Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin
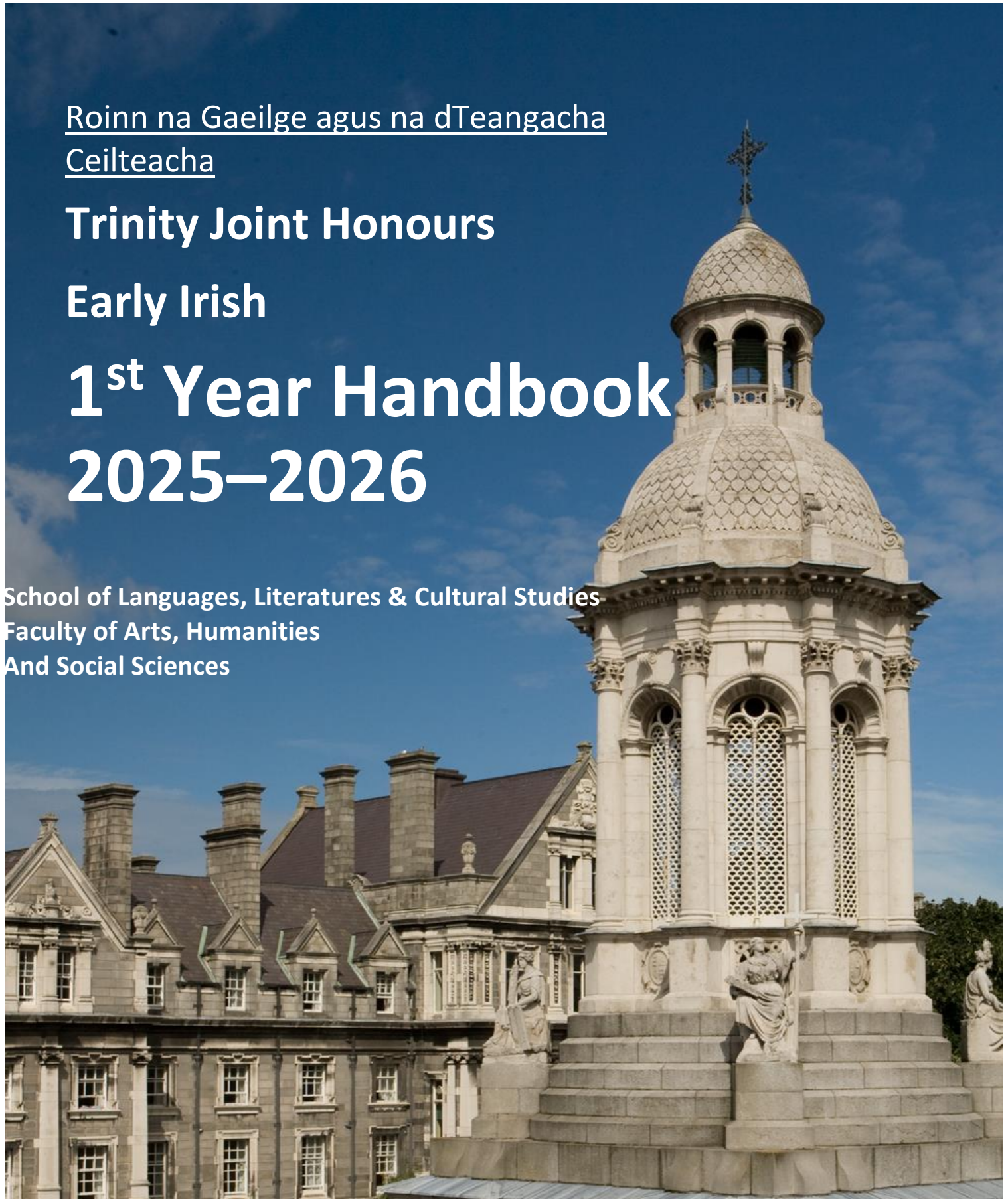
Roinn na Gaeilge agus na dTeangacha Ceilteacha

Trinity Joint Honours

Early Irish

1ˢᵗ Year Handbook 2025–2026

School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Faculty of Arts, Humanities
And Social Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF IRISH 2025 – 2026

