Procedure for Review of Programmes

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to set out broad guidelines for the preparation and conduct of Programme reviews in Trinity College Dublin and its linked and collaborative providers nationally and transnationally.

The purpose of a Programme review as outlined by the Good Practice Guideline for the Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Reviews of Programmes and Award in Irish Universities (Irish University Quality Board 2012) is to:

- facilitate a critical self-assessment of the Programme by Programme Director, Management Committee and Schools involved in its delivery;
- provide an opportunity for the overall evaluation of the programme, with a range of inputs and analyses;
- provide an opportunity to review the content, relevance, curriculum design and delivery of the Programme in the light of feedback obtained from students, external examiners, industry, professions and other external peers.
- ensure that academic standards are maintained on the Programme and provide assurance on this to the University Council, students and other external stakeholders.
- assess the strategic direction of the Programme in the context of internal and external developments and, when necessary, facilitate large-scale changes to it, or discontinuation.

2. Scope

2.1 This procedure applies to programmes of education provided across schools, faculties, linked and collaborative partners that:

- may as a result of their interdisciplinary nature fall outside other quality review processes e.g. School Reviews.
• if provided within Trinity, the programme is not subject to an accreditation review by an external regulatory body; and/or

• if provided by a partner outside Trinity, the provider/programme is required to be external quality assured under the QQI Act 2012, although the programme may be subject to accreditation review by an external regulatory body e.g. Teaching Council.

2.2 Elements of a Programme Review include:

• A student evaluation survey;

• Focus groups with academics, administrators, students, graduates and employers to conduct a SWOT analysis of the Programme;

• Data analysis, collation and reporting over a five-year period of key Programme, finance and student performance metrics;

• A Self – Assessment Report (SAR) to be provided to the External Review team six weeks prior to the on-site visit;

• An on-site visit by a panel of External Reviewers for 2-3 days that includes a schedule of presentations, interviews/meetings and tours of teaching and learning facilities;

• A Programme review report that sets out the findings and recommendations of the External Review team.

3 Benefits

3.1 Programme reviews allow a periodic review with inputs from staff, students and external stakeholders to confirm that the Programme curriculum, teaching and learning provides students with a range of critical skills and prepares them for opportunities in further study and employment.

3.2 Programme reviews fulfil the University’s commitment to the cyclical quality assurance of programmes of education and training.

3.3 Demonstrate good practice on the part of Trinity College in alignment with the guidelines set out under the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012, and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
4 Procedure for Programme Reviews (to be read in conjunction with General Procedures for Quality Reviews)

4.1 Establish a Coordinating Group to guide the review process.

4.2 Agree upon the content of the student evaluation survey and the cohorts of students to participate in it. The survey is to be administered manually in order to optimise response rates. The Quality Office will work with School and Course Administrators to agree dates and times for administration of the survey and will lead the administration effort. In addition, the Quality Office will arrange for the statistical analysis of quantitative findings by an external provider and provide qualitative analysis of open comments into a report for inclusion into the Self - Assessment Report.

4.3 The Coordinating Group nominates representatives to participate in focus groups to conduct the SWOT analysis of the Programme and provide contact details of graduates and employers who may be appropriate participants. Employer details can be obtained from, among other sources, the First Destination Survey available on the Careers Advisory Service website.

4.4 The Coordinating Group will confirm contact details for external examiners active on the Programme. The Quality Office will write to external examiners to notify them of the planned programme review in advance of the examining period preceding the review, with a request for the timely return of the Annual Report.

4.5 Data analysis and collation is led by School, Course and Faculty administrators, members of the Coordinating Group and broader School, Faculty and College representatives. The optimal period for data arrays is five years.

Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of potential data and sources. Note that within TCD:

(i) the Faculty Dean and Faculty Finance Partner must sign off on Programme finance data for inclusion in the Self – Assessment Report; and

(ii) student number data should be based on HEA returns. Approved figures can be found in the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Reports.

4.6 Self - Assessment Report (SAR) forms the principal source of information for the External Review team, prior to their arrival on site. It situates the Programme within the relevant schools, faculty and broader University strategic environs. It should therefore have a strategic focus, be forward looking, provide a critical appraisal of the
programme and the quality assurance processes that support the programme. Responsibility for the development of the SAR and engagement of internal and external inputs into it rests with the Coordinating Group. The main body of the SAR (excluding appendices) should not exceed 50 pages.

