Report of the
Working Group on Interdisciplinary and
Service Teaching

May 2006
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Interdisciplinary courses may be defined as those courses where a number of disciplines, both within and across Schools / Faculties, are jointly involved in the management and delivery of a programme with considerable input from each discipline. Stand alone courses are managed and largely delivered by a single School or discipline. Service teaching occurs when a course provider within Interdisciplinary or stand alone courses ‘contracts’ another College discipline to provide teaching on the programme. We discuss the incidence of service teaching in undergraduate courses and propose conventions for service teaching interactions on undergraduate teaching in the context of new structures that encompass guidelines for the initiation and maintenance of service teaching agreements. Sixty six per cent of undergraduate FTEs in College are in respect of either interdisciplinary courses or courses which have an element of service teaching. We take a position that the development and facilitation of interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements is essential if College is to expand its postgraduate and research areas without having a negative impact on the scale and quality of undergraduate degrees.

Some basic recommendations

a. All service teaching activity should be reflected by an FTSE allocation and separate financial arrangements should be phased out or immediately discontinued.

b. In order to ensure a common currency in the distribution of FTSEs for interdisciplinary and service-teaching arrangements, FTSE calculations should be based on the ECTS credits applied at the module level within courses. Where a module involves more than one School, the FTSE for that module should be allocated on the basis of the input from each School.

c. Schools/departments providing service teaching are represented on School and Faculty Committees. Where there are course co-ordinating committees, it may be considered therefore to be good practice that, subject to size considerations, service teaching providers should be represented on the co-ordinating committee structure for the programme in question.

d. If College is to build on the considerable effort put in thus far by those involved in the Broad Curriculum initiative, then curricular structures must be reviewed to provide the flexibility with which this can be achieved and properly credited by FTSE allocations in the future.

We feel curriculum development cannot be frozen during the ARAM’s transition period. Yet, changes in course delivery by a School purely on financial grounds which have a demonstrably detrimental financial effect on another School would not be acceptable. Good practice principles on course delivery are proposed which should apply to all courses and not just those that have service teaching. Council-approved and established academic employees of the College are those who should have the primary roles in all activity, both teaching and research, and any employment of those who fall outside this category to undertake teaching must stand up to the closest academic scrutiny. Where a School wishes to include a curriculum element on a course for which it does not itself have staff with the relevant academic background and expertise, then it should first and foremost approach the relevant disciplinary areas in College to ascertain whether they would be in a position to offer or contribute to the offering of a course. Only when that avenue has been exhausted should the employment of external lecturers be considered. Existing guidelines provide that registered postgraduate students may be teaching assessment examiners on an undergraduate or postgraduate course only under the supervision of a member of the academic staff of a School, and normally only in the Freshman years. The application of these guidelines should be reviewed to ensure that academic quality is maintained in all aspects of undergraduate provision.

Good practice guidelines for course delivery

e. A School has overall responsibility for design and delivery of its curricula, subject of course to approval by the relevant College bodies. If a subject taught by a School has substantial cross-disciplinary elements, it should be taught by established staff members of corresponding profile.

f. Where a School wishes to include a subject on its curriculum for which it does not have established staff with the appropriate academic background and expertise, other related Schools / disciplines in College should be approached in the first instance to provide the required teaching. Lecturers other
than established College academic staff should only be employed to teach a subject where other related Schools / disciplines have indicated that they are not in a position to provide such teaching.

g. Where a School is undertaking curriculum review and changes to course offerings and existing arrangements are being considered, consultation should take place with the other related Schools / disciplines in cases where margins of disciplinary boundaries are involved in the subjects taught.

h. A Head of School may query the basis for another School delivering teaching in certain subject areas on academic grounds related to the expertise available in either School to teach a specific course.

Notification procedures

Guidelines for appropriate notification and discussion of planned curricular changes are proposed, by which all interested parties should engage fully in consultation, with the aim of facilitating curriculum development on academic grounds while giving all parties an opportunity to consider the most appropriate delivery of a subject. Any issue which cannot be resolved in this manner would be referred to the Senior Lecturer who would, following consideration of submissions, make recommendations to Council.

i. Planned changes on course delivery should involve early discussion with all Schools involved and a clear understanding of the academic grounds for such a change with reference to good practice guidelines.

j. Notification of changes to course delivery and the personnel involved in respect of all courses should take place in parallel with the consideration of Calendar changes.

k. When Calendar changes are submitted for consideration by the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee, changes which involve revisions to existing lecturing should be supported by additional commentary which demonstrates adherence to best practice guidelines. This would include a change in personnel delivering courses from established College academic staff to postgraduate students or external lecturers.

l. When proposed changes directly affect other schools under service teaching or interdisciplinary course arrangements, the commentary should indicate the consultation that has gone on in advance of the proposal of the Calendar change. Consultation must take place with a School providing service teaching or interdisciplinary course committees have to be notified of a proposed change in course delivery and/or a cancellation of a service well in advance of the consideration of Calendar changes.

m. Where possible, the existing provider of teaching should be given the opportunity to propose how they might contribute to the revised curriculum proposed.

n. Once good academic practice guidelines are followed, consultation has taken place as described above and agreement is reached between the providers, the proposed change in course delivery should be notified to the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee for sign-off through the Calendar changes process as described above.

o. If a dispute arises between course providers which cannot be averted by the agreed procedure, this would be considered by the Senior Lecturer according to the good practice guidelines. before making recommendations to Council. Each School will be required to make a full submission to the Senior Lecturer based on the good practice guidelines and providing supporting evidence. Supporting evidence should give examples of national and international best practice in teaching of the subject area, and any other relevant data such as outcomes of external advice on curriculum development and any course evaluations undertaken. The Senior Lecturer will make recommendations to Council as to an appropriate resolution.

