



**Trinity College Dublin,
The University of Dublin**

Quality Committee

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the
16 May 2019, 3.00 – 5.00pm, Boardroom, House 1

Present:

Professor Chris Morash, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)
Professor Orla Sheils, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer
Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies
Professor Mary Rogan, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Ciara O' Hagan, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Jan de Vries, Faculty of Health Sciences
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer Students' Union
Ms Julia Carmichael, Chief Risk Officer
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian
Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services
Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office (Secretary)

Apologies:

Professor Darryl Jones, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science
Ms. Victoria Butler, Secretary's Office
Dr Gogoal Falia, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union

In attendance:

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH) and Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research for QC/18-19/035: Progress Report on the Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH).
Professor Kevin O' Kelly, Dean of Students for QC/18-19/036: Update on the PG student experience.
Ms Louise Staunton, International Student Experience and Global Officer Manager, and Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation for item QC/18-19/037: Presentation on the 2018 International Student Barometer (ISB) survey.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (VP/CAO) thanked the members of the Committee who were completing their terms of office – Professor Darryl Jones (Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS)), Professor Vinny Cahill (Dean of Engineering Mathematics and Science (EMS)), Ms Aimee Connolly (Education Officer of the Students' Union), Mr Gogoal Falia (Vice-President of the Graduate Students' Union) and Ms Laura Conway-McAuley (CSD representative), whom he noted had completed two terms on the Committee. He welcomed the new Dean of HS, Professor Orla Sheils to her first

meeting and Professor Ciara O' Hagan (Faculty of AHSS representative), who is replacing Professor Jenny Berrill until April 2020.

QC/18-19/033 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 11 April 2019

The Deputy Librarian reported an inaccuracy relating to QC/18-19/027, item (ii) on page 4, which stated that the lack of diversity in the student population was an issue of concern for the Library. She reported that, in fact, the opposite issue was a concern for the Library, i.e., an increase in student diversity, and requested that the minute be amended to reflect this fact.

QC/18-19/034 Matters arising

The VP/CAO informed the Committee that Council had approved the consolidated Annual Faculty Quality Report (AFQR) (QC/18-19/027) and the Revised Focus Group Procedures (QC/18-19/029) at its meeting on the 8 May. The Quality Officer advised that four PhD candidates who completed the Focus Group Facilitation Skills Workshop in February (QC/18-19/029) had facilitated two focus groups for the School of Medicine on the 15 May 2019. With regard to the approval of linked providers quality assurance procedures (QC/18-19/028), she advised the committee that a follow-up meeting with Marino Institute of Education (MIE) had occurred to discuss the outcome of the review of MIE's Quality Assurance (QA) policies and procedures; and the review of the Royal Irish Academy of Music's (RIAM) QA policies and procedures was underway.

The VP/CAO reported that the risk associated with the lack of availability of high-calibre placements in Health Sciences had been included on the HS Faculty Risk Register (Action: QC/18-19/027.2). The Director of Student Services advised the Committee that she had reviewed the information available on pathways for the undergraduate Science programme on the Trinity website, including those linked to and from the Academic Registry website (Action: QC/18-19/027.4), and was satisfied that they ultimately led students to the same information. The Senior Lecturer concurred, but said that there was a broader issue with the College website in terms of its structure, which required an overhaul. The VP/CAO reported that funding had been approved for the first year of a project to develop a University-wide content management system and that this would address structural and content issues with the current website. He suggested that a representative from IT Services and/or the Communications Office be invited to the Committee next year to provide an update on this.

**** QC/18-19/035 Progress Report for the Trinity Long Room Hub**

The VP/CAO welcomed the Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH), Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, and the Dean of Research, Professor Linda Doyle, to the meeting to speak to the progress report for the Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH). Professor Ohlmeyer reported that all of the recommendations have been addressed since the review, and that a Deputy Director for the Hub has been appointed. She noted that a number of key research initiatives are currently underway (joint COFUND application with TCIN, Adapt, and the Global Brain Initiative, Horizon 2020 application on the crises of democracy, reconfiguration of the TLRH Research Incentive Scheme to align with College Strategy).