The format of the SAR is outlined in Appendix 2 and includes the following headings:

- Introduction
- Programme governance and management
- Programme structure
- Curriculum
- Student numbers
- The student experience
- Programme administration
- Future strategy in terms of vision and development of the Programme and links to University’s strategic goals and initiatives
- Finance and resources

4.7 The on-site visit by the external reviewers occurs over 2-3 days. A draft schedule is to be agreed with the Quality Office eight weeks prior to the review date. A template for a draft schedule and principles to be followed in its development can be found in the General Procedures for Quality Reviews.

4.8 Student participation/representation across undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral cohorts and graduates who are no longer in College, is an expectation of quality reviews in the Irish Higher Education System.

4.9 A draft timeline detailing the key phases and deliverables for a Programme review can be found in Appendix 3.
# Appendix 1: Data and potential sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Requirements</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student profile and numbers: quotas, CAO points, admission/enrolment statistics, year on year retention, Sophister numbers by moderatorship choice (if applicable) exam results and attainment of Award by Class, completion rates, gender profile.</td>
<td>SITS/ Senior Lecturer Annual Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admission Office/Academic Registry/Programme Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profile of students who enter through non-CAO routes (TAP, HEAR, DARE, Mature, Direct entry)</td>
<td>Trinity Access Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mature Student Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Academic Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme finances and resources</td>
<td>Faculty Dean, Faculty Finance Partner and Finance Service Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Destination Survey</td>
<td>Careers Advisory Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data on international students and the International Student Barometer</td>
<td>Global Relations Office</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School/Programme Global Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression and retention data for cohorts from 2012/13 onwards. Post Graduate Surveys data Faculty Annual Quality Reports Academic staff workload statistics</td>
<td>Faculty Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Examiners Reports, Irish Survey of Student Engagement, Status of School Quality Reviews</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff:Student Ratio (FTSE data)</td>
<td>Human Resources (Staff Office)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty HR Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps showing facilities and space allocation for Programme delivery</td>
<td>Building and Estates Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographies of teaching staff</td>
<td>Programme/School website, RSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Services</td>
<td>College website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Suggested format/ content for SAR

1 Introduction

- Introduction to Trinity College Dublin.
- Overview of the Programme- history and evolution over time.
- The evaluation process used to develop the SAR.
- Key outcomes of the SWOT analysis conducted via Focus Groups.

2 Programme governance and management

- Programme committee structure and relationships to School and Faculty Committees, Research Centres, Research Institutes (Terms of reference, membership, frequency of meetings and papers can be include in Appendices).
- How teaching is managed on the Programme: staff composition across Schools, Faculties, those providing ‘service teaching’ into the programme and in teaching support roles (including name and title of position holders such as Module Coordinators) (include in Appendices).
- List showing the highest qualification achieved by academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme, their publications, grant income, workload, project supervision, research supervision, consulting projects and patents in the last five years (include in Appendices).
- Outline processes to assure the quality of teaching and learning on the Programme such as induction, mentoring and continuous professional education.
- Describe any perceived or potential risks to the Programme and how these are being managed.

3 Programme structure

- Description of the Programme structure and analysis of it’s effectiveness.
- Entry requirements including any specific programme pre-requisites.
• Progression requirements: Freshman and Sophister years.

• Programme Handbook with programme learning outcomes, module descriptors and learning outcomes identifying core, pre-requisite and elective modules (include in Appendices).

4 Curriculum

• Outline of the syllabus for the duration of the Programme: years, semesters, modules and credits.

• Research – led teaching: connections with University research themes Institutes, Centres, and interests of Schools/Academics associated with the Programme.

• Quality of Teaching and Learning: large vs small group, online, blended, transferable skills, innovative technologies, inclusive curriculum, padagogies.

• Assessment Methodologies: exams/Continuous Assessment (CA) breakdown, assessment regulations and policies on marks and standards.

• Examination structure and statistics i.e results by year over a 5 year period.

• External examiner reports (past 5 years to be included in Appendices).

• Student centred: internships, industry placements, opportunities to study abroad, links to industry, changes in response to module/course evaluations.