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF

Professor of Irish	Chair currently empty	
Professor of Early Irish	Professor (Emeritus) Damian McManus (retired)	
Lecturers	An Dr Eoin Mac Cárthaigh (Head of Department)	**Room 4061**
	An Dr Mícheál Hoyne	**Room 4059**
	An Dr Pádraig de Paor	**Room 4062**
	An Dr Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh	**Room 4060**
	An Dr Christina Cleary	**Room 4056**
	An Dr Peter Weakliam	**Room 4056**
Part-time lecturers	Máire Ní Bháin (retired)	**f/ch Room 4055**
	An Dr Seosamh Mac Cárthaigh	**Room 4056**
Tutors / Teaching Assistants	Cillian Ó Diomasaigh	
	Manus Ó hEochaidh	
	Dean Markey	
Administrative support	Caoimhe ní Bhraonáin School of Languages undergrad support team	**Room 4055** **Room 5080**

You'll get all information about the Department of Irish and Celtic Languages and about our courses from the Departmental Senior Executive Officer.
You will also find lots of useful information about the Department on our website.

Coordinators

Joint Honours (Modern) Irish	Pádraig de Paor	depaorp@tcd.ie
Single Honour Early and Modern Irish and Joint Honours Early Irish	Mícheál Hoyne	mhoyne@tcd.ie
Computer Science &Language/ European Studies	Eoin Mac Cárthaigh	emaccart@tcd.ie
Erasmus (inbound & outbound)	Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh	dnicchar@tcd.ie

Of course, you're also welcome to contact Caoimhe, or the appropriate module if your query relates to that module.

Senior Executive Officer phone number: (896)1450, email: nibhraoc@tcd.ie

NB: The admin support staff in the School has been centralized and, if Caoimhe is not in 4055, you'll find other undergrad support team staff in 5080 or email undergraduate.sllcs@tcd.ie (or timetables.sllcs@tcd.ie if you have a timetabling issue). Tá fáilte romhaibh scríobh as Gaeilge i gcónaí.

Office hours (Room 4055)

Monday on campus **10am to 12pm** or by email after that (nibhraoc@tcd.ie)

Tuesday on campus **10am to 12pm** or by email after that (nibhraoc@tcd.ie)

Wednesday   [Office closed – email only]

Thursday on campus **10am to 1pm** or by email after that (nibhraoc@tcd.ie)

Friday on campus **10am to 1pm** or by email after that (nibhraoc@tcd.ie)

You'll find information about the Department of Irish on our website.

This handbook, a Module Directory and essay cover sheets can all be found on the Departmental pages for undergraduate students.

Departmental phone number: (896)1450, email: nibhraoc@tcd.ie

In the event that there is a discrepancy between College Board General Rules as published in the College Calendar and this handbook, the General Rules shall hold.

You may request an electronic version of this handbook by emailing nibhraoc@tcd.ie.

www.tcd.ie/Irish
https://www.tcd.ie/Irish/undergraduate/handbooks/index.ga.php

THE JOINT HONOURS COURSE IN EARLY IRISH

This course covers Irish language and literature from the very beginnings until early medieval Ireland. The **Early Irish** course explores various aspects of Irish-language literature up to 1200A.D.. Old Irish Language and grammar are taught so that you will acquire the ability to read such Early Irish texts as Táin Bó Cúailgne in their original versions. You will attend lectures on the history of the Irish language and its relationship to other Celtic languages. You will dive into a range of texts from prose to poetry, both ecclesiastical and secular. You may also have the opportunity to learn some Welshe and sample some Welsh literature subject to staff availability.

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In the Irish Language Department, we welcome students from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. We believe that a diversity of ideas and knowledge enriches everyone's learning, provided we treat each other with dignity and respect.

We strive to incorporate accessibility and inclusion into our teaching and classrooms to ensure that all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, background or socio-economic status, have an equal opportunity to participate fully in their studies and achieve their learning goals.

