

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

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A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Senior Lecturer, Dr Aileen Douglas (*Chair*)  
Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan  
*Directors of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate)*  
Dr Philip Coleman, School of English,  
Dr Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities  
Dr Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies  
Dr Irene Walsh, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
Dr Zuleika Rodgers, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics  
Dr Eleanor Denny, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
Dr Jim Quinn, School of Business  
Dr Michael Gormley, School of Psychology  
Dr Conor McGuckin, School of Education  
Dr Oran Doyle, School of Law  
Dr Dermot O'Dwyer, School of Engineering  
Dr Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
Dr Ian Sanders, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor David Grayson, School of Chemistry  
Professor Dan Bradley, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
Dr Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science  
Dr Anne Marie Healy, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)  
Dr Brian Foley, Director of CAPSL  
Ms Jennifer Fox, Education Officer, Students' Union  
Ms Rachel Barry, Student Representative

Apologies: Dr Evangelia Rigaki, School of Drama, Film and Music  
Ms Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM  
Dr Francis O'Toole, Director of BESS  
Professor Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics  
Dr Stefan Hutzler, School of Physics  
Dr Clair Gardiner, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
Dr Catherine McCabe, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Professor Shaun McCann, School of Medicine  
Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative

In attendance: Ms Sorcha De Brunner,

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**UGS/10-11/038 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 were approved.

**UGS/10-11/039 Matters arising**

- (i) UGS/10-11/031: The Senior Lecturer noted that draft coversheets, discussed in relation to the plagiarism item, had been circulated to members and would be discussed at the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) meeting scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

**UGS/10-11/040 Course proposal for a five-year integrated programme in Computer Science**

A proposal for a five-year integrated course in Computer Science, dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 2011, was circulated. She noted that this is the first of several five-year integrated programmes being developed to come before USC and invited the Director of

Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate) (DTLUG), Dr Andrew Butterfield, from the School of Computer Science and Statistics, to present the proposal.

He outlined the main aspects of the course proposal noting that the main impetus for the introduction of a five-year programme in Computer Science was the development of new accreditation requirements. Current accreditation arrangements will cease to apply beyond 2012 and graduates after that date will require a masters degree award to gain recognition as a Chartered Engineer from Engineers Ireland. He commented that securing accreditation will help to ensure that the programme remains attractive to international students who see it as an indication of quality.

Discussing the structure of the proposed programme he explained that it comprises the existing four year undergraduate degree, with modules included from existing taught postgraduate courses offered in the School, as well as certain new elements such as the internship in the Senior Sophister year. Progression over the first three years of the course would be the same as for the first three years of the Moderatorship in Computer Science. Students wishing to take the full five-year programme must achieve grades of at least 2:2 and 2:1 at the end of the Junior and Senior Sophister years, respectively. Students not achieving the required 2:2 at the end of the Junior Sophister year take a different Senior Sophister year, from those continuing on the five-year programme, which does not contain postgraduate modules or the industry placement. In year five, students must do a dissertation (30 ECTS) and a research methods module (5 ECTS) along with a number of optional modules. Students may exit the programme with an Ordinary B.A. after three years or with a B.A. (Moderatorship) after four years. He highlighted that there is an entrance point into the Senior Sophister year for students with at least a level seven degree from other third-level institutions, in Ireland or abroad.

Responding to a query in relation to the Government's Fee Remission Scheme, the Academy Secretary confirmed that a case would have to be made to the Higher Education Authority to try to secure fees for the fifth year. However, she noted that such a case is unlikely to succeed in the current economic climate. It was noted that student numbers in the fifth year of a similarly structured programme in University College Dublin are healthy, despite the fact that they must pay fees.

It was queried if progression grades at the end of the Junior and Senior Sophister years are necessary given that an integrated programme structure is being proposed. Responding, Dr Butterfield confirmed that this issue had been widely discussed within the School and it was concluded that students achieving only a third class result in the Junior Sophister year would struggle in the final years of the five-year programme. The 2:1 grade requirement at the end of the fourth year mirrors the grade required of applicants to taught M.Sc. courses in the School. In discussing progression, within the proposed programme, the meeting generally supported the setting of specific grade requirements.

