



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

**Trinity College Dublin**  
**The University of Dublin**

**A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 13 May 2015 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.**

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Dean of Graduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Research, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor E O'Dell, Professor M Junker-Kenny, Professor D Faas, Professor J Walsh, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor G Watson, Professor R Dahyot, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor JP Spiers, Professor C Comiskey, Professor M Clarke, Professor P Cronin, Ms D Alexander, Professor D Kelleher, Vice-President for Global Relations, Dean of Students, Ms K Byrne, Ms S Kearney.
<i>Apologies</i>	Professor I Donohue, Dr S Bloomfield, Ms S Baker, Ms M Kenny, Mr A Miller, Mr A Hanna, Chief Operating Officer, Mr S Hatton (GSU).
<i>In attendance</i>	Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Ms S De Brunner.
<i>Observers</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Ms A P Worrall).

**SECTION A**

The Provost requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda items. None was declared.

**CL/14-15/166 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 15 April 2015 were approved and signed.

**CL/14-15/167 Matters Arising:**

**CL/14-15/144 (iii):** The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer confirmed, in relation to previous suggestions from the Task Group on the Reform of University Selection and Entry (TGRUSE), that there will be no changes to Trinity's mathematics and other language requirements for matriculation purposes and that Council's governance over entry requirements will be maintained.

**CL/14-15/168 Provost's Report**

- (i) The Provost informed Council of recent fundraising trips to London and San Francisco to build funding support for projects such as the Centre for Literary Translation, the Engineering, Energy and Environment Institute (E3) and Bridge 21. In relation to the E3 project, he reported on a meeting which took place with the Higher Education Authority concerning the expansion of provision in the areas of Engineering, Computer Science and Natural Science prior to the commencement of building work on the Institute, and he flagged a future meeting with the Department of Education and Skills.

On the topic of strategic fundraising he noted that work was continuing with the Trinity Foundation on the development of an overall case for the support of College. It is hoped that its first fundraising drive will be launched, privately at least, in 2016. In response to a query from a committee member on access to the Trinity Foundation by schools and disciplines for assistance with smaller levels of funding, the Provost confirmed that the Trinity Foundation does not only focus on large gifts and that smaller donations are vitally important to the funding strategy. He suggested, however, that it might be possible to take a more integrated approach by bundling gifts thematically and cited an example of seeking philanthropy for scholarships generally across College. He emphasised the importance of input from Trinity's schools and advised that the Associate Vice-President for Global Relations would liaise with schools and disciplines in this regard.

- (ii) The Provost congratulated winners of the inaugural Global Engagement Awards: Professors Roger West, Mac MacLachlan and Lorna Carson. The Librarian and College Archivist highlighted that the Library received a commendation for work carried out through the Digital Resources and Imaging Services.
- (iii) The Provost updated Council on the work of the Trinity Education Project Steering Committee which is currently focussing on the attributes of Trinity graduates. He advised that plans are in train to put in place a project manager.
- (iv) Speaking about other travels, the Provost noted that the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and he had visited Cambridge University to discuss tenure for academic staff, and that the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and he had visited the Trinity College Dublin Association of Northern Ireland. In relation to the latter visit he was able to report on the Northern Ireland Feasibility Study which is due to commence for entry in 2015/16.

Speaking on the topics of tenure and the internationalisation of academic titles implemented in Trinity, a member noted that in US universities when academic staff members achieve tenure, they are no longer referred to as Assistant Professors. This is not the case in Trinity and, as such, reflects badly on longstanding members of permanent academic staff in that category.

- (v) The Provost invited the Secretary to the College to update the meeting on a public forum related to the upcoming referendum on marriage. The Secretary to the College noted that the previous forum, scheduled for 21 April 2015, was postponed due to unavailability of some of the speakers which would have led to an uneven discussion. He announced that the forum would now take place on the 19 May 2015 at 6 p.m. It was noted that this clashed with another event taking place in the Long Room Hub. The Secretary to the College advised that he would look into the matter to see if the clash could be avoided.

*Professor Geoghegan joined the meeting for the next item.*

#### **CL/14-15/169 Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study**

The Provost welcomed Professor Patrick Geoghegan, former Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and Project Sponsor, to the meeting to speak to his memorandum, dated 5 May 2015, and the Interim Report on the Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study, dated 31 January 2015.

