

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 26 April 2016

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 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 Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub
Professor Orla Hardiman, Director, TBSI

In attendance:

Dr Oonagh Kinsman, Trinity Research & Innovation, Rapporteur to the
Committee
Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research
& Innovation
Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services
Division
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations (IT
Services)

Apologies:

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics

Not present:

Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)
Professor Carol Newman, Director of Research, School of Social
Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of School of Languages Literatures &
Cultural Studies
Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology

Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director, CRANN
 Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director, TCIN
 Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies
 Mr Michael Cooke, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association
 Ms Katie Crowther, President, Graduate Students Union

For circulation:

Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
 Professor Jane Alden, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music
 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 Geralyn Hynes, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

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/15-16/16	Research Development Manager	Prepare review committee for new Research Programme Officer proposals	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/50	Dean of Research	Progression of the document on Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/39	Dean of Research	Consult VP/DOR group of the IUA to see if all Irish universities were using ORCID identifiers and if any unintended consequences had arisen.	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/49	Dean of Research	Report back to IUA VPDoR on concerns with Research Career framework policy document	<i>In progress</i>
RD/15-16/55	Director of Strategic Projects	Revise proposal for Trinity Visiting Academics Programme and recirculate to the Committee	<i>In progress</i>
RD/15-16/57	Dean of Research	Seek information on number of PhD students paying EU and non-EU fees and the source of funding	<i>In progress</i>

RS/15-16/53 Matters Arising from the Minutes

For the final meeting of the Research committee for this academic year all the Directors of Research will be invited.

The Research Career Framework policy discussion document (RS/15-16/49) had prompted a discussion on redundancy and Contracts of Indefinite duration. David O'Shea provided additional advice from Mary Leahy in Human Resources taking into account challenges in the Labour Court. Consideration for redundancy takes into account the defined tasks, the source of funding and the length of service. There may be a difficulty if tasks include significant teaching and funding for the post from a School. Minor teaching activity is acceptable as part of a post-doctoral research contract. A time period of over 6 years employment and taking into consideration other tasks can make redundancy more difficult. Some administrative posts can be costed into an EU grant and some are paid out of overheads

RS/15-16/54 Update from the Dean of Research

Six SFI investigator Programme awards have been made to Trinity out of 24 awards nationally. This is a small number of the 33 submitted and there is a significant cohort of unhappy PIs. It is of concern that 66% of SFI funding is linked to centres of PIs associated with centres and there are issues with the limited breadth of the SFI remit. The Director of the Long Room Hub noted that there was significant pressure on the IRC funding which has a budget of €34 million compared to SFI's budget of €160 million and suggested that there should be political discussions at a ministerial level. The Director of Research for the School of Genetics and Microbiology was also concerned and suggested that SFI be asked to review. The Director of TBSI commented that it was difficult where the Chief Scientific Officer is also the Director of SFI and that HRB does not provide alternative funding in the space. It was suggested that the budget for IRC New Horizons should be increased. The Director of the Long Room Hub commented that Trinity had not done so well in the New Horizons call. It was also noted that junior academics are at a disadvantage as SFI have removed smaller grants and HRB requires PIs to have already had funding.

College has been invited by the Wellcome Trust to submit a proposal for an Institutional Strategic Support Fund where cofounding is required. A response is awaited from senior staff in the area of Wellcome Trust funding.

PRTL is under discussion and a document has been issued via the Education consultation group who have been advising on Innovation 2020. The core principles for PRTL relate to Innovation 2020. The Director of Trinity Research and Innovation was in a meeting with DEJI recently and this topic was raised. It is unclear which agency will manage the programme as SFI were mentioned as the primary agency and that maybe the HEA no longer has the staff capacity. There are a number of concerns with the content of the document. A major concern is the possible disenfranchisement of AHSS. The timeline for the call may be the end of December. The Director of Research for the School of Medicine asked if a research assessment exercise would form part of PRTL but it was thought that this would relate more to the core grant. It was suggested that with new ministerial appointments it might be the right time to raise the issue of PRTL through contacts in DEJI.

RS/15-16/55 Trinity Visiting Academics Programme

College is looking for nominations for this programme which has been funded through the ERC support programme from SFI where a percentage was allocated centrally. This seeks to initially attract high profile individuals who may then be interested to relocate to Ireland. It seeks to build on the visiting research fellowship programme run by the Long Room Hub. The profile of individuals is such that they would be subsequently be able to apply for an ERC or SFI Professorship. The Director of Research for the School of Genetics and Microbiology requested that the Research Development Office give advice to any prospective candidates on suitability for these schemes and mentoring. The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities was concerned with the timelines as it takes time to identify such individuals. The DOR emphasised it would be an on-going process but there may be individuals already identified that this scheme could support. He would like to create a positive welcome to Trinity and build the international community in College and will seek a meeting with HR to assist with this.

The Research Development Manager commented that any proposed stipend would be taxed through payroll. The Director of the LRH informed that they had hosted 100 visitors from 35 countries but that the administration was heavy, payment was paid on receipts, no stipends had been provided, funding accommodation in Dublin for short periods was difficult and that visas are often necessary. The administration requires nearly 1 FTE in the LRH for this activity. It was emphasised for the scheme to be successful that the visitor is fully integrated and the home School takes full responsibility. Membership of the Senior Common Room should not be a problem as this is part of the current offering and commons tickets can be provided.

