



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 17 November 2021 at 11.15am remotely and hosted from the Provost's Library.**

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Vice-President for Global Engagement, Dean of Students, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor L. Carson, Professor P. O'Grady, Professor D. Romelli, Professor A. O'Connor, Professor M. Lyons, Professor M. Monaghan, Professor M. Ruffini, Professor B. O'Connell, Professor L. O'Driscoll, Professor M. Gill, Professor C. Donnellan, Ms. AM. Malone, Dr. O. Gobbo, Professor A. Long, Ms. B. Genockey, Ms J. Bochenek, Ms. Z. Cummins, Ms. J. Wall.
<i>Apologies</i>	Registrar, Professor A. Bray, Ms. D. Kelleher, Ms. S. Sutton, Ms. A. Bhattacharjee.
<i>In attendance</i>	Interim Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms. F. Flanagan.
<i>Observers</i>	Ms. Camilla Persello, Ms. Nilki Aluthge Dona.

**SECTION A**

The Provost welcomed everyone to Council and requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. The Secretary advised that there were no conflicts of interest reported.

**CL/21-22/043    Declarations by new Members and Observers**

The new member of Council made the required statutory declaration (item: C.20 Membership of the University Council: Faculty of Health Sciences).

**CL/21-22/044    Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 20 October 2021 were approved and signed.

**CL/21-22/045    Matters Arising**

The Academic Secretary referred Council to minute CL/21-22/024 'Draft Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)' explaining that the Report was not approved by Board on 3 November

2021 and that a number of amendments had been sought. She advised that the updated Report had been sent to Board for electronic approval.

Referring to minute CL/21-22/025 'Change of Name of School of Religion', the Academic Secretary advised Council that the name change had been approved by Board on 3 November 2021.

#### **CL/21-22/046 Provost Report**

##### **i Science Gallery**

The Provost informed Council that since its establishment in 2008 the Science Gallery has been a successful public engagement forum for interdisciplinary learning, and the Science community has played a huge role in the cultural life of Trinity and the wider Science Gallery network. She drew attention to the Science Gallery's finances, which due to a decline in grants and income since 2017 the Gallery has incurred substantial deficits. Trinity is unable to continue to sustain these losses and the future of the Science Gallery depends on finding a sustainable way of operating the Gallery. The Provost highlighted that every effort is being made to address the finances with ongoing discussions taking place with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

In response to a comment from the Dean of Research the Provost agreed that greater engagement between the Science Gallery, should it continue operating, and the Trinity academic and research community is desirable.

##### **ii Old Library Redevelopment Project**

Speaking to the item the Provost explained that the Old Library Redevelopment Project, which aims to safeguard the Old Library building and conserve its precious collections for the future is underway, and she drew attention to the need to source an alternative location for the Book of Kells while works are taking place. An interim exhibition is also required to generate the finances needed to support the works and all options are being explored.

##### **iii Covid-19 Pandemic**

The Provost highlighted the significant rise in Covid-19 cases over the past number of weeks and acknowledged how challenging the pandemic has been for all staff and students. Referring to 'Trinity Living with Covid', she stated that the intention is to continue to deliver teaching and research while appreciating the need for flexibility due to students and staff having to take time-out due to Covid. She emphasised the role of personal responsibility in managing the situation, with staff and students continuing to wear masks, as appropriate, and to avail of antigen testing when needed.

In response to a comment from a member on the need for Trinity to continue with in-person teaching and the impact that Covid has had on students, the Provost advised that the plan is to continue in-person teaching and to manage issues as they arise. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer explained that every effort will be made to maintain teaching and learning on campus and she is working with College Health to manage situations as they arise. The Senate member reminded Council of the UniCov project, which aims to detect increased levels of Covid-19 across College and invited members to become part of the study and inform their colleagues of the study. She advised that contact has been made with the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for funding of the project to continue in Semester 2.

