



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

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The University of Dublin**

**Quality Committee**

Draft Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the  
4 October 2018, 3.00 – 5.00pm, West Theatre Boardroom

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**Present:**

Professor Chris Morash, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)  
Professor Darryl Jones, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Mary McCarron, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences  
Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Ms Julia Carmichael, Chief Risk Officer  
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary  
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer  
Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
Professor Mary Rogan, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Jenny Berrill, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science  
Professor Jan de Vries, Faculty of Health Sciences  
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian  
Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services  
Ms. Victoria Butler, Secretary's Office  
Dr Gogoal Falia, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union  
Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer Students' Union

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office (Secretary)

**Apologies:**

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science  
Ms Geraldine Ruane, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

**In attendance:**

Professor Linda Doyle (Dean of Research) and Professor Stefano Sanvito (Director of CRANN) for item QC/18-19/003(i) - Implementation Plan for CRANN.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer began by welcoming new Committee members.

#### **QC/18-19/001 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 7 June 2018**

The draft minutes of the meeting of the 7 June 2018 were approved with one correction – the completion date for Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley's second term of office on the Committee (listed on page 5 as 2018/19) was corrected to 2019/20.

#### **QC/18-19/002 Matters arising**

The Academic Secretary reported that the Review of CRANN (QC/17-18/059), the Progress report for the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN) (QC/17-18/060), and the Progress report for Computer Science and Statistics (QC/17-18/061) had been approved by Council on the 20 June 2018.

With regard to the action arising from the QC discussion of the Progress Report for Computer Science and Statistics (QC/17-18/061.1), the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that further conversations were required regarding the career implications for Teaching Fellows of taking on a one-year teaching-only position.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the approach taken to the CRANN review, which involved an assessment of the review processes that CRANN and AMBER had been subject to by funding bodies such as SFI in the previous five years to (i) ascertain if the requirements for a quality review had been met by these processes or (ii) if a material gap existed that warranted a full quality review. The review confirmed that no material gap existed and that a full review of CRANN was not warranted. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer for her work on the review and for producing such a comprehensive report.

#### **QC/18-19/003 Quality reviews**

##### **(i) Implementation Plan for CRANN**

A Committee member declared a possible conflict of interest but on discussion it was agreed that no conflict existed, and the member remained for the item.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed Professor Linda Doyle (Dean of Research) and Professor Stefano Sanvito (Director of CRANN) to the meeting to present the Implementation Plan for CRANN. Professor Doyle drew the Committee's attention to a document (circulated with the Implementation Plan), which outlined the relationship between CRANN and AMBER. She emphasized the important distinction between CRANN and AMBER - CRANN being the Institute and AMBER being the key project housed within the Institute – and reported that both are essential to the other's existence.

With regard to the recommendation concerning the risk to the Advanced Microscopy Laboratory (AML) associated with the proposed redevelopment of the Trinity Technology and Enterprise Centre (TTEC), Professor Doyle reported that interference caused by vibrations from nearby DART trains had ruled out a move to TBSI. A second option, to remain *in situ* but protect the AML from the impact of the building works, is currently the preferred option and is being explored.

With regard to the other recommendations, Professor Doyle reported that the relationship between TRIs and large funded research centres housed in Trinity had been addressed in the draft Research Strategy, currently awaiting approval by the relevant Committees. She reported that a process to review the College Policy on Trinity Research Institutes is underway and that a revised policy is due to be presented to the Research Committee in November. The Dean concluded by welcoming the approach that had been taken to the review and acknowledging the detailed analysis undertaken by the Quality Officer in that regard. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Professor Doyle and Professor Sanvito, noting that the relocation of the AML was an ongoing, complex issue.

#### **Decision/Action:**

003.1: The Committee recommended the Implementation Plan for CRANN to Council for approval.

## **(ii) Progress Report for the School of Dental Science**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited the Dean of Health Sciences to speak to the progress report for Dental Science. Professor McCarron reported that the implementation of the review was well progressed. She reported that the School had held a very successful research 'away day', which she had attended, and that a decision had been taken to retain the breadth of research themes within the School and to focus on education as an area of growth. The School is further developing its relationships with research institutes in Trinity and has introduced a mentoring system for staff submitting grant applications.

With regard to the funding of the School, the Dean reported that a transparent funding model for distribution of fees and the core grant had been negotiated with the HSE and is being implemented. A formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be implemented that will see money being directed to the School initially rather than to the Hospital. She noted that this is a key step forward for the Dental School. In terms of the status of clinical staff in the hospital, most of whom are not Trinity staff but are funded by the HSE, the Dean highlighted the need to progress the issue of promotions for these staff.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Dean and noted the positive engagement with the School in the quality review process.

