

## Handbook for MEELC Dual Degree Students

Academic year 2023-2024

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with the *MEELC Handbook*, the *School Handbook*, and the *Dual Degree Handbook*.

### **The first two years**

You spend the first two years of the Dual Degree at Trinity, and your syllabus during this time is the same as that as any other MEELC student. For policies which apply during this period, refer to the *School Handbook* and *MEELC Handbook*.

The marks gained during your first two years will not count towards your Trinity degree. Nor – though you should satisfy yourself on this point by consulting Columbia’s own guidelines directly – do we understand that they will count towards your Columbia degree (see <https://tcd.gs.columbia.edu/content/transfer-credit>).

That said, the marks from the first two years will appear on your Trinity transcript, and a strong performance in them may well be useful in gaining internships and/or impressing employers. It is thus advantageous to ‘hit the ground running’.

You also need to successfully complete all your Trinity modules in order to progress to Columbia.

### **Choosing your second-year modules**

When choosing your Second Year modules (in the summer after First Year), you do not need to worry about how this will affect you at Columbia: from Columbia’s point of view, all students incoming from Trinity MEELC are the same and have the same Columbia options, regardless of which modules they chose at Trinity.

*Except* – when you choose your Trinity Elective (a special type of module, run College-wide; you do one of these, in Second Year), bear in mind that some of these are recognized by Columbia as fulfilling their core requirement in Science. Columbia will notify you in the summer after First Year of which Trinity Electives have this feature. Taking one of these will thus reduce your workload at Columbia. If you choose a Trinity Elective which is not on the Columbia ‘Science’ list, that is permissible, but then your workload at Columbia will be higher, and Columbia strongly discourage it.

### **Foundation Scholarship**

As a registered Trinity student, in your second year you are eligible to apply for the Trinity Foundation scholarship.

Information about the Foundation Scholarship can be found online, and is also circulated by email. NB the information specific to Dual Degree students in the Foundation Scholarship FAQs (also in respect of the ‘perks’ offered to them).

### **Study-abroad arrangements in Second Year**

Trinity-only MEELC students spend their third year abroad (in Europe, possibly also in the Middle East). As a Dual Degree student, you do *not* do this. You can therefore ignore the communications about arrangements for study abroad and/or Erasmus which are circulated to second-year MEELC students.

### **Years three and four**

You spend years three and four at Columbia. Which Columbia modules you study is between you and Columbia: Trinity does not need to approve your Columbia modules (though you must of course follow Columbia’s own rules).

### **How Trinity calculates your Trinity degree**

As a Dual Degree student, you end up with two separate degrees, one from each institution. Re how Columbia determines your Columbia grade, you should ask Columbia.

For how Trinity calculates your Trinity degree, you should refer to the *Dual Degree Handbook*. In 2023-2024, the following is understood to apply:

*For the purpose of calculating the Trinity degree classification, the cumulative GPA recorded on the final transcript provided by Columbia University (which includes the marks for both Columbia years) will be combined with the aggregate mark from the additional modules required by Trinity (30 ECTS) on a 50%-50% basis.*

(But, as a University rather than MEELC rule, you should confirm it with University sources).

Also refer to the *Dual Degree Handbook* for conversion tables (to indicate how the Columbia cumulative GPA will be converted onto the Trinity scale).

### **Trinity requirements while you are at Columbia**

During your time at Columbia, you not only have to fulfil the requirements of Columbia itself: you are also required by Trinity to submit work to Trinity, which Trinity assesses, to a total of 30 ECTS credits. These count towards your Trinity degree.

20 ECTS credits are a capstone project which you write in your fourth year. See information below.

10 ECTS credits, for which you have two options:

- a) MLU3401Y *MEELC Dual Degree Internship*
- b) EEU3300Y *Ideas and Perceptions of Europe*

### **Enrolment in Trinity modules**

*Important note:* Trinity requires you to pass your Third Year at Columbia. The way this is recognised by the Trinity system is that, at the start of your Third year (=first at Columbia), Trinity will enrol you on a year-long Trinity module worth 60 credits called *MEELC DD Columbia University JS Year (MLU3333Y)*.

