



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

**XX = Board relevance**

**Trinity College Dublin  
The University of Dublin**

**A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 11 March 2020 at 11.15 am in the Trinity Board Room.**

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Vice-President for Global Relations, Dean of Students, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor D. Murchan, Professor D. Shepherd, Professor C. Kelly, Professor M Monaghan, Professor M. Ruffini, Professor M. Clarke, Professor M. Corry, Professor A. Long, Ms. E. Black, Mr D. O'Reilly, Ms G. Scanlon, Dr. A. Guha.
<i>Apologies</i>	Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of Research, Professor R.A. Kenny, Professor A.M. Brady, Professor S. Alyn Stacey, Academic Secretary, Dr. S. Kerr, Ms D. Kelleher, Ms N. McCay, Ms I. Lis.
<i>In attendance</i>	Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Director of Student Services, Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms Sorcha De Brunner.
<i>Observers</i>	Mr F. Frank, Mr. D. Ringis

**SECTION A**

The Provost welcomed everyone to Council. He requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda. The Secretary noted that there were no conflicts of interest reported in relation to the agenda.

**CL/19-20/103    Declarations by new Members and Observers**

A new Council observer made the required statutory declaration.

**CL/19-20/104    Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 12 February 2020 with the amended wording 'Assistant Professor in Intellectual Disability' under item CL/19-20/101 (Nominations for Appointment) were approved and signed.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

**CL/19-20/105 Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising.

**CL/19-20/106 Provost's Report**

The Provost advised that as he had provided an extensive report at the February Council meeting there was not a need to provide a report at this meeting. He informed Council that the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025 was launched by livestream on 9 March 2020 and he invited Council members to take a hardcopy of the Trinity Strategic Plan after the meeting. He extended his thanks to the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and his team for their excellent work on the Strategic Plan, which presents nine goals spanning all of Trinity's activities and encapsulates a number of existing strategies such as 'A Living Research Excellence Strategy' and the 'Global Relations Strategy 3'.

**CL/19-20/107 Revised Senior Academic Promotions Procedure**

**XX**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the principal changes to the Senior Academic Promotions Procedure advising Council that following the completion of the 2018 Senior Academic Promotions round, the Senior Academic Promotions Committee (SAPC) met on 6 February 2020 to review the policy and process. He reported that a number of principal changes to the policy were recommended that were considered and approved by the Executive Officers Group on 3 March 2020 and the Human Resources (HR) Committee on 9 March 2020. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that consultation had been carried out with representatives of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) trade union, Heads of School, and candidates that participated in the 2018 Senior Academic Promotions round.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer brought Council through the proposed principal changes as follows:

1. Re-introduction of a Head of School signed report to ensure that the Head of School has reviewed the application and confirmed the accuracy of the information within it. He added that the Head of School will not provide a judgement on the suitability of the candidate for promotion.
2. Reinstatement of interviews for 'Professor Of' shortlisted candidates with SAPC to interview the shortlisted candidates.
3. Suspension of the Accelerated Advancement for Associate Professors to enable the Committee to make the maximum number of awards of promotion to staff to a higher grade given the constraints of the financial envelope.
4. Removal of the option to re-allocate 5% of the weighting from one category to another for scoring purposes, as the option currently only applies to applicants for promotion to Associate Professor.
5. Making it clearer that applicants may apply to three consecutive promotion rounds rather than 'within a three-year period'.
6. Approval of a Panel of external members for SAPC to draw upon for availability purposes, with the same three members to be used for a promotion call.
7. 'Special circumstances' to be now called 'personal circumstances'.
8. Provost (or nominee) to rank the names of all eight external referees.
9. Slightly widened eligibility to act as an external referee with only co-authors from the preceding seven years excluded, rather than general collaborators.
10. Revision of the wording on feedback to unsuccessful candidates.
11. Definitions of research to include mention of campus companies.
12. Editing of the application form to expand the word count in the teaching section to 800 from 350 words. He advised that applicants will be asked to provide more specific input on timetabled and supervision hours, curriculum development, teaching innovation, addressing student feedback specifying the impact that this had on their

teaching.

13. Removal of the indicative timeline for the promotions round – to enable the next three rounds to run in quick succession over 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and invited questions and comments.