Professor Geoghegan provided background information about the feasibility study noting that it was approved as a two-year study to see if an alternative admissions route could be designed and administered on small scale. Applications are judged based on three modalities given equal weighting (Leaving Certificate points, relative performance ranking (RPR) and the completion of a personal statement) as opposed to one modality, the Leaving Certificate Examination, which

is used currently to admit the majority of entrants. Three courses were identified for inclusion in the study: Law, History and Ancient and Medieval History and Culture. The first cohort of students was admitted successfully under this project in September 2014 and another cohort is due for admittance in September 2015. The two main challenges under the feasibility study were to ensure the anonymity of the candidates and information about their schools and the generation of information about each applicant's relative performance rank; both were achieved.

There was a good level of interest in the study with largely positive newspaper articles, editorials and letters published. The Department of Education and Skills complimented Trinity for its experimentation around the edges of admissions procedures and has advised that some adaptations could be made, for example, by adjusting the weightings of the three modalities. The Minister for Education and Skills has also spoken positively of the study particularly in relation to the RPR. In relation to other higher education institutions, the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) has expressed an interest in partnering with Trinity in the future to look at its applicability to the institute of technology sector, how a similar entry mechanism would work in non-arts, humanities and social sciences courses and the effect it might have on retention. Interest has also been expressed by a third level-institution in Northern Ireland, especially in relation to the possible effect of RPR on diversity in the student body.

He asked Council to consider extending the study into a third year so that further data can be collated, that some experimentation can take place in relation to the modalities and to allow for potential collaboration with DIT in the future.

The report was received with interest by members of Council. The strong focus on RPR was queried by a member since some of the students admitted through this route expressed concern about its use. Responding, Professor Geoghegan noted that this was not raised as a general public concern. It was also queried why the RPR only ranked applicants in relation to other CAO applicants, rather than in relation to their entire Leaving Certificate class. Professor Geoghegan acknowledged that this was a limitation and one that arises because the CAO does not have data related to those who do not apply. In answer to a question about prohibitive costs and resources, should the study be mainstreamed, Professor Geoghegan noted that the scoring of the personal statements was the most costly aspect of the study, whereas, the RPR could be scaled up with relatively little expense or effort. Consideration could be given to scoring personal statements only in 'tie-breaker' situations in the future. The RPR as a criterion was commended by a member who noted that it gives students a better chance of entering higher level education where there is little or no tradition of doing so in their secondary school.

Council approved the proposal to extend the feasibility study into a third year. It was noted that a paper outlining any changes to the process would be circulated to Council in September 2015 for approval. The Provost thanked Professor Geoghegan and all those involved in the study.

*Professor Geoghegan left the meeting.*

#### **CL/14-15/170 Proposal for a Tenure-Track System for Entry-Level Academics**

A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, dated 5 May 2015, was circulated along with a proposal document related to the introduction of a tenure-track system for entry-level academics. A corrected version of the appendix to the document was tabled. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer speaking to the document noted that it was an early iteration of the proposal and was circulated to Council for initial discussion and feedback.

She brought the meeting through the outline features of the proposed tenure-track for entry level academics. She noted that the current procedures related to *ad hoc* recruitment to permanent academic posts has become complex and fragmented. To compete within the context of globalised academic recruitment, Trinity must position itself to attract the best

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young academics internationally. Key to enabling this is the development of a robust and dynamic tenure-track system for junior academics. Under this system, a suite of tenure-track positions would be advertised and recruited internationally on an annual basis and would replace the current system of recruiting to permanent academic positions. The allocation of these tenure-track positions will be determined through the development of staffing plans at school-level and the involvement of the faculty deans in setting priorities within their faculties with final approval resting with the Executive Officers, on the recommendation of the Strategic Staffing Sub-group. Those recruited to one of these positions would be offered an initial five-year fixed-term contract and placed on the appropriate point of the scale, taking account their qualifications and experience. Performance reviews would be held at the end of the first and second years by the relevant head of school. At the end of the third year, their performance would be reviewed by a panel, chaired by the head of school and comprising other senior level academics in the school. At the end of the fourth year, tenure-track employees would be interviewed by a tenure panel, chaired by the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and comprising each Faculty Dean, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, the Dean of Graduate Studies, three senior research leaders (one from each faculty) and representation from the Academic Staff Association. Those reaching the required standards will be offered a permanent contract at the end of the fourth year which would supersede the initial fixed term contract. Those who do not meet the criteria complete their contract and leave College, and thus have a year to find other employment. Alternatively, they may appeal the decision of the panel. The outlined timeline would be modified to take account of extended periods of leave, such as maternity leave. Those successfully completing the tenure interview would be deemed to have met the criteria for Junior Academic Progression and, therefore, to have reached the merit bar.