The VP/CAO thanked the Director and noted that concerns regarding TLRH's ability to function as a research hub had been largely addressed since the review. In response to a query from the Academic Secretary regarding the security of the Hub's funding, the Director reported that while work will continue to secure research funding at national and international level, a large philanthropic donation in the order of €5-7m is required to future-proof the Hub. The Deputy Librarian welcomed the multi-annual TLRH Library Joint Research Agenda (June 2018) and the Director of the Hub commended the work of the Programme Manager for Research Informatics in the Library, Dr Niamh Brennan, in supporting early career researchers. She welcomed the appointment of an Arts and Humanities Impact Officer. The Dean of Health Sciences suggested that opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas between the TLRH Research Project Officers (RPOs) and the RPOs in the Faculty of Health Sciences should be explored.

The Dean of Research praised the Hub's succession planning which provides a handover period between the current and incoming Director. Professor Ohlmeyer concluded by commenting that the quality

review had been a very useful exercise and thanked the Quality Officer, the VP/CAO, the Dean of Research, the Dean of AHSS and the Hub's stakeholders for their input to the process.

The VP/CAO thanked the Director of the TLRH and the Dean of Research, and closed the discussion.

Decision/Action

035.1: The Quality Committee recommended the Progress Report for the Trinity Long Room Hub to Council for approval.

QC/18-19/036 Update from the Dean of Students on the PG student experience

The VP/CAO welcomed the Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O' Kelly, to the meeting to report on work underway to address issues arising from the 2018 ISSE Survey in relation to the postgraduate student experience. The Dean reported that a working group of the Student Life Committee (SLC) has been established to respond to postgraduate (PG) student issues and that the postgraduate orientation programme, previously coordinated by the Graduate Students' Union, has been brought under the remit of the Transition to Trinity Officer (TTO). The programme is now running throughout the year to map to different entry points, and includes a focus on preparing students to adapt to Trinity's academic culture (e.g. the shift from continuous assessment to exams, familiarising students with the plagiarism regulations etc.). It will also address students' expectations around access to support services and provide advice regarding transactional activities (e.g. visas, finances, accommodation).

The meeting discussed the sense of isolation experienced by some postgraduate research (PGR) students, particularly those based off-campus, and the Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the relationship with the supervisor/research group is critical in this regard. In response, training has been provided by the Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) for more than 500 students on 'managing upwards' and 'how to be a supervisee' and CAPSL has provided training to over 50 supervisors through the Research Supervisor Development Programme. The Dean of Health Sciences reported that many postdocs have formed their own mentoring groups on hospital sites to provide peer support for researchers.

Postgraduate students highlighted difficulties integrating into the academic community as an issue and the Dean reported on a number of initiatives to address this including (i) a themed seminar series where students can present on their work and build networks with other researchers in the same field of study and (ii) the provision of a PG Liaison Counsellor to work with the Postgraduate Advisory Officer on developing PG wellbeing strategies to support tailored interventions.

The Dean of Students noted that postgraduate students reported difficulties securing a 12-month housing lease. One response has been the development of a mechanism to maintain private leased accommodation in circulation for Trinity PG students, with the objective of matching expiring leases to new incoming 12 month postgraduate taught (PGT) and PGR students.

The Dean of Graduate Studies thanked the Dean of Students, noting that while the survey take-up is good, the timing of the survey is an issue as problems do not generally present themselves until later in the academic year. He reported that a new supervision model involving a thesis committee for each PGR student was in development. The Dean also advised that all PG students are emailed every two weeks by his office to advise them on what they should be doing at this stage of the year. In addition, a community social event is held for PGR students once a month and it is hoped to continue such events over the summer.

The Senior Lecturer welcomed the thesis committee model, saying that this would provide an opportunity to include a pastoral element in the supervision process. A member queried whether supervisors are surveyed to evaluate how their role has changed/developed as a supervisor over time. The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that they are not, but it was agreed that this would be a useful

quality enhancement initiative. The Quality Officer concluded by reporting that the results of the 2018 ISSE Survey had been released and that results for the ISSE PGR Survey are expected by the end of May 2019. A report will be presented to the Committee in Michaelmas Term.

The VP/CAO thanked the Dean of Students and the Dean of Graduate Studies, and closed the discussion.