The reintroduction of the Head of School signed report was welcomed, and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer was asked to provide clarification on the nature of the information to be provided by Heads of School on teaching, particularly in relation to supervision, due to supervision hours for Masters' students varying considerably across and within disciplines. The member added that it would also be useful to quantify the number of Masters and PhD students instead. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer acknowledged the variability of supervision hours across disciplines and noted that this had been raised by the Unions also. He noted that average supervision hours could only ever be estimated due to the variability in student needs and, he added, that there would be a difficulty in stating a minimum number of students for supervision, as this would be dependent on students being available.

Referring to appendix 7, question 3 in the 'Research and Scholarship' section of the Head of School Report, a member suggested that this be reworded as follows 'What are the primary research outputs in your field and how are these evaluated?', as the original phrasing of the question may benefit some disciplines over others. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer agreed with the suggested wording stating that there was no intention to advantage one discipline over another. Referring to a comment on the provision of feedback, he remarked that written feedback will be provided to unsuccessful candidates by the Promotions Committee and the Faculty Review Committee through the Faculty Deans and the Faculty HR Partner, which will also provide feedback through face-to-meetings on request.

**Decision:**

**CL/19-20/107.1:** Council approved the revisions to Procedure No. 57, Senior Academic Promotions Procedure subject to the inclusion of the question 'What are the primary research outputs in your field and how are these evaluated?' to replace question 3 in the 'Research and Scholarship' section of the Head of School Report.

**CL/19-20/108 Proposal in relation to Distance-Based Postgraduate Research Study**

The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced the proposal for Distance-Based Postgraduate Research Study by outlining the rationale for the policy. He referred to the high cost of living in Dublin and limited accommodation availability as barriers to Postgraduate Research (PGR) registration and reported that online technologies are successfully employed in comparator universities to provide greater access to higher education. The proposal, he acknowledged, may not apply to all programmes due to the nature and requirements of specific disciplines and Schools adding that the admission of an applicant to a distance-based PGR programme will be contingent on the approval of the supervisor and the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) (DTLP).

The Dean of Graduate Studies brought Council through the main elements of the proposed model advising that applicants apply in the normal way indicating their preference to study on a distance basis, normal course fees are charged, and that existing students on the standard register can be permitted to transfer to the distance-model. He added that it is proposed that the DLTP/prospective supervisor(s) interview prospective candidates to confirm their suitability, and that the candidate will need to agree to a set of conditions presented in a supplementary application form prior to joining the 'distance-register'.

Supports for students studying via the distance-model were outlined by the Dean of Graduate Studies as follows, the agreement of a supervision plan prior to admission; regular online meetings with supervisor(s) and group online meetings with other students; regular webinars and podcasts; and students taking a minimum of 20 ECTS of taught modules,

which may include a new careers and employability module, currently under development, and the existing module 'Teaching and Supporting Learning as a Graduate Teaching Assistant'. He added that students will be required to have taken a minimum of 10 ECTS by the end of their first-year and may, over the course of the programme, take structured modules in other universities acquiring credit for their structured PhD once approved by their supervisor(s) and DTLP.

The Dean of Graduate Studies referred to the limitations of distance-study including, the lack of access to teaching and networking opportunities, and student services and supports. However, he stated that he was confident that the online supports outlined previously would be sufficient to address the limitations, and that prospective candidates will be asked to confirm their understanding of the limitations through the supplemental application form.

The Provost invited questions and comments from Council.

The Librarian and College Archivist thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies for his presentation and asked if distance-based PGR registration is on the increase, and if it is expected that Trinity grant PhD students from other universities access to the Library. The Dean of Graduate Studies responded that the practice in comparable universities is that the majority of students are located in the university and that PhD students may have access to their local libraries. He added that while he expects there to be an interest in this distance mode of research education, he does not have data on projected numbers. He confirmed that the plan is to pilot this model with Schools from September 2020, if the proposal is approved, and that a full review will be undertaken after two and a half years.

Responding to a question raised on whether the 'Teaching and Supporting Learning' module will be mandatory the Dean of Graduate Studies acknowledged that due to some students already teaching at an advanced level the module would not be mandatory.

A member commented that funding bodies such as the Irish Research Council (IRC) may not provide funding for distance PhD students. The Dean of Graduate Studies acknowledged that there may be a need to approach funding bodies to explain the distance model, and in response to a question on stipends he advised that such students would be eligible for stipends. He confirmed that a student receiving external funding could apply to undertake their postgraduate research studies at a distance and that such students will pay the same fees as those who are physically present on campus. He clarified that these students would also have to be physically present for their confirmation hearing and *viva voce* examination.