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**CL/21-22/047 Council Format 2021-22****XX**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised Council that prior to academic restructuring (pre-2008) and the introduction of the academic committees of Council, academic related matters for development, policy or other, were discussed initially at Council usually aided by a discussion paper. Working groups were established to develop and bring forward a structured proposal for consideration and approval by Council and it was common practice for several iterations of a proposal to be discussed by Council before approval was granted. She noted that a review of Council agendas over the past five years illustrates that policies, reports, and course proposals recommended by academic committees of Council have featured on Council agendas, with Section A items comprising, course proposals, annual reports, quality reviews, academic policies, project updates, and the Provost's Report. Except for the Provost's Report all other topics arrive at Council following prior ratification by committees of Council. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted the fact that the majority of items brought to Council are approved attests to the rigour of the process of the academic committees of Council. She remarked that Council has had very little input into strategy over the past ten years with advanced drafts of Strategic Plans being brought to Council for discussion, and that Council has not been appraised of progress on the implementation of education and research strategic goals. There is a role for Council to be more engaged in debating national or international education developments and how these may impact Trinity's education provision.

Drawing attention to the Statutes, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that the Statutes reference Council's role as having 'initial responsibility for the academic affairs' of the University'. She highlighted the need for the recognition of Council's purpose of leading and initiating academic developments within and outside, as necessary, Council scheduled meetings. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer proposed that as of Hilary term Section A of the agenda be divided into A.1 items for development/discussion and approval, and A.2 items for approval and noting, which have already been considered by the academic committees of Council. A.2 items could include course proposals. If approved, she added, amendments to the Statutes, Schedule 2 to the Chapter on Council will be required.

Responding to a request from the Provost, the Secretary to College advised Council of the Board experience to a transition to a Section A1 and A2 agenda, which he reported has worked well and resulted in committees reporting to Board feeling empowered. He advised that committee approved items are not discussed in detail and this has freed up time for strategic discussion.

Members welcomed the proposals with the Librarian and College Archivist commenting that Council's feedback on the Library Strategy six years ago was very helpful. The Dean of Graduate Studies highlighted that the proposed change is a welcome one in the context of postgraduate renewal and that she would value high-level and strategic discussions of proposals at a very early stage.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer.

**Decisions:**

**CL/21-22/047.1:** Council approved the proposed changes to Council Format 2021-22 from Hilary term as follows: Section A items to be divided into A.1 items for development/discussion and approval, and A.2 items for approval and noting, which have already been considered by academic committees of Council and can include course proposals.

**CL/21-22/047.2:** Council recommended amendments to the Statutes, Schedule 2 to the Chapter on Council for consideration by the Statutes and Schedules Working Party.

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The Junior Dean, Professor Philip Coleman joined the meeting

**CL/21-22/048 Integrity in an Academic Context**

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised Council that Academic Integrity is an area that has been under discussion in Trinity for quite some time and that it has become increasingly pressing due to the proliferation of information and means of reproducing it electronically; the rapid evolution of assessment precipitated by new pedagogies and the pandemic; and the rise in sophisticated and predatory commercial interests' intent on profiting from student vulnerabilities. Referring to the work of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and universities in Ireland on this issue, he recommended that Trinity as an institution examine its practices and policies relating to integrity in an academic context. He advised that he, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Junior Dean would welcome Council's reflections on three questions as follows:

1. Why and in what areas do we need to nurture a culture of integrity at Trinity?
2. What are the primary obstacles/threats to nurturing a culture of integrity at Trinity?
3. What do we need to do to develop further a culture of integrity at Trinity?

Ms. C. Persello joined the meeting.

The Provost agreed that it is timely for Trinity to reflect on academic integrity and for Council to give direction on a way forward. She invited the Junior Dean to speak.

The Junior Dean advised that he was delighted to attend Council for discussion of the item explaining that part of his role involves overseeing undergraduate and postgraduate student discipline. Students who are referred to him have at least two instances of plagiarism recorded against them or have been deemed to have committed a serious offence. He reported that a significant number of level 4 plagiarism cases were brought to his attention over the summer months and that he has nine student cases to address in the coming weeks. He highlighted the need for a policy on academic misconduct and plagiarism to be developed in the shorter term with work on academic integrity progressing in the longer term.

