



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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The University of Dublin**

**Quality Committee**

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the  
7 June 2018, 3.00 – 5.00pm, Boardroom House 1

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**Present:**

Professor Chris Morash, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)  
Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science  
Professor Gillian Martin, Senior Lecturer  
Ms Geraldine Ruane, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary  
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer  
Professor David Lewis, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science  
Professor John Walsh, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Peter Crooks, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Sheila Ryder, Faculty of Health Sciences  
Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services  
Ms. Victoria Butler, Secretary's Office  
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian  
Vice-President, Graduate Students' Union  
Education Officer, Students' Union

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office (Secretary)

**Apologies:**

Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Professor Darryl Jones, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Mary McCarron, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences  
Professor Catherine Darker, Faculty of Health Sciences  
Professor Aonghus McNabola, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science

**In attendance:**

Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Initiatives for item *QC/17-18/059 Review of CRANN*

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### **QC/17-18/057 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 10 May 2018**

With regard to **QC/17-18/051(ii)**, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that reference had been made to the 'Mechanism for adding TAs to BoardPad' – this should read 'Mechanism for adding TAs to Blackboard'.

### **QC/17-18/058 Matters arising**

The Quality Officer reported that the revised Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedure (*QC/17-18/047*) (Appendix 1) was discussed at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) Associated College Degrees Committee (ACDC) on the 30 May and will be consideration by Council on the 20 June and Board on the 27 June.

In relation to item *QC/17-18/013 - Quality review of the Chaplaincy*, the Assistant Secretary reported that she and the College Secretary had met with the Church of Ireland Chaplain, the Reverend Steve Brunn, to discuss the interfaith requirements of the increasingly diverse student population which last year saw the number of Muslim students rise to be above that of Protestant students. She reported that the Secretary's Office had also engaged with Global Relations around forecasting the future breakdown of the student population to identify future need. Following discussions with the Rev Brunn, it is proposed to follow a UK model whereby vetted staff members become faith representatives who can act as campus contact and information points for those of other faiths. A call for expressions of interest will go out and selected staff will be provided with training. The initiative will be piloted through the Human Resources Office for 2018/19 and then rolled out across the College. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (VP/CAO) acknowledged the importance of this work, noting that historically College structures were aligned to accommodate a smaller number of faiths. He also noted that the implementation of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) would complicate the process of obtaining data to support this initiative.

Regarding the mechanism of adding TAs to Blackboard (*QC/17-18/33*), the IT Services representative reported that a communication to all Schools had been drafted and was awaiting final approval before being sent out. The Academic Secretary requested that the Quality Committee members be copied in the final communication.

### **QC/17-18/059 Review of CRANN**

The VP/CAO invited the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Mathematics & Science (FEMS), Professor Vinny Cahill, to present the review of CRANN and welcomed the Head of Strategic Research Initiatives, Dr Fiona Killard to the meeting for the item. The VP/CAO reported that CRANN had already been subject to many external reviews and that the circulated document summarised the nature and outcomes of these reviews, as well as making a number of recommendations.

The Dean of FEMS noted that the document provided a comprehensive analysis of the history of CRANN and AMBER, and outlined the links with the College research theme around nanoscience. He noted that CRANN had undergone numerous reviews by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), that the CRANN and AMBER Scientific Advisory Board had reviewed the activity of both the Institute and the Centre, and that CRANN had undergone a review of the nanoscience theme as part of the research themes review. The Dean was of the view that there was little to be gained by conducting another review. He drew the Committee's attention to the three recommendations presented at the end of the report for consideration. Noting the importance of clarifying the relationship between CRANN and AMBER, he informed the Committee that SFI centres are multi-institutional and this complicates the governance arrangements. The Head of Strategic Research Initiatives agreed with the Dean's comments, reporting that Institute members were relieved not to have to be reviewed again.

The VP/CAO thanked the Dean and Dr Killard and welcomed the report, noting that the approach supported recent efforts to streamline quality assurance processes. With regard to the recommendation to review the Policy on Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs), he queried whether there are plans for this. Dr Killard reported that the Dean of Research and the Associate Deans will bring this for action to the

Research Committee in 2018/19.