• Curriculum review process: frequency, key individuals or committees with overall responsibility for the conduct of programme approvals or reviews, how student and external stakeholders views are incorporated into the process.

5 Student numbers

• Quotas.

• Enrolment.

• Progression by year.

• Retention.
• Moderatorship subject preferences and numbers (if applicable).

• Final year project numbers.

• Examination results by year.

• Direct entry numbers versus omnibus entry numbers – class sizes.

• Mobility statistics – TAP, HEAR, DARE, Mature Student Dispensation Scheme, Recognition of Prior Learning, FETEC, International students.

6 The student experience

• Student induction processes.

• Key findings of student evaluation survey (full report in appendices).

• Annual module and course evaluations/surveys.

• Student representation and feedback mechanisms.

• Teaching and learning supports, including IT and Library.

• Student Services.

• Student complaints processes.

• Academic appeals.

• Student facilities/amenities.

• Information for students including website, publications, Blackboard.

7 Programme Administration

• Structure, staffing and roles of programme administration support functions.

• Role of Schools and disciplines.

• Academic cycle of Programme administration.

• Recruitment activities and events - open days, school visitations.

• Module selection and advice.
• Examinations.

• Court of First Appeal.

• Systems to support programme administration.

8 Future strategy in terms of vision and development of the Programme and links to University’s strategic goals and initiatives

• Strategic Plan 2014-1019.

• Global Relations Strategy – 18% target growth in student numbers.

• Innovation and entrepreneurship strategy.

• Online education strategy.

• Leinster Pillar 1 Cluster (HEA Landscapes in Irish Higher Education).

• Linked provider or collaborative national and/or transnational arrangements around validated programmes, dual or joint Awards.

9 Finance and resourcing

• Income to College.

• Income to Faculty and Schools.

• Operating budget for Schools/Programme.

• Research income and distribution to support teaching and learning.

• Staff:Student Ratios.

• Final year projects.

• Facilities and equipment.

10 Summary

• Programme-led recommendations to be put to the review team for consideration.

• Specific questions/issues on which external reviewer opinion is sought.
## Appendix 3: Draft Timeline for a Programme review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>17-14mths</td>
<td>Quality Office (QO)</td>
<td>Agreement to proceed with Review</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prior to</td>
<td>Faculty Dean</td>
<td>Budget discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish Coordinating Group.</td>
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<td>Agree detail timeline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>14-10mths</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>Nominate and select External Reviewers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinating Group</td>
<td>Confirm date of review.</td>
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<td>Selection Panel</td>
<td>Agree student evaluation survey and focus group nominees.</td>
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<td>Write to External Examiners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR Preparation</td>
<td>12-10mths</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>Identify data needs and send requests to appropriate sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>10-4mths</td>
<td>Coordinating Group</td>
<td>Conduct student survey and focus groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting of SAR</td>
<td>10-3mths</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>Analyse student survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinating Group</td>
<td>Write up focus group SWOT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analyse, collate and format data/results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of draft SAR &amp;</td>
<td>3-2mths</td>
<td>Coordinating Group</td>
<td>Drafting SAR, circulate for review and revise drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schedule to QO.</td>
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<td>Book rooms for onsite visit.</td>
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<td>Identify interview attendees for schedule, send invitations to attend.</td>
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<td>QO review and comment on SAR and draft schedule.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coordinating Group incorporate QO comments and return draft SAR to QO to send for proofreading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase</td>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>What</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proofreading</td>
<td>7 weeks prior to Review</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>Proofread copy of draft SAR returned to Coordinating Group to make amendments and return final SAR, appendices and schedule to QO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of SAR to External Review Team</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>Review documentation and Quality Office Briefing pack sent to External Review team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Review Teleconference</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>Confirm receipt of Review documentation. Respond to questions, requests for further information and/or changes to draft schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalise arrangements for onsite visit</td>
<td>4-1 weeks</td>
<td>Quality Office Coordinating Group</td>
<td>Room set-up, Travel, accommodation and catering, Confirm meeting attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site visit</td>
<td>Week 0</td>
<td>Quality Office Coordinating Group</td>
<td>As per final review schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Review Follow-up</td>
<td>1-4mnths post Review</td>
<td>Quality Office</td>
<td>As per General Quality Review Procedures</td>
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</tbody>
</table>