

## **GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD**

### **MINUTES**

Thursday 30 June 2011

9.00-11.00 a.m. in the Seminar Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Invent

- Present:** Professor Gary Murphy (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry,  
Dr Françoise Blin, Dr Dermot Brabazon, Dr Pat Brereton,  
Professor John Costello, Ms Claudine Devereux,  
Dr Christine Loscher, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary),  
Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Ms Patricia Moore, Dr Anne Morrissey,  
Dr Declan Raftery
- Apologies:** Ms Hannah Dyas, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Dr Bernadette Flanagan,  
Professor Colm O’Gorman
- In attendance:** Ms Emma O’Brien (for Item 9)  
Dr Siobhain McGovern, Dr Ethna Regan

#### **SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES**

##### **1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of three submissions under Item 12.

##### **2. Minutes of the meeting of 5 May 2011**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

##### **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

- 3.1** Noted that confirmation that Academic Council had approved the revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* had been made available on 30 May 2011. Noted that these regulations would be discussed by Faculty Research Committees in 2011/12 with a view to monitoring their fitness for

- purpose. Noted too that they include a stipulation that having theses proofread/edited on a commercial basis is not permitted. (Items 3.2 and 3.7)
- 3.2** Noted that the issue of making 2.5-credit modules available as part of Graduate Training Elements would be discussed at a future meeting of the GSB. (Item 3.3)
- 3.3** Noted that the Graduate Training Elements for the Faculty of Science and Health had been approved electronically by the GSB on 16 May 2011. (Item 3.4)
- 3.4** Noted that a Memorandum of Understanding between the University, St Patrick's College and Dundalk Institute of Technology in respect of a joint doctoral programme was being drawn up, and that this was consonant with the statement by the President at the 27 June 2011 meeting of Academic Council that it would be desirable to seek opportunities for strategic collaboration with DKIT. Noted that DKIT is also a partner in the BioAT structured PhD programme. (Item 3.5)
- 3.5** Noted that a School is in the process of identifying an alternative external examiner for a student. (Item 3.6)
- 3.6** Noted that, when the PGR2 (annual progress report) is being revised, provision will be made for the listing on it of the members of the supervisory panel. (Item 3.7)
- 3.7** A proposal for the attribution of credits for attendance at a Summer School by students from the School of Communications was approved. Noted that the issue should be integrated, on a retrospective basis, into the academic structures in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and that this would be done. Noted that results would be dealt with by the Graduate Research Assessment Board (see Item 11 below). (Item 3.8)
- 3.8** Noted that the Daniel O'Hare Scholarships would be announced on 1 July 2011, that they would be directed towards research likely to lead to the creation of knowledge in the areas of innovation, sustainability and social cohesion, and that the application form would be more detailed and rigorous than had been the case in 2009/10. (Item 3.9)
- 3.9** Noted that discussions about a possible transfer student are ongoing in a School. (Item 3.11)
- 3.10** Noted that the proposals on Higher Doctorates had been approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 27 June 2011. (Item 3.16)
- 3.10** Noted that discussions were in progress about the supports available for students whose native language is not English and that a future GSB meeting would consider the issues pertaining to the small number of students admitted without having met

- the University's English-language requirements. (See also Item 10 below.) (Items 3.17 and 9)
- 3.12** Noted that discussions are in progress with both NAIRTL and DCU Human Resources Office about the provision of supervisory training programmes. (Item 3.18)
- 3.13** Noted that information about the nature and extent of external examining experience had been obtained in respect of three nominated external examiners, and the nominations had been approved. (Items 5.2, 5.3 and 5.23)
- 3.14** Noted that a nominated external examiner had been approved on the basis that it had been ascertained that his nomination was not in contravention of regulations. However, to avoid a situation in which there might be conflict of interest, an alternative internal examiner had been approved by means of Chair's action on 7 June 2011. (Item 5.18)
- 3.15** Noted that satisfactory details about the publications of a nominated external examiner had been obtained, and the nomination had been approved. (Item 5.21)
- 3.16** Noted that the format of the last section on the pro-forma *curriculum vitae* within the PGR4 (notification of intention to submit thesis for examination) form had been changed. (Item 5)
- 3.17** Noted that, by means of Chair's action on 12 May 2011, Professor Pádraig Dunne of University College Dublin had been appointed as external examiner, and Professor Colette McDonagh of the School of Physical Sciences had been appointed as internal examiner, for a PhD candidate in the School of Physical Sciences.

## **SECTION B: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES**

- 4. Applications for transfer to the PhD register or confirmation on the PhD register**
- 4.1 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.1, School of Biotechnology/NICB  
Approved.
- 4.2 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.2, School of Biotechnology/NICB  
Approved.
- 4.3 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.3, School of Biotechnology/NICB  
Approved.
- 4.4 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.4, School of Biotechnology/NICB  
Approved.

