

**The University of Dublin  
Trinity College**

**Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 23 January 2018**

**Present:**

Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research (DoR)

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Ruth Barton, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts

Professor Ann Devitt, Director of Research, School of Education

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English

Professor Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Brian Brewer, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

Professor Diarmuid Phelan, representing Director of Research, School of Law

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of Research, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Studies

Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology Professor Gaia Narciso, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Professor Jacob Erikson, Director of Research, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology

Faculty of Engineering, Director of Research, Mathematics and Science

Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Faculty of Health Sciences

Professor Jeffrey O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science

Professor Louise Gallagher, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Professor Helen Sheridan, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director, TCIN

Professor Orla Sheils Director, TTMI

Mr Shane Collins, President of Graduate Students Union

**In attendance:**

Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division

Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian

Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director Trinity Research & Innovation

Dr Oonagh Kinsman, Trinity Research & Innovation, Secretary to the Committee

Dr Jennifer Daly, Project Support Officer, Office the Dean of Research

Apologies:

Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry  
Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering  
Professor Sinead Ryan, Director of Research, School of Mathematics  
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub  
Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation

Not present:

Professor Peter Gallagher (ADoRPG)  
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business  
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Professor Adrian Bracken, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics  
Professor Sanvito, Director, CRANN  
Professor Orla Hardiman, Director, TBSI

**Actions arising / on-going:**

Agenda Item	Owner	Action	Status
RS/15-16/49	Dean of Research	Feedback on proposed Research Career Framework policy	In progress
RS/15-16/57	Dean of Research	Consideration of additional SITS functionality to provide data for source of funding for PhD fees	In progress
RS/15-16/62	Associate Dean of Research	Report to the Research Committee with policies on bio-banking, data retention and stem cells	In progress
RS/15-16/63	Dean of Research	Review implementation of criteria for Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence from all 3 Faculties at end of Hilary term 2018	In progress
RS/16-17/20	Dean of Research and President of Graduate Students Union	Consider postgraduate representative forum as a mechanism to raise research concerns in the Dail	In progress
RS/16-17/23	Dean of Research	Provide details of internal programmes to promote visiting academics and external ERC applications on internal web	In progress
RS/16-17/28	Dean of Research	Through the IUA, contribute to a response on SFI's proposed governance model for Centres	In progress
RS/17-18/07	Associate Dean of Research PG	Revert to SFI on equipment call and issues and ask Procurement to investigate contract arrangements for equipment maintenance.	In progress
RS/17-18/07	Dean of Research	Ethics training will be further explored by the Research Ethics Policy Committee and training needs identified	In progress

RS/17-18/12	Librarian	Seek Faculty nominees for Scival Users Group	<i>In progress</i>
RS/17-18/	President of Graduate Students Union	Feedback from the townhall meeting on postgraduate fees and provide an existing paper identifying issues to the DoR	<i>In progress</i>

**RS/17-18/17 Introduction by DoR**

DoR welcomed all to her first Research Committee as Dean of Research and thanked Oonagh Kinsman for getting her up to speed in advance.

**RS/17-18/18 Matters arising from the minutes**

DoR noted the large list of ongoing actions. As she only formally took over the DoR role from January 1<sup>st</sup> there were inevitably some things she had not been able to address yet but she provided updates on what she could.

RS/15-16/49. DoR attended the IUA meeting in January but this topic wasn't addressed so no update.

RS/15-16/57. No update on SITS.

RS/15-16/62. DoR noted that Professor Martina Hennessy's term has ended. A new Associate Dean of Research will be appointed who will have responsibility for this item.

RS/15-16/63. DoR intends to meet with all faculty Deans in relation to this item and this will be a topic at a future meeting.

RS/16-17/20. No discussion as yet, but the DoR observed that academics seem to have a much greater desire to raise issues politically and be more proactive in campaigning to change systems. This was also noted at the IUA with the remit of the new Director to engage more with government and other stakeholders.

RS/16-17/23. DoR noted that she is working on this item at the moment and she is trying to create a clearer process for decision making. The situation has changed from actively looking for external candidates interested in relocating to Trinity to one where there is now a queue of people expressing interest. The DoR intends to use some of these opportunities as case studies to find what works best.

RS/16-17/28. DoR noted that SFI used to talk to the IUA VP/DoRs more regularly, but then centre directors started to get more facetime. The IUA is rebuilding relationship with SFI and plan for SFI to attend IUA meetings more regularly.

RS/17-18/07 DoR will get an update from ADoRPG.

RS/17-18/12. The Scival user group has not been formed yet. The Librarian confirmed that there have been no volunteers so will have to approach faculty to participate.

**RS/17-18/19 Update from DoR**

The DoR noted that although she has been at TCD for a long time, she had not attended a Research Committee recently so introduced herself. She was the Director of the SFI Centre CONNECT and will be handing over this role in the next few days. Being a Centre director includes having a focus outside TCD so she needs to reacquaint herself with internal processes and issues and is extremely honoured to be in the role of DoR

now. She intends to spend time talking to people to get a sense of how things are across Trinity. She emphasised the need to recognise that there are different ways to do research and not to consider one way better than the other. She is Professor of Engineering and the Arts and hopes that this will enable a more rounded approach.

