

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 13.00 p.m. on Thursday 4th October 2012
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Professor Veronica Campbell, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Martin Fellenz, School of Business

Professor Isabel Rozas, School of Chemistry

Professor Simon Wilson, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Ebrahim Al Awadhi, School of Dental Science

Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Drama, Film & Music

Professor Conor McGuckin, School of Education

Professor Sam Slote, School of English

Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Professor Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics

Professor Anne-Marie Brady, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology

Professor Gillian Wylie, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics

Professor Tim Hicks, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Professor Stephanie Holt, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Mr Martin McAndrew, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)

Mr Andrew McEwan, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

Ms Alex Anderson, CAPSL Representative (*Ex officio*)

Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)

Ms Lee Mills, Information System Services Representative

Apologies: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Tim Foster, School of Genetics and Microbiology

Professor Jurgen Uhlich, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

Professor John Gormley, School of Medicine

Professor Anna Davies, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Lidia Tajber, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Mauro Ferreira, School of Physics

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research

Ms Jennifer Hill, Graduate Studies Office (*Ex officio*)

In attendance: Ms Helen Wheeler, Graduate Studies Office, Acting-Secretary to the meeting
(*Ex officio*)

Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

GS/12-13/01 Welcome to members of Graduate Studies Committee

The Dean welcomed the following new Directors of Teaching and Learning

(Postgraduate) and thanked their predecessors:

Professor Ebrahim Al Awadhi, School of Dental Sciences

Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Professor Tim Hicks, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities

She also welcomed Mr Andrew McEwan, as the new vice-president of the Graduate Students' Union

GS/12-13/02 Minutes of 31st May 2012

The minutes of the meeting of 31st May 2012 were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/12-13/03 Matters Arising

The Dean confirmed that as per item GS/11-12/054, The Harmonisation of Assessment Regulations document was approved at the meeting of the University Council on 13th June.

Ms Alexandra Anderson updated the Committee on the timeframe for the publication of the Calendar Part 2. Drafting is due to be completed by end of October, with publishing due for end of November 2012. Schools should be aware that the regulations contained within the handbook should align with the Calendar. The Dean thanked Ms Anderson and the Schools for their input into refining the Calendar entries in the context of harmonisation.

SITS has now gone live and any identified issues are currently being logged and passed on to the Tribal team. A number of courses will be piloted in the next academic year for the assessment and progression function in SITS and the Dean requested as much input as possible from the Schools involved.

The Global Relations Strategy was formally approved on 10th September 2012.

The Arabic modules proposed by the School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics and approved at the last meeting are progressing well with 4 students enrolled.

The Dean announced that the Graduate Students' Union has kindly invited all Committee members to coffee in the Graduate Students' Union Common Room after the meeting.

GS/12-13/04 Work Plan for Michaelmas Term

The University Council and University Board have approved the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) as an Associated College. At present RIAM offers a MA in Music Performance and a Doctorate in Music Performance, which are currently accredited by Dublin City University. The Dean informed the Committee that the usual College quality processes will be followed as part of the TCD accreditation for those RIAM courses, as well as for any new postgraduate courses introduced by RIAM.

The Provost has requested that the Dean chair a taskforce to consider the academic issues and business case associated with Online Education and prepare a discussion paper for University Council by March / April 2013. The taskforce will include academic and external members and the discussion paper will be considered by GSC.

The HEA are currently developing a national doctoral framework in consultation with the IUA. This is to be brought to the Committee for discussion/ input at a later date.

GS/12-13/05 Research Supervision Guidelines

The Dean thanked the following for their considerable input into this document: Professor Derek Nolan, Professor Conor McGuckin, Professor Martin Fellenz, Professor Melissa Sihra, Professor Anne-Marie Brady, Professor Ciara O'Farrell and Mr Martin McAndrew. The Dean asked the Committee to review the document and provide any further input prior to its publication. Once published all supervisors will be given a copy and it will be available for staff and students online. The aim of the handbook is to provide supervisors with practical information on student supervision and will be complemented with support workshops for supervisors.

The question of the funding available for College Awards was raised since students are funded for 3 years yet the Trinity PhD is described as a 4-year degree. The Dean and Ms Thornbury responded that students in receipt of a College Award can apply for further 1 year of funding, however this is dependent on their School's funding availability. The Dean agreed to follow this up with the Faculty Deans and Treasurer's Office and revert to the Committee. Ms Thornbury to seek advice from Payroll on taxable income from scholarships as it was noted that students on studentships are taxed on any income above €18k.