Action: The Director of Strategic Projects will take the comments into consideration, revise the document and recirculate

RS/15-16/56 Sponsorship of Clinical Trials

Professor Michael Gill, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Clinical Research Facility reviewed the opportunity for clinical trials generally and how these can lead to better patient care and outcomes. More specifically there is an opportunity for Trinity to take on the sponsorship for investigator led clinical trials which requires additional structures and processes to be put in place. Other universities in Ireland eg UCC and UCD all have this capability and Trinity needs to ensure that this opportunity is available to clinicians and other research staff to maximise the potential patient care outcomes of research being carried out and to help attract good clinician scientists. A policy document had been reviewed and advice taken on governance and legal issues. Risks had been summarised including strategic risks of not proceeding and operational risks. The risk for Trinity in not adopting the policy outweigh the risks of adopting the policy.

The cost associated with adoption of the policy are €25k-€30k per annum for a Clinical Research Advisory Officer and additional bespoke insurance of €25k per year. These costs will be provided by the School of Medicine

for 2 years and it is planned that this be self-financing thereafter assuming a conservative 3 clinical trials per year.

Members of the committee requested clarification of the risks, when Trinity should be the sponsor and the role of the hospital partner. Professor Gill emphasised that understanding and management of risk was important. The types of trial that Trinity might sponsor include novel therapies, repurposing or therapies or particular patient groups. The hospital partner had taken on the sponsorship role in the past on a case-by-case basis but did not have the necessary expertise. The Director of TBSI endorsed the policy and that the development of the capability was essential and commented that RCSI for example was also ahead of us in their provision. The Director of Trinity Research & Innovation was supportive but identified a skills gap in the Contracts Office for clinical trial associated contracts which will need to be addressed. Also he noted that partnership agreements with the hospitals were not optimal and that the Contract Office would liaise with the Clinical Research Facility to produce template agreements. The DoR was supportive and wished to see better relationships between life scientists and clinicians and use of the CRF was one such mechanism. Professor Gill noted that designation of the CRF as a research centre would assist financial operations and progress needs to be made on financial management, contract management and communications. The Director of Research for the School of Medicine was supportive and noted the challenge for the new Director of TTMI to bridge the divide between scientific outcomes and possible patient benefit. Professor Gill also gave detail on mitigating risk and that review of the design and structure of protocols of trials undertaken outside the CRF will be provided, that the HPRA will undertake inspections to confirm legal and regulatory standards eg reporting of adverse events. An independent person will be appointed to advise on standards.

The policy was approved by the Research Committee and it was noted that approval was needed by both Board and Council

RS/15-16/57 Payment of PhD fees from Irish funding sources

The Director of Research for the School of Computer Science and Statistics reported that two SFI funded centres were associated with his School and that the current cap for fees from SFI was €5,500 versus Trinity EU fees of €6,300 left a shortfall of €800. This shortfall was not so marked with other Irish universities eg UCD fees were 5,800 and DCU fees were 5,500. He asked if we should be requesting SFI to remove the cap. Currently overheads are used to cover the gap and asked if the overheads policy could be revised to alter the proportional split.

The DoR confirmed that this was not a new issue and he would seek information from the Dean of Graduate Studies on the number of PhD students paying EU and non-EU fees and the possible source of funding for the fees. The Research Development Manager clarified that budgets for H2020 collaborative award budgets included full fees. The Projects Accounting Manager noted that fee levels were set by Planning Group. The Director of the LRH noted that removing the cap might be an issue for the IRC as it would affect their budgets. The Director of Research

for the School of Natural Sciences agreed that there was an issue with the IRC cap but that the School had limited means to fund the shortfall.

Action: DOR will seek PhD payment information from the Dean of Graduate Studies

RS/15-16/58 Timeline for Research Quality Productivity and Metrics Review

The Director for Research for the School of Histories and Humanities noted that the Vice-Provost wanted input for Ussher posts. The measures for the Faculty of AHSS had been discussed extensively and were now agreed and would be circulated to other Faculties. They have provided a written introduction to provide context, have reduced categories from 25 to 14 and have concentrated on outputs and not activities. The tenure track requirements should take into account the Faculty based model and that new staff should have relief from a heavy teaching load for 2 years

The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology indicated that within the Faculty of EMS a framework included one PhD student, 4 papers in 2 different calendar years and at least one paper without a PhD supervisor but that each Head of School should advise on interpretation. ERC application was a requirement. The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities commented that a major application such as a H2020 application would be one such output but that PhD supervision was an activity not an output.

The Director of Research for the School of Medicine noted that discussions were continuing within the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The Research Development Manager asked how joint appointments would be treated across 2 Schools. In this case the relevant schools would work together on a case by case basis. The ADoRMH commented that bibliometric tools at their disposal were weak and that RSS does not provide accessible information on research income or citations. Assistance is provided by Niamh Brennan in the Office of Scholarly Communication and Access to Research but budget constraints have limited her use of tools. She acknowledged that interdisciplinary working and shared posts adds a degree of complexity but that we have to start the process.

It was noted that the end of May for completion of this task was challenging.

RS/15-16/59 AOB

The DoR intended to circulate the annual Dean of Research report in advance of the next meeting at which all Directors of Research would be invited. A self assessment of the committee structure and function would also be carried out.