### **Decision/Action:**

003.2: The Committee recommended the Progress Report for Dental Science to Council for approval.

## **(iii) Progress Report for the Law Programmes**

Two Committee members declared a potential conflict of interest with this item but on discussion the Committee agreed that no conflict of interest existed, and the members remained for the discussion.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to speak to the progress report for the Law programmes. He reported that the review had focussed specifically on the School's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as the School had found this approach more useful than the standard School review. Professor Jones informed the Committee that while most of the recommendations were in train or being addressed, the School had chosen not to implement the recommendation to allow sophister students to take modules earlier or later than they should in terms of progression as it would require abandoning the differentiation of junior and senior sophister modules. Both the Dean and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commended the School's engagement with the recommendations and the reasoned argument put forward for its decision.

With regard to the recommendation to develop more cross-disciplinary Law modules as 'approved modules' in TEP, the Dean reported that this is being progressed and that discussions have taken place with Economics in this regard. The Senior Lecturer advised the Committee that the process of selecting approved modules was being finalised with a view to approaching Schools with options in the coming weeks. In relation to the recommendations regarding the long-term sustainability of the Law and French and Law and German programmes, the Dean informed the Committee that the teaching of modules on French/German law through the French/German language will cease for students commencing in September 2019.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew the Committee's attention to the recommendation that more formal quality assurance procedures should be put in place for the year abroad. The Academic Secretary noted that this was something that would have to be addressed at a College level and it was agreed that a draft Trinity procedure should be brought to the Committee for consideration before the end of the academic year. The Quality Officer informed the Committee that the quality assurance of off-campus learning would be addressed by the revised QQI Code of

Practice for International Learners and that a checklist for the QA of professional placements and off-campus learning had been added to School review procedures in March 2018. She also reported that discussions were underway with Global Relations regarding the application for the International Education Mark (IEM). The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and noted that student mobility was being considered as part of TEP work-stream 3 and the Global Relations Strategy (GRS) III. With regard to the recommendation that better supports and training be provided for adjunct staff, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer requested an update from the School in terms of what training had been provided.

The Dean of Graduate Studies, a member of the Law School, noted that the review had been a very positive experience for the School and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the School for its sincere engagement with the process. He also thanked the Faculty Dean for his presentation, and closed the discussion.

**Decision/Action:**

**003.3** – Procedures for quality assurance of the year abroad to be developed, in consultation with Global Relations, before the end of the 2018/19 academic year.

**003.4** – An update to be provided from the Law School on what training opportunities have been provided for adjunct staff.

*The Deputy Librarian joined the meeting.*

**QC/18-19/004 Revised Terms of Reference for the Quality Committee**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reminded the Committee that at its meeting on the 7 June 2018 (QC/17-18/064) a commitment had been given to review and revise the Committee's Terms of Reference, including its membership, to align with changes in the quality assurance legislation and in anticipation of the requirements for the institutional review.

The Quality Officer reported that the revised membership of the Quality Committee was approved by the College Board at its meeting of the 12th September 2018. Changes to the membership include (a) approval for the Chief Operating Officer to nominate a delegate (Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services) to attend meetings, (b) addition of the Chief Risk Officer (Ms Julia Carmichael) as an *ex-officio* member to reflect the alignment of quality and risk, and (c) change in status of attendance of the Deputy Librarian and the Assistant Secretary to *ex-officio* members.

The changes to the Terms of Reference reflect the new legislative environment and incorporate responsibility for quality enhancement as well as quality assurance. They have also been revised to reflect a request from the College Registrar, in support of the College's Gender Equality Action Plan, that the Terms of Reference of Principal, Academic and Compliance Committees of College be amended to specify that no more than 60% of members will be of any one gender. The Quality Officer reported that the revised Terms of Reference will be sent to Board for noting with the minutes of this meeting.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and reported that a change had also been made to the number of self-nominated members, to align with the Statutes. This had coincided with a change in representation from the Faculties as a number of members had come to the end of their second term on the Committee. With regard to the Chief Operating Officer's nominee, he clarified that Ms Walls will undertake that role for a three-year term.

The Committee endorsed the revised Terms of Reference and recommended them to Board for approval.

