



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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Quality Committee

20 April 2023, 2.00 – 4.00pm
College Boardroom, Trinity Business School

Quality Committee	
Meeting Date	20 April 2023
Present	Professor Orla Sheils, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair); Professor Sylvia Draper, Dean of STEM; Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary; Professor Brian O’ Connell, Dean of Health Sciences (HS); Professor Gail McElroy, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS); Professor David Shepherd, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer; Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies; Ms. Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Professor Jan de Vries, HS representative; Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, STEM representative; Mr. Patrick Magee, Corporate Services Division (CSD); Professor Emma Stokes, Vice-President for Global Engagement; Ms. Orla Cunningham, Chief Operating Officer.
Apologies	Professor Gizem Arikan, AHSS representative; Ms. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian; Professor Dirk Van Damme; Mr. Shashwat Khandelwal; PG representative; Ms. Vickey Butler, Assistant Secretary; Ms. Zoe Cummings, Education Officer, TCDSU; Ms Julia Carmichael, Chief Risk Officer.
In attendance	Dr David O’ Regan, Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, School of Physics for <i>QC/22-23/045 Accreditation Report: Institute of Physics</i> . Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary – Academic Affairs for <i>QC/22-23/046 Quality Review of Academic Affairs</i>

Agenda items	Key points arising from discussion	Actions/Decisions
<p>QC/22-23/042 – Quality Committee minutes 29 March 2023</p>		<p>Decision QC/22-23/042.1: The QC minutes of the 29 March 2023 were approved.</p>
<p>QC/22-23/043 – Matters arising from the Quality Committee minutes of the 29 March 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>QC/22-23/035 Implementation Plan for the Quality Review of the Lir</i> The Implementation Plan for the Quality Review of the Lir was approved by Council on the 13 April 2023. • <i>QC/22-23/036 Proposed Trinity-Lir Joint Academic Oversight Committee</i> The proposed Trinity-Lir Joint Academic Oversight Committee was approved by Council on the 13 April 2023 • <i>QC/22-23/037 Quality Review of the Careers Service</i> The Quality Review of the Careers Service was approved by Council on the 13 April 2023. 	
<p>QC/22-23/044 (i) Annual Faculty Quality Report 2021/22 – Health Sciences (HS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following key areas were highlighted in the discussion of the HS AFQR: (i) The lack of a centralised student evaluation system in College is a key concern. A proposed College licencing agreement with Survey Monkey does not facilitate centralised reporting, consistency in the use of survey questions or the ability to compare results over time. An enterprise license is easy to obtain and install, but budget for it would need to be identified centrally and a College Lead with responsibility for its management would need to be agreed. (ii) The lack of a centralised system to support the External Examiner process has been raised multiple times. A project to address issues around External Examining, including a centralised system to manage External Examiner reports, is in train, but again will require allocation of budget centrally and agreement of an identified owner. Good rates of return for EE reports were evidenced for most Schools but in Medicine, EE reports are not submitted until after the repeat vivas in January resulting in lower reported return rates. It was agreed that return rates for the previous year should be included in the HS AFQR in order that the numbers can be logged. 	<p>Action QC/22-23/044.1: Issues raised in the AFQRs regarding the VLE/Blackboard to be forwarded to the Director of IT Services to inform the consultation on a new VLE.</p> <p>Decision QC/22-23/044.2: The number of External Examiner reports returned for Medicine for the previous reporting year should be included in future HS AFQRs.</p>