On page 5 of this document it was agreed that in Section 7, the word 'unsatisfactory' should be changed to 'all'.

It was suggested that more onus should be put onto supervisors to maintain good relationships with students, and that mediation should be mandatory when relationship breakdowns occur. The Dean is to input this into Chapter 8 (page 13) of the handbook. It was advised that all relationship breakdowns should be documented, with clear paper trails in the event of appeals.

It was mentioned that there are currently no regulations in place when supervisors stop supervising the students and the Schools are left to find alternative supervisors. This can be extremely difficult and it was decided that more effort should be put into mediating issues. The question of responsibility of initiating mediation was raised. The Dean was unwilling to be too prescriptive as there are too many possibilities and it is impossible to cover all eventualities. More directive wording in relation to the role of the postgraduate director of teaching and learning (page 13) was requested.

A member requested that the Progress Report be 2 separate documents in order to facilitate independence between student and supervisor. Mr Martin McAndrew stated that in the interests of openness and communication this should remain as it is, as it is an academic report rather than a form for documenting other issues. It was also stated that in the case of appeals, specific College documents must be completed. The Dean has introduced some minor changes in the Progress Report to include a research plan for the following 12 months and progress to date (pages 25-26).

Appendix 1 is to be updated by Mr Trevor Peare.

The GSC approved the document, subject to minor changes and agreed that Supervisor support workshops for 2012/13 will include:

- Introduction to research supervision (aimed at new supervisors / supervisors new to TCD)
- Effective research supervision

GS/12-13/06 HEA and the Structured PhD

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has indicated to the Provost that core funding will only be allocated to students on structured PhDs. The Dean reminded the Committee that all Trinity PhD students are undertaking structured PhD and that the structured component should include regular monitoring of progress and attendance at modules (discipline-specific, generic and transferable skills).

The Dean described the role of the Innovation Academy and the Graduate Certificate in Innovation & Entrepreneurship in providing transferable skills training to students registered in any discipline. The Dean circulated fliers for the Innovation Academy and introduced 3 PhD students (Eileen Diskin; Stephen Sheridan; Norah Pelizzari) who have all completed the

Graduate Certificate in Innovation & Entrepreneurship in the Innovation Academy. The students spoke of the positive aspects of the Innovation Academy, saying that it provided an alternative and broader perspective on possible careers, that it facilitated interaction with students from other disciplines and has opened up alternative career opportunities. The Academy has encouraged a proactive approach in the students and the video output of their research has been used in other fora.

The Dean emphasised that modules at the Innovation Academy are free to registered PhD students.

How to best market the Innovation Academy was raised and it was suggested that supervisors are given more information about it in order to encourage their students to actively participate. Supervisors should not make it difficult for their students to attend. The Director of the Academy visited the School of Film, Music and Drama at the invitation of Professor Melissa Sihra and it was confirmed that Innovation Academy staff and the Student Ambassadors would be available to meet with staff and students in any School to provide information.

A discussion followed about the possibility of stipulating a minimum ECTS for the Trinity PhD given that a maximum 30 ECTS may be undertaken over the first 18 months of registration. Some schools suggested a minimum of 10 ECTS which may be discipline-specific and/or generic & transferable skills. A discussion on seminar participation as appropriate activity for PhD students was discussed, although no ECTS credit is attached to that activity.

The Dean requested postgraduate directors of teaching and learning to send her an outline of any modules / structured activities that their Schools currently provide to support student development. This is to be revisited at a later Committee meeting. She also requested that all PhD students and supervisors be reminded that ALL PhD students are registered on a structured PhD.

GS/12-13/07 AOB

The Dean congratulated Professor Martin Fellenz on receiving a National NAIRTL award for teaching excellence on 17th September.

The Dean reminded the committee of the launch of the Employment-Based PhD Programme from the Irish Research Council which had extended the deadline for applications to 18th October. The Dean stressed that this is applicable across all disciplines and encouraged Schools to apply. This would involve students being employed by external organisations and TCD guidelines for this form of studentship had previously been discussed and approved by the GSC.

Prof. Veronica Campbell

Date: 16th October 2012