**Decision/Action:**

**004.1:** The revised Terms of Reference will be sent to Board for approval with the minutes of this meeting.

## **QC/18-19/005 Quality Policies and Procedures**

### **(i) Procedure for electronic transfer to External Examiners of students' exam scripts and coursework**

The Quality Officer reported that under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), introduced in May 2018, students' assessed work is regarded as personal data. Consequently, the electronic transfer of students' exam scripts and coursework to External Examiners prior to their attendance in College for courts of examiners poses a potential breach of this new regulation. The draft procedure aims to address this issue by providing information and guidelines for the secure transfer of and access to student exam scripts and coursework as part of the external examiner process.

Ms Smith reported that IT Services recommend the use of HEAnet and OneDrive for secure file transfer, and that currently exam scripts must be scanned and sent in booklet form, which is very time-consuming for Schools. Issues around security and functionality prohibit the use of Blackboard for direct access to continuous assessment by External Examiners and a request has been submitted to IT Services and Human Resources for a project proposal to address this. She reported that a new External Examiner website, to be launched in Michaelmas term, will contain a GDPR advisory notice for External Examiners which it is hoped will mitigate the risk of a data breach. The procedure was considered at the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) on the 12 September 2018 and at the Graduate studies Committee on the 27 September 2018.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic officer thanked the Quality Officer and opened the discussion to the floor. The Chief Risk Officer highlighted the importance of ensuring that External Examiners have securely disposed of any electronic or hardcopy data (such as theses) in their possession after the examining process has concluded, as they are data managers under the new GDPR. The Quality Officer reported that concerns had been expressed at USC about asking Schools to take responsibility for following-up with External Examiners on this part of the process. The Senior Lecturer suggested that this should be done at College-level and the Dean of Health Sciences agreed that this approach would reduce the risk of inconsistency at local level. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggested that a section could be included in the External Examiner report template requesting written confirmation from examiners that any soft or hardcopy data in their possession has been securely destroyed. In response to a question regarding responsibility for the cost incurred by External Examiners of securely disposing of soft or hard copy student data, or of returning hard copy material to Trinity for disposal, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggested that a disposal fee should be incorporated into the current procedures.

The Dean of Graduate Studies queried the status of a thesis that is retained by an External Examiner beyond the examining period, noting that this can happen where an Examiner deems the thesis to be of exceptional quality or is of personal interest to the Examiner. The Academic Secretary suggested that permission must be sought from the student in such cases, and the Quality Officer agreed that retaining data beyond the examining period would require the permission of the author.

In response to a query from a member as to how the GDPR regulations apply where a student's data is being sent to an Examiner outside the EU, the Chief Risk Officer suggested that the GDPR regulations apply but that the student must be notified that the data is being sent outside the EU.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and closed the discussion.

### **Decision/Action:**

**005.1** Quality Officer to amend the procedure to say that:

- (i) External Examiners (as data processors) should confirm, in writing, that they have (a) securely deleted the electronic files held on their computer following completion of their examination duties and (b) securely disposed of any hard-copies print outs of scripts and/or coursework upon completion of their external examining duties.

- (ii) Where the secure disposal of hardcopy documents by external examiner incurs a fee, then this should be reimbursed by College as part of the examiner's claim for expenses.
- (iii) Where the students' exam scripts or course-work are being sent outside the EU for examination, the student should be notified of this. However, the same procedure (i.e. this procedure) for electronic transfer of the information within the EU will apply.
- (iv) On submission of their PhD thesis, a student's written consent should be sought to the Examiner retaining a copy of the thesis beyond the examining period, should they so wish.

**005.2** Quality Officer to consider how written confirmation from External Examiners that they have

- (i) securely deleted the electronic files held on their computer and
- (ii) securely disposed of any hard-copy scripts and/or coursework and/or theses in their possession can be included in the external examiner process.

**005.3** Quality Officer to consider the process by which expenses incurred by an External Examiner in the secure disposal of hardcopy examination documentation can be reimbursed.

**(ii) General Procedure for Quality Reviews**

The Quality Officer reported that a process to update the suite of quality review procedures was initiated in 2017/18 to reflect changes in national and international legislation, and strategic initiatives such as the College's Gender Equality Action Plan and the Trinity Education Project. Revised procedures for Administrative/Service reviews, School reviews and Programme reviews have already been approved, and the revised review procedures for Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs) await the revision to the College Policy on TRIs (arising from the CRANN review) and will be brought to the Committee at a future date.