Speaking to the item, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted the need to find a mechanism to encompass the disparate elements that fall under academic integrity, including research, and she noted the important role of the graduate attributes at undergraduate level in enculturating academic integrity values. The Dean of Research highlighted the importance of addressing complex issues across the university in relation to research integrity in the postgraduate space and the need for Trinity to examine its governance structures in how it responds to cases involving research and supervision matters, which can involve several structures.

Members agreed that there is a need to broaden the focus from academic misconduct and plagiarism to one of integrity in an academic context and for staff to support students in taking responsibility for academic integrity. The Senior Tutor highlighted the need for greater space in the curriculum to explore moral and ethical behaviour and the development of values on integrity. He drew attention to many cases of academic misconduct that had arisen in the past 12 months and the role that changing modes of assessment had played in the increase in academic misconduct. Assessment design, he added, is important in reducing opportunities for academic misconduct. The ethical behaviour of students working in group assessment activities and professional conduct in professional settings, are areas that require further attention. A member from the School of Engineering drew attention to the role of professional accreditation highlighting accreditation criteria as including how integrity is addressed in the curriculum.

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The Vice-President for Global Engagement referred to her experience as a former Junior Dean commenting that she often found that academic misconduct was a response to stress and difficult issues in the student's life. She emphasised the need for the contributing factors that give rise to academic misconduct to be addressed.

Responding to a member's comment on the use of an academic honour code that students must sign-up to in US universities, the Provost reflected on the shift in focus to one on integrity and honourable behaviour rather than misconduct. She noted the importance of encouraging students to speak out and to call out instances of academic misconduct where they arise.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated that she welcomed the discussion and concurred that there is a need to broaden out the dialogue beyond plagiarism. She suggested the development of a principle-based overarching framework to underpin and inform ethical decision-making and for specific policies on academic misconduct to fall under this framework. There is a need, she added, for measures to address plagiarism and academic misconduct in the first instance, with the development of an academic integrity framework to be developed in the longer term.

A discussion on the culture and value system in higher education took place with members recognising the impact of a competitive culture and the focus on metrics for academic promotions as contributing to academic misconduct. It was recognised that there needs to be a greater emphasis on integrity in an academic context. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate highlighted the role of institutions in socialising integrity, noting that employers want graduates who act with integrity.

The student experience was highlighted by the SU Education Officer and the SU AHSS student representative who highlighted the experience of a student who had been investigated for plagiarism. The student reported a lack of available information on plagiarism and had experienced the process as stressful and elongated, and one that impacted on future assessments. They highlighted that the plagiarism policy had not been followed correctly in one instance and called for the student experience to be considered in any work on academic integrity. The Provost highlighted the need for definitions of plagiarism and software used to detect plagiarism to be examined.

The Provost in closing the discussion acknowledged the point raised by the Dean of Students that academic integrity will be a huge piece of work for Trinity as it multifaceted and encompasses many areas. She agreed with the Dean of Graduate Studies that some measures are required in the shorter term such as policy development, with longer-term measures including the development of a principle-based framework. She thanked members for their contributions to the discussion.

**Decision:**

**CL/21-22/048.1:** Council noted the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies on Integrity in an Academic Context.

**Action:**

**CL/21-22/048.2:** The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to discuss measures to address academic integrity with the Junior Dean, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Academic Secretary.

The Junior Dean, Professor Philip Coleman left the meeting

**CL/21-22/049 National Student Survey Reports: Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught, and Postgraduate Research**

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The Dean of Students introduced the National Student Survey Reports explaining that there are two separate reports this year, an undergraduate and postgraduate taught (UG and PGT) report and a postgraduate research report (PGR). The reports were sent to Schools on 1 November 2021.

Referring to the demographic profile of participants who had responded to the 2020/21 survey, the Dean of Students stated the response rates for undergraduate and postgraduate (taught) students (33%) and postgraduate research students (32%), noting that first year students (42%) accounted for the highest percentage of respondents for the UG and PGT report and PhD (97%) students accounting for the highest percentage of respondents for the PGR report. Respondents tended to be female [62% (UG and PGT) and 68% (PGR)], full-time students [94% (UG and PGT) and 91% (PGR)], with Irish students accounting for 75% of UG and PGT respondents and 52% of PGR respondents.