In the final section of the report, we discuss aspects of the future development of undergraduate course delivery, with reference to existing barriers to the development of flexible and high quality undergraduate course provision which enables College to fulfil its stated objective of being a research-led university.
Section 1 – Working Group on Interdisciplinary and Service Teaching

1.1 Membership
The Working Group on Interdisciplinary and Service Teaching was set up at the request of the Heads’ Committee in Michaelmas Term 2006 and its membership is as follows:

Dean of Social and Human Sciences (chair)
Professor Frank Boland, Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Engineering
Dr Donal O’Donovan, Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Mathematics
Professor David Taylor, Head of School of Natural Sciences
Professor David Little, Head of School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Dr Raj Chari, Director of European Studies
Dr John Rochford, Director of Biology Teaching Centre
Ms Elspeth Hayes, Senior Lecturer’s Office, (secretary)

1.2 Meetings

1.3 Terms of Reference
The Working Group identified its terms of reference as follows:
1. To document current and historical arrangements for interdisciplinary and service teaching in undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. To consider issues with the management of interdisciplinary courses and current mechanisms for agreements regarding interdisciplinary and service teaching. These may include issues regarding:
   a) the quality of teaching and curricula
   b) ‘perceptions’ on how Schools could improve their financial (ARAM) positions through different approaches to undergraduate teaching
   c) the appropriate management and administration of interdisciplinary courses and service teaching arrangements.

2. To consider and propose conventions for interactions on undergraduate teaching in the context of new structures. This might encompass:
   a) guidelines for the initiation and maintenance of service teaching agreements
   b) how interdisciplinary and service teaching should be reflected through ARAM
   c) guidelines for the management of interdisciplinary courses.

3. Consider and make proposals regarding future models for interdisciplinary and service teaching in undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, and consider the necessary conditions in the structure of College’s teaching programmes and administrative support to enable these.

The working group structured its discussions around the different aspects of the terms of reference, and this report represents the outcome of these discussions. In the course of the working group’s discussions, particular aspects came to the fore. Other aspects, such as a detailed analysis of administrative support and management for interdisciplinary courses were considered too much for the group to consider. Our focus became to present a report to the Heads’ Committee which could be of use in addressing immediate issues surrounding service teaching arrangements. The views of directors of interdisciplinary courses on aspects of the management of the courses and issues arising had however been sought and informed the discussions and the eventual recommendations of the report. The responses received from directors of interdisciplinary courses can be made available on request. Analysis and recommendations regarding management and administration of the College’s current or future inter-school (interdisciplinary) courses are absent from this report but are clearly not unimportant.
Section 2 – Current context and issues arising

2.1 Introduction
Over a number of years of growing student numbers, College has offered a great breadth of programmes on limited resources both at undergraduate and increasingly at postgraduate level. This has been achieved through many arrangements where teaching on a programme has been undertaken by different departments according to the subject expertise available. This has been evident in the offering of fully interdisciplinary programmes, where a number of departments play a full part in the management and offering of a degree programme, and in service teaching arrangements, where one or more departments provide teaching for specific subjects or modules for a department (or group of departments) which is the principal programme provider.

Prior to the introduction of the Academically-based Resource Allocation Model (ARAM) and the accompanying academic restructuring, the teaching arrangements for interdisciplinary and service teaching were reflected either through a) the distribution of full-time student equivalents (FTSEs) for the courses, which were used to drive the allocation by the Deans’ Committee of non-pay, part-time pay and equipment budgets between Faculties, or b) financial arrangements agreed between specific departments.

These arrangements reflected academic agreements regarding teaching provision which were made at co-ordinating or management committees in the case of interdisciplinary programmes, separately between departments in the case of service teaching, or drawing on both agreement models to varying degrees. No College procedures have to-date been developed regarding best practice in this area. If an unresolvable dispute arose, the correct course of action would at the final instance have been considered by the University Council. The Faculty committee structure also provided an inclusive forum whereby such issues might be discussed and agreed.

The College’s Strategic Plan for 2003-2008 places primary emphasis on the development of Trinity College as a research-led university. A primary goal in this is the increase in numbers of research postgraduate students, which is also incentivised under the ARAM. However, this cannot be achieved independently of the development and support of the College’s teaching mission. The provision of high quality undergraduate programmes should produce graduates who progress to postgraduate study in College, in both the taught and research areas. The Strategic Plan 2003-2008 provides for the maintenance of overall undergraduate numbers and an increase in taught postgraduate numbers. While we hope that the expansion of the postgraduate and research areas could create more resources for the undergraduate, we may have to be more efficient with the use of staff resources in the undergraduate. Inter-school cooperation on interdisciplinary programmes and in service teaching arrangements, as in the past, could be central to being able to maintain student undergraduate numbers and quality, on limited academic resources.

2.2 Academic restructuring and ARAM
The primary principle of the ARAM is that funding follows academic activity. Teaching activity continues to be quantified through FTSEs, which drive the allocation of the core recurrent budget through the ARAM.

The academic restructuring process and the introduction of the ARAM may encourage some Schools to re-evaluate existing participation in interdisciplinary and service teaching, both in terms of its effect on the financial situation for the School under the ARAM and the appropriateness of the academic offering provided to students under existing arrangements. This leads to concern and debate as to what ability Schools should have to make changes which may have a perceived negative effect on other Schools, for which the provision of service teaching may be a considerable proportion of teaching activity and therefore of FTSEs. The extent to which any School can, through this approach, rely on increasing the proportion of the core grant allocated to it through the ARAM is also unclear.

One of the proposals approved by the Board in the development of the framework for the ARAM is of key importance to the consideration of issues in this area: ‘A key principle underlying the transition period in particular and which should be agreed now, as it implicitly underlies much of the thinking of the Task Force in relation to an ARAM and links to the principles of predictability and fairness discussed earlier, is that an
academic unit should not be permitted to adopt unilateral measures, which could cause unacceptable financial and/or academic consequences for another academic unit.¹

The application of this principle however requires parameters which set a context in which academic decisions and the financial consequences of these may be balanced, with the academic merit of any action may be fully considered as the first priority.

