

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 21st February 2013
Boardroom, Provost's House

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

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Martin Fellenz, School of Business

Professor Simon Wilson, School of Computer Science and Statistics

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

Professor Neville Cox, School of Law

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

Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics

Professor John Gormley, School of Medicine

Professor Anna Davies, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Anne-Marie Brady, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Lidia Tajber, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Mauro Ferreira, School of Physics

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*)

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 Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Isabel Rozas, School of Chemistry

Professor Andrew Pierce, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics

In attendance: Ms Jennifer Hill, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

GS/12-13/22 Minutes of 6th December 2012

The minutes of the meeting of 6th December 2012 were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/12-13/23 Matters Arising

The Dean informed the Committee that following Item **GS/12-13/17** the Vice Provost has been working with the Faculty Deans and Schools in relation to refinements to the

ABC to recognise new academic activity. The proposal from the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) for a validated course, Master of Music in Performance, has received favourable feedback from the external review and will be circulated for review at the March meeting of the University Council. There has been some consideration given to changing the name of the course to Master in Fine Arts – Music in Performance.

The Dean confirmed that as per the minutes Item **GS/12-13/20** the Guidelines for students and staff on the modification of examination and assessment arrangements for students with disabilities has been brought back to the Graduate Studies Committee for noting and has been circulated as part of Section C.

The Dean confirmed that the call for the Trinity Teaching Award for Postgraduate Students has been circulated to Schools.

GS/12-13/24 Dean of Students

The Dean introduced the Dean of Students, Professor Amanda Piesse, and thanked her for attending the meeting to update the Committee on a number of current issues. The Dean of Students explained that as postgraduate students make up a third of all TCD students it is important to consider the postgraduate student experience as well as the undergraduate. There were three items on the agenda:

- a) Student parent, Carer and Pregnancy Policy. The Dean of Students explained that this document was developed from an existing policy already in Calendar Part 2 and expressed thanks to Simone Cameron-Coen for her significant input into preparing the document.

It was clarified that text on Page 7 and Page 9 should read "... and end not earlier than four weeks after the expected date of birth."

It was also clarified that the 26 consecutive weeks' maternity is as per Irish / EU legislation.

In answer to a query it was explained that a student on a taught masters course is required to take one year for maternity leave to ensure they return to the course at the same stage they left it the previous year. While a research student is permitted to take just six months (from September to March or from March to September) there is flexibility for them to take a year if required. The Committee expressed concern that maternity leave for research students must fall in line with the September and March registration periods and requested the Dean of Graduate Studies and Dean of Students to follow up to see if this can be progressed to allow for further flexibility on the timing of maternity leave.

It was confirmed that a dedicated student parent space is to be allocated in the Buttery.

It was suggested that where the policy states that students are under no obligation to disclose their pregnancy, information should be added to note that they are encouraged to talk to their supervisor / tutor, etc.

It was agreed that provision should be made in the policy for situations where mother and father are both students. The Dean of Students agreed that she would liaise with Professor Cox, DTLPG for the School of Law, on the correct wording for this. It was confirmed that off books has always been granted for exceptional *ad mis* grounds where the father may need to take additional time.

It was confirmed that the final draft of the policy would be circulated to the Committee for noting. The Dean congratulated the Dean of Students and noted that this is the first Irish University to implement such a policy.

- b) Irish National Student Survey. The Dean of Students explained that this is a mandatory survey for all students. A working group including representatives from all Irish Universities, Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Education have produced the survey which has the aim of gathering information on the

student experience. It has a launch date of 4th March and further information can be found at www.studentsurvey.ie. Initially only undergraduate students were to be surveyed but this is now to be extended to include taught postgraduate students in the pilot phase. It has been determined that the survey is not fit for purpose for postgraduate research students and so there will be a separate survey for these students from March 2014. The Dean of Graduate Studies suggested that the Dean of Students link in with the IUA as part of the planning for this part of the survey.

- c) Orientation. The Dean of Students explained that, as per the circulated memo, at present there is no single oversight of the process for orientation and different offices provide different information to students, in different formats, at different times. For postgraduate students in 2012 the Graduate Students Union put together a very comprehensive week long programme of events which complemented the meeting organised and held by the Graduate Studies Office. However, many individual courses and Schools hold their own orientations and often mixed information is presented to the students.

A steering group is to conduct an orientation review and provide a strategy and implementation plan to provide an orientation process for all students. As part of this allocation of responsibility will be determined and resources allocated accordingly.