We support the Dignity and Respect Policy, the Accessible Information Policy and other disability-specific policies and procedures, and the aims and objectives of Trinity's Inclusive Curriculum Project. We welcome suggestions and feedback on how we can improve our accessibility and inclusion; please contact the Head of Department, Eoin Mac Cárthaigh at emaccart@tcd.ie

EARLY IRISH – JUNIOR FRESHMAN COURSE

TAUGHT PROGRAMME
You will have **11 Weeks** in Semester 1 (**12 weeks** in Semester 2, which is the usual duration).

IRU11001 Old Irish Grammar A (5 ECTS)
Lecturer: Mícheál Hoyne **(Grammar)** Semester 1, 2 hrs per week
Tutor: Cillian Ó Diomasaigh **(tutorial)** Semester 1, 1 hr per week
Assessment: 66% written exam, 34% grammar exercises [written exam 60 minutes in the official winter exam session]
Reading: E. G. Quin, *Old-Irish Workbook* (Dublin 1975)
J. Strachan and O. Bergin, *Old-Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old-Irish Glosses* (Dublin 1949, srl.)
A. Green *Old Irish Verbs and Vocabulary* (Somerville, MA, 1995)

IRU11021 Introduction to Early Irish Sources (5 ECTS)
Lecturer: Seosamh Mac Cárthaigh. 1 hr per week, Semester 1
Assessment: 40% Written exam, 60% essay. [classroom-based exam 45 minutes in Week 12] [Essay: Deadline 19.12.25]
Reading: A reading list will be provided

IRU11041 Introduction to Early Irish Sagas (5 ECTS)
Lecturer: Damian McManus. 1 hr per week, Semester 1 :: **ONLINE**
Assessment: 100% essay. [Deadline: 19.12.24]
Reading: A reading list (and reading materials) will be provided

IRU11002 Old Irish Grammar B (10 ECTS)
Lecturer: Mícheál Hoyne **(Grammar)** Semester 2, 2 hrs per week
Tutor: Cillian Ó Diomasaigh **(tutorial)** Semester 2, 1 hr per week
Assessment: 66% written exam, 34% grammar exercises [written exam 120 minutes in the official summer exam session]
Reading: E. G. Quin, *Old-Irish Workbook* (Dublin 1975)
J. Strachan and O. Bergin, *Old-Irish Paradigms and Selections from the Old-Irish Glosses* (Dublin 1949, srl.)
A. Green *Old Irish Verbs and Vocabulary* (Somerville, MA, 1995)

IRU11032 Introduction to Old Irish Prose (5 ECTS)
Lecturer: Mícheál Hoyne. Semester 2, 1 hr per week
Assessment: 100% written exam [classroom-based exam 45 minutes]
Reading: J. Strachan & O. Bergin *Stories from the Táin* (Dublin 1944, srl.)
Any other required texts will be provided

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS IN EARLY IRISH

Written exams:
Winter Examinations
Old Irish Grammar A   (66% of) IRU11001 Old Irish Grammar A (1 hour)
Summer Examinations
Old Irish Grammar B   (66% of) IRU11002 Old Irish Grammar B (2 hours)

Classroom Exams
Written exam, Week 12, T1   (40% of) IRU11021 Introduction to Early Irish Sources
Written exam, Week 12, T2   (100% of) IRU11032 Introduction to Old Irish Prose

Continuous Assessment:
Essay (2000-2,500 words)   (60% of) IRU11021 Introduction to Early Irish Sources
Essay (c.2,500 words)   (100% of) IRU11041 Introduction to Early Irish Saga
Homework exercises   (34% of) IRU11001 Old Irish Grammar A
Homework exercises   (34% of) IRU11002 Old Irish Grammar B

You have two essays to submit in Early Irish: one for **IRU11021 Introduction to Old Irish Sources** and one for **IRU11041 Introduction to Early Irish Saga**.

The essays (IRU11021 *Introduction to Old Irish Sources* and IRU11041 *Introduction to Early Saga*) are due on or before **19 December 2025**.

TORTHAÍ FOGHLAMA
IRU11001 & IRU11002 Old Irish Grammar A&B
On successful completion of this module students should be able to:
- read and translate basic classical Old Irish
- describe the orthography of Old Irish and how it differs from its modern counterpart
- analyse the grammatical structure of basic Old Irish sentences with the appropriate terminology
- describe the concept of the 'paradigm' and apply it to the grammatical analysis
- recognise and explain the main differences between Old and Modern Irish
- apply the skills of grammatical analysis acquired in the study of Old Irish to any other language
- use textual glossaries competently.

