

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March,  
2003 in Room 2026, Arts & Social Sciences Building.

Present (Chair)	Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of Research	Prof. M. Gibney
Arts (Humanities)	Dr. M.-A. Valiulis
	Dr. A. Chantler
Arts (Letters)	Prof. D. Singleton
	Dr. C. Morris
Business, Economic & Social Studies	Dr. E. Mahon
Engineering & Systems Science	Dr. A. Moore
	Dr. T. Orr
Health Sciences	Ms. A. Higgins
GSU	Mr. D. Scammell
	Mr. T. O' Donnell

In attendance: Ms. E. McGlade (Library), Ms. G. Hogan; Prof. C. Feighery; Ms. L. Donnellan (GSO); Dr N. Daly (English); Prof. N. Grene (English); Dr. L. Malone (Clinical Medicine); Ms. B. Moran (Clinical Medicine); Dr. S. Allwright (Community Health & General Practice)

Apologies: Dr. T. Kavanagh; Dr. P. Kruger; Dr. F. Falkiner

**167.0 Minutes of the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2003**

A number of changes were requested to the minutes of the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> January.

**167.1 Corrections to the minutes of the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2003**

Ms Donnellan reported that the requested corrections to these minutes had been made

**167.2 Matters arising**

Re item 166.2 of the minutes of the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2003, the proposed changes to the Calendar regulations regarding the Ph.D. in Political Science-awarding of a lower degree, the Dean reported that the Department of Political Science would be reporting back to the Committee with clarification of the issues arising from the proposed introduction of an M.Phil.

Re item 166.4 of the minutes of the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2003, procedures for the award of higher degrees by research, the Dean said that he would postpone reporting on his proposals until the meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Regarding the issue of fees for the validated postgraduate diplomas from the Church of Ireland College of Education (Item 160.3, minutes of the meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2002), the Dean reported that the issue of a fee for these courses was currently under discussion with the Treasurer.

### 167.3 Review of the M.Sc. in Community Health

The Dean introduced the item and asked whether the Committee had any queries. Dr Mahon said that the review of this course had raised some interesting questions regarding the role of the college in attracting international students. She also queried the role played by ISA in attracting postgraduate students and said that she would like to see Graduate Studies more involved in this aspect of recruitment. The Dean of Research felt that there should be more support for international students as they pay a higher fee but do not seem to get adequate support. The Dean then introduced Dr Shane Allwright, course co-ordinator for the M.Sc. in Community Health, who outlined the results of the review to the Committee. The major points raised by the reviewer were:

1. The recent resignation of the Course co-ordinator, who is also lecturer for the International Public Health module, will pose a threat to this component of the course, one of the distinguishing features of the course.
2. The role of the course in the overall strategy of the Department needs to be assessed to determine whether the benefit of the course to the Department outweighs the cost of running the course, both in financial and staff terms - would the Department be better served by devoting its staff time to research activities?

Dr Mahon asked whether Dr Allwright had sought sponsorship to cover the cost of a lectureship in the area of International Public Health. Dr Allwright said that they had approached Irish Aid but had been told that supporting staff costs did not fall within their remit, even though the course provided training for people who would then be going on to work in Irish Aid-supported countries. Dr Mahon queried whether partial funding from the *cista communis* could be sought but Dr Allwright felt that this would not be possible at this time. Dr Allwright suggested that the International Public Health element of the course might have to be dropped. Dr Valiulis queried how this would impact on recruitment. Dr Allwright said that she felt that they would still be able to attract overseas students to the course but that non-EU students may find it less attractive as a result. The Dean asked whether non-EU students on the course were typically sponsored. Dr Allwright replied that while some were sponsored through Irish Aid, others were self-funded. The Dean of Research queried whether the balance between research and taught course teaching outlined in the report had been discussed at Departmental level. Dr Allwright said that it had, but that a detailed discussion had been deferred until the Departmental Review. There were no other questions and the Dean thanked Dr Allwright.

The Committee then discussed the review and agreed that it reflected the increasing difficulty for Departments in providing staff and financial support for taught postgraduate courses. It was suggested that the sponsorship model such as that offered by the M.Sc. in Health Services Management could provide a way for some courses to deal with the issue of financial restraints. The Committee approved the report and recommended that it be forwarded for inclusion in the Departmental Review.