As she is only post a couple of weeks there are no major updates. The main meetings have been the LERU Deans of Research meeting which was hosted in Trinity in early January. This was deemed to be very interesting and informative. They are a very ambitious group and are very useful in updating on policies and sharing of knowledge. There was plenty of discussion about open science/open scholarship. Brexit was also discussed but this centred mainly on the LERU nominated person taking the lead and input from Irish delegates.

The DoR also attended the recent VP/DoR IUA meeting which was mainly focussed on setting out their agenda for the year with three areas identified for attention - governance (including SFI centres); balance within the system (Arts/STEM; core grants versus research grants etc); and better engagement with stakeholders. She noted that a university's stakeholders are now quite broad and IUA plans to engage with these more effectively especially the wide range of government departments that affect research.

#### **RS/17-18/20 Update from the Research Ethics Policy Committee**

Professor Orla Sheils presented in her capacity of Chair of the Research Ethics Policy Committee (REPC). Ethical elements include use of human data, use of animals and aspects of wider societal impact. Funding agencies increasingly mandate that universities are compliant with ethical rules. She noted that there is huge strain internally on committees in terms of keeping track of applications being processed, incidents being reported etc. Two applications have been received from schools to establish their own level 1 research committees - Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, and Chemistry. Both have been approved.

A bespoke pilot software application to streamline ethics applications was trialled by the Schools of Medicine and Computer Science and Statistics. One obvious advantage of this software is the ease of gathering data. An evaluation of commercially available software was undertaken. All research ethics chairs were invited to a demonstration by a company that provides similar software to UK universities. The cost of this particular software is approximately €20,000 per annum with a €6,000 installation fee. No figure is available for upgrading the CSS pilot to the same level. The software operates similarly to programmes used for submitting manuscripts online, it allows for speedier turnarounds on decisions and is much easier to extract the necessary data. The favoured option was the commercial vendor but this comes at a cost. She noted that administration of the commercial software would probably require 1 FTE so would be more than the basic cost of the software.

Hospital research ethics committees had brought in a charge of €600 for college applications however they will now waive this fee for TCD applications.

Professor Sheils noted that research integrity formed part of the Policy on Good Research Practice but there is a need to develop policy to address the handling of complaints and to how to react to requests for information from funders.

The REPC identified three areas that require training:

1. REPC members themselves need some training as the number of committees has expanded. It was suggested that a forum for chairs and members could be used to exchange experience and personnel. The chairs will implement this.
2. Data management.
3. Research ethics training both at student and staff level.

Data management impacts are wide. Professor Sheils met with School of Law to discuss specific training however she suggests that that training should be applicable to all of college rather than individual packages. Epigeum offer online training but may not have enough content for what is required. DoR asked if the REPC needs the Research Committee to provide input or conclusions. Professor Sheils noted that at this stage she is providing background information and is seeking support for the activity. Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT services informed that IT Services were developing training on research data management as well as training on GDPR and IT security. Decisions as to who should take the courses and whether they should be voluntary or mandatory will be discussed with the Executive Officers Group. Anyone handling personal information for example might be required to take the on-line course. DoR asked if all courses will be on-line. Although there will be on-line content there is the capability to develop short courses once it is agreed what is needed. Professor Sheils noted that this is a hugely welcome advance and hopes ethics training can be developed in the same way. DoR clarified with Professor Sheils that Epigeum is limited currently by the number of licences. Some training is provided by Lynda.com but Professor Sheils noted that there is a need for such training to be identified, packaged and provide guidance on the correct modules.

She noted the clinical trial sponsorship taskforce led by Professor Martina Hennessy and referred to the Policy and Procedures for University Sponsorship of Clinical Trials in the items for noting. This has the potential to open up a new area to college that has not been capitalised on to date.

#### **RS/17-18/21 Provost's Annual Report**

The Provost commented on the summary financial position included in the annual report 2015/2016 including the lack of increase in EU postgraduate fee income however the income from research grants and contracts had increased year on year.

#### **RS/17-18/22 Trinity Education Project (TEP)**

This was presented by the Provost and Senior Lecturer and is covered in Goal 3 of Trinity College's Strategic Plan. The main aim is to promote a research-inspired curriculum. Undergraduates ideally should get a sense of what it is to be in a research-led environment. The Provost noted that feedback from employers fora showed they were concerned with critical thinking and communication skills, and were seeking graduates who have developed those skills. Technology is becoming more important in how curricula are delivered. Internships were playing a bigger role and he noted recent high-profile engagements with employers like Intel and Bank of Ireland. However such internships were currently limited and Provost observes structures would have to change to allow internships for Arts students for example.