The VP/CAO acknowledged the importance of documenting the relationship between CRANN and AMBER, and the Dean of FEMS clarified that as AMBER is an SFI research centre (in conjunction with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), University College Cork (UCC) and the Trinity Centre for Bioengineering), it is subject to SFI governance arrangements. The Dean highlighted the importance of the role of Institute Director. He noted that SFI must approve the Director of AMBER whereas Trinity appoints the CRANN Director, and that confusion can occur when this is not the same individual. With regard to the recommendation regarding a timeline for the redevelopment of the Trinity Technology and Enterprise Campus (TTEC) and the management of any potential risk to the CRANN Advanced Microscopy Laboratory (AML) and the 3-D printing facility, Dr Killard reported that the Dean of Research is liaising with Dr Diarmuid O'Brien (Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer) in this regard.

The Academic Secretary wondered why the recommendation to review the TRI Policy was against changes in specific College policies rather than more general changes. The Dean of FEMS agreed, noting that as yet there was no change to the College overhead policy. He reported that the TRI Policy, which he had developed as Dean of Research, was designed to be largely independent of College Policy and states that issues such as allocation of overheads for research contracts be negotiated between TRIs and individual Schools. In terms of the new Baseline Budgeting Model (BBM), TRIs are largely independent of this as they can avail of strategic funding from College and so are already included in baseline budgeting.

The Deputy Librarian queried whether the recommendations relating to human resources detailed in section 2.4.3 would be addressed and the VP/CAO reported that these are included in the CRANN annual report to the College Finance Committee. The Quality Officer reported that the CRANN risk management plan evidences that these recommendations are being dealt with through the management function. The Dean of FEMS advised the Committee that SFI will have oversight of recommendations arising from these reviews and noted that, due to the project nature of AMBER, it is time-bound. Additional staffing would be incorporated into any proposal for a successor to AMBER.

A Committee member highlighted the gender issue outlined in the AMBER progress report to SFI and queried whether there was any progress in addressing this. The Quality Officer reminded the Committee that the Trinity gender action plan has actions for TRIs and noted the activities in FEMS towards attaining Athena Swan accreditation at Faculty level. The Head of Strategic Research Initiatives reported that HR is working towards HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers) accreditation from the EU. The Academic Secretary concluded the discussion by acknowledging the work undertaken by the Quality Officer in putting the report together.

The VP/CAO thanked Dr Killard and advised that the Report would proceed to Council for approval.

### **QC/17-18/060 Progress report for the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN)**

The VP/CAO invited Professor Cahill and Dr Killard to present the progress report for the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN). The Dean reported that significant work had been done to address the review recommendations, including the implementation of new governance arrangements, better internal communication, securing new grant funding, and increased opportunities under E3. He noted that neuro-engineering is an upcoming area.

The VP/CAO noted that at time of the review the E3 initiative was at an early stage of development and the Global Brain Health Initiative (GBHI) was not active. The Head of Strategic Initiatives agreed that the landscape had moved on considerably since the review. In response to a query from a Committee member, the Dean of FEMS reported that there was an opportunity to make a strategic appointment to underpin the emerging transdisciplinary area of neuro-humanities, but that this would require strategic support from relevant Schools. Dr Killard reported that the Long Room Hub

had recently engaged with the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) to drive activity in this emerging area of research.

The VP/CAO thanked the Dean and reported that the Progress report would proceed to Council for approval.

#### **QC/17-18/061 Progress report for Computer Science and Statistics**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited the Dean of FEMS to present the Progress report for Computer Science and Statistics. The Dean reported that the School review had highlighted concerns regarding the philosophical underpinning and intellectual vision of the School strategic plan, but that this had been addressed and a revised School strategic plan approved. He noted that the School is in the process of significant expansion as part of the E3 initiative, with plans to grow student numbers by 40-50% and increase numbers of teaching staff, primarily through teaching fellow appointments.

The VP/CAO thanked the Dean, noting that a revised School academic governance model which included a reconfiguration of disciplines within the School would be going to the next Board meeting for approval. He acknowledged the significant work which had taken place in the School to address the recommendations arising from the review. With regard to the recommendation to develop a more transparent financial model, the VP/CAO noted that this had been overtaken by the new Baseline Budgetary Model (BBM) and the financial model supporting the E3 initiative. The Dean of FEMS agreed, noting that while the previous financial model didn't drive income from activity the E3 model offered a precise indication of revenue that will flow from different activities.