IRU11021 The sources of Early Irish literature
On successful completion of this module students should be able to:
- read and describe a basic type of the Irish alphabet *cló Gaelach*
- identify different types of dating criteria and apply them to dating a given manuscript (Irish or otherwise)
- place Old Irish accurately in a wider continuum of development and transmission of the Irish language
- provide an elementary assessment of the position of Irish within the wider linguistic family of Celtic
- read and describe the Ogam alphabet
- recognise and describe the basic features of Old Irish syllabic metrics.

IRU11041 Introduction to Early Irish Sagas
On successful completion of this module students should be able to:
- recognise and describe the main cycles into which Early Irish literature is divided for purposes of analysis
- articulate the varying views of modern scholarship regarding the nature and function of early Irish saga
- analyse the main features of heroic biography and apply the template to the sagas read
- identify the underlying moral or message of the sagas studied
- articulate the relevance of Early Irish saga for the modern reader
- write a fully referenced essay drawing on the detailed bibliography provided for each saga.

IR11032 Old Irish Prose (HT, 5 ECTS)
On successful completion of this module students should be able to:
- translate on their own Old Irish prose tales of a similar level (such as the remainder of those edited in *Stories from the Táin*)
- recall and apply the format of grammatical analysis to other Old Irish forms within their level of competence
- transfer the format of grammatical analysis to words in their own mother tongue and other languages outside of Old Irish
- consult a textual glossary and correctly identify words and grammatical forms in it.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

a. ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend all lectures and classes of the course, and to complete the course exercises and essays. If they consistently fail to attend, this may be reported to the Senior Lecturer; if such a report is made at the end of both terms of the same academic year, the Senior Lecturer may refuse permission for the student to sit the annual examinations. Each student must attend at least two-thirds of the lectures and classes in any given module, and must complete at least two-thirds of the written work associated with that module, in order to earn the credit points for the course and to avoid being deemed non-satisfactory.

b. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT / ESSAYS

Students should note that a significant percentage of the first-year marks is awarded for exercises and essays completed during the year. It is therefore very important not to neglect this work.

Students are required to write two essays during the year, each between 2,000 and 2,500 words in length.

The two Early Irish essays (IRU11021 Introduction to Old Irish Sources and IRU11041 Introduction to Early Irish Saga) are due on or before **19 December 2025**. An electronic copy of each essay must be submitted through Blackboard (and to *aisti.gaeilge@tcd.ie* if requested by the lecturer). A cover page is available at on the Department's website.

A penalty of 5% per week will be applied after the deadline, and no essay will be accepted more than two weeks late without special permission from the Head of Department. Each student must submit the essay, together with the official cover form, through Blackboard.

Essays – General Guidelines

Essays must be neat, legible, and typed with 1.5 or double line spacing. Adequate margins should be left for notes, etc. Essays should present a coherent argument with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. State your approach at the outset, or explain precisely what you intend to do. Use references to primary texts (or excerpts from them) in support of your argument, and include translations of the excerpts where necessary. End with a conclusion.

References should be provided (in footnotes, endnotes, or in-text parentheses). A bibliography must be included at the end of the essay, listing works in alphabetical order by authors' surnames.

The use of other scholars' views is acceptable provided that proper acknowledgement and references are given; however, your own arguments are the most important element in assessment. Do not leave quotations as isolated "orphans" in the middle of your essay: comment on them and integrate them into your argument. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited (see below).

References

The preferred system is *"surname + date + page number"*, with full details provided in the bibliography at the end of the essay. Here is an example:

> As Aisling Ní Dhonnchadha explains this development in the Irish short story: 'Blah, blah, blah', (Ní Dhonnchadha, 1981, 135–6).

