

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 27 November, 2008  
Boardroom, Provost's House

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**Present:** Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),  
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology  
Dr Joe McDonagh, School of Business  
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry  
Dr Anne O'Connell, School of Dental Science  
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music  
Prof. Biswajit Basu, School of Engineering  
Dr Darryl Jones, School of English  
Dr Hazel Dodge, School of Histories & Humanities  
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Dr Jeffrey Kallen, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
Dr Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics  
Dr Thomas Connor, School of Medicine  
Dr Paula Murphy, School of Natural Sciences  
Dr Andrew Harkin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics  
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology  
Dr Gillian Wylie, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics  
Dr Robert Thomson, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Mr Michael McGrath, Acting Manager of MIS (*Ex officio*)  
Mr Ronan Hodson, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)  
Ms Alexandra Murphy, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)  
Dr Jacqueline Potter, C.A.P.S.L. (in attendance)  
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)

**Apologies:** Dr David Lloyd, Dean of Research  
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:  
Dr Fintan Sheerin, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Dr Carl Vogel, (*Acting*) School of Computer Science and Statistics

**In attendance:** Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)  
Mr Robert Otway-Norwood, Graduate Studies Office

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The Dean introduced Mr. Robert Otway-Norwood from the Graduate Studies Office who will be in attendance at the meetings for the GSO.

**GS/08-09/007 Minutes of 23 October 2008**

The minutes of the meeting of 23 October, 2008 were approved by the Committee after a discussion on point 210.4. This concerned the availability of language orientation courses to postgraduate taught course students. These have been available in CLCS for the past two years and, following endorsement of the GSC of a proposal from the Head of School at a previous meeting of the GSC, the Head of School undertook to investigate how these can be made available to the wider postgraduate community subsequent to practicalities with respect to ARAM being addressed.

**GS/08-09/008 Matters Arising**

The Dean spoke to the circulated revised fees document and noted that its recommendations had been approved by the Finance Committee and that she was working with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to implement the changes within. She also noted that lowering the non-EU fees for postgraduate students was under discussion as these students were now attracting funding under RGAM.

A query arose re expected cutbacks in SIF funding and the Dean confirmed that funding under SIF 1 was committed in total but would now be implemented in phases. Reprioritisation with respect to SIF 2 funding was

being undertaken in all Universities and, whilst indications are that the HEA is committed to this funding there had been no official confirmation on this to date.

**GS/08-09/009 M.Sc. International Management (One year f/t, two year p/t)**

The Dean welcomed Dr. Mary Lee Rhodes from the School of Business and invited her to speak to the circulated document.

Dr Rhodes explained that the proposed Masters was the second offering from the School of Business in the area of pre-experience Masters, which was a move from the old strategy of offering masters more suited to applicants with significant business experience. This course will have an international residency week in one of several countries and Dr Rhodes confirmed that the School of Business have a number of specialists in the International Business area who are greatly looking forward to hosting the course. Participants will have a qualification in business or economics or a cognate discipline and a specific GMAT score will be required for entry to the course. A discussion arose regarding the possibility of offering a "stay at home" version of the course to reduce the expense involved for students on the course but it was pointed out that the international residency was an integral part of the course and that students would attend courses in international universities during this period. The Committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

**GS/08-09/010 Discussion document on Learning Outcomes**

The Dean welcomed Ms Alexandra Anderson and invited her to speak to the circulated document.

Ms Anderson noted that the Learning Outcomes project is part of the ongoing implementation of Bologna and the NQAI in College and that when completed it would result in greater clarity for students and greater transparency and precision with respect to awards. The international reference point was a proposal to commence with programme outcomes and it was anticipated that by 2010 there would be publishable material on learning outcomes available for all course handbooks. Programme outcomes would illustrate what knowledge and skills a typical graduate student should be able to demonstrate following completion of a programme and these would be linked to the ECTS credit system. Ms Anderson explained that the role of the Bologna desk was to facilitate the process with support from CAPSL and confirmed that the Learning Outcomes themselves would be written by the course committees. A process of self-certification will be adopted where each school will approve their own outcomes. A detailed website with information on the project is being refined at present. The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed this project as a positive development and noted that it has been approved by the University Council.

A discussion arose on whether learning outcomes would be applied to research courses and it was agreed that this would not occur but that taught modules which are being taken as part of a research course (i.e., generic skills and transferable skills courses) may be subject to learning outcomes. There was general agreement that these outcomes should be published in conjunction with the Book of Modules and it was confirmed that a database was in development at present to hold this information and data. Following a robust discussion on the Learning Outcomes project the committee agreed that it should be viewed as a positive process for those involved in the delivery of courses and will allow any deficiencies in courses to be easily highlighted.

Some concern was raised regarding the educational principles upon which the learning outcomes were based, noting that they were quite out-dated. However, it was agreed that overall schools could develop these outcomes to best reflect their own disciplines and core values, and therefore this process was seen to be a very positive development

**GS/08-09/011 Award of taught masters with distinction**

The Dean opened a discussion on the award of taught masters with distinction and pointed out that reports from a number of external examiners to taught courses indicated that they were not aware that distinctions could be awarded to taught masters students. She drew the committee's attention to the regulation in the Calendar Part II and advised that each School should ensure that their School Executive confirms the local processes in place for awarding distinctions. The Committee discussed introducing an award for excellence in postgraduate research and it was agreed to further investigate the most efficient way to evaluate research students for an award of this type.

**GS/08-09/012 Any Other Business**

i) The Dean updated the committee on the new Postgraduate Tutorial Service which is under development by the Senior Tutors Office and confirmed that tutors were being identified to staff the service and that a roll-out of this initiative is expected early in 2009.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.20 am.