The primary concern of College in considering the context in which Schools can plan how courses will be offered under the new structures and ARAM must be the quality of programmes provided at all levels, in both teaching provision and the importance of the student experience in College.

It is therefore necessary to consider best practice for a) the provision of both interdisciplinary and service teaching in College, and b) criteria for consideration when a change in service provision is being proposed during the planning process.

2.3 Existing interdisciplinary and service teaching activity

The extent of interdisciplinary and service teaching in College, to some degree, can be traced through the annual FTSE exercise. This shows all arrangements that have an associated FTSE transfer, but does not show those where there is only a financial transfer, as discussed below.

The FTSE for each course year is divided between those participating departments, on the basis of agreed proportions or an annual calculation of input from each department. The Senior Lecturer’s Office has analysed FTSE data for 2004-05, which offers the statistics shown in the following table:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>No. of Courses</th>
<th>FTSE</th>
<th>Percentage analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total UG Courses (inc TSM subjects)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10029</td>
<td>84% of total taught course FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSM Programme</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>12% of total UG FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG Interdisciplinary courses</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3968</td>
<td>40% of total UG FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTSE on interdisciplinary courses which represent service teaching transfers</td>
<td>314</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG Courses with Service Teaching Transfers (including TSM, excl interdisciplinary)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2646</td>
<td>26% of total UG FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTSEs transferred to service teaching providers</td>
<td>343</td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary course and courses with service teaching total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6613</td>
<td>66% of total UG FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total UG Service Teaching FTSE</td>
<td></td>
<td>657</td>
<td>7% of total UG FTSE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Postgraduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Courses</th>
<th>FTSE</th>
<th>Percentage analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total PG Courses</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>16% of total taught FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG Interdisciplinary Courses</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>7% of total PG taught FTSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG Courses with Service Teaching Transfers (excl interdisciplinary)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>7% of total PG taught FTSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTSEs transferred to service teaching providers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>15% of total PG taught FTSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total UG and PG Taught FTSE</td>
<td></td>
<td>11960</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ Key Features of an Academic-based Resource Allocation Model (ARAM) ARAM Task Force, John O’Hagan (Chair), 20th January 2005. Section 1.7 Further proposals, recommendation 21

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As can be seen, from the table, 66% of undergraduate FTSEs and 15% of postgraduate taught FTSEs are in respect of either interdisciplinary courses or courses which have a service teaching element. Clearly this type of activity is an element of a large proportion of undergraduate courses and allocation of funds via the ARAM. In respect of service teaching specifically, approximately 7% of undergraduate FTSE transfer to service teaching providers, and thus attract income for those providers under ARAM. Background data to this analysis is available upon request from the Senior Lecturer’s Office.

2.4 Interdisciplinary courses

Interdisciplinary courses may be defined as those courses where a number of disciplines, both within and across Schools/Faculties are involved in delivery of a programme with considerable input from each discipline. The disciplines involved are more or less equal partners and the programme is managed in the forum of a committee with representation from all partners.

In the undergraduate sphere, interdisciplinary courses represent 40% of FTSEs, including those for common entry courses in Economic and Social Studies, Engineering, Science, and the Medicine course which involves many disciplines within the School. Interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements are not separate entities. A number of these courses also have FTSE transfers to other departments which indicate service teaching arrangements, representing approximately 8% of FTSEs for interdisciplinary courses.

2.5 Service Teaching

Service teaching occurs when a course provider ‘contracts’ another College School / department to provide specific teaching on a programme, for which that School or department has the most appropriate expertise. There has not been consistent practice in College regarding the representation of service teaching providers on co-ordinating committees for the programme in question. Under previous structures, the membership of the Faculty Executive Committee included the Heads of Department of all departments teaching on courses in the Faculty, and the members of staff in those departments could attend the Faculty Committee as full members. Under new structures, the membership of the School Committee and the membership of the Faculty Committee include a representative from each School or department providing service teaching.

Excluding interdisciplinary courses, a further 26% of undergraduate FTSEs are in respect of courses in which FTSE transfers have been made in respect of service teaching. As noted earlier, service teaching agreements are reflected either through FTSE transfers or through local financial arrangements, which by their nature may be viewed as more informal, ad-hoc arrangements. The extent of the latter type of arrangement is difficult to quantify, likewise the circumstances and agreements involved and such arrangements are not reflected in FTSE transfers. However, the amount of activity reflected through FTSE transfers suggests, we hope, that the greater majority of activity is reflected in this manner. These non-FTSE based arrangements and the difficulty of documenting and tracking these does however raise the issue of how we deal with such ‘informal’ arrangements. A School who feels that any change of such an arrangement would be damaging may find it harder to quantify the impact of any proposed change. It is important that all service teaching arrangements are reflected in FTSEs.

2.6 Two Subject Moderatorship programme

The Two Subject Moderatorship programme represents another model of interdisciplinary programme, constituting 12% of the undergraduate cohort. While each subject is largely a discipline-specific course with limited use of service teaching, the structure of the overall programme means that unilateral action by one or more participating subjects can have specific effects on the intake into other subjects.

2.7 Broad Curriculum Initiative

The development of the Broad Curriculum Initiative, since Council and Board approved the Policy on the Broad Curriculum in 1999, has introduced further interdisciplinary aspects into the undergraduate curriculum, while building on educational objectives which have been at the heart of the Trinity learning experience for many years. Since 1993/94, under arrangements which pre-date the Broad Curriculum Initiative, the Centre for Language and Communication Studies has offered extra-curricular language modules to mostly Freshman students. In some instances students have been able to gain course credit for successful completion of language modules. Under the Broad Curriculum, more students have the opportunity to take a language module in substitution for an elective element of their ‘home’ curriculum. The Broad Curriculum cross-faculty courses, offered since 2002/03, have provided many students, mostly in the Senior Freshman and Junior Sophister years, with the opportunity to take a course outside their primary subject area, and in 2004/05, 82% of students who completed cross-faculty courses were taking the course on a substitution basis.
The College’s Strategic Plan 2003-2008 sets the goal that Broad Curriculum activity should constitute 10% of the undergraduate curriculum in each year. This cannot however be easily achieved under the present curricular structures.