Five additional questions on Covid-19 were added to the survey in 2020/21 with the majority of respondents reporting access to a 'suitable study environment at home'; sufficient access to online learning to engage with studies (UG and PGT respondents); and adequate access to the on-campus facilities required to engage with research (PGR respondents). The Dean of Students commented that 40% of PGR respondents agreed with the statement that 'Covid-19 has affected my funding or my ability to fund myself during my research' and 58% reporting 'access to the online campus facilities required to engage with research'. Summarising the impacts of Covid-19 on respondents, the Dean of Students outlined the following:

#### UG and PGT respondents

- Final year cohorts were the most negative in their responses to Covid questions.
- Access to online was generally positive.
- Collaborative learning index and student-faculty interaction was lower than the sector average.

#### PGR respondents

- 10% drop in confidence in completing the programme within expected timescale.
- 12-16% deterioration in overall personal outlook.
- HEA extension funding mitigated the worst impacts on those in receipt of funding but not the self-funded Arts, Humanities and Social Science respondents.

The Dean of Students drew Council's attention to the nine indicators of the survey and how Trinity is performing relative to other Irish universities. She remarked that Trinity had a higher score than other Irish universities in 'reflective and integrative learning', with lower scores reported in areas such as 'collaborative learning', 'effective teaching practices' and 'quality of interactions.' She noted that over the last six years the percentage of respondents (year 1, final year, PGT) reporting their entire education experience as 'excellent/good' had decreased from 81% (2016) to 66% (2021), with 92% (2016) and 85% (2021) of respondents reporting that they would 'definitely/probably yes' would return to the same institution.

Speaking to PGR respondents, the Dean of Students presented the eleven domains explored by the survey and how Trinity compared with other Irish universities. Regarding overall experience, 69% of Trinity respondents reported a good/excellent experience compared to 76% of respondents from other universities.

The Dean of Students highlighted that the impact of interventions put in place by Trinity in recent years to improve the PGR experience was evident, with:

- A 14% increase in the proportion of respondents 'definitely or mostly agreeing' that they had 'received an appropriate orientation/induction programme',

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- High levels of awareness of research integrity at 82% following the introduction of the PhD module,
- An increase to 50% in 2021 from 42% in 2019 in the proportion of PGR respondents who reported that they had received 'appropriate support and guidance in their teaching and demonstrating roles', following the introduction of the 'teaching and supporting learning' Graduate Teaching Assistants module in 2018/19.

An area requiring further attention (trend over three years), the Dean of Students explained, is the differential experience of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) PGR candidates over that of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and Health Science candidates in the following:

- Suitable working space.
- Access to specialist resources for research.
- Disproportionally self-funded (44%).
- Highest potential to withdraw for financial reasons.
- Lower levels of interaction with other PhD students.

Speaking to the PGR overall experience, the Dean of Students reported that 69% of respondents reported both a good and excellent experience and the confidence to complete their research within the timescale.

The Dean of Students concluded her report by highlighting the stepping stones to improve PGR student engagement – support, collaboration, well-being, and publication. She drew attention to the inclusion of two additional slides on cohort results (year 1, final year, and PGT respondents) and Faculty results (year 1, final year, and PGT respondents).

The Provost thanked the Dean of Students for her report and invited questions and comments.

The Dean of Graduate Studies commended the Dean of Students on the report stating that a recurring theme is that Arts, Humanities and Social Science PGR students tend to self-finance their studies and don't have access to sufficient desk-spaces; these are areas that need to be addressed. A member drew attention to the area of 'collaborative learning' noting that further discussion is required to develop ways to improve this. The member also pointed out that UG and PG respondents indicated a preference for the continuation of recorded lectures post-pandemic and this needs to be further explored.

Commenting on the Higher Education Authority (HEA) extension funding for research students, the Dean of Research explained that this had worked well, and he commended Trinity on its success in distributing the funding. He highlighted the need for better engagement with self-funded students on funding available to support their research.

Responding to a comment from the Provost on the design of the survey, the Dean of Students advised that the survey is a national survey and as a result the questions asked are set. She extended her thanks to the Quality Office staff for all their work on the reports.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Students for her report.

