

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 01 December 2015

Present:

Professor John Boland, Dean of Research (DoR), Chair
Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRMH)
Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research and Innovation,
Secretary

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Stephen Minton, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Director of Research, School of Histories
and Humanities
Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of Research, School of Languages,
Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Carol Newman, Director of Research, School of Social
Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work
and Social Policy

Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science

Professor Doug Leith, Director of Research, School of Computer
Science and Statistics
Professor Aoife McLysaght, Director of Research, School of Genetics
and Microbiology
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences

Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

In attendance:

Dr Oonagh Kinsman, Trinity Research & Innovation, Rapporteur to the
Committee
Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research
& Innovation
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations (IT
Services)
Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Initiatives, Office of the
Dean and Vice President for Research (item RS/15-16/31, 32 only)

Apologies:

Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services
Division

Not present:

Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Jane Alden, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film &
Music

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English
 Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law
 Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 Professor Andrew Pierce, Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
 Professor Daniela Zisterer, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Professor Isabel Rozas, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
 Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering
 Professor Sergey Frolov, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
 Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics
 Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
 Professor Geralyn Hynes, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, CRANN
 Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of Research, TCIN
 Professor Orla Hardiman, Director of Research, TBSI
 Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub
 Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies
 Mr Michael Cooke, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association
 Ms Katie Crowther, President, Graduate Students Union

Actions arising / on-going:

Agenda Item	Owner	Action	Status
RS/14-15/78	Dean of Research	Feedback on the reconsideration of the sustainability of TRIs and their value to Schools	<i>In progress</i>
RS/14-15/80	Vice Provost/CAO	Feedback on tenure track	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/03	Directors of Research	Directors of Research to provide 2 highlights for the DoR Report on research and innovation of interest from their Schools by 31 December 2015	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/15	Associate Dean of Research MH	Feedback policies and decisions from the research ethics policy committee on US Department of Defence funding	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/16	Research Development Manager	Seek submissions from each area currently co-funding an Research Programme Officer	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/28	Directors of Research	Feedback further comments on Lone Worker guidelines to DoR and ADoR by next meeting.	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/30	The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology and the Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities	Lead further discussion on Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/33	Dean of Research	Prepare a discussion document on retired staff and research activities	<i>In progress</i>

RS/15-16/23 Minutes of 03 November 2015

The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology requested revision to the wording of RS16-16/16. This now includes 'The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology felt strongly that there should be an opportunity for new posts to be created'. Meeting minutes were otherwise accepted.

RS/15-16/24 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The topic of the budget for the Research Programme Officers (RS/15-16/16) was discussed again and the Research Development Manager stated that the call on the ring fenced budget will be reassessed when submissions have been received from existing areas with RPOs.

DoR updated members on the Dean of Research Report (RS/15-16/03), which requested highlight information from each School for the academic year 2014/2015. He wanted to produce a document that could be provided to an external audience eg contacts of Global Relations. He suggested that 1 page with 2 highlights including graphics should be provided from each School and be submitted to Kevin Ennis (ennisk@tcd.ie) cc Oonagh Kinsman (oonagh.kinsman@tcd.ie) by end of December. The highlights should not include topics already covered in the Provost's annual report. If there was a significant highlight from the start of this academic year it could be included. The Rapporteur will circulate an example.

ACTION: The Directors of Research requested to submit 2 highlights demonstrating Schools' wealth of research and innovation by the end of December.

RS/15-16/25 Introduction and update from the Dean of Research

The DoR reported from the SFI summit that the budget for SFI is due to grow. The balance of funding between Centres and other areas is planned to change from 65% of total budget on Centres to 45-55%. Measures will be put in place to increase the funding for postgraduate funding in Centres especially in collaboration with industry. The current industry projects are too short in duration to support such PhDs. Budget for challenge based activities will increase although it is not clear who will define the challenges.

The Research Development Manager asked if there were any plans to work more closely with other national funding agencies as the draft SSTI 2 made mention of this. There had been no discussion on this topic. The Director of Research for the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences asked if the lack of funding for basic research has been addressed. SSTI 2 discussions did include the need for a broader approach to basic research. The Director of Trinity Research and Innovation reported that the SSTI 2 was due to be launched on December 8 but apart from the emphasis on human capital he did not see any inspiring new initiatives being included. The ADoRMH commented that Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences was mentioned but only briefly.

RS/15-16/26 Associate Membership of UK Research Integrity Office

The ADoRMH requested approval of a subscription of €2,500 per year for membership of UKRIO. Trinity has had 12-13 events needing ethical assessment over a two and a half year period which covered a number of different issues and there is a need to seek advice where there is limited experience internally. This not for profit organisation provides independent advice conferences, training and case studies. Other subscribers included UCD and UCC. Information on other subscribers outside the UK will be sought. The subscription was approved.

A workshop could be provided in the spring. The Director of Research for School of Histories and Humanities asked for more information on engagement with this organisation. A link to the organisation will be provided from the Dean of Research web pages so that on-line resources may be used. He asked if all chairs of ethics committees could be invited to the planned workshop.