A discussion took place as to the merit of filling teaching posts through short-term teaching fellowships, noting the impact that a one-year teaching position with limited promotion opportunities would have on the post holder's career development. A Committee member noted that there is already a considerable level of casualization of staff within College, and reminded the Committee that this has been highlighted as an issue of concern in several reviews. Another member cited his UK experience, where academics have concerns about teaching-only jobs as they are perceived as having career-limiting implications. The Dean of FEMS suggested that the career expectations of anyone taking a Teaching Fellowship would need to be managed, as there was little prospect of returning to research at the end of the fellowship and the one year tenure leads to limited prospects. Another member remarked that teaching opportunities offered to postdocs are an important part of their career development and the VP/CAO acknowledged that there is a spectrum of practice across the College. Quality Officer noted that the availability of teaching staff has an impact on staff:student ratios and the ability to provide small group teaching, both of which are recurrent quality issues. The Dean of FEMS agreed that there is a dearth of demonstrators to support small groups, which is an issue that needs to be addressed as the College wants to facilitate more small-group teaching. The discussion concluded with an acknowledgment that there is a need to provide teaching supports without casualization, perhaps by professionalizing these teaching roles.

The VP/CAO thanked the Dean and reported that the Progress report would proceed to Council for approval.

#### **Decision**

**061.1:** The VP/CAO will discuss the issues raised regarding Teaching Fellows with Human Resources.

*The Dean of FEMS left the meeting and the Chief Operating Officer joined the meeting.*

#### **QC/17-18/062 Feedback on Quality Reviews undertaken in 2017/18**

This item was withdrawn and will be considered at a future meeting.

### **QC/17-18/063 Results from the Quality Committee self-evaluation survey**

The Quality Officer spoke to the results of the Quality Committee survey which were circulated with the papers for the meeting. She noted that the requirement to self-evaluate annually is included in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

There were seven responses to the 12 multiple choice questions, giving an overall response rate of 41%. The issues raised fell into three main themes (i) the composition of the Committee and attendance rates of Committee members, particularly in relation to the administrative and support areas of College, as these have a direct impact on the student experience (ii) the effectiveness of the Committee and its performance, and ways in which the impact of the Committee can be monitored and improved (iii) the future direction of the Committee, particularly in relation to the Institutional Review.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer, and invited comments from the Committee. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) commended the work of the Committee and expressed disappointment that her schedule and workload prevented her from attending regularly. She suggested that it would be useful for new members of her staff such as the Director of Student Services to have exposure to the issues raised in the Committee relating to student services, and she requested that the Committee's terms of reference be reviewed with a view to including a COO's representative in the membership. The VP/CAO supported this suggestion, noting that many of the recurrent issues arising from quality reviews concern areas that fall under the COO's remit such as space, systems, etc. Noting that both the self-nominated administration /service area representatives – Ms Jessie Kurtz, the Deputy Librarian and Ms Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services - would conclude their second terms of office at the end of the 2018/19 academic year, the VP/CAO highlighted this as a wider representation issue that would need to be addressed. He suggested that there was a difference between members serving in their own capacity and members representing constituent areas, and that the latter needed to be empowered to represent through existing or revised reporting structures. In relation to the Faculty representatives, for example, he suggested that the Faculty Executive Committees should have quality as a standing item for which the Faculty representatives would attend. The importance of having the Library represented on the Committee was acknowledged. The Academic Secretary advised that any changes to the terms of reference would need to be discussed with the Registrar and the Provost, and should be considered in the light of the next institutional review. With regard to the review of governance of quality, the Academic Secretary reported it was considered at the Council and a decision made to postpone approval of the proposed Review of Governance of Quality at Trinity until consideration has been taken of how it will fit with the ongoing institutional strategic planning process.

#### **Decision:**

**063.1:** The terms of reference and membership of the Committee will be reviewed and a revised draft presented to the first meeting in the new academic year.

*The Assistant Secretary left the meeting.*

### **QC/17-18/064 Revised Programme Review Procedures**

The Quality Officer drew the Committee's attention to the revised programme review procedures which had been amended (i) to reflect the new TEP structures, (ii) to include the new generic Terms of Reference for programme reviews, (iii) to reference new policies and procedures and (iv) to include the sample checklist for off-campus placements.

#### **Decision:**

**064.1:** The Quality Committee approved the revised Programme Review Procedures.

**QC/17-18/065 Any other business**

The VP/CAO sincerely thanked those Committee members who were ending their terms of office – Professor Aonghus MacNabola, Professor Peter Crooks, Professor Sheila Ryder, Professor John Walsh, Dr Gillian Martin (Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies), Ms Alice MacPherson (Education Officer of the Students' Union), and Mr Madhav Bhargav (Vice-President of the Graduate Students' Union).

There was no other business and the meeting closed.