QC/18-19/037 Presentation on the 2018 International Student Barometer (ISB) survey

The VP/CAO welcomed Ms Louise Staunton, International Student Experience and Global Officer Manager, and Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation, to the meeting to present the results of the 2018 International Student Barometer (ISB) survey.

Ms Staunton spoke to the key Trinity results from the 2018 survey, which was conducted between the 20 November and the 10 December 2018.

- Trinity response rate of 31% is higher than the ISB national rate of 26% and the Global ISB rate of 27%.
- Trinity overall satisfaction rate is slightly below that of the national ISB (87% vs 89%).
- UG first year satisfaction rates are above the Irish average (94% vs 93%) whereas PGT (84%) and PGR (82%) are below the Irish average (88% and 87% respectively)
- Positive results were identified on learning overall and on the quality and expertise of lecturers.
- Strong perception of value for money at UG level (75% agree/strongly agree) but slightly less so at PGT and PGR level (71% agree/strongly agree and 69% agree/strongly agree respectively).

The data showed that class size was an issue for Trinity PGT students and the meeting noted that both small and large class sizes could contribute to low student satisfaction. The Director of Student Services noted that difficulties with module registration could be a confounding factor in the low satisfaction rates observed for registration. She also noted the importance of making offers early in the admissions cycle as late offers impact the arrival and registration experience. With regard to the Academic Registry, the Dean of Graduate Studies stressed the importance of Schools adhering to closing dates.

The Director of Internationalisation reported that the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RSCI) was included in the survey, and that Trinity had requested clarification on whether this was appropriate as the medicine-specific focus of the RSCI had the potential to skew the national results.

In response to a query from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer regarding the low level of satisfaction with course organisation, the Quality Officer reminded the Committee that a Programme Handbook Policy had been developed in 2016. The Academic Secretary reported that a recent review of course handbooks against this Policy revealed that many are not easily accessible. She highlighted this as an issue of concern, particularly as recent changes to the College Calendar have resulted in a more streamlined, pared-back format that contains less course-specific information. The VP/CAO suggested that the proposed content management system would facilitate easier access to course information online and the Senior Lecturer noted that the fixed timetable would also help in this regard.

The discussion noted the importance of managing students' expectations in terms of careers advice, supports for immigration registration and access to the College Health Service. The Dean of Health Science noted with regard to pre-registration health checks for medical students, that the waiting times could be reduced if health checks and immunisations were undertaken in the relevant teaching hospitals. The Director of Student Services noted that some of the issues with the Health Centre in terms of resources would be addressed when the service moves to larger premises in Oisín House.

Learning spaces in Trinity scored 10% below the primary benchmark for other Irish Universities, and the VP/CAO reported that, arising from the Estates and Facilities Strategy, it has been agreed that future years' backlog maintenance budget will be 1% of College turnover.

The issue of the timing of the results was discussed, noting the long turnaround time between the date of the survey and the receipt of results from ISSE (November to April), and the importance of communicating the results and consequent actions to students was stressed.

The Quality Officer reported that Schools will be asked to respond to the ISSE and ISB results via the Annual Faculty Quality Report (AFQR). The Senior Lecturer noted the importance of meaningful engagement by Schools with the survey outcomes. In response to a query from the Deputy Librarian, who noted the usefulness of Library-specific open source comments, Ms Staunton reported that area-specific reports will be produced from the ISB data.

The VP/CAO thanked Ms Staunton and Ms McNamara and suggested that it would be useful for Council to see a plan of action to address the results of the ISB, incorporating possible solutions to the issues raised.

Decision/Action:

037.1: An action plan to address issues raised in the ISB to be brought to Council in September.

The Dean of Graduate Studies left the meeting at this point.

QC/18-19/038 Risk Register for Quality Legislative Compliance

The Quality Officer spoke to a risk register on quality legislation, which was requested by the Chief Risk Officer to inform preliminary planning for a review of 'Compliance with Quality Legislation' by Internal Audit. She advised that the risk register will inform planning for the Institutional Review in 2020/21 and the College Risk Register. Twenty four risks had been identified, 18 of which were classified as medium and 6 low risk. Of the 18 medium risks, three scored at the higher end of the range – (i) the risk of an unfavourable outcome in the institutional review, (ii) the lack of agreed institutional-level quality metrics and (iii) risk to breaches of EU-GDPR in the transfer of students' assessed work to external examiners.