**Decision:**

**CL/21-22/049.1:** Council approved the National Student Survey Reports: Undergraduate / Postgraduate Taught, and Postgraduate Research 2020/21.

**CL/21-22/050 Any Other Urgent Business**

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There was no any other urgent business.

## SECTION B

### **CL/21-22/051 Engagement Advisory Group**

The minutes of 27 May 2021 were noted and approved.

### **CL/21-22/052 Graduate Studies Committee**

The Dean of Graduate Studies drew attention to the Excellence in Research Supervision Award Proposal (GS/21-22/029) advising that a proposal will be brought to Council on this.

Referring to minute GS/21-22/031 'Online or Remote Viva Voce Examinations', the Dean of Graduate Studies reported that GSC is considering the format of viva voce examinations post-pandemic and whether online or remote viva voce examinations should remain. She highlighted that a proposal will be brought to Council on this.

**Decision:**

**CL/21-22/052.1:** The minutes of 4 November 2021 and appendices (i) change in course title and award title of Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Tangent) and (ii) revised Assessment and Academic Progression Policy were noted and approved.

### **CL/21-22/053 Quality Committee**

**Decision:**

**CL/21-22/053.1:** The minutes of 9 November 2021 and appendix: Annual Quality report to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) were noted and approved.

### **CL/21-22/054 Research Committee**

The Dean of Research advised that the Research Committee is currently exploring the issue of postdocs and teaching contracts.

The minutes of 21 September 2021 were noted and approved.

### **CL/21-22/055 Student Life Committee**

The minutes of 9 November 2021 were noted and approved.

### **CL/21-22/056 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

The minutes of 2 November 2021 were noted and approved.

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## SECTION C

### CL/21-22/057 Bachelor in Music

The Council noted the memorandum from the Registrar dated 8 November 2021.

### CL/21-22/058 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners

- (i) The Council noted the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 22 September 2021 and noted by Board on 6 October 2021<sup>1</sup>.
- (ii) The Council noted the memorandum from the Registrar dated 9 November 2021.
- (iii) The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees dated 17 November 2021.

#### Higher Degrees by Research Alone

**MD** Cecilie Halling

**PhD** Saheba Bhatnagar; Ciara Byrne; Akira Hayakawa Campbell; Yang Chen; Eoghan Paraic Corbett; Martina Josephine Devlin; Eoin Patrick Finegan; Kieran Fraser; Turlough Owen Hughes; Marion Catherine Kelly; Kevin Philip Lacourse; Soumyajyoti Maji; Clíodhna Mary McHugh; Gail Nicolson; Megan O'Brien; Petar Tadic;

**D. Ch. Dent.** Charlotte Anne Mc Carra;

**MSc** Wenji Quan; Nicola Taylor.

### CL/21-22/059 School Director

The Council noted the nomination of Dr John Bosco Conama as Director of the Centre for Deaf Studies, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences, from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2024.

### CL/21-22/060 Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences

The Council noted that the Board had approved the nomination, following an election, of Professor Brian O'Connell as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences for a five-year term to commence on Thursday 28 October 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> This list, already noted and approved by Council on 20 October 2021, was circulated in error and the error was noticed after the Council meeting of 17 November 2021. The Higher Degrees list of 20 October 2021 would be circulated to the Council meeting of 15 December 2021 for noting and approval.

**CL/21-22/061 Acting Head of School**

The Council noted that the Board had approved the nomination of Professor Derek Sullivan as Acting Head of School of Dental Science from 3 November 2021 to 31 December 2021, or until a Head of School of Dental Science is appointed, whichever date is earlier.

**CL/21-22/062 Council Business Approved by Written Procedure - Search Committee for Head of School of Dental Science**

To note that the enclosed memorandum from the Pro-Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences dated 1 November 2021 was approved by the Council via written procedure on 2 November 2021.

**CL/21-22/063 Membership of the University Council: Faculty of Health Sciences**

The Council noted that the following has been nominated to fill the vacancy arising from Professor Brian O’Connell’s appointment as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, and will serve as a member of the University Council for the remainder of Professor O’Connell’s three-year term 2020-2023:

Senior Constituency – Head of School: Professor Michael Gill

**SECTION D**

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

Signed .....

Date .....

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