- 4.5 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.5, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.
- 4.6 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.6, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.
- 4.7 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.7, School of Computing  
Approved.
- 4.8 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.8, School of Computing  
Approved.
- 4.9 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.9, School of Computing  
Approved.
- 4.10 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.10, School of Computing  
Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and the School.
- 4.11 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.11, School of Computing  
Approved.
- 4.12 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.12, School of Computing  
Approved. Noted that it was somewhat unusual that a title, or at least a working title, had not yet been identified for the thesis.
- 4.13 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.13, School of Education Studies  
Decision deferred pending discussion between Dr Brereton and the School.
- 4.14 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.14, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering  
Approved.
- 4.15 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.15, School of Nursing  
Approved. Agreed that the Chair would request the School not to refer to the additional examiner as an 'external' examiner.
- 4.16 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.16, School of Nursing  
Approved. Agreed that the Chair would request the School not to refer to the additional examiner as an 'external' examiner.
- 4.17 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.17, School of Nursing  
Approved.
- 4.18 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.18, School of Physical Sciences  
Approved.
- 4.19 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.19, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.
- 4.20 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.20, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and the School about the role of the School research committee.
- 4.21 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.21, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and the School about the role of the School research committee.

- 4.22 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.22, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and the School about the role of the School research committee.
- 4.23 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/4.23, School of Physical Sciences  
Approved.

Noted that it would be important, in the longer term, to ensure that students completed the transfer/confirmation procedure in a timely fashion and that the revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*, due for implementation in September 2011, would be of assistance in this matter.

## 5. Appointment of external examiners

- 5.1 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.1, PhD, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Dr Kathleen Shields, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Approved.
- 5.2 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
Professor Dmitri Papkovsky, University College Cork  
Approved.
- 5.3 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.3, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
Professor Thomas McCarthy, University College Cork  
Approved.
- 5.4 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.4, PhD, Dublin City University Business School  
Professor Michael West, Lancaster University  
Approved.
- 5.5 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.5, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences  
Dr Kathryn Whitehead, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Approved.
- 5.6 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.6, PhD, School of Computing  
Dr John Levine, University of Strathclyde  
Approved.
- 5.7 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.7, PhD, School of Computing  
Dr Tim McCarthy, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Approved.
- 5.8 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.8, PhD, School of Computing  
Dr Percival McCormack, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Approved.
- 5.9 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.9, PhD, School of Computing  
Dr Barrou Diallo, European Patent Office  
Approved.

- 5.10 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.10, PhD, School of Computing  
Dr Daniela Petrelli, Sheffield Hallam University  
Approved.
- 5.11 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.11, PhD, School of Computing  
Professor Pádraig Cunningham, University College Dublin  
Approved.
- 5.12 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.12, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
Dr Cindy Collinge, Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork  
Approved subject to the form being signed by the Head of School.  
Professor David Paine, Brown University  
Approved subject to the form being signed by the Head of School.
- 5.13 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.13, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
Dr James Walsh, University of Liverpool  
Approved.
- 5.14 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.14, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
Professor Roger Webb, University of Surrey  
Approved.  
Dr Ray Duffy, Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork  
Approved subject to the provision of the *curriculum vitae*.
- 5.15 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.15, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
Professor Darren Bagnall, University of Southampton  
Approved.
- 5.16 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.16, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering  
Professor John P Cosmas, Brunel University  
Approved.
- 5.17 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.17, MSc, School of Health and Human  
Performance  
Dr Jennifer Pintar, Youngtown State University  
Approved. Agreed that, when the time came for the student to submit for  
examination for the award of PhD, it would be essential to ensure that the  
subject-matter of the thesis was quite distinct from the subject-matter of the  
MSc thesis. Agreed that the Chair would mention this matter, and the wider  
discussion that had taken place about this notification of intention to submit  
for examination, to the Head of School.
- 5.18 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.18, PhD, School of Law and Government  
Dr Piers Robinson, University of Manchester  
Approved.
- 5.19 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.19, PhD, School of Law and Government  
Dr Anna Stavrianakis, University of Sussex  
Approved.  
Dr Gillian Wylie, Trinity College Dublin  
Approved.

- 5.20 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.20, PhD, School of Nursing  
Professor Peter Bradshaw, University of Huddersfield  
Approved.
- 5.21 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.21, PhD, History Department,  
St Patrick's College  
Dr Toby Barnard, University of Oxford  
Approved.
- 5.22 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.22, PhD, Music Department,  
St Patrick's College  
Dr Stephanie Pitts, University of Sheffield  
Approved.
- 5.23 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.23, PhD, School of Physical Sciences  
Professor James Bradley, University of Liverpool  
Approved.
- 5.24 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.24, PhD, School of Biotechnology  
Dr Shirley O'Dea, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Approved.
- 5.25 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/5.25, PhD, School of Mechanical and  
Manufacturing Engineering  
Professor Luigi Tricarico, Politecnica di Bari  
Not approved. Agreed that the Chair would discuss the issues with the Head  
of School.

## **6. Requests for changes to supervisory arrangements**

- 6.1 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/6.1, School of Applied Language and  
Intercultural Studies  
Approved.
- 6.2 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/6.2, School of Biotechnology  
Approved.
- 6.3 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/6.3, Dublin City University Business School  
Approved.
- 6.4 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/6.4, School of Chemical Sciences  
Approved.
- 6.5 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/6.5, School of Communications  
Approved.
- 6.6 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/6.6, School of Communications  
Approved.