Responding to a number of questions, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that it is not envisaged that years accrued on a tenure-track position in other institutions would be recognised by TCD; quotas for successful tenure-track academics would not be set, each member of staff recruited to one of these positions would be offered tenure if they meet the criteria in the allowed time; the tenure-track position would remain with the relevant school should the academic leave College post-tenure; the tenure panel would set the criteria for these positions and not the school; in relation to academic posts which require clinical duties, College is considering the creation of a position of Professor of Practice; it is unlikely that tenure-track staff would be eligible for promotion or retention procedures before they are granted tenure; it is not good practice to ask entry level academics to act as sole supervisors for doctoral students; Cambridge, which has introduced a tenure-track system, has not reported any diminution in the quality of applicants they are recruiting; and the timeline for reviews and the confirmation of tenure at the end of the fourth year resulted from input received to-date. She re-iterated the fact that what was circulated to Council was the initial outline proposal and that a number of the points raised could be looked at as the finer details are worked out, along with the refining of criteria and deciding on how to assess performance.

During the discussion, a concern was raised about the possibility of the five-year initial fixed term contract transforming into a contract of indefinite duration after a period of four years and, therefore, having to invoke redundancy procedures should a candidate not work out. It was noted that the initial contract can be drafted to avoid such a situation. It was highlighted that the document refers to tenure as being equivalent to permanency when it should refer to tenure leading to permanency, which is more consistent with the provisions related to tenure in the 2010 Consolidate Statutes.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and noted that a more developed proposal would return to a future meeting of Council.

*Professor Walsh retired from the meeting.*

**CL/14-15/171 Irish Universities Association – Task Group on Reform of University Selection and Entry (TGRUSE): Common Entry Points Scale**

A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 6 May 2015, was circulated along with a briefing paper from TGRUSE related to the establishment of a revised common points scale, dated 29 April 2015. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer advised that revisions to the common points scale for entry to higher level education was necessitated by the introduction of broader grading bands for use in the Leaving Certificate Examination from 2017 onwards, announced by the Minister for Education and Skills on 29 September 2015. The broader bands represent a reduction from fourteen to eight grades to be used at both the higher or ordinary levels (H1-H8 and O1-O8). In light of the implementation due in 2017, the revised points scale will have to be finalised and approved by September 2015.

Academic councils in each of the universities are being asked to agree a set of principles which will underpin the development of the new scales which may be summarised as:

**Principle One** seeks to retain the current alignment between the higher and ordinary level papers in terms of points, that is, the current alignment of the grades HC3 to OA1, which would translate to the alignment of grades H5 to O1 on the revised scale. Research from the Education Research Centre supports this alignment.

**Principle Two** proposes that the revised scale should be non-linear. The current scale is largely linear, with the use of five-point increments, except in the case of A1 which attracts a ten-point increment. Whilst a non-linear scale would be harder to explain to applicants and the general public, the introduction of broader grading bands, alongside a linear point scale, would result in increased levels of random selection.

**Principle Three** represents a departure from existing practice by recommending that points be awarded for the H7 grade band (30-39%). This is to encourage students to engage with the higher level curriculum which is viewed as more beneficial for those intending to undertake third-level study than undertaking subjects at the ordinary level. Currently, taking the ordinary level paper carries less risk: points are awarded for ordinary level C grades, but not for a higher E grade, even though there is evidence to suggest that they constitute a similar level of achievement.

**Principle Four** supports the retention of bonus points for mathematics at the higher level, however, the application of bonus points would not extend below the H6 grade.

During the ensuing discussing, it was pointed out by a member that the document from TGRUSE seeks authority to be delegated to the Chief Academic Officers in the task of reaching sectoral agreement on the revised points scale, and this is not in line with what is being asked of Council. It was noted that this formulation of words is contained in the TGRUSE document which is an appendix to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's proposal memorandum and this is not being asked of Council; the final proposals on this item would return to Council for consideration and approval.

In response to a query about the size of the increments in the non-linear scale, and whether they should increase or decrease in relation to the achievement of higher grades, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer advised that Professor Wilkins, from the School of Mathematics in Trinity, has completed some additional modelling in relation to non-linear scales and this has been sent to TGRUSE for consideration. His proposed model appears to be more equitable and, therefore, she would continue to promote it as an option. It was confirmed that TGRUSE has not considered the direct translation of percentage marks into entry points.

Council approved the guiding principles and requested the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer to continue working with others in the sector to develop a full set of

proposals within the parameters of the four principles, as outlined, and noted that proposals will be brought back to Council for consideration in September 2015.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer for her work to-date with TGRUSE and for representing Trinity.