A principal barrier to the development of this model of interdisciplinary curricular activity, is the lack of flexibility in curriculum structure to enable students to take a Broad Curriculum option as a credit-bearing part of their course. Currently the majority of students have this opportunity in one year of their course of study, normally the Senior Freshman or Junior Sophister year. There remain major barriers to this however in the Health Sciences especially due to the demands of professional education, and active consideration has yet to be given to how such provision might be extended to more years of a course of study. That there is no formal programme of substitution in the Junior Freshman year is a major issue for the Centre for Language and Communication Studies in retaining students on language modules.

The ECTS value of a Broad Curriculum cross-faculty course or language module has been set at 6 credits, however there remains variation in the value of courses for which a Broad Curriculum course may be substituted. Due to this variation in credit values, and to the continuing existence of a number of courses who have not been able to accommodate substitution into their programmes, FTSE transfers are not currently made in respect of participation in Broad Curriculum courses\(^2\). Given the current disciplinary basis of the Broad Curriculum courses currently offered, if FTSE transfers were made, this may prove a disincentive to certain disciplinary areas in allowing students substitute when they do not have an opportunity to attract FTSEs by similar means.

Numbers of students participating in Broad Curriculum cross-faculty courses have been relatively consistent for the last three years with between 550 and 600 students initially registering and an average of 450 students completing a course each year. These numbers have remained steady even though the number of courses offered has risen from six in 2002-03, ten in 2003-04, eleven in 2004-05 and thirteen in 2006-07\(^3\). Funding is not available to run additional courses on the same basis as the original twelve supported through Atlantic Philanthropies funding, and given the current curricular structures and participation levels it is not evident that the offering of extra courses would attract more students.

If College is to build on the considerable effort put in thus far by those involved in the Broad Curriculum initiative and make further progress towards the goals set out in the Strategic Plan, then curricular structures must be reviewed to provide the flexibility with which this can be achieved and properly credited in the future.

2.8 Profile of teaching

Data has not been collated regarding the nature of teaching that the existing FTSE transfers represent. It is self-evident however that for interdisciplinary courses, the FTSEs represent the full range of College’s course delivery activities and teaching types. For service teaching arrangements, the teaching provided may be specific to the course for which the teaching is being provided, or students may be joining classes which are also offered to and taken by students from other courses, including degree courses offered by the service teaching provider.

College’s quality review processes and the commendation of these in the outcome of the recent EUA review support a statement of confidence in the overall quality of teaching provision on our courses. It is vital however to identify risk where it might occur in this area, and to provide frameworks by which this can be mitigated. In the provision of service teaching especially, where currently no formal management system exists, the principal School providing the course must have confidence that service teaching is provided to the highest academic standards, and that it is consistent with the agreement made under which teaching would be provided. Any changes proposed to existing arrangements must also demonstrate that teaching will continue to be provided to the highest standards.

\(^2\) It should be noted in the case of Broad Curriculum Cross-Faculty courses, that the departments which offer these courses through funding awarded by the Atlantic Philanthropies were awarded five-year contract lectureships to support provision of these courses, subject to an undertaking to continue to provide the courses once the contracts had finished. All these contract lectureships are currently ongoing.

\(^3\) Twelve cross-faculty courses are offered through funding from Atlantic Philanthropies. One course is offered by the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy (Department of Economics) with funding from Development Cooperation Ireland.
2.9 Teaching Assistants and Assistant Examiners
Since 1999/2000, a consolidated list of Teaching Assistants and Assistant Examiners has been presented to Council annually by the Senior Lecturer's Office, on the basis of data supplied by Faculty Offices. The criteria for Teaching Assistants and Assistant Examiners and the agreed procedure for nominating these is attached as Appendix A. Examination of the consolidated lists presented to Council since 1999/2000 shows considerable use of such teaching and examining resources. It is however unclear how applicable these stated criteria are to current activities and the extent to which the criteria are adhered regarding the type of postgraduate student or other suitable person who should undertake these duties and the extent of their activities. The existing criteria gave the Faculty Dean responsibility for signing-off as to the appropriateness of the nominations forwarded for presentation to Council, and the transfer of this responsibility to Heads of School should occasion a review of these criteria and their application.

The extent of other teaching activities undertaken by non-College staff such as staff from other third-level institutions or visiting academics should also be monitored and be governed by good practice guidelines.

As Schools examine how to structure teaching activities and may look to making senior academic staff resources available for postgraduate teaching, supervision and research, it is possible that Schools will look to increase the use of Teaching Assistants and Assistant Examiners and other non-College teaching staff. It is important however, that the criteria for their use is carefully reviewed and revised appropriately and that measures are taken to ensure that these are adhered to, so that College can ensure the appropriateness and quality of teaching provision at all levels.

It is equally important that in service teaching arrangements, while the service provider has responsibility for the provision of the course, the primary course provider should be as confident of the quality of the teaching provision on service teaching courses is as they are of that on its own courses.

For both interdisciplinary and for service teaching, clear parameters should be agreed between the relevant parties regarding mode of delivery, the staff involved in the teaching and assessment of a course, assessment arrangements and the appropriate approach to these relevant to the overall programme and relevant School policy.

2.10 Management and Administration
The arrangements for management and administration may be different for interdisciplinary courses and for service teaching arrangements. The common thread however is that they must ensure clarity and co-operation between relevant parties, clear provision of information and appropriate duty of care to students, and enable the best academic practice to remain the principal concern.

2.10.1 Interdisciplinary courses
The large majority of courses of a clearly interdisciplinary nature, including the common entry courses, have specific management or co-ordinating committees which are charged with management of the academic structure, curriculum, regulations and other administrative issues surrounding the courses. These would meet on a formal regular basis and the discussions and decisions of the committees clearly documented.