The Senior Tutor stated that while he endorsed the proposal his own experience taught him that there is a need to ensure that all online meetings are attended, as slippage can happen. The Dean of Graduate Studies concurred and stated that this would need to be properly managed.

In response to a question from the Provost relating to regulation 53 in the Calendar Part III, Section I, the Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that the rule states that 'Normally, all graduate students should enter into residence in or near Dublin'. Concerns were expressed by students on the consequences of removing the Calendar requirement and the introduction of this model, as there may be immigration and residency implications for international students. The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that he did not expect this development to impact on applications for immigration and residency.

A member asked if the model is intended to be open equally to candidates living in Ireland and overseas, and if consideration had been given to the resourcing and management of online meetings and webinars. The Dean of Graduate Studies advised it would be up to students and not Schools to organise the webinars.

The Dean of Students highlighted some of the findings emerging from the postgraduate student survey in relation to the student experience and urged caution. The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that he was confident that the limitations presented in the

application form and explicitly acknowledged by the applicant, would offset expectations relating to professional networking opportunities and research ambience.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer added his support for the proposal stating that the concerns raised by the Dean of Students were addressed through the policy, as it clearly outlines the conditions attached to the distance model.

The Provost stated that it would be important to establish interest in piloting this model and suggested that an appeals mechanism relating to the transfer of students from the standard mode to the distance mode be built into the policy.

**Decision:**

**CL/19-20/108.1:** Council approved the Distance-Based Postgraduate Research Study proposal, in principle, subject to the inclusion of an appeals mechanism and subject to presenting information on the proposed pilot Schools to a future Council meeting for consideration and approval.

**Actions:**

**CL/19-20/108.2:** The Dean of Graduate Studies to bring a proposal on piloting the distance model to a future meeting of Council for consideration and approval.

**CL/19-20/108.3:** The Dean of Graduate Studies to include a mechanism for student appeals relating to the transfer of existing students to the distance-mode of research study in the policy.

**CL/19-20/108.4:** The Dean of Graduate Studies to review and revise the wording of the Calendar Part III regulation relating to the residency requirement.

The Provost stated that item 7 would be taken prior to item 6 due to item 6 requiring considerable time for discussion.

**CL/19-20/109 Annual Report of the Dean of Graduate Studies 2018/19**

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that he would take the Academic Registry (AR) Annual Report 2018/19 as read. He stated that his annual report does not include an analysis of 2019/20 applications due to this data not being presented in the AR Annual Report.

The Annual Report of the Dean of Graduate Studies, he explained, is structured in three sections, Part A: Commentary on the AR Annual Report, Part B: Other Developments in the 2019 year, and Part C: Looking Forward. The Dean of Graduate Studies advised Council that due to time constraints he would focus on Parts B and C. Reporting on Part B of the Annual Report he referred to a number of developments that took place in 2019/20 including, the establishment of the Thesis Committee model of supervision for incoming 2019/20 PhD entrants; Thesis by Publication allowing students to submit a thesis comprising a series of published or unpublished papers bookended by an introduction and conclusion; and supporting the student hardship fund through the 'Trinity on the Move' cycle, which raised €16,000. Part C of the report he explained highlights three critical issues for future consideration – financing and the PGR space; systems, processes and resources; and the vision of the 'Trinity Student'. The Dean of Graduate Studies in referring to financing and the PGR space drew attention to the financial pressures faced by PhD students due to escalating rents and the underfunding of students in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. He stated that the stipends are well below the living wage thus creating hardship for students and reduce Trinity's ability to attract students. Trinity systems, processes and resources, he explained, are not adequately resourced resulting in matters not being dealt with efficiently and promptly. The Dean of Graduate Studies in referring to his vision of the 'Trinity Student' described Trinity's postgraduate education as one that works around the undergraduate education model and is not meeting the needs of graduate students. He explained that the recommendations presented in Part C are based on issues that have arisen during discussions at the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) and are presented in the context of postgraduate reform. He acknowledged that it would not be appropriate for Council to consider the recommendations alone, given the resource implications these are also a matter for the Finance Committee.

The Provost invited questions and comments.