*The Dean of Health Sciences retired from the meeting.*

**CL/14-15/172 Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Exercise - Online**

A memorandum from the Dean of Graduate Studies, dated 13 May 2015, was circulated along with a course proposal, from the discipline of Physiotherapy in the School of Medicine, for a new online course leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Exercise. The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that the focus of the course is on how to use exercise to benefit those undergoing clinical care, not only for illnesses normally linked to a lack of exercise, such as, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, but also for groups of patients for whom exercise may not have traditionally been used, such as those with dementia or cancer.

The decision to offer this as an online course was made in cognisance of the need for healthcare professionals to participate in continuing professional development but at a time, in Ireland at least, when opportunities for study leave are reduced.

She advised that the proposed course is aligned to level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications and carries 30 ECTS, (2 x 10 ECTS modules and 2 x 5 ECTS modules) to be completed over nine months. As per other Trinity online courses, a 10 ECTS module comprises 10 online sessions. Assessment methods are varied comprising both formative and summative components.

She advised that the course proposal has been reviewed by Professor Dr. Thierry Troosters, Head of the Research Group for Cardiovascular and Respiratory Rehabilitation from the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and Respiratory Division, KU Leuven, University of Belgium. He offered constructive recommendations, resulting in some amendments to the proposal document, and is supportive of the course overall.

The Vice-President for Global Relations noted that the proposal was timely as it is likely that general practitioners will be expected to prescribe exercise to patients. She highlighted the growing reputation of the Discipline of Physiotherapy in Singapore and advised that it was an opportune time to offer online courses, such as this one, to professionals in Ireland, Singapore and elsewhere globally. It was confirmed that entrants should already possess a Bachelor's degree with a 2.1 result, or equivalent, in healthcare or allied healthcare professions.

Council approved the delivery of a new online course leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Exercise and noted that it is due to commence in September 2015.

**CL/14-15/173 Discontinuation of the Moderatorship in Irish Studies**

A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 30 April 2015, was circulated along with documentation related to the discontinuation of the Moderatorship in Irish Studies.

Introducing the item, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that the course commenced in 2007 and that applications to the course have been dropping over the last few years; to-date only seven first preference applications had been made for the 2015/16 academic year. Efforts were made to improve uptake which included discussions with guidance counsellors and the implementation of significant course amendments, however, interest in Irish Studies has remained low. She advised that, if Council approved the proposed cessation, the last cohort of new entrants would be admitted to Trinity in 2015/16.

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The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that the proposal to end the course had been considered and approved by the Irish Studies Course Committee, the participating schools and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. It was also discussed at the recent Undergraduate Studies Committee, where the proposed discontinuation was noted with regret.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted the commitment of the participating schools to continue to offer some of the modules from the course into the future and commented that the Trinity Education Project will include reviewing entry into courses and subjects in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; this could involve the creation of minor course strands.

Council approved the proposal to discontinue the Moderatorship in Irish Studies and noted that the last Junior Freshman cohort would enter in 2015/16.

#### **CL/14-15/174 Research Matters**

##### **(i) Clarification on Research Productive Status**

A memorandum from the Dean of Research, dated 6 May 2015, was circulated along with a memorandum which had been circulated to the Research Committee, dated 30 March 2015. The Dean of Research spoke to the item and explained that his memorandum outlined proposed amendments to College's criteria for identifying research productive staff. He noted that research productivity is established by counting the number of research outputs produced by each member of staff over a defined period of time. The current methodology does not take into account periods of leave, such as maternity leave, part-time staff status and the taking on of significant administrative roles in College, such as annual officers, heads of schools or faculty deans. He outlined the proposed recommendations to extend the eligibility period for the purpose of counting publications and noted that these are aligned to the system adopted by the European Research Council. In addition, co-authored research publications are currently weighted at 0.5 for participating authors, which does not take into account the differing norms across disciplines in relation to research and publication practices. This has had the effect of categorising certain academic staff members as non-research productive, even though they are active, due to the tendency towards co-publication in their academic fields. It is proposed that authors in joint publications will receive weighting of 1. This, however, would be a short-term solution since it does not take account of the different practices across College and nor does it include quality metrics in the designation of research productivity, which could lead to the prioritising of quantity over quality in the future.

A member highlighted the fact that the proposal memorandum does not mention part-time staff. The Dean of Research confirmed that this was discussed at the Research Committee and referred the meeting to the minute (RS/14-15/56). It was suggested that the eligibility period could be adjusted to take account of their time commitment.

In the discussion that followed members highlighted the different practices in relation to research publications in their academic fields and stressed that research metrics should take account of these differences.