The administrative support to those courses follows a number of models, from a dedicated course director supported by an administrative office with professional administrative staff support, to the responsibility being split between Schools and the relevant academic and executive officers according to the course elements taught by each School.

2.10.2 Service Teaching
The co-ordination of the management and administration of service teaching arrangements has generally no formal structure other than the ongoing contact and co-operation between relevant academic staff and the administrative and executive officer staff. Under previous structures, the Faculty Executive and Faculty Committee structure would have been the main forum for dialogue regarding such agreements and this is now provided for in the School Committee and Faculty Committee under new structures. While there should be no wish to create additional unnecessary layers of management, is it necessary to ensure that these arrangements are effectively managed and reviewed.
2.11 Summary of principles and proposals:

2.11.1 Interdisciplinary courses may be defined as those courses where a number of disciplines, both within and across Schools / Faculties, are involved in delivery of a programme with considerable input from each discipline. The disciplines involved are more or less equal partners and the programme is managed in the forum of a committee with representation from all partners.

2.11.2 The management or co-ordinating committee is charged with management of the academic structure, curriculum, regulations and other administrative issues surrounding the courses. The committee meets on a formal regular basis and the discussions and decisions of the committees clearly documented.

2.11.3 Service teaching occurs when a course provider ‘contracts’ another College discipline to provide teaching on the programme, for which that School or department has the most appropriate expertise. Schools/departments providing service teaching are represented on School and Faculty Committees. Where there are course co-ordinating committees, it may be considered therefore to be good practice that, subject to size considerations, service teaching providers should be represented on the co-ordinating committee structure for the programme in question.

2.11.4 If College is to build on the considerable effort put in thus far by those involved in the Broad Curriculum initiative and make further progress towards the goals set out in the Strategic Plan, then curricular structures must be reviewed to provide the flexibility with which this can be achieved and properly credited in the future.

2.11.5 The criteria for the use of Teaching Assistants and Assistant Examiners (Postgraduates) should be reviewed and the revised criteria applied consistently throughout College.

2.11.6 The extent of other teaching activities undertaken by non-College staff such as staff from other third-level institutions or visiting academics should also be monitored and be governed by good practice guidelines.

2.11.7 For both interdisciplinary and for service teaching, clear parameters should be agreed between the relevant parties regarding mode of delivery, the staff involved in the teaching and assessment of a course, assessment arrangements and the appropriate approach to these relevant to the overall programme and relevant School policy.
Section 3 – Conventions for inter-school co-operation on undergraduate teaching

3.1 Introduction
The first section of the report described existing interdisciplinary and service teaching structures in College and surrounding issues. These represent the initial conditions that are being exposed to new financial incentives and governance structures. This central section of the report makes recommendations regarding the core criteria which should drive any interdisciplinary or service teaching agreement and inform any consideration of changes being made to such arrangements. We also discuss perceptions that incentives exist for Schools to expand market share in the undergraduate area and argue that a long-term goal should be to make the maximum possible academic resources available to expand in the postgraduate and research areas though not at the expense of quality in our undergraduate programmes.

3.2. Immediate challenges
There are both short-term and long-term challenges to consider in College’s treatment of interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements. In the short-term there may be attempts to bring more teaching back into a School, in order to increase FTSEs and thence increase the share of the core grant attracted through ARAM. In order to do this, Schools may seek to cut back on existing interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements. In the presumption that existing programmes offer academic quality, it would be logical to state that any such move on purely financial grounds would not be acceptable under the ARAM principles due to its detrimental financial effects on Schools formerly participating in interdisciplinary courses or undertaking service teaching. However, in order to ensure the continuing academic quality and appeal of our taught programmes, both undergraduate and postgraduate, it is unacceptable to freeze legitimate curriculum development for the duration of a transition period, for fear of ‘unacceptable financial consequences’. In an increasingly competitive market, such inaction could only damage College’s intake of students and the income available for the College as a whole.

It is necessary therefore to agree guidelines for good practice in making and maintaining agreements on interdisciplinary and service teaching in College’s current structures, which ensure that the quality and attractiveness of the College’s taught programme is not compromised during a transition period. Good practice guidelines will also help avert disputes or as a last resort, outline how disputes should be adjudicated. The keystone of such good practice guidelines is the quality of the teaching, which is greatly determined by those employed by College to provide teaching, their expertise and background. Council-approved academic employees of the College are obviously those who should have the primary roles in all activity, both teaching and research, and any employment of those who fall outside this category to undertake teaching must stand up to the closest academic scrutiny.

There is an obvious perception that a School which takes on undergraduate teaching which another School or discipline would be able or willing to provide would be gaining FTSEs and therefore core grant allocation at the expense of another School. However, it should also be considered that the School is also taking on an ‘opportunity cost’. Under the good practice guidelines which are proposed below, a School taking on teaching of a particular subject would in the first instance be expected to use the time of an appropriate established member of academic staff. The ‘opportunity cost’ thereby arises as it might be more productive and beneficial to the School’s resources in the long term to have that member of staff spending more time on research activities and postgraduate supervision. This over-riding principle introduces a further element of self-regulation in that established members of academic staff are likely to think very carefully regarding the implications of taking on teaching which could impede research activity and postgraduate supervision.

3.3 Long term challenges
The long term challenge for College’s teaching programme lies in fulfilling the goals of the College’s Strategic Plan to become a research-led university, and the more recent 4th-level agenda, and also developing postgraduate taught courses, while maintaining undergraduate numbers and the quality of College’s undergraduate programmes. Given that this research focus is incentivised through ARAM, it is our argument that Schools should seek to make academic resources available to expand in postgraduate and research areas while maintaining overall undergraduate numbers across College and the quality of undergraduate provision. It is our suggestion that the appropriate instrument to achieve these, given the principles of good practice outlined above, will be to share teaching resources in the undergraduate area especially, and make as much use of the expertise
of other Schools and disciplines in College as possible, thereby distributing FTSEs inter-school and expanding interdisciplinary and service teaching activities.