Dr Butterfield confirmed that the School wishes to schedule examinations at the end of the first semester to facilitate the internship and dissertation elements of the programme. He advised that the School would seek specific permission from Council to do so if examinations were not introduced, as standard, at the end of Michaelmas term.

Comments were noted in relation to two module descriptions. It was suggested that the reference to Wikipedia be reviewed in CS4001 *Fuzzy Logic*, since its use is discouraged in other disciplines, and it was noted that the learning outcomes in CS7039 *Research Methods* require further development.

The Senior Lecturer thanked Dr Butterfield for speaking to the proposal. USC endorsed the proposal and noted that it would also be considered by the Graduate Studies Committee prior to its presentation to Council.

**UGS/10-11/041 Review of the Academic Year Structure****XX**

A memorandum, 'Review of Academic Year Structure', from the Senior Lecturer, dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011, was circulated along with analysis of the responses from Schools and Course Offices gathered through the consultation process.

The Senior Lecturer, speaking to the item, noted that Schools were asked to comment on two matters, the support or otherwise, of examinations at the end of the Michaelmas term and the placement of study week. From the responses received, she commented that the majority of Schools are not in favour of introducing examinations following Michaelmas term and that there is no consensus on the scheduling of study week. As a result, she proposed the following recommendations:

- the current academic year structure should remain unchanged;
- Schools and Course Offices should be consulted on the maintenance of the third revision week in Trinity term approved by Council for 2010/11 only;
- that the provision of end of term assessment/class tests be further explored at a local level with those academic areas which have expressed this preference;
- the placement of study week in both teaching terms should remain as it is.

It was noted that a number of Schools did not support the introduction of end of Michaelmas term examinations within the stated parameters. However, the Senior Lecturer commented that the number of outright negative responses outweighed these.

Responding to a query about areas setting their own study weeks, the Senior Lecturer, referring to the existence of a number of cross-school and cross-faculty courses, noted that this would not be possible as some students would never get a clear study week.

It was commented that whilst there are the same number of teaching weeks in the year the organisation of these over two teaching semesters is very condensed for students. The Senior Lecturer responded that the insertion of a third revision week in the current academic year was to help students with the pressures they faced in the second semester.

The meeting agreed that the proposed recommendations followed the analysis of responses received during the consultation period and recommended these to Council.

**UGS/10-11/042 Calendar Changes**

A revised set of *General Regulations* was circulated, along with further course amendments from the Two Subject Moderatorship Course Office and the School of Education. A further revision to §20 of the *General Regulations* was tabled.

**a) General Regulations**

Speaking to the item the USC Secretary noted that legal advice would be sought in relation to flagging changes arising from the GeneSIS project. She also noted that amendments to the Fitness to Practice section would be presented at the next USC meeting.

She brought the meeting through the proposed changes, as circulated, and highlighted the following:

- §7, H4: She noted the changed procedure for students availing of free fees. Whilst a second registration session is still required for the Government's remission scheme, students are no longer required to physically present for it. It is assumed that students are to remain registered for the full year unless they notify College of their intention to withdraw by the 31<sup>st</sup> January.
- §20, H6: Referring to the provision which empowers the Senior Lecturer to require a student to undergo a medical examination or other assessment, where concerns are raised in relation to a student ability or suitability to participate in

his/her course, she noted that this has been strengthened to take account of situations where a student fails to attend such an assessment.

- §63, H15: Following a request from the Equality Committee, wording has been inserted to highlight the fact that reasonable flexible arrangements can be put in place in cases of student pregnancy.
- §82 & §83, H19 & 20: Following a request from the Heads of Schools Committee, the words 'or designate' has been inserted to indicate that Heads of Schools may delegate their function, in relation to the investigation of alleged acts of plagiarism, to an appropriate staff member. It was commented by a member that references to a 'Head of School' already implies 'or designate' and to specify it in this instance could negate this inference elsewhere in the Calendar.