Council approved the proposals put forward in relation to the extension of the eligibility period for those who have taken extended periods of leave, have taken on significant administrative roles in College and for part-time staff. Council also approved the scoring of co-authored publications as 1 in the determination of research activity, as an interim measure, pending the definition of quality metrics following a review of the current research productivity criteria in the coming academic year.

(ii) **Clarification on International Policy**

A memorandum from Mr Tony Flaherty, International Funding Executive, Trinity Research and Innovation, dated 31 March 2015, was circulated. The Dean of Research introduced the document and explained that the current Ethics Policy states:

The College shall not knowingly receive funding from organisations/institutions whose activities include practices which directly post a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups or whose activities are inconsistent with the mission and values of the College.

This has been clarified somewhat through the Research Committee that any application for funding which requires a 'statement of military relevance' must be submitted to the Dean of Research, who will consider the statement based on the potential to mankind, and that any such application may be found to be unacceptable. Despite this clarification, the clause had been interpreted in different ways and is potentially preventing applications for research funding, unnecessarily. He noted that the memorandum also contains a provision for setting up a more formal and transparent process to consider such applications.

A number of concerns were raised in relation to the proposed wording. It was commented that it was quite weak and could subordinate others' human rights to the right of an institution to conduct research, and this should never be the case. Further, it was commented that the proposed wording itself was unclear. A member, commenting on the suggested formal process, advised that consideration should also be given to an appeals mechanism and queried why it had not been integrated into the Ethics Committee structure.

The Provost, noting the ambiguity of the wording, the number of concerns raised by Council members and the imperative for clarity given the significance of the subject matter, invited the Dean of Research to bring back a revised version of the document addressing the concerns raised to a future meeting of Council.

**CL/14-15/175 Any Other Urgent Business**

The Provost queried the publication timelines for the annual reports from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies for 2013/14. It was noted that due to concerns about the accuracy of the data produced by SITS, the reports would not be ready until the 23 September 2015 meeting of Council. The Provost voiced his concern and disappointment over the situation.

**SECTION B****CL/14-15/176 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting of 21 April 2015 were noted and approved.

**CL/14-15/177 Graduate Studies Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting of 23 April 2015 were noted and approved.

**CL/14-15/178 International Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting of 4 March 2015 were noted and approved.



**CL/14-15/179 Quality Committee**

The draft minutes of 27 April 2015, together with progress reports for the School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Comparative Medicine Unit were noted and approved.

**CL/14-15/180 Research Committee**

The draft minutes of the meetings of 31 March 2015 and 28 April 2015 were noted and approved.

**CL/14-15/181 Student Life Committee**

The Dean of Students highlighted the discussion related to additional student charges and the concerns expressed about the effect these would have on the student experience. The draft minutes of the meeting of 4 February 2015 were noted and approved.

**CL/14-15/182 Academic Appeals Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2015 were noted and approved.

### SECTION C

**CL/14-15/183 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners**

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 15 April 2015 and noted by Board on 29 April 2015.

**PhD** Mark Canavan; Tadgh Cotter; Jennifer Ruth Ann Cowman; Deirdre Daly; Alex Dowdall; Aidan O Flannagain; Joseph Harrington; Nial Harte; Claire Helen Audrey Hearnden; Conor Morrissey; Jean Morrissey; Cliona Maire Ni Cheallaigh; Kim Orange; Deirdre Christina Purfield; Rebecca Alanna Rolfe; Justin Tallon; Eimhin Walsh; Xia Zhang; Pietro Zucca.

**MSc** Lucas Mason-Brown; Clodagh Murphy.

**MLitt** Heather Browning.

**MAI** Kieran Mc Connell.

**CL/14-15/184 Heads of School**

The Council noted that the Board had approved the nomination of the following to Head of School:

- (i) **Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies (2015-2018)**  
Professor Juergen Barkhoff, 29 June 2015;
- (ii) **English (2015-2018)**  
Professor Chris Morash;
- (iii) **Psychology (2015-2016)**  
Professor Ian Robertson;
- (iv) **Social Sciences and Philosophy (2015-2018)**  
Professor Gail McElroy.

**CL/14-15/185 School Directors – Computer Science and Statistics – Director of Research (2015-2017)**

The Council noted and approved the nomination of Professor Douglas Leith.

**CL/14-15/186 Chairs Sub-Committee – Representative of the Academic Staff Association**

The Council noted the nomination of Professor Terence Barry as a member of the sub-committee.

Item **C.4 School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies School Review Taskforce**, was withdrawn from the Agenda.

**SECTION D**

*In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted*

Signed .....

Date .....