#### **167.4 Proposal to refocus and rename the current M.Sc. in Nuclear Medicine**

The Dean introduced Dr. Lesley Malone and Ms. Bernadette Moran, course co-ordinators for the P. Grad. Dip. in Magnetic Resonance Imaging and the P. Grad. Dip./M.Sc. in Nuclear Medicine respectively. Dr. Malone outlined the proposal to the Committee. At present Diplomas are offered in either Nuclear Medicine or Magnetic Resonance Imaging. Students who achieve level of distinction in the postgraduate diploma in Nuclear Medicine have the option of proceeding to an M.Sc. in Nuclear Medicine. However, students on the Diploma in Magnetic Resonance Imaging do not have that option. This proposal seeks to reformat the Nuclear Medicine M.Sc., rename it and to allow entry from either the Nuclear Medicine P. Grad. Dip. or the Magnetic Resonance Imaging P. Grad. Dip.

In response to questions, Dr. Malone confirmed that students moving from the Diploma to the Masters forego the award of a Diploma. She added that students must achieve over 75% in the Diploma in order to be eligible to proceed to the Masters option. The Committee approved the proposal.

#### **167.5 Proposal for an M.Phil in Popular Literature**

The proposal was presented by Dr. Nick Daly and Prof. Nick Grene, who made the following case for the proposal to the Committee:

1. There is a demand and a need for this course - the existing taught courses in English, the M. Phil in Anglo-Irish Literature and the M. Phil. in Creative Writing are both heavily oversubscribed.
2. No other English Department in Ireland or the UK offers a postgraduate Diploma in Popular Literature, with the exception of the MA in Popular Literary Fictions at Middlesex University.
3. Since most academic libraries do not have comprehensive holdings in the area of popular literature, the copyright holdings of the library at TCD are a unique resource.
4. Many members of the School of English have research and teaching interests in the area of popular literature and therefore will be able to teach on the course.
5. As with the M. Phil. in Anglo-Irish Literature, it is hoped that this course will act as a gateway for future research students.

Dr Valiulis queried what impact the course would have on the teaching load of the English Department. Prof. Grene said that they would shift the balance of teaching within the Department to allow staff who normally taught at undergraduate level the opportunity to teach at postgraduate level. In addition, teaching assistants would be deployed to free up senior colleague's time. Prof Singleton asked why the course did not include a P. Grad. Dip. option. Prof. Grene said that they did not feel that a Diploma option was necessary as during the 18 years that the Anglo-Irish Literature course had been running, the fall back option of a Diploma had only been used once. Dr Mahon asked whether the number of applicants was matched by the quality of the applications. Prof Grene said that of the approximately 30 offers made each year, most candidates had upper 2<sup>nd</sup> class honours degrees. Dr Valiulis asked whether the fees for the course were standard fees. The Dean reminded the Committee that taught course fees were

individually set, on the advice of the proposers and as approved by the Finance Committee. Prof Feighery queried how students responded to being taught by teaching assistants. Prof. Grene replied that the department took care to employ research students who were relatively advanced in their studies and that he had no concerns about the standard of teaching. Last year the quality of tutorial teaching had been assessed for the departmental review and the response had been extremely positive. Dr Mahon asked how fee increases were set and the Dean replied that routine annual increases were determined by the Finance Committee. Additional fee increases beyond this would have to be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. Mr Scammell felt that any raise in fees, particularly those of non-EU students would be very unwelcome in the current climate of student dissatisfaction with facilities.

The Committee approved the proposal.

#### **167.6 The implications of the current financial cuts on self-funded courses**

Dr Mahon expressed her concern about the effect that the current financial cuts were having on the ability of individual departments to run taught postgraduate courses effectively and to provide a quality service to students. These concerns were supported by the Committee and Dr Mahon suggested that it may be useful for co-ordinators to meet and discuss strategies for dealing with the problems arising, e.g. costs for marketing and advertising courses. Dr Mahon suggested pooling ideas by compiling a database of different solutions to the problems. It was agreed that the Dean would speak to Dr Mahon about putting together a group to look into the issues and that the Committee would revisit the topic at a later stage.

#### **167.7 Any other business**

The Dean briefly introduced a document from ISA regarding the recruitment of overseas students, which be discussed at the next meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed. The next meeting is scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2003.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_