## 7. Other student issues

- 7.1 Student ref. GSB/2011/A4/7.1, School of Law and Government  
The request for special-case admission to the Master's register, on a part-time basis, was approved subject to the completion of a Master's qualifying programme which should normally take the form of a 5,000-word research proposal or other appropriate document as determined by the School.

## SECTION C: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

### 8. Proposed Graduate Training Elements

None.

### 9. Proposed research Master's in Bioinnovation

- 9.1 In the discussion about this proposal, the following were noted:
- while the numbers on the proposed programme will be small, it is strongly supported by industry and may serve as a model for analogous programmes in the future
  - it is important that DCU be seen to be a leader in this field
  - the modules are available not only to those taking the programme but to a maximum of twenty-eight research students across the partner institutions
  - the award of MSc will be made by DCU
  - the award will appear as 'MSc' on the parchment; the word 'Bioinnovation' will not appear; the area of specialism will be apparent from the results in the transcript
  - while the entry requirements appear quite broad, it is expected that, in practice, only very highly-qualified candidates will apply
  - on the matter of whether or not a follow-on PhD programme would be required, it is considered, at present, that there is no need for this; the situation will be revisited if necessary; previous requests from medical doctors to be admitted to PhD programmes have been the subject of discussion within the University.
- 9.2 The proposal was approved subject to verification that no contravention of Marks and Standards would be involved (e.g. in terms of credit rating or duration of period of study). Agreed that the Chair would notify the Deputy President/Registrar, Professor Anne Scott, of the outcome of the discussion.
- 9.3 Agreed that a request would be made to the Education Committee to have the issue of award titles generally discussed, and parameters outlined and approved.



**10. Revised proposal on English-language requirements**

In the discussion about this proposal, concern was expressed that lowering requirements without putting adequate support systems into place for students with relatively weak English might not be in the students' best interests. It was agreed that the proposal would be submitted for discussion in Faculties with a view to being on the agenda of the GSB again, at its meeting of 3 November 2011. It was further agreed that Dr Morrissey, who had submitted the proposal, would discuss the issues with the International Office and would also ascertain what levels of English-language support are available in other universities. (See also Item 3.11 above.)

**11. Request in respect of Graduate Research Assessment Boards and sign-off of provisional results**

**11.1** Noted that the request had been approved. Noted that resit opportunities would not normally be available to research students who failed taught modules and that the expectation was that they would repeat a failed module, or take an appropriate alternative module, in the next academic session.

**11.2** Noted that issues relating to the entering of grades for taught modules would be discussed by relevant staff members outside the context of the GSB.

**12. Any other business****12.1 Recording and publication of transfer/confirmation oral examinations in the School of Computing**

The Chair introduced this item by noting that he had been asked by Professor Josef van Genabith to ascertain the view of the GSB on the practice currently used in the School of Computing whereby students seeking transfer to or confirmation on the PhD register have their presentations recorded for the purposes of placing them on the school's website for public availability.

Professor van Genabith raised a number of concerns about this practice and the Chair then sought the view of Professor Michael Scott, Head of the School of Computing, on the issue. The Chair began the discussion by presenting to the GSB a document which outlined the viewpoints of both Professor van Genabith and Professor Scott.

Significant concern was expressed about the practice, on the following grounds:

- ethical issues arise in respect of obtaining student consent, particularly given the indication that a good reason would be expected in situations where a student chose not to have recorded material go on line, the absence of clarity around the issue of the timing of the request for consent, and the power imbalances that necessarily exist in a situation where a student is being examined
- recording and making the examination available on line would be likely to create stress for the student, particularly if consent had to be obtained prior to the examination; it is not usual to make other elements of examination processes publicly available
- legal issues pertaining to the rights of funding bodies would need to take precedence over any desire to record the results of research and make them available on line; issues of intellectual property rights and confidentiality would be likely to arise
- the research being presented would not be in final form because the student would not have completed the research programme
- the role of the supervisor in respect of the proposal is not clear.

It was agreed that the concerns of the GSB should be made known to the School of Computing, to the University's Executive and to the University's Research Ethics Committee.

It was noted that, if the School wished to record student presentations with a view to supporting the students and helping them to improve their performance at oral examinations, this would be a different matter, as it would not involve public dissemination of the research and would not be likely to lead to the concerns mentioned above.

## **12.2 Chairing of Complaints Review Committee meeting**

Agreed that it would be appropriate for the Chair to act as chair of an upcoming Complaints Review Committee meeting, subject to the agreement of the Deputy President/Registrar, Professor Anne Scott.

## **12.3 Final meeting for inaugural GSB Chair**

The Chair noted that this would be his last GSB meeting, he having chaired the GSB since its inception in September 2007. He expressed sincere appreciation to all his colleagues on the GSB, past and present, for having contributed to making his experience as Chair such a positive one. Professor Costello, on behalf of the members, thanked the Chair for his excellent work over the past four years.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 8 September 2011  
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_