RS/15-16/27 Any Other Urgent Business

None

RS/15-16/28 Lone Worker Guidelines

The ADoRMH reviewed the final guideline document from the Research Ethics Committee which had been discussed at the 15 May 2015 Research Committee. The DoR commented that the sign in sheet should be modified by each School and that work can take place out of hours with Head of School approval. He suggested that from a liability perspective the buildings office should be advised. The Director of Research for School of Histories and Humanities also suggested that the guidelines be checked with Human Resources and include IFUT as part of the discussions. The Director of Research for the School of Psychology commented that in providing guidelines to cover students and staff and all work types some of the wording was too basic. The ADoRMH commented that guidelines were needed to be in place without any further delay and these could be refined at a later date. It may not be appropriate for the REPC or the Research Committee to undertake College wide consultation. However it was agreed that any further comments from the Research Committee should be fed back to DOR and ADoRMH who will also consult with HR and buildings office on liability issues.

ACTION: Committee members to feedback any additional comments to DOR and ADoRMH by the next meeting.

RS/15-16/29 Research Ethics and Integrity

The ADoRMH reviewed the memo which had been sent to the Director of Research of the School of Business clarifying the requirements for a level 1 approval. The ADoRMH clarified that all schools had identified if a level 1 committee was required and she will summarise the 24 level 1 committees already formed.

RS/15-16/30 Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence

The DoR discussed whether the existing processes had the potential for undesired outcomes, ie focussing on quantity rather than quality metrics. He also wanted to investigate the numbers of staff being returned for rankings metrics and to estimate what numbers currently are classified as 'Research Inactive'. Comments from committee members included the fact that it was unclear how Trinity values a member of staff who has excelled in teaching and has become less research active, the issue of activity versus academic contractual requirement for research, and that metrics used for promotion should be clear and that impact factors of journal are a crude measure.

The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology discussed her position paper 'Measuring Research Productivity an Excellence' which proposed a significant revision of the current research evaluation system in College. She also suggested that in the implementation of such an evaluation it should be clearly articulated what use will be made of the metrics eg financial allocation purposes or promotions. She proposed the new research evaluation system should 1) take differences into account between disciplines and research norms, 2) Account for the career stage of the individual, 3) Consider a wide set of criteria and 4) consider different levels of achievement. She commented that the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment and the Wellcome Trust argued against the use of Impact factors. Output from the Royal Society on 'The future of scholarly scientific communication' was also referenced.

The Director of Research for Histories and Humanities agreed that discipline specific criteria should be used and that the measures and discussion of 'Research Excellence' and 'Research Active' are two different discussions. He referred to ongoing discussion in the AHSS area and work already carried out by the RIA.

The Director of Research for the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences commented that the current system does not work for their school and may affect promotional prospects. The Director of Research for School of Social Work and Social Policy described the painful process of evaluation in the UK and how we can measure quality to ensure we reflect Trinity as a research active university with capabilities to compete on a world stage in some areas. The Research Development Manager commented that interdisciplinary research is being promoted eg the possibility of a challenge based approach to funding in the SSTI 2 but current measures do not take this into account. A number of staff have dual appointments across Schools.

It was agreed that the current numbers of 'research active' and 'research inactive' staff will be reviewed by the DoR for ranking discussions but that this will not link directly to the HEA compact.

Action: The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology and the Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities will lead further discussions.

RS/15-16/31 Rankings Agency questions and Data

The Head of Strategic Research Initiatives described the four ranking agencies and their requirements: Quacquarelli Symonds (QS); Times Higher Education (THE); Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) / Shanghai Rankings (SJTU) and Thompson-Reuters Rankings. She outlined the responsible units in Trinity for data inputs and emphasised the short timeline until the next data request in the spring. Citation cleansing is being carried out by all Schools. To ensure international reputational surveys are optimised, bespoke communications are proposed for PI contacts and alumni. A project will look at 2017 onwards.

RS/15-16/32 Theme review

The Head of Strategic Research Initiatives reported that the super panel composed of 15 members will be in Trinity from 6-9 December 2015. They will not review themes but will evaluate the reports for Theme Mission and Vision; Leadership/Team and Capacity to engage with Stakeholders. Each panel member will review a number of themes and a final report will be completed.

Questions were asked on the outcomes and how they may be used. The DoR noted that the Provost will be using compelling stories from internationally benchmarked themes to seek funding from external sources especially philanthropic donors. There will be no impact on internal resources or promotion currently. The DoR stressed that he will be reviewing opportunities for sponsor fundable large scale research activities, looking at untapped resources, identifying areas of scholarship that may have ERC candidates etc. There might be access to strategic funding in the future although with no additional resources this would have to be a realignment of existing resources.

RS/15-16/33 Retired staff

The DoR will engage with HR to ensure that retired staff are not disenfranchised, that they can continue to input into research activities where appropriate, that external funding and pay constraints are understood and approval processes with the HEA streamlined.

Action: DoR will prepare a discussion document on retired staff.

RS/15-16/34 Any other business

None noted