In the bibliography at the end of the essay, this should appear as follows:

For a book:
> Ní Dhonnchadha, A. (1981). *An Gearrscéal sa Ghaeilge.*

For an academic article in a book:
> Ó Háinle, C. (1978). 'Gnéithe d'ealaín Phádraic Uí Chonaire', *Promhadh Pinn* (pp. 22–31).

c. Academic Plagiarism

All students are strongly advised to read carefully the University's policy on Academic Plagiarism. This policy is published in the *University of Dublin Calendar 2024–2025* (General Regulations and Information) and further details are available in the School handbook. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work or ideas of another person (student or scholar) to the University as your own — i.e. without citing the source of that work or those ideas, and without giving due acknowledgement to their author. The Department of Irish is required to apply the University's regulations in any such case.

All students must complete the online course *Ready Steady, Write* and sign a declaration to this effect when submitting written work (available at: http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write).

d. Grades

Grade	Mark Range	Description
I	70%–100%	outstanding answer/essay
II.1	60%–69%	very good answer/essay
II.2	50%–59%	good answer/essay
III	40%–49%	satisfactory answer/essay
F1	30%–39%	unsatisfactory answer/essay (fail)
F2	0%–29%	very poor answer/essay (fail)

Assessment criteria:

- **Essay:** quality of arguments, presentation (see below), breadth of reading, linguistic accuracy, fluency of style, richness of vocabulary, accuracy of spelling.
- **Translation:** fidelity to the original text, linguistic accuracy, fluency of style, richness of vocabulary, accuracy of spelling.
- **Analysis:** accuracy of analysis, level of detail, and consistency of analysis with the translation.

	Thesis	Research	Argument	Presentation
First-class	new, well-developed ideas	primary sources, variety of appropriate sources	well-organised, with conclusion	clear style, no typographical errors
Second-class honours (II.1)	well-developed	secondary sources, variety	organised, but no conclusion	requires attention in terms of style and syntax
Second-class honours (II.2) / Third-class honours	unclear	only one or two sources	moderately organised	careless throughout
Fail	no thesis	superficial	poorly organised	subtantial weaknesses

e. PRIZES

i. **Thaddeus O'Mahony Prize**: awarded to the student achieving the best results in the first-year Modern Irish examinations.

ii. **Composition Prize**: awarded to the three students who produce the best essays during the first year in Modern Irish.

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f. Gaeltacht Grants

First-year Modern Irish students must spend at least eight weeks in the Gaeltacht before taking their final-year degree examination (in the third or fourth year). To assist students in fulfilling this requirement, a limited number of Gaeltacht grants are awarded each academic year.

To apply, students must submit a specific application form at the end of the first term and attend an interview or meeting as announced. Those selected will be entitled to a grant, provided the conditions are met.

Students are strongly encouraged to attend Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta (NUIG) for a summer residential Gaeltacht course before entering the second or third year (mid-May, two weeks). Caoimhe ní Bhraonáin is the staff contact for enquiries about the grants.

g. Optional Trinity Modules / New Subject Areas

In the second year, students will make choices regarding their pathway through the undergraduate course. Students may take up to 20 ECTS outside the Early and Modern Irish programme – optional modules, new minor subjects, or similar. Further information is available at: https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/trinity-pathways/

Additional Notes for Students in the Department of Irish

Useful Academic Resources

- The Library: see www.tcd.ie/library to access the catalogue

- www.tearma.ie: online terminology dictionary, useful for modern terms, but Ó Dónaill / de Bhaldraithe should be used for general daily vocabulary (www.focloir.ie and www.teanglann.ie)

- www.edil.ie: *eDIL – Dictionary of the Irish Language*, searchable online, especially useful for Early Irish

- Gaeilge na hAlban: see www.smo.uhi.ac.uk and www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba for additional material

College Life Resources

Tutors: Your tutor is your link with College offices. They provide confidential support for illness, personal issues, or academic problems. See www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/your_tutor for more information.

Counselling: College counsellors assist students with personal or academic difficulties. See www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling and http://student2student.tcd.ie/ for peer advice. They cover a wide range of topics, including stress, essay writing, note-taking, etc.

Disability Services: Provides support and services for students with any disability or learning difficulty. See www.tcd.ie/disability/

Career Services: Specific contact in the Department of Irish: Orlaith Tunney. See www.tcd.ie/careers/ for more information. Further details are also available in the School Handbook.