#### b) Two Subject Moderatorship

The USC Secretary advised that the circulated amendments to the Two Subject Moderatorship (TSM) regulations clarified the ECTS requirements for students taking either a semester or an academic year abroad. She commented that she would contact the TSM Office in relation to the language used in relation to supplemental examinations.

#### c) School of Education

There were no comments or queries raised in relation to the further amendments from the School of Education.

### UGS/10-11/043 Programme Amendments

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A proposal document, 'Suggested Modifications to the BA (Moderatorship) in Computer Science, Linguistics and a Language', dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 2011, from Dr Carl Vogel of the Centre for Computing and Language, was circulated.

The Senior Lecturer outlined the main points of the proposal and noted that the programme might include additional language options in the future.

Following a short discussion, the USC recommended the following changes, to apply from the 2012/13 academic year, to Council:

- the undergraduate programme, 'Computer Science, Linguistics and a Language' be renamed 'Computer Science and Language';
- the three existing entry points, related to the different language strands, be amalgamated to create one entry point through the CAO;
- the combined quota would reduce from 25 to 15 places.

### UGS/10-11/044 Gold Medals

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A memorandum 'Review of Gold Medal Criteria', from the Senior Lecturer, dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011, was circulated along with the document, 'Criteria for the Award of Gold Medals', dated April 2011. The Senior Lecturer, speaking to the item, referred to an earlier discussion at USC where it was agreed that Schools should review their Gold Medal criteria, bearing in mind that examiners should mark out of 100% (UGS/10-11/014). She noted that only four courses wished to amend their award criteria:

#### ➤ 055 Music Education

Changed from category 3 (overall mark of 73% and above where all modules have a mark of 70% and above) to category 6 (overall mark of 70% and above).

#### ➤ 067 Dental Science

Changed from category 2 (overall mark of 75% and above) to category 6 (overall mark of 70% and above).

#### ➤ 458 Midwifery (BSc) and 446 Nursing (BSc)

Changed from category 2 (overall mark of 75% and above) to a new category 8 (overall mark of 75% and above in SS year, overall mark of 70% and above in JS year, and must pass all clinical placements on first attempt in JS and SS years).

She also reported, following the collation of responses, that there was little support for either the development of a narrative to supplement the numerical criteria or for the inclusion of a separate Gold Medals section in the University Calendar.

It was noted that a clarification may be required in relation to the criteria applied in the School of Law. The Senior Lecturer advised that this issue would be conveyed to the Examinations Officer.

**UGS/10-11/045 Any other business**

- (i) The Senior Lecturer conveyed her disappointment in relation to the reaction to the rescheduling of examinations due to the Royal Visit, which is scheduled to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011, especially given the amount of advanced notice provided. She noted that running examinations on the day would require not only the re-location of all examinations but also the re-location of the Examinations Office at a critical time of year. Given the high risks that this would entail, the original decision, to remove all examinations from that day, was made to ensure the integrity of the examination process, including the security of papers and scripts, as well as to assist with security arrangements for the visit. She noted that, as normal, the Examinations Office would have engaged to try to resolve difficulties for particular cohorts of students.

She commented that since appropriate resources have been provided to re-locate the Examinations Office, solutions are being developed to accommodate the examinations on the day in question. She noted that a large amount of work is still to be done in relation to logistical arrangements and that there would be communications to staff and students when details are confirmed.

- (ii) Responding to a query regarding the number of requests, received by the School of Engineering, to allow students to split their examinations between the annual and supplemental examination sessions, the Senior Lecturer confirmed that the regulation, which generally does not permit this, has not altered. She commented that some student situations require solutions which do not fit neatly within the regulations.

**UGS/10-11/046 Items for noting**

USC noted, and approved where necessary, the following:

- (i) Report, 'Foundation Scholarship Examinations, Review on the revised format of Scholarship Examinations', dated March 2011.
- XX (ii) Memorandum from the Heads of the Schools of Computer Science and Statistics, and Business, 'Change of Course Title', dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2011, detailing the change in course title of 'Business and Computing' to 'Computer Science and Business', from the academic year 2012/13.

signature

date