The Senior Lecturer discussed Graduate Attributes which are: think independently; communicate effectively; develop continuously; act responsibly. Consultations made it clear that deep knowledge of an academic discipline is crucial to developing these attributes. She noted that the key curriculum principle is that all undergraduate programmes will be research-centred. They will have more depth, but also more breadth so that students will have opportunities to engage with subjects beyond their core discipline. This breadth will be facilitated through three measures: introduction of electives; approved modules; and opportunities to take up new subjects. Approved modules are part of the programme of study related to the students' main subject. Flexibility is introduced with the option to take up elective modules. Electives will be 5 ECTS modules. The Provost noted that TEP aims for these electives to broaden students' learning and ideally they should be linked to one of the 19 research themes where Trinity has considerable strength. This would create a valuable connection for undergraduates to research conducted at the frontier of their discipline. Electives should address key societal challenges. Electives may also include languages and Chinese Studies will be offered in the first wave. The Senior Lecturer noted that linking the electives to the research themes will enable a visible link between college research and undergraduates and promote a "Connected Curriculum" as proposed by Dilly Fung.

The Provost observed that at many universities, high-profile researchers are not teaching students. At Trinity, all undergraduate students have the opportunity to do a research project, and another way to broaden this experience is through these electives. A number of the research themes have agreed to provide electives in the first wave. The Senior Lecturer notes that the first intake for electives will be for 2019/20, primarily Engineering. They will need many more elective modules after this first phase as all students eligible to take electives will be coming on-stream. The Provost asked for observations of the Research Committee on these proposals, and also if the members of the Research Committee would be willing to help develop more modules. The DoR asked if electives will open to all. Senior Lecturer confirmed that electives should not have pre-requisites and will be standalone modules for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. Electives will be compulsory for some courses and optional for others.

The Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities agreed with the principle but asked from a practical perspective where the teaching

hours will come from and how schools will be compensated if they're losing out on labour. The Senior Lecturer noted that schools have to release a certain number of electives and that there will be movement in and out of disciplines. The Provost confirmed that each elective will be associated with schools as research themes do not have administrative resources. Some finer details have to be worked out but the amount of teaching will not change. The Senior Lecturer confirmed there was a maximum of 10 ECTS. The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences asked whether postgraduates could be involved. The Provost noted that some electives could have c. 100 students, but wants to stay focused on undergraduate students.

The Director of Research, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Studies noted that there is discussion within school on approved modules, that there is a need to be aware of what other offerings schools will be making and asked if there will be a process to see what other schools will be providing. The Senior Lecturer confirmed that a process and timeline will be set out. The Provost clarified that approved modules are modules which are already offered whereas the electives are completely new. The Director of Research, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Studies asked if there is scope to have cross-school collaboration on "super modules" on things like language acquisition and research methods that would free up resources across schools to allow more offerings. The Provost suggests there is nothing to prevent schools from exploring this. The DoR noted that the graduate attributes are relevant for researchers and PhDs as well and suggested that offering an elective can only be a positive for the lecturer who chooses to offer one in terms of bringing ideas to a new audience. The President of Graduate Students Union commented that he could see the benefits of being able to opt in to modules that are outside of a student's core discipline before they consider moving into further research. The Librarian noted the use of primary research material in the Library.

The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science asked if any other Irish university offers similar research-linked modules. Trinity will be the only university to do so. The Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities suggested that co-teaching across schools would be a good way to offer these modules in terms of taking advantage of the breadth of knowledge across the university. The Director of Research, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Studies asked how often electives would have to be refreshed. The Provost would expect them to be updated regularly and that the modules should be seen as a continuous process. The Digital Engagement theme for example is actively working to engage across schools on developing these electives. Provost also notes that students are very enthusiastic about this development.

#### RS/17-18/23 AOB

The Librarian announced that Laura Shanahan had started as Head of Research Collections in the Library.

The President of Graduate Students Union noted there would be a town hall meeting on postgraduate fees at which the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer and the Dean of Graduate Students will all speak. The DoR asked for feedback in the form of a short report. The previous fees model was discussed where part year funding was accepted. He noted that although a memo was sent to the Finance Committee no changes are anticipated. He confirmed that an additional month was offered but this was not sufficient when students are obliged to pay for a full year when they might only need a couple of months. It is also observed that the lack of EU Postgraduate income is linked to the cost of living in Dublin which is entirely prohibitive to students. The DoR noted that she is working with Fiona Killard on a further analysis of postgraduate income. She noted that SFI funds a maximum of 5.5k for PhD fees which is also having an impact. The issue has been raised with SFI but there is no movement. The President of Graduate Students Union noted that there has been a meeting with the Minister's advisors and a paper brought to various committees which identifies all of these issues. The DoR requested a copy.

DoR noted an email from LERU inviting people to complete a questionnaire on the European Commission multi-annual Financial Framework and encouraged members of the Research Committee to participate if they have time.

The Director of TCIN asked in relation to SFI calls what the calls for 2018 will be. The DoR noted that their annual report outlines what they will be focusing on, but will look to see if there is further information.

The DoR thanked Oonagh Kinsman for all her assistance and work for the Research Committee.

Action: President of Graduate Students Union to provide feedback on the townhall meeting on postgraduate fees and to provide a paper on the subject to the DoR.

#### **RS/17-18/23 Items for Noting**

Items for Future Meetings - Review of criteria for Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence. Other agenda items are welcome

Policy and Procedure for University Sponsorship of Clinical Trials: This policy was circulated for information.