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	<p>(iii) Inadequate support for Blackboard. IT Services is working to identify improvements to the current VLE while consultation on College requirements for a new VLE, to align with the requirements of the Admissions Strategy, is undertaken. A working group on this will be set up in the coming weeks and the VP/CAO will report on its progress. The importance of HS students being able to get access to their results in Blackboard and access to the curriculum going back five or more years was stressed, as this is a requirement of the accrediting body. The issue of access to the VLE for part-time staff also needs to be addressed, particularly in the light of micro-credentials and the move to more flexibility teaching and learning.</p> <p>(i) The Faculty has responded to the findings of the Stand Up, Speak Out! Racial Justice in Healthcare Education report by (i) initiating a curriculum review to ensure that students from different ethnic backgrounds can see themselves represented in texts, (ii) seeking to ensure that every student should have someone that they can report issues of racism to – in the first instance this is likely to be the tutor and (iii) educating staff and students to recognise a racial abusive incident and to know how to report and deal with it. The Dignity and Respect Policy also offers pathways for reporting racial abuse and the Faculty website is being developed as a one-stop mechanism to signpost resources and supports. Tutors may need additional training to support students in clinical settings and an audit of policies in place in clinical sites is also being undertaken to establish who has responsibility for them.</p>	<p>Decision QC/22-23/044.3: The Quality Committee recommended the HS AFQR to Council for approval.</p>
<p>QC/22-23/044 (ii) Annual Faculty Quality Report 2021/22 - Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following key areas were highlighted in the discussion of the AHSS AFQR: <p>(i) IT and Physical Infrastructure: The Faculty upgraded 19 rooms in 2022 using a HEA development grant supplemented by strategic funds, but many more rooms require upgrading. The most significant issue is the maintenance of IT equipment / software and on-site support for rooms. Physical infrastructure is also a key issue in terms of staff recruitment and retention, and the report suggests that Trinity's space policy needs to be considered in relation to flexible working.</p>	<p>Decision QC/22-23/044.4: The Quality Committee recommended the AHSS AFQR to Council for approval.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) Delays in the election or appointment of postgraduate student representatives to Faculty and School committees represents the third year of disruption in this area. (iii) Staff:Student ratios: Global student recruitment is good but the increased student numbers impact on the S:S ratio. Issues with inadequate funding for the Library and e-resources were reported by Histories and Humanities. (iv) Concerns regarding grade inflation in the School of Law were raised by the External Examiners and will need to be monitored. (v) Tight turnaround times for marking and compression of exams in the new Academic Year Structure (AYS) place a considerable burden on staff, students and external examiners and have been raised at USC. The VP is leading a process to consider the issues raised. A suggestion to timetable larger modules at the start of the examination period has been implemented by some Schools but is subject to the mode of the exam and the constraints of the Examinations Office. The SL and the Director of Student Services offered to liaise with the Academic Registry about providing a more systematic approach. 	
<p>QC/22-23/044 (iii) Annual Faculty Quality Report 2021/22 – Science, Technology, Engineering and Science (STEM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following key areas were highlighted in the discussion of the STEM AFQR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Dean of Stem articulated that the physical infrastructure and, in particular, the quality of seating and the over-crowding in Goldsmith Hall, is a key issue and has a detrimental effect on the 1st year experience. The Chief Operating Officer acknowledged that the downstairs area of the theatre as a flat structure may not be optimal as a teaching space, but there is little that can be done in that regard. She undertook to investigate whether the graffiti on the seats can be addressed and vandalised seats replaced, but said that funds were not available to replace all of the seating. In relation to over-crowding, she stressed that the Hall should not be over-crowded as the capacity of the theatre is known and lectures should not be timetabled for a larger amount than this number as it is against safety regulations. (ii) A shortfall in the budgets for some Schools is of concern and will need to be addressed. The Dean reported concerns from E3 schools that the new budget model may not align to the business plan that was approved. 	<p>Decision QC/22-23/044.5: The Quality Committee recommended the STEM AFQR to Council for approval.</p>

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	<p>(iii) The delay in completion of the E3 capital build is having an impact on space, particularly in the labs where there is a bottleneck of students resulting from the increase in undergraduate student numbers.</p> <p>(iv) A decline in the number and proportion of EU and Irish Ph.D. numbers in STEM and reports from PGR students of an increased workload associated with the capstone projects are concerning, especially as PGR students come from the capstone pipeline.</p> <p>(v) Access to and suitability of LENS reports was highlighted by the School of Natural Sciences.</p> <p>(vi) School of Physics reported that to address issues with the larger College examination venues, they are piloting a return to on-site exams.</p> <p>(vii) The structure of the National Student Survey does not support STEM Schools in identifying key actions to implement at a local level or to gather feedback which allows a rapid response to issues in real-time. Any centralised system needs to consider why students are being evaluated, what information needs to be extracted, for what purpose and preferably where action can be taken in real time.</p> <p>(viii) The Faculty Dean offered to put forward a representative to sit on the VLE working group.</p> <p>In response to a query, the Quality Officer reported that the consolidated AFQR to Council will draw out common issues and key concerns from across the three Faculty reports.</p>	
<p>QC/22-23/045 Accreditation Report: Institute of Physics (IoP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accreditation visit was the first since the TEP reforms. The outcome was a conditional accreditation for two years to address (i) the perceived irregularity of uncapped resits (reassessments), and (ii) associated but wider concerns over the evidence of grade inflation. • The external examiner has not reported evidence of grade inflation and there is a definite trend across all universities for more 1st class degrees. There is also a wider trend that can show there will be a natural deflation of marks post covid. • The Senior Lecturer advised that there is ongoing discussion at USC around TEP regulations regarding reassessments and whether policy changes or derogations 	<p>Decision QC/22-23/045.1 The Quality Committee approved the accreditation report from the Institute of Physics.</p> <p>Action QC/22-23/045.2 An implementation plan to update the Committee on progress can be submitted in Michaelmas Term 2023/24</p>

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	<p>are required to address this. The outcome of this discussion will benefit the School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If helpful, an implementation plan to update the Committee on progress can be submitted at a future date. 	<p>prior to response to IoP in February 2024.</p>
<p>QC/22-23/046 Quality Review of Academic Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Affairs has already progressed many of the reviewers' recommendations. • The visibility of Academic Affairs will be improved through involvement in the PG renewal project and socialisation of new policies. The PG renewal policy also presents opportunities to review current practices within AA which are resource intensive and to push the expertise out to schools. • The work of Academic Affairs and Academic Practice is complementary and the development of a new template for course design and a workshop ahead of the launch and will be jointly delivered. 	<p>Decision QC/22-23/046.1: The Quality Committee recommended the quality review of Academic Practice to Council for approval.</p>
<p>QC/22-23/047 Any other business - Quality Committee Annual Self-Evaluation Survey</p>	<p>The Quality Committee annual self-evaluation survey 2022/23 is open and members are encouraged to respond.</p>	
<p>QC/22-23/048 Implementation Plan - CINNTE review</p>	<p>The Implementation Plan was submitted to QQI and published on the QQI website on the 14 April 2023.</p>	