In terms of mitigating actions to address these risks, the Quality Officer reported that Trinity's plan for the institutional review would be informed by the experience of other Irish universities that have been through the cyclical review process, noting that CINNTE review reports for all the HEIs are accessible on the QQI website.

With regard to establishing and embedding quality metrics, the Quality Officer noted that there are no nationally agreed quality metrics for Higher Education at sectoral level. The QQI guidelines stressed the importance of establishing metrics at institutional level and being able to demonstrate forward planning in terms of monitoring these metrics in a systematic way. She also noted that while there are procedures in place to address transfer of student scripts to examiners, there is considerable risk of a breach given the high volume of scripts in circulation, particularly at this time of year when annual Courts of Examiners are taking place.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and opened the floor to Committee members. In the ensuing discussion the impact of TEP on the cycle of quality reviews was discussed. The Quality Officer reported that Trinity was partially non-compliant in the 2012 institutional review due to the disruption to the cyclical review of administrative/support areas resulting from the START Programme. Discussions with QQI on the potential for disruption to the cycle of academic reviews due to the impact of the TEP have occurred, in an effort to mitigate the risk of non-compliance. QQI has provided assurances that the TEP will be viewed as a significant quality project. The Chief Risk Officer advised that TEP was appearing on risk registers, and that she would be looking at trends and identifying common areas of concern across

all the risk registers. This assessment would inform the development of the College-wide register and the final risk rating of some risks on the Quality Legislation risk register.

The VP/CAO closed the discussion by noting that the register was approved on the basis that the work of the Chief Risk Officer would inform a future iteration of the Quality Legislation risk register and associated risk ratings.

Decision/Action:

038.1: The Committee approved the risk register on the basis that a future iteration would be informed by the work of the Chief Risk Officer.

The Chief Risk Officer left the meeting at this point.

QC/18-19/039 Procedure for the Review of Dual and Joint Degrees

The Quality Officer spoke to a presentation on a draft Procedure for quality review of dual and joint awards, circulated with the papers. She reported that the development of the procedures was required to address the growing number of dual and joint awards in which Trinity was involved. She also highlighted as relevant the context of the International Education Mark (IEM) against which Trinity would be reviewed in the institutional review. She stressed the need for the procedure to be flexible enough to reflect the frameworks of partner institutions in other jurisdictions.

In response to a query from the VP/CAO, the Quality Officer reported that key differences between this and a standard Trinity review were the fact that the review would address the MOU of the arrangement with the partner institution, evaluate continuing strategic alignment of the award and assess compliance against the Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. The review will take a risk-based approach, and (i) will recognise a review delivered with an Irish Designated Awarding Body (DAB) under the same NFQ and QA framework, (ii) use shared EU guidelines and frameworks for reviews of joint degrees with EU institutions (ESG 2015); and (iii) for non-EU partnerships, it will be important to map Trinity's requirements against that of the partner institution and the jurisdiction in order to ensure that statutory requirements can be met. The meeting discussed negotiating the terms of reference for the review at the start of the contractual process. The Committee decided that it would be more appropriate after the contract was agreed, but that the contract should reflect the need for a quality review that met national statutory requirements. Noting that reviews are a resource intensive process, it was suggested that there should be flexibility to allow for groups of programmes with small student numbers to be reviewed together.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and closed the discussion.

Decision/Action:

039/1: The Quality Committee approved the procedures for review of dual and joint degrees.

The Senior Lecturer left the meeting at this point.

QC/18-19/040 Any other business

The Academic Secretary thanked the VP/CAO for his work as Chair and the Committee members registered their appreciation with a round of applause.

The Quality Officer reported that the annual self-evaluation survey would be circulated in due course and that dates for next year's meetings would be circulated once approved Council and Board dates were published. There was no other business and the meeting closed.

QC/18-19/041 For noting

The VP/CAO noted that all issues on the Quality Committee call-over log had been addressed. He drew the Committee's attention to item B3, the Consolidated Annual Faculty Quality Report (AFQR).