A discussion of recommendations presented on fees took place with a student member supporting the introduction of EU fees for all students, and the waiving of the difference in fee between the contribution paid by funders and the fee charged by Trinity. The Provost explained that individual Schools are free to cover the fee difference in respect of their students; it would not be appropriate for the fee difference to be taken from the central fund, as this would draw resources away from other Schools and their students. He advised that the Dean of Graduate Studies recommendations would be noted and that these would need to be presented and discussed by the Finance Committee. The Dean of Students referred to findings of the postgraduate student survey relating to the funding of postgraduate research students and highlighted that 41% of students in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences are completely self-funded and he emphasised the need to provide support to these students.

The Director of Student Services clarified that the purpose of the AR Annual Report is to present data on the previous academic year and she offered to work with the Dean of Graduate Studies on the inclusion of additional statistics in the report in the future. She added that she welcomed the recommendation to provide additional resources to the AR.

A member referred to the structured PhD modules highlighting that there is duplication across Schools, which needs to be addressed. The Dean of Graduate Studies stated that this will be explored in the context of the review of postgraduate education and that, in the meantime, a full list of PhD generic modules is being produced by the Graduate Studies Office.

**Decision:**

**CL/19-20/109.1:** Council noted the recommendations presented in the Annual Report of the Dean of Graduate Studies 2018/19 and approved the Annual Report.

**CL/19-20/110 Contingency Planning for Academic Continuity in response to Coronavirus**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 4 March 2020, was circulated. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the item by outlining a number of measures which had already been put in place in Trinity in response to the Covid-19 outbreak such as moving lectures online for students. He noted that in making these decisions, Trinity is trying to strike a balance between keeping students and staff members safe, whilst enabling the continuation of College business, in so far as possible. He noted that Government policy is evolving and, as it does, Trinity will respond with necessary actions. He invited the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies to speak to his memorandum on contingency planning.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies requested Council to consider several contingency measures, particularly in relation to examinations to ensure that students can be appropriately assessed, and reassessed if necessary, to enable progression at the end of the academic year.

Concentrating on contingency measures for examinations, he outlined the following, which, if approved, could be implemented locally by schools:

- Convert examinations to written assignments.
- Conduct online examinations through Blackboard.
- Re-designate some modules as Pass/Fail where students have completed sufficient continuous assessment to pass the module without the examination component.
- For small classes, conduct local examinations in locally managed space, maintaining appropriate social distancing.
- Extend the designated examination period.
- Delay some or all examinations to the reassessment period.

In addition to the above plans, he suggested further contingency examination days, in addition to those approved previously in the academic year.

	<b>Standard dates</b>	<b>Contingency dates previously approved</b>	<b>Proposed additional contingency dates</b>
<b>Semester 2 Assessment Session</b>	Mon 27 April – Fri 1 May	Thurs 23 – Sat 25 April	Sat 2 May, Tues 5 - Sat 9 May, Mon 11 - Sat 16 May
<b>Reassessment Session</b>	Mon 31 August – Fri 4 September	Mon 24 - Fri 28 August	Mon 17 - Sat 22 August, Sat 29 August

The Dean of Graduate Studies indicated that he had asked coordinators of postgraduate modules to provide alternative modes of assessment for students.

Speaking about Commencements, the Registrar advised that just under 1,000 graduands are expected to attend ceremonies across three days in April. Whilst still scheduled, for the time being, attendees have been contacted to see if they would like to be conferred *in absentia*; they would have to explicitly request this option.

The Provost advised that significant levels of work and planning have been put into responding to the Covid-19 outbreak and he reiterated that the main priority is to ensure the health and safety of Trinity’s students and staff members. He stressed that lectures have not been cancelled, rather they are moving online; it may take a few days to implement this across College and that training sessions are underway with assistance being offered to lecturers. He commented that some module activities such as laboratory sessions and practicals cannot be taken online and advised that these could still run, as could smaller seminars and tutorials, provided social distancing protocols are observed. He advised that the University community will be kept informed of developments through regular communications.

Members of Council raised queries and concerns in relation to the continued physical delivery of some types of teaching. These related to the maximum class size for small group teaching; students travelling into Trinity, many on public transport; while social distancing measures can be enforced in the teaching space this is not possible in doorways and hallways. One member confirmed that his School had moved all teaching activities online, including all seminars and tutorials. The Provost confirmed that discussions were had in relation to a specifying a maximum class size for face-to-face teaching but it was decided that it should be left to the discretion of the module coordinator as it would depend on other factors, such as available space for social distancing practices. A student member commented on different interpretations being taken by specific schools and the Provost advised that these would be looked into outside of the meeting.