3.4 Disciplinary boundaries and responsibilities
In the College environment, academic groupings are based around disciplinary focus, yet interdisciplinarity both at an individual and collective level is an increasing basis of activity. The debate about a particular disciplinary grouping’s responsibility or entitlement to provide teaching in a particular subject is also central to the issues to be addressed in the consideration of interdisciplinary and service teaching. The definition of a discipline, and whether it is possible to judge which would be the most appropriate to teach certain subjects is often problematic. Yet, it is important to remember that a student graduates with a degree that is seen to be from Trinity College, not just from a particular School, and a graduate’s grounding and expertise in particular subjects will reflect on the College as a whole, specifically the disciplinary areas who may or may not have been involved in teaching that graduate but would more obviously teach that area in the eyes of the outside world.

A first principle in the provision of teaching is that it should be provided by established College academic staff wherever possible. Where a School wishes to include a curriculum element on a course for which it does not itself have staff with the relevant academic background and expertise, then it should first and foremost approach the relevant disciplinary areas in College to ascertain whether they would be in a position to offer or contribute to the offering of a course. Only when that avenue has been exhausted should the employment of external teaching be considered.

More difficulties arise however where a disciplinary area itself draws upon elements of other disciplines. This has specific resonance in relation to professional and vocational courses but could be seen in many areas whereby a particular subject of study could be parsed into a number of disciplinary areas.

Consideration must be given to national and international best practice in the teaching of a particular subject, and to the academic expertise and training of those who propose to teach a particular course when compared to that which might be offered by a more discipline-specific area. It would be expected that the process of curriculum development and planning would consider such issues and take external advice as to best academic practice.

3.5 FTSE calculations
The current ways in which teaching activity is reflected through FTSE allocations or other financial arrangements are discussed in the last section of this report. The basis for the calculation of FTSE distribution in the past has differed between faculties from analysis of annual input by department, to overall agreement on percentage distribution. There is a danger that the historical methods of calculating FTSEs might be distorting the financial flows created by the ARAM. This could lead to pressure to cut back on existing interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements and would not facilitate expansion of these.

Under new structures, it is important that the driver for the reflection of teaching activities is as accurate, consistent and transparent as possible. The following is therefore proposed:

a) That FTSE calculations should be based on the ECTS credits applied at the module level within courses. Where a module involves more than one School, the FTSE for that module should be allocated on the basis of the input from each School.

b) That all teaching activity should be reflected by an FTSE allocation and separate financial arrangements should be phased out or immediately discontinued.

The importance of the creation of a ‘common currency’ of teaching unit through ECTS is central to College’s ability to provide the best taught programmes whilst focusing resources on the research and postgraduate activities. A flexible structure is needed that enables Schools to share course offerings and expertise, and offer curricular choice to students. The standardization of course offerings into modules and a standard term structure would have obvious advantages in this regard. These issues will be further explored in the third section of this report.
3.6 Procedures for revision of interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements

In the context of the above, we narrow our focus and make proposals regarding the appropriate procedures and processes needed to support interdisciplinary and service teaching in the new environment.

As discussed earlier, a mechanism used to support growth in student numbers has been to bring in teaching from outside the established College staff. If Schools look to concentrate resources towards postgraduate and research work, there is again the possibility that many will look to providing more of their undergraduate teaching through the use of ‘bought-in’ lecturers and postgraduate students. This is a serious issue for the quality of all undergraduate provision, not just interdisciplinary and service teaching.

We propose that there should be accepted standards of course delivery which would be applicable to ‘in-house’ courses equally as to service teaching and interdisciplinary arrangements. Agreements regarding teaching provision between Schools involved in interdisciplinary courses and service teaching would be based on those standards.

College’s current environment favours the maintenance of the ‘status quo’ during a transition period in order to avoid actions which detriment other Schools. However we have argued that changes as a result of legitimate curriculum review cannot be proscribed if College’s best interests are to be served. Planned changes should involve early discussion with all Schools involved and a clear understanding of the academic grounds for such a change with reference to good practice guidelines. If the academic quality criteria were not met and a change could not supported in terms of academic quality then it would not be supported on purely resource based grounds during a transition period, and arguably not at any stage.

It is proposed that there should be a notification procedure for changes to course delivery and the personnel involved at a similar time to Calendar changes. This should apply to all courses. When Calendar changes are submitted for consideration by the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee, changes which involve revisions to existing lecturing should be supported by additional commentary which demonstrates adherence to best practice guidelines. This would include a change in personnel delivering courses from established College academic staff to postgraduate students or external lecturers.

When proposed changes directly affect other schools under service teaching or interdisciplinary course arrangements, the commentary should indicate the consultation that has gone on in advance of the proposal of the Calendar change. Consultation must take place with a School providing service teaching and/or interdisciplinary course committees should be notified of a proposed change in course delivery or a cancellation of a service well in advance of the consideration of Calendar changes. Where possible, the existing provider should be given the opportunity to propose how they might contribute to the revised curriculum proposed and the School which wishes to make the change must be able to demonstrate that it is better placed to provide the required teaching on the revised course than the previous provider, on the basis of the good practice guidelines.

Once good academic practice guidelines and the notification procedure are followed and agreement is reached between the providers, the proposed change in course delivery should be notified to the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee for sign-off in the manner described above.

If a dispute arises between course providers which cannot be averted by the agreed procedure, this would be considered by the Senior Lecturer according to the good practice guidelines, who would make recommendation to Council as to an appropriate resolution.

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4 Pressures in the system can come from situations such as research proposals requiring a buy-out of teaching for the researcher.

5 It should be noted that some allowances need to be made in such a procedure to allow Schools to respond with some degree of autonomy to unforeseen circumstances such as sick leave or a late notification of a research contract which involves some buy-out of teaching time.
3.7 Good practice guidelines for course delivery

The following are proposed as guidelines for good academic practice in course delivery:

3.7.1. A School has overall responsibility for design and delivery of its curricula, subject, of course, to approval by the relevant College bodies. If a subject taught by a School has substantial cross-disciplinary elements, it should be taught by established staff members of corresponding profile.

3.7.2. Where a School wishes to include a subject on its curriculum for which it does not have established staff with the appropriate academic background and expertise, other related Schools / disciplines in College should be approached in the first instance to provide the required teaching. Lecturers other than established College academic staff should only be employed to teach a subject where other related Schools / disciplines have indicated that they are not in a position to provide such teaching.

3.7.3. Where a School is undertaking curriculum review and changes to course offerings and existing arrangements are being considered, consultation should take place with the other related Schools / disciplines in cases where margins of disciplinary boundaries are involved in the subjects taught.

3.7.4. A Head of School may query the basis for another School delivering teaching in certain subject areas on academic grounds related to the expertise available in either School to teach a specific course.

These guidelines on good academic practice in course delivery should be used in general and it is hoped would enable curriculum planning and review to be undertaken in a manner which supports the continuance of operations in a collegial manner and facilitates co-operation and agreement between Schools.

However, where disputes arise between Schools that cannot be resolved through inter-School consultation, each School will be required to make a full submission to the Senior Lecturer based on the good practice guidelines and providing supporting evidence and the Senior Lecturer would make recommendations to the University Council. Supporting evidence should indicate national and international best practice in teaching of the subject area, and any other relevant data such as outcomes of external advice on curriculum development and any course evaluations undertaken.

The overriding concern even in time of financial difficulty however should be the quality of the teaching offered by College. ‘Bought-in’ lecturing should always be the last resort for College so it remains important that all internal opportunities should first be exhausted. If external teaching is then considered, the quality of this must also be closely scrutinized and if this cannot be assured, then it would be more appropriate for College not to offer courses than to compromise the quality of teaching.
3.8 Summary of principles and recommendations:

3.8.1 A measure proposed by a School on purely financial grounds which had a demonstrably detrimental financial effect on another School would not be acceptable.

3.8.2 Legitimate curriculum development cannot however be frozen for the duration of a transition period.

3.8.3 Council-approved and established academic employees of the College are those who should have the primary roles in all activity, both teaching and research, and any employment of those who fall outside this category to undertake teaching must stand up to the closest academic scrutiny.

3.8.4 The development and facilitation of interdisciplinary and service teaching arrangements is in the best interests of College’s undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

3.8.5 Where a School wishes to include a curriculum element on a course for which it does not itself have staff with the relevant academic background and expertise, then it should first and foremost approach the relevant disciplinary areas in College to ascertain whether they would be in a position to offer or contribute to the offering of a course. Only when that avenue has been exhausted should the employment of external teaching be considered.

3.8.6 FTSE calculations should be based on the ECTS credits applied at the module level within courses. Where a module involves more than one School, the FTSE for that module should be allocated on the basis of the input from each School.

3.8.7 All teaching activity should be reflected by an FTSE allocation and separate financial arrangements should be phased out or immediately discontinued.

3.8.8 Best practice guidelines in course delivery should be applicable to all courses.

3.8.9 Agreements regarding teaching provision between Schools involved in interdisciplinary courses and service teaching would be based on the best practice guidelines.

3.8.10 Planned changes should involve early discussion with all Schools involved and a clear understanding of the academic grounds for such a change with reference to good practice guidelines.

3.8.11 A notification procedure for changes to course delivery and the personnel involved at a similar time to Calendar changes will apply in respect of all courses.

3.8.12 When Calendar changes are submitted for consideration by the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee, changes which involve revisions to existing lecturing should be supported by additional commentary which demonstrates adherence to best practice guidelines. This would include a change in personnel delivering courses from established College academic staff to postgraduate students or external lecturers.

3.8.13 When proposed changes directly affect other schools under service teaching or interdisciplinary course arrangements, the commentary should indicate the consultation that has gone on in advance of the proposal of the Calendar change. Consultation must take place with a School providing service teaching or interdisciplinary course committees have to be notified of a proposed change in course delivery and/or a cancellation of a service well in advance of the consideration of Calendar changes.6

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6 It should be noted that some allowances need to be made in such a procedure to allow Schools to respond with some degree of autonomy to unforeseen circumstances such as sick leave or a late notification of a research contract which involves some buy-out of teaching time.
Where possible, the existing provider should be given the opportunity to propose how they might contribute to the revised curriculum proposed.

Once good academic practice guidelines are followed, consultation has taken place as described above and agreement is reached between the providers, the proposed change in course delivery should be notified to Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee for sign-off through the Calendar changes process as described above.

If a dispute arises between course providers which cannot be averted by the agreed procedure, this would be adjudicated by the Senior Lecturer according to the good practice guidelines.

The following guidelines for good practice in course provisions should be adopted:

3.8.17.i A School has overall responsibility for design and delivery of its curricula, subject, of course, to approval by the relevant College bodies. If a subject taught by a School has substantial cross-disciplinary elements, it should be taught by established members of staff of corresponding profile.

3.8.17.ii Where a School wishes to include a subject on its curriculum for which it does not have established staff with the appropriate academic background and expertise, other related Schools / disciplines in College should be approached in the first instance to provide the required teaching. Lecturers other than established College academic staff should only be employed to teach a subject where other related Schools / disciplines have indicated that they are not in a position to provide such teaching.

3.8.17.iii Where a School is undertaking curriculum review and changes to course offerings and existing arrangements are being considered, consultation should take place with the other related Schools / disciplines in cases where margins of disciplinary boundaries are involved in the subjects taught.

3.8.17.iv A Head of School may query the basis for another School delivering teaching in certain subject areas on academic grounds related to the expertise available in either School to teach a specific course.

Where disputes arise between Schools that cannot be resolved through inter-School consultation, each School will be required to make a full submission to the Senior Lecturer based on the good practice guidelines and providing supporting evidence. Supporting evidence should indicate national and international best practice in teaching of the subject area, and any other relevant data such as outcomes of external advice on curriculum development and any course evaluations undertaken. The Senior Lecturer will consider the submissions before making recommendations to Council as to an appropriate resolution.
Section 4 – Future development of undergraduate course delivery.

4.1 Introduction
In this last section, we explore briefly how College’s structures could provide a platform by which resources for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching could be used across College to offer undergraduate and taught postgraduate curricula of high quality while still enabling College to fulfil its objectives of being a research-led university which is a leader in fourth level activity. This relies on the principle stated earlier that interdisciplinary and service teaching possibilities and the expertise of all Schools and disciplines in College should be fully exploited. The idea of the ‘opportunity cost’ to a School in taking on undergraduate teaching which others could be doing has been explored. If this ‘opportunity cost’ is not to affect the College’s ability to achieve its overall goals, the structures need to be in place to streamline the provision of College’s taught programmes.

4.2 Flexibility in course delivery
In the second section of this report, we have demonstrated the extent of existing interdisciplinary and service teaching activity in the College, and discussed the role of the Broad Curriculum programme and the limitations which the current structures place on its development. The main barrier to the provision of flexibility in course provision which can enable such beneficial pooling of resources and provide the most attractive educational opportunities to our students is the varying structure of individual course curricula which militates against the sharing of teaching modules. College’s term structure and timetable are already overstretched and require review if our undergraduate programmes are to be sustained and developed. The current debate regarding modularisation and review of College’s term structure provides an opportunity to develop greater flexibility in course provision, which could facilitate efficient delivery of high-quality teaching through the standardisation of units of teaching and study and enable this to be quantified through ECTS. This would also provide for the development of the principles of the Broad Curriculum initiative which is a stated goal of the College’s Strategic Plan 2003-08, and is also desirable for College in terms of the attractiveness of its courses in an increasingly competitive market.

It is apparent through the demonstrated extent of interdisciplinary activity that College has developed in many ways towards concepts of modularisation. Two Faculty-level common entry programmes already exist in the Business Economic and Social Studies and Science programmes, the Two-Subject Moderatorship programme represents an interdisciplinary approach and with the potential for the development of the interdisciplinary elements of the Broad Curriculum initiative, College should view such moves as evolutionary, rather than revolutionary.

4.3 Regulation or competition?
An increase in flexibility in College’s curriculum structure, while enabling exchange of teaching services and interdisciplinary activity, would not however in itself lessen the need for the processes proposed in section three of this report and the possibility for controversy between Schools over proposed curricular provision. There would remain a requirement for considerable levels of regulation which would need to be supported centrally through the Senior Lecturer’s Area and the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning and Heads’ Committees. Any regulatory approach can easily become cumbersome and in the interests of the best use of College resources it may be wise to consider alternatives which may be possible through other course structures. In a more radical step, the concept of modularisation could in the future be extended to a full review of the manner in which students are admitted to courses and degree programmes, in a move towards the model common in places such as North America and being developed in other institutions both in Ireland and in the United Kingdom.

Using the platform of flexible and comparable modules making up degree programmes and a term structure consistent across College, common entry routes might be identified for all faculties and students would then build their degree programmes according to the modules offered by different Schools, with appropriate prerequisites according to the mode of study chosen (e.g. Single honor, joint honor, major/minor, or broad curriculum-type option). Similar models are already successfully in operation in the Business Economic and Social Studies programme and Science programmes. Such a reform of degree entry modes and flexibility in student choice of modules across all schools would allow competition for students to adjudicate the most appropriate disciplinary area to offer a certain course. The need for the central regulatory model would therefore be lessened, as while a need to monitor the appropriateness of a School offering particular modules on academic quality grounds would remain, students’ choice of courses would determine the long-term viability of module offerings.
Appendix A

Criteria for Teaching Assistants and Assistant Examiners as stated in the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer to Deans of 11 February 1999.

7 TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Appointees to the post of Teaching Assistant would normally be employed as assistants to lecturers taking large classes, normally in the freshman years; they will give classes, tutorials and provide assistance with the marking of tests and coursework under the supervision of the lecturer concerned, who will retain ultimate responsibility for all marks awarded.

(a) Criteria for Appointment
Will be graduates, normally registered for an MLitt/MSc or PhD degree and may be recruited from College or other Irish universities.

(b) Nominating Procedures
Head of Department should submit nominations forms to Faculty Deans in the first instance, following which a consolidated list of names will be submitted to Council for approval.

(c) Role in College
Will provide assistance to lecturers taking large classes, normally in the freshman years, give classes/tutorials, and provide assistance with marking of tests and coursework, under the supervision of the lecturer concerned, who will retain ultimate responsibility for all marks awarded.

(d) Term of Appointment
Appointment will normally be for a period of one year paid from departmental pay budgets.

7a ASSISTANT EXAMINERS

Assistant Examiners will be employed to provide assistance to lecturers taking large classes or other classes involving specialist knowledge. They will be teachers on the course(s) concerned, and provide assistance with the marking of freshman examinations under the supervision of a full time member of the academic staff, or a qualified member of staff designated by the Head of Department, who will retain ultimate responsibility for all marks awarded. In exceptional circumstances, assistant examiners with appropriate qualifications may be appointed to mark other examinations. In such cases, a proposal will be put by the Senior Lecturer to Council.

(a) Criteria for Appointment
Will be graduates, normally in their second or subsequent years of an MLitt/MSc or PhD degree.

(b) Nominating Procedures
Heads of Department should submit nomination forms to Faculty Deans in the first instance, following which a consolidated list of names and year of course which is being examined will be submitted to Council for approval.

(c) Role in College
Will be teachers on the course(s) concerned, and provide assistance with the marking of freshman examinations under the supervision of a full-time member of the academic staff, or a qualified member of staff designated by the Head of Department, who will retain ultimate responsibility for all marks awarded.

(d) Term of Appointment
Appointment will normally be for a period of one year, paid from departmental pay budgets.

Deans should be satisfied that all nominees fall within the stated criteria as appropriate.