This module is assessed on a pass/fail basis, and does not contribute to the calculation of your Trinity degree. You pass it by passing your Columbia modules. (Your Columbia Third year will count towards your Trinity degree, but they will enter the count at a later point in time – see below).

Owing to when the 3<sup>rd</sup> year Columbia results become available (usually after the Trinity annual Court of Examiners), you pass the module *MEELC DD Columbia University JS Year (MLU3333Y)* in the Trinity supplemental period. This is purely an administrative procedure, and in no way counts against you on your Trinity record.

During your Fourth Year, you will be enrolled on:

- MLU34CPY *MEELC Dual Degree Capstone*

You will also be *retrospectively* enrolled on the 10-credit module you chose:

- **either** MLU3401Y *MEELC Dual Degree Internship*
- **or** EEU3300Y *Ideas and Perceptions of Europe*

Hence the marks for your 20-credit capstone and for the 10-credit module (*Internship* or *Ideas and Perceptions of Europe*) will count toward your Trinity Fourth-Year mark, even if some or all of the work was undertaken before your Fourth Year.

### **Choosing your 10-credit module**

Your choice of whether to do the *Internship* or *Ideas and Perceptions of Europe* needs to be communicated to [columbiadualba@tcd.ie](mailto:columbiadualba@tcd.ie) Cc'ing your Dual Degree Academic Advisor at Trinity by the end of Reading Week in Hilary Term in your Second Year.

Subject to the authorization of your Dual Degree Advisor at Trinity, you may enroll on *Ideas and Perceptions of Europe* in the first instance, and then switch to the *Internship* subsequently. If you are unsure about how to organize an internship at the time of making the choice, this is a good strategy.

NB lectures for *Ideas and Perceptions of Europe* are held in Trinity at the end of your second year.

### **Ideas and Perceptions of Europe**

Information about this module is circulated during your Second Year by the module coordinator.

Since, if you do the module, you will only be formally enrolled on it retrospectively (in Fourth Year), at the time of actually engaging with the module you will not see it on your Trinity Blackboard. Other arrangements will be made for getting course materials and information to you.

## **The Internship**

If you choose to do the Internship:

After completing your second year at Trinity you should undertake an internship which gives you practical experience of work as encountered by specialists, in an area broadly relevant to MEELC. It should last a minimum of 3-4 weeks, and involve you working on a project under the direction of a relevant professional. It is recommended that you do this during your Third Year (first year at Columbia), or the summer before or after it.

You are expected to take the initiative in organising the placement, but you will have the advice of your Dual Degree advisor in Trinity. The Trinity Dual Degree advisor needs to approve the placement and project in advance of your starting in order for it to 'count' – as soon as you have an idea for the Internship, email them to seek approval.

Shortly after the internship is completed, you should arrange for an email with a short report from the relevant institution or organisation to reach your Trinity Academic Advisor, to ensure satisfactory completion.

The internship is assessed by a reflective essay (see below), which should be emailed to your Trinity Academic Advisor. For the essay to be marked, it will normally be necessary for the short report from the organisation or institution to have been received.

### **The reflective essay on the Internship**

The reflective essay on the Internship should be 1500 words long. It contributes 10 ECTS to your degree.

The reflective essay has the following learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the development of professional skills related to the internship experience
2. Identify the completion of performance objectives
3. Demonstrate engagement with the core activities of an organisation or institution
4. Present a critical reflection on the objectives of the internship.

It should offer intelligent reflections on the experience of the internship, and to outline how the internship furthered or enhanced your academic (and personal) development. In other words, the essay should relate your personal experience as an intern to your course of study and to your academic (and personal) development.

In general, the essay should demonstrate your ability to reflect on your performance as an intern and to assess the significance of the experience in your academic career. Throughout, it

should be supported with specific examples. Like any essay, it should be structured with an introduction, a main body of text and a conclusion.

The introduction should outline the overall context and structure of the internship, explaining your role as an intern, introducing the organisation where the internship was completed, and giving the reasons for choosing the internship in question.