Students' Union: Offers a wide range of services, including welfare support and social events. See www.tcdsu.org

Cumann Gaelach: Organises céilís, singing groups, set-dancing classes, beginner Irish courses for international students, weekend trips, and the annual Féile na hÉigse. See www.cumann.ie

Irish Language Office: Promotes Irish within the College, among staff and students, and provides services and information, including student accommodation schemes in Irish. See www.tcd.ie/gaeloifig

In an emergency: College Security Services can be reached at x1999 (01 896 1999)

ECTS: The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is described in the School Handbook.

Plagiarism: See the College Calendar (Calendar Statement on Plagiarism for Undergraduates – Part II, 82–91) here and the consequences of plagiarism here. Further information is in the School Handbook.

Career Guidance Service:

As a student of Trinity College, you have access to information, support, and guidance from the Career Guidance staff during your time at the College and for one year after graduation. Services include individual career appointments, CV and LinkedIn profile clinics, practice interviews, and mentoring.

Visit https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/ for career advice, postgraduate study information, and job searches.

Sign in to MyCareer to book appointments, access vacancies and internships, and register for upcoming employer events.

Follow the service on Instagram for career news and advice: @trinity.careers.service

Note regarding the use of Articifial Intelligence and Generative AI

Please be advised of the following:
1) We do not encourage you to use *ChatGPT* (or similar) in your assessed work, but – providing you do so in conformity with the present document – we do not forbid it.

2) If you use it, *ChatGPT* (or similar) must be acknowledged like any other source: if you take information and/or ideas from it, you should indicate this just as if you were taking them from a published article. If you take wording from *ChatGPT*, this should be acknowledged and in quotation marks. As with any other source, long strings of quoted matter are not advisable. Failure to provide such acknowledgments constitutes a breach of the College plagiarism policy.

3) The reader should be in no doubt as to where each piece of information in your work comes from. Markers will be on the lookout for suspect information and passages that demonstrate the particular weaknesses of generative AI. Incorrect and/or fabricated information will be penalized, while thorough and competent referencing will be rewarded.

4) Citations of *ChatGPT*, or any equivalent, should follow this format:

Creator. Date of Access. Platform/Tool used. Accessed at: URL. Prompt: "Text of prompt entered."

For example:

Open AI. Accessed 5th Jan 2023. *ChatGPT*. Accessed at: https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/. Prompt: "How reliable are the sources for Enheduanna's poetry?"

If you gave it multiple prompts, there should be multiple citations.

4) While properly referencing *ChatGPT* will protect you from plagiarism, it will not protect you from the errors which it generates. You would be well advised to independently verify information provided by *ChatGPT*. If you do this, it is fine to quote directly from the sources you use for verification – you no longer need to quote ChatGPT itself.

5) With immediate effect, all assessed-work cover-sheets in the School will ask you to state whether you have used 'artificial intelligence' or not in producing the work. This question must be answered over and above the provision of any references to such a source. Answering this question incorrectly will be counted as a breach of academic integrity.

If you answer 'yes', you should include the full text provided by *ChatGPT* in an appendix to your work, so that the marker can see the full context (as they would be able to if you quoted a normal publication).

6) In the event that markers suspect unacknowledged/improper use of *ChatGPT*, you may be called to an investigative meeting, where you will be examined on both the form and content of the work in question, and on the general topic. In the event the markers still have concerns, these will be referred to the Junior Dean as a suspected breach of academic integrity.

7) Just as AI tools are evolving, so too are AI-detection tools. Turnitin has announced new capabilities to appear by the end of this year. Improper use of *ChatGPT* now could come back to haunt you later.

A final point is that, precisely because a certain kind of (fairly low-level) writing can now be done by chatGPT, future employers will no doubt be looking for humans whose capabilities in writing, research and argument go beyond those of AI tools. All the more reason, then, to properly hone these skills. 'Artificial intelligence' may prove to be a helpful tool in certain circumstances if used properly, but you should not allow it to stifle your curiosity or your determination to learn and grow as a student of Trinity College.

Martin Worthington and Jennifer Edmond (Directors of UG and PG education, on behalf of the School)