Ending the discussion, he drew the attention of the Committee to the Trinity website which holds specific information about Covid-19 and measures in the College.

**Decision:**

**CL/19-20/110.1:** Council approved the set of recommendations outlined in the memorandum to enable local implementation, as appropriate.

**CL/19-20/111 Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no Other Urgent Business.

**SECTION B**

**CL/19-20/112 Graduate Studies Committee**



The Dean of Graduate Studies referred Council to GS/19-20/362i in the minutes and reported that students now receive copies of the external and internal examiner's PGR reports when they are sent to the DLTP and the supervisor. Drawing Council's attention to GS/19-20/362.ii the Dean of Graduate Studies advised Council that GSC agreed that Trinity will not require submission of a hardbound copy of a thesis to the library from April 2020. A student member welcoming the submission of theses electronically expressed concern that hardbound copies would not be available for future students to access from the library. Given the discussion generated on this development, the Dean of Graduate Studies agreed to revisit it at a future meeting of Council.

The minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2020 were noted and approved.

**CL/19-20/113 Quality Committee**  
XX

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised Council that the Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR) was approved by the Quality Committee noting that this was the first official document to be submitted as part of the documentation for the Institutional Review to be conducted by Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI).

- (i) Implementation Plan for School of Nursing and Midwifery
- (ii) Progress Report for School of Religion
- (iii) Annual Institutional Quality Report

**Decision:**

**CL/19-20/113.1:** Council noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 26 February 2020 with appendices 'implementation plan for School of Nursing and Midwifery, 'progress report for School of Religion', and the 'Annual Institutional Quality Report'.

**CL/19-20/114 Research Committee**

The Provost advised that the Dean of Research would provide an update at a future meeting of Council.

The minutes of 14 January 2020 were noted and approved.

**CL/19-20/115 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

- (i) Revised Timetabling Policy and Procedures
- (ii) Proposal for a Trinity Elective

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to the Revised Timetabling Policy and Procedures appended to the minutes advising that the Central Timetabling Unit (CTU) will continue to be located in the Academic Services Division (ASD) for the 2020/21 academic year to support the ongoing development and implementation phase of the fixed timetable.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies informed Council that a Proposal for a Trinity Elective 'Contemporary Art Angles', developed by the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), was approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. He explained that the introduction of the Trinity Elective delivered by NCAD is part of a broader College-level strategy to build a collaboration between Trinity and NCAD. An inter-institutional collaboration agreement between Trinity and NCAD he advised will be brought to Board for consideration and approval before the end of the academic year.

**Decision:**

**CL/19-20/115.1:** Council noted and approved the minutes of 18 February 2020 with appendices 'Revised Timetabling Policy and Procedures' and 'Proposal for a Trinity Elective.'



**SECTION C****CL/19-20/116 Academic Registry Annual Report 2018/19**

The Council noted and approved the Academic Registry Annual Report 2018/19.

**CL/19-20/117 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners**

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 12 February 2020 and noted by Board on 26 February 2020.

**Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

**PhD** Dalal Almuaili, Aidan Baker-Murray, Mark Byrne, Bryan Gerard Boyle, Emanuele Bosoni, Robert Briggs, Matheus Cafalchio De Oliveira, Nicolas Luca Celli, Aisling Curley, Shelli Ann Garland, Egle Gusciute, Daniel Manraj Maloney, Cora Mc Caughan, Robert McGuinness, Siobán Brigid O'Brien Green, Eoin O'Keeffe, Stephen Hugh Reynolds, Philip Schuler, Emmet Sheerin, Jessica Walls.

**MSc** Daniel Nelis

**CL/19-20/118 School Director**

The Council noted and approved the following nomination:

- (i) Professor Eoin Scanlan as Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Chemistry, for a two-year term commencing 1 June 2019

**CL/19-20/119 Heads of Discipline**

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

- (i) Professor Evangelia Rigaki as Head of Discipline of Music, School of Creative Arts, for a three-year term commencing 1 June 2020
- (ii) Professor Ian Donohue as Head of Discipline of Zoology, School of Natural Sciences, for a three-year term commencing 1 June 2020

**CL/19-20/120 External Examiners – Marino Institute of Education**

The Council noted and approved the Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 13 February 2020.

**CL/19-20/121 Dates of Board/Council for 2020/21**

The Council noted and approved the Memorandum from the Secretary to the College dated 4 March 2020.

**SECTION D**

In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings