



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

XX = Board relevance

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

An extraordinary meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 2 September 2015 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Dean of Students, Professor A Holohan, Professor G Watson, Professor R Dahyot, Professor J P Spiers, Professor C Comiskey, Professor M Clarke, Dr S Bloomfield , Ms S Cameron-Coen, Dr G Hegarty, Ms M Kenny, Ms P O'Beirne, Mr J Bryant, Mr D Whelehan, Ms. S Kearney.
<i>Apologies</i>	Vice-President for Global Relations, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor D Faas, Professor C Morash, Professor J Walsh, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor I Donohue, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor P Cronin, Professor D Kelleher, Chief Operating Officer, Academic Secretary, M S. Hatton.
<i>In attendance</i>	Librarian and College Archivist, Secretary to the College, Ms S De Brunner.
<i>Observers</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Ms A P Worrall).
<i>By invitation</i>	Professor D Wilkins

SECTION A

The Provost requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda items. None was declared. The Provost welcomed members, new and continuing, to the extraordinary meeting of Council. He also welcomed Professor D Wilkins, who attended the meeting to answer technical questions related to CL/15-16/002.

CL/15-16/001 Statutory Declaration

Those members attending Council for the first time made the statutory declaration.

CL/15-16/002 Context for the Revised Common Points Scale

A memorandum, dated 26 August 2015, from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer was circulated. Introducing the item, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer commented that the documentation sets out the recommendations from the Task Group on University Reform of University Selection and Entry (TGRUSE) on the revised common points scale and minimum matriculation requirements, the context for the development of these revisions, the process involved and the rationale for the recommendations presented. She noted that the other universities and the Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI), the body which represents the institutes of technology, have already approved the proposed revisions.

She endorsed the adoption of the proposed scale (NL3) and made a number of general observations related to its design, development and implementation:

Higher			Ordinary		
Bands	Grade	Points	Bands	Grade	Points
90 - 100%	H1	100			
80 < 90%	H2	88			
70 < 80%	H3	77			
60 < 70%	H4	66			
50 < 60%	H5	56	90 - 100%	O1	56
40 < 50%	H6	46	80 < 90%	O2	46
30 < 40%	H7	37	70 < 80%	O3	37
0 < 30%	H8	0	60 < 70%	O4	28
			50 < 60%	O5	20
			40 < 50%	O6	12
			30 < 40%	O7	0
			0 < 30%	O8	0

Proposed Revised Common Points Scale (NL3)

- Trinity College provided significant input into the process with Professor Wilkins acting as the expert advisor to the technical working group;
- Trinity College’s Admission Officer was a member of the technical group;
- the proposed scale does not depart from the existing parameters within the current CAO system which safeguard objectivity and transparency;
- it respects considerations of simplicity, memorability and practicality since, of the models considered, it is closest to the current points scale and, further, at the higher level, it places the points to be awarded within the percentage grade bands;
- in practical terms, the new scale can be implemented within the various information systems used across the sector and within the CAO; and
- it would not be feasible for Trinity College to unilaterally develop and implement its own points scale, and, in any case, to do so could be detrimental to student recruitment.

Speaking more particularly about the principles approved by Council in May 2015 (CL/14-15/171) she explained how these were met by the recommendations.

Principle 1: The revised points scale maintains the current alignment between the higher and ordinary level papers in terms of the award of points, that is, the current alignment of HC3-OA1 will be translated to H5-O1 on the revised scale (at 56 points). The Education Research Centre in St. Patrick’s College has conducted research which confirms the validity of this alignment and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the State Examination Commission will ensure that this alignment is reflected in the content of examination papers and marking processes.

Principle 2: The revised scale is moderately non-linear and moderately convex with the size of the increments increasing slightly as grade bands rise. With the introduction of broader grading bands in the Leaving Certificate, the retention of a linear scale would have resulted in excessive levels of random selection as a consequence of a greater number of students receiving the same aggregate points. The proposed scale minimises the number of candidates presenting with identical aggregate points scores by distributing candidates across a fuller range of possible points totals.

She highlighted the issue of ‘leap-frogging’ associated with non-linear convex scales, that is, where a candidate, with an uneven grade profile and a lower percentage average on a linear scale, overtakes another candidate with a more even grade profile and a higher percentage

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average on the non-linear scale. She noted, however, that the proposed scale is only moderately convex and keeps this phenomenon within academically justifiable grounds.

Principle 3: The revised points scale awards points for the new H7 (30<39%) grade. This is designed to encourage more students to take-up higher level subjects in the senior cycle by reducing the risk associated with higher level examinations. It creates pedagogical incentives for students to engage with higher level curricula whilst not over-rewarding performance at this level.

The second component of this principle is to accept the H7 grade for matriculation purposes. It is proposed that Trinity’s current minimum matriculation requirements of three HC3 grades and three OD3 grades move to three H5 grades and three H7/O6 grades under the new grading structure. There are no changes proposed, however, to the subjects required for matriculation.

In addition to this, some guidance has been given on translating minimum subject requirements under the current grading scheme to the new scheme. She outlined that HC3 (55-60), HC1 (65-70) and HB2 (75-80), should translate to H4 (60-70), H3 (70-80) and H2 (80-90), respectively, and noted that this information corrects details provided in the memorandum.

Principle 4: She noted that there are no changes proposed in relation to awarding bonus points to students achieving a passing grade in higher level mathematics, that is, they will only apply to candidates achieving a H6 grade or higher.

In the discussion that ensued, the work of TGRUSE, the technical group and Professor Wilkins was commended. It was noted that these changes, alone, would not address the ‘points race’ and nor would they assist students with their transition to third-level education.

Further clarification was offered by Professor Wilkins in relation to ‘leap-frogging’ and the minimisation of random selection under the proposed scale, based on his analysis of encoded anonymised leaving certificate data from 2010.

Council approved the recommendations put forward by TGRUSE and the Provost extended his thanks to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor David Wilkins and the Admissions Officer for their work on behalf of Trinity College and their contribution to the sector.

Signed

Date