GS/12-13/25 Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education)

The Dean informed the Committee that the proposed course from Marino Institute of Education, has been approved by the Associated Colleges Degrees Committee. Although it is a Level 8 qualification the students taking the course will be graduates and, as such, the course is to be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee. It will also be noted by the Undergraduate Studies Committee (unless the members wish to discuss it).

The Dean introduced Dr Séan Delaney, Registrar of Marino Institute of Education and asked him to speak to the circulated document.

Dr Delaney explained that Marino offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This new course will be delivered by Marino but validated by TCD and has been developed in response to the Teaching Council registration requirements now requiring educators and practitioners teaching in the Further Education sector to have a teaching qualification in addition to expertise in their subject area.

There were queries from the Committee in relation to the following:

- the credit weighting of placements: Table 5 shows a 3-week placement in year 1 receives 5 ECTS but a 4-week placement in year 2 receives 10 ECTS;
- assessment: Section 8.5 indicates that a student can fail two 5 ECTS modules but still pass the course; It was also queried that the proposal does not state what happens if a student fails overall.
- In relation to 7.4 it was noted that any student feedback should also be fed-back to the students.

It was agreed that each of the above points would be reviewed and the document revised.

Professor Conor McGuckin confirmed there is a long history of development and collaboration with the School of Education and Marino and the proposed course has the School's full support.

The Committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to the above amendments to the proposal and any additional amendments that may be required following the external assessor's report.

GS/12-13/26 Irish Research Council

The Dean confirmed that there has been a change to the Irish Research Council funding for research students. The funding will now be provided for four years, instead of three as it was previously. In addition, three years of funding will also be available for students to apply for where they have already completed one year of a PhD. There will not be any top-up funding available for students who have received three years of funding already.

The Dean confirmed that the Irish Research Council has specified that funding will only be allocated to students who are registered for a Structured PhD and she referred the Committee to the circulated definition of a Structured PhD, taken from the IRC Terms and Conditions. Many of the elements are already embedded in the TCD regulations, such as generic/transferable skills modules offered through the Schools or the Innovation Academy and appropriate placements, also offered by the Innovation Academy.

In answer to a query it was explained that a work placement should be embedded as part of the PhD. Concern was raised about the amount of assessment given that many PhD students take four years to complete without having to undertake additional modules, etc. and it was clarified that many of these elements should be assessment light.

The IRC are allowing Deans of Graduate Studies to say whether sufficient structure is provided and any queries regarding this are to be directed to the Dean.

It was noted that there is a tight time-frame for applications for the IRC funding given that a supervisor has to be assigned and is required to complete a support statement and the Head of School must sign off on each application. It was also noted that incorrect documentation was made available and the Dean confirmed that the IUA Deans Group had been in contact with the IRC about this. Although the IRC funding only covers EU fees, non-EU students may still apply.

The Dean informed the Committee that each School will be required to have a definition of their structured PhD. While some of this information has already been collected the Dean will work with the Schools to generate this information which will align with the HEA's key components of a structured PhD.

GS/12-13/27 Online Higher Education

The Dean informed the Committee that a taskforce had been set up to consider online higher education with a view to preparing a discussion document to be submitted to the University Council. Meetings have been held with individual Schools and from those meetings it has been noted that there is interest in developing technology-enhanced education across the college. The main area of concern that has been raised related to whether there is sufficient expertise in-house.

The taskforce's recommendations focus on three areas:

- Technology enhanced learning for existing students
- Increased provision of blended and fully online courses
- Making some online courses open access

It was noted that Continuing Professional Development is becoming a necessity in some areas (such as Pharmacy) where upskilling is required and that online provision could best meet this need.

The Committee acknowledged the need to progress with this and noted that some online courses are already being considered by Schools and it would be important to proceed swiftly. The committee also noted that schools would need to be supported in these endeavours and that many staff already have a significant workload

GS/12-13/28 AOB

The new publication "Supervision of Research Students" was circulated to the Committee and the Dean informed them that all academics would be receiving a copy and

the document would also be made available online.

In answer to a query about the timing of allocation of number of research awards to Schools it was confirmed that the Graduate Studies Office notify each faculty of their number of awards in January prior to the Postgraduate Open Day.

Section B for noting and approval

1. The Committee approved the change of name for the M.Phil. in Film Theory and History to the M.Phil. in Film Studies Theory, History, Practice as proposed by the School of Drama, Film and Music.

Section C for noting

1. The Committee noted the Guidelines for Students and Staff on the Modification of Examination and Assessment Arrangements for Students with Disabilities

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.40am.

Prof. Veronica Campbell

Date: 3rd March 2013