The main text should outline the goals set at the beginning of the internship and the tasks completed with the aim of achieving those goals. It should further reflect on the extent to which said goals were achieved, and why; how the efforts made towards achieving them contributed to your personal, professional and academic development (e.g. what new skills were learned); and how the internship contributed to the work of the organisation.

The conclusion should provide a brief summary.

The reflective essay should normally be submitted within 3-4 weeks after the completion of the internship. The essay should be emailed to your Trinity Academic Advisor.

The mark (of which you will be informed within a reasonable time of submitting the work) will only appear on SITS (the Trinity online grading system) in your Fourth year, when Trinity will enrol you on the module *Internship MEELC Dual Degree (MLU3401Y)*, which is worth 10 ECTS. The grade for the reflective essay will be the grade for this module.

### **Planning the Fourth-year capstone at the end of Third Year**

Given your Columbia workload in Fourth Year, you are strongly advised to make a start on your Trinity capstone work over the summer between Third and Fourth year. To this end, you need to start approaching potential supervisors in the Trinity Hilary Term of your third year (i.e. before mid-April).

### **The Fourth-Year Capstone**

The Trinity capstone project can be on any aspect of your studies, or on any academic topic of interest to you which is germane to your Columbia Major and/or MEELC studies.

You write the Trinity capstone under the supervision of a Trinity academic. You can either approach one directly, or ask your Trinity Academic Advisor for suggestions. In the latter case, you should explain the general idea you are interested in. Once you have a supervisor, s/he can help you narrow the topic down.

As noted above, you are strongly advised to approach supervisors by mid-April in your Third Year, with a view to getting started over the summer. This will reduce your workload in Fourth year.

For those of you writing a Senior Thesis at Columbia, the Trinity capstone should be distinct from the Senior Thesis (there should, for example, be no verbatim overlap between the two), but it may be related to it: it may be a parallel/complementary project, and/or one which grows out of your Columbia Thesis. If you have any questions about how these rules apply to your case, you should discuss them with your Trinity supervisor *and* Academic Advisor.

The Capstone project, and its assessment, are divided as follows:

- a. 20% – a written research proposal of 1000 words (including footnotes but not bibliography or any appendices).
- b. 50% – an analytical essay of 5000 words (including footnotes but not bibliography or any appendices).
- c. 30% – a *viva voce* examination about your project, conducted online, with a small panel of academics from Trinity.

### **1. The research proposal**

The project proposal should offer a concise and clearly structured outline of your initial ideas about your research project, written for a lay academic audience.

The proposal should include the following components:

- (1) Title and short description of research project.
- (2) A brief discussion of the aims and the scope of the project, and a short presentation of the research questions and the proposed hypotheses. Any essential background information should also be provided.
- (3) A short description of the sources and theoretical framework (if any) to be used in the project.
- (4) Notice should be given of any difficulties of method which you envisage arising.
- (5) There should be a brief (and not necessarily comprehensive) survey of previous work on the topic.
- (6) A short bibliography of 5 to 10 titles should be appended (without being included in the word count).

It is essential to consult a potential supervisor and to do preliminary research in advance of submitting the proposal.

The proposal and the main text of the capstone are assessed separately, as self-standing pieces of work. If, owing to legitimate reasons arising from further research, the main text of the capstone ends up differing from that the proposal said it would do, this will not be held against you.

### **2. The analytical essay of 5000 words**

This should analyse evidence in order to answer a clearly formulated research question. Due attention should be given to problems of method, and there should be appropriate engagement with relevant scholarship.

There should be no significant verbatim overlap with the research proposal.

### **3. The viva**

The *viva voce* examination will normally last c. 20 minutes. The examiners will have read your dissertation beforehand.

You should be prepared to defend your project (approach, write-up, methods, conclusions), to explain its relevance and importance, to be probed on your general knowledge of the topic and scholarly literature attaching to it, and to answer questions arising from the discussion.

You are encouraged to practice the viva beforehand (e.g. it would be a good