Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held in the Trinity Business School Boardroom
at 10am on Thursday 01 October 2026

XX = Council relevance

Present	Professor David Hevey, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*) Professor Aisling Dunne, School of Biochemistry & Immunology Professor Xiaoning Liang, Trinity Business School Professor Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry Professor Gavin Doherty, School of Computer Science and Statistics Professor Evangelia Rigaki, School of Creative Arts Professor Padhraig Fleming, School of Dental Science Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, School of Engineering Professor Alice Jorgenson, School of English Professor Patrick Walsh, School of Histories & Humanities Professor Deirdre Ahern, School of Law Professor James Hadley, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies Professor Colin Flynn, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences Professor Andreea Nicoara, School of Mathematics Professor Eimear Guinan, School of Medicine Professor Micha Ruhl, School of Natural Sciences Professor Melissa Corbally, School of Nursing & Midwifery Professor Eduardo Ruiz-Hernandez, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences Professor Graham Cross, School of Physics Professor Olive Healy, School of Psychology Professor Jude Lal Fernando, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies Professor Noah Buckley, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Apologies	Professor Russell McLaughlin, School of Genetics & Microbiology Ms Patricia Maguire, Academic Secretary Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office Professor Eavan Brady, School of Social Work & Social Policy
In attendance	Professor Wladislaw Rivkin, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education (TT&L), Ms. Leona Coady, Director of Graduate Studies, Dr Ríonnagh Sheridan, Secretary to Graduate Studies Committee (Academic Affairs, TT&L), Ms. Siobhan Dunne, Sub-Librarian, Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services, Professor Susan Pike, Academic Director of Portal, Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services, Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of the Centre for Academic Practice, Professor Joseph Roche, Associate Dean of Research, on behalf of Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research.

The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed all members and attendees to the meeting.

Section A

XX	GS/26-27/008	**Minutes of GSC of 17 September 2026** The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of 17 September 2026.
	GS/26-27/009	**Matters Arising** The Dean noted no matters arising.
XX	GS/26-27/010	**Postgraduate Taught and Micro-Credential Sub-Committee** Professor Wlad Rivkin presented two programmes recommended for approval by the Postgraduate Taught and Micro-Credential Sub-Committee at its meeting of 22 September: i) the M.Sc. in NeuroAI: Bridging Brains and Machines is a one-year, full-time masters programme. The Committee noted the Sub-Committee recommended the programme subject to the integration of feedback on areas such as student numbers, research supervision, and the programme title. ii) the M.Sc. in Human Factors and Ergonomics (Online) is a two-year, part-time online masters programme. The Committee had briefly discussed the intention of the M.Sc. proposers to seek professional accreditation and develop links with industry. **Decision: GSC/26-27/010i:** The Committee approved the proposal for the M.Sc. in NeuroAI: Bridging Brains and Machines subject to: 1. the integration of feedback as provided by the Postgraduate Taught and Micro-Credential Sub-Committee; 2. a satisfactory External Reviewer report. **Decision: GSC/26-27/010ii:** The Committee approved the proposal for the M.Sc. in Human Factors and Ergonomics, subject to: 1. the integration of feedback as provided by the Postgraduate Taught and Micro-Credential Sub-Committee; 2. a satisfactory External Reviewer report.
	GS/26-27/011	**RPL Integration** Dr Cormac Doran introduced Dr Graham Glanville and his role in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Trinity. The Committee noted that relatively few programme webpages currently advertise RPL opportunities and discussed its potential to support access to postgraduate study, including for returning and international learners. Members discussed the

assessment of prior learning against entry requirements and learning outcomes, the administrative requirements involved, and the use of RPL for exemptions for existing students. It was clarified that RPL does not currently apply to postgraduate research programmes.

Action: GSC/26-27/011: Schools to identify suitable postgraduate programmes where RPL could support admission, with relevant webpages to be updated in collaboration with Marketing, IT Services and the Graduate Studies Office.

GS/26-27/012 Academic Policies Workplan

Dr Elizabeth Donnellan presented i) the process of academic policy development and review, ii) policy updates completed in 2025/26, iii) policies due for review or development, scheduled for 2026/27, and iv) invited Schools to contribute feedback on any aspect of policy development. The Committee asked for clarity on the how the College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and GenAI will develop into policy, and noted that operational challenges can arise when policies conflict.

Action: GSC/26-27/012: Schools to engage with Dr Donnellan on the formation of new policy and to provide feedback on the performance of existing policy in practice.

GS/26-27/013 Proposal for a Working Group on the requirements for a creative or practice-based PhD thesis

Ms Leona Coady presented to the Committee commentary received from external examiners, supervisors and PhD candidates which described the need to 'right-size' the work submitted for the PhD degree when in the combined form of a written thesis and a substantial practice or creative element. Ms Coady asked the Committee to i) approve the formation of a Working Group and ii) to nominate members to the working group.

The Committee noted the potential for the process to become overly bureaucratic and asked for clarity regarding the definition of 'creative and practice-based' submissions, given that PhD by publication is not currently permitted.

Decision GSC/26-27/013i: GSC approved the establishment of a Working Group for a Creative and Practice-based PhD Thesis.

Action GSC/26-27/013ii: Directors of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning to submit nominations for membership of the Working Group for Creative and Practice-based PhD Thesis.

GS/26-27/014 **Proposal for a Working Group to examine extensions to the PhD confirmation process.**

Ms Leona Coady presented a proposal to establish a Working Group to review arrangements for students who require a further period of registration before re-presenting for confirmation, and the role of confirmation as a progression milestone. It was noted that, in the absence of specific regulations, such cases are currently managed on an individual basis. The Committee discussed the potential for an extended registration period in appropriate cases, subject to the recommendation of the Thesis Committee. The implications for registration, fees and funding were noted, alongside the need for clear and consistent procedures.

Decision GSC/26-27/014i: GSC approved the establishment of a Working Group to examine extensions to the PhD confirmation process.

Action GSC/26-27/014ii: Directors of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning to submit nominations for membership of the Working Group to examine extensions to the PhD confirmation process.

XX GS/26-27/015 **Any Other Business**

The Dean of Graduate Studies i) presented an amendment to the Terms of Reference for Graduate Studies Committee, to replace Clause 5 with new language to include Postgraduate Taught Programmes and Postgraduate Research Programmes and ii) nominated the new Director of Graduate Studies as Ex Officio attendee

Decision GS/26-27/015i: The Committee approved the amendment to the Terms of Reference for Graduate Studies Committee.

Decision GS/26-27/015ii: The Committee approved the Director of Graduate Studies to attend Graduate Studies Committee in an *Ex Officio* capacity.

Agenda B

No items were entered under Agenda B

Agenda C

GS/26-27/016 **Update to the Draft Sustainability Action Plan**

Dr Pauline Rooney outlined the strategic context for the proposed education actions within the Sustainability Strategy, noting that these had been consolidated and updated to reflect work already completed. The proposed approach has moved away from introducing a standalone sustainability module towards embedding relevant content within existing modules and disciplines.

The Committee supported taking a flexible approach, noting that integration may not be appropriate in all disciplines and that programmes would not be required to incorporate sustainability content where it was not relevant.

Action GS/26-27/016: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) to provide feedback on the Draft Sustainability Plan via a link to be circulated by the VP Biodiversity & Climate Action, by the deadline of 14 October 2026.

GS/26-27/017 **Postgraduate Taught and Micro-Credentials Sub-Committee Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference for the Postgraduate Taught and Micro-Credentials Sub-Committee.

GS/26-27/018 **Universal Design for Learning Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference for the Universal Design for Learning Advisory Group.