Ms Smith clarified that the General Review Procedures provided a high-level overview of the elements of the quality review process that are generic across all review types. The revisions to the procedures include (a) locating the development of the Terms of Reference for reviews at the start of the process in order to inform the focus of the self-assessment report (SAR) and the schedule of meetings (section 5.2), (b) a more detailed indication of the College Officers/managers required to be involved at key points in the review process, by review type, to ensure that key stakeholders are not omitted from the process (ref Table 1, section 5.3), (c) clarification of who has responsibility for review costs (section 5.28, 5.29); and (d) a procedure for the deferral or postponement of a review (section 5.30 - 5.37). Ms Smith reported that, where necessary, the procedures for School, Programme, and Administrative/Service Units will be reviewed to ensure alignment with revisions in these General Procedures.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and invited comments from the Committee. In response to a query from a Committee member regarding section 5.3.5, the Quality Officer clarified that where a SAR is deemed not fit-for-purpose and a decision is taken to postpone a review as a result, the review team are not informed as to the reason. The IT Services representative requested that section 5.25 be amended to read IT resources rather than ISS resources.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and closed the discussion.

**Decision/Action:**

**005.4** The Quality Committee recommended the revised General Procedures for Quality Reviews to Council and Board for approval, subject to the amendment to section 5.25.

### **QC/18-19/006 QOI Code of Practice for Research Degrees**

The Quality Officer spoke to a consultation draft of the QOI Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (circulated) which was submitted to the universities on 14th September 2018 with a response to QOI due by 28th September 2018. She advised that the development of the Code was led through the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies Group as a result of feedback on the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes (published March 2017) that identified the need for a separate Code of Practice for Research to detail effective practice. The draft Code of Practice builds on the former IUQB publication *Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Higher Education (Second Edition 2009)*.

Ms Smith reported that the draft Code was presented to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) on the 27 September 2018, following which key points of feedback were provided to QOI concerning the requirement for research theses to be of 'publishable' quality, the resource implications of the delivery of some aspects of the Code, and the overly prescriptive and regulatory nature of the Code.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, noting the size of the document, suggested that in encompassing the whole of the Higher Education sector, the code was too detailed to be relevant or useful to the university sector. The Dean of Graduate Studies agreed that the document was not futureproofed. Further, he expressed concern that the document attempted to codify something that was not codifiable. He expressed concern that some of the content is resource dependant e.g. the requirement to provide students with the opportunity to attend conferences, and that Trinity could be exposed if students challenge Trinity's adherence to the Code on those grounds.

In response to a query from the Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Health Sciences as to the status of the Code, the Dean of Graduate Studies clarified that the universities are required to 'have regard' for the code. The Quality Officer further clarified that the Code has been developed as part of a suite of guidelines arising from the QOI Act, and that the College will need to respond to it as part of the institutional review.

The Academic Secretary queried how the College's existing supervision guidelines align with the Code, and the Dean of Health Sciences suggested that a mapping exercise could be carried out to determine where cross-over occurs between the two. The Chief Risk Officer supported the undertaking of a mapping exercise and the production of a qualified response to QOI in the interim. The Quality Officer reported that some of the procedures that address the Code may sit at School level and that an exercise to identify these and any gaps would need to be included in any mapping exercise. She informed the Committee that the Code was on the agenda for discussion at the IUA meetings on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and that the issues of concern would be raised by the relevant Officers in order to inform a sectoral approach to the Code.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Committee and closed the discussion.

#### **Decision/Action:**

**006.1** Quality Officer and Dean of Graduate Studies to map the existing procedures for research degrees, including the Trinity supervision policy, against the requirements of the QOI Code of Practice for Research Degrees with a view to identifying where alignment or gaps exist. The outcome of the gap analysis and any suggestions for new procedures/policies required to address gaps to be brought to the Quality Committee meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

**006.2** Quality Officer, Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to raise Trinity's concerns regarding the appropriateness of the QOI policy for Universities at their respective IUA meetings on the 8<sup>th</sup> October.

**QC/18-19/007 Any other business**

The Quality Officer reported that the process for the Quality Assurance of Linked Providers has been re-initiated. With regard to the International Student Barometer (ISM), Ms Smith reported that Trinity has the opportunity to include five questions in the next ISB survey and that consultation is ongoing across College as to what these questions should be. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer stressed the importance of including students in this consultation process.

**QC/18-19/008 For noting**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that all items on the call-over log were being addressed.

He drew the Committee's attention to the report of the Cultural Diversity Working Group (circulated for noting) and, in response to a query from a member as to how the requirements for cultural change are being addressed by College, reported that the Strategic Plan 2019- 2024 will address this.

With regard to the updated Quality Framework (circulated for noting), the Senior Lecturer noted that one of the requirements of the Trinity Education Project is to improve the quality of the teaching experience. In this regard, he stressed the importance of providing documentary evidence of progress, and incorporating metrics to support this from the start. The Committee agreed to include this on the agenda for discussion at a later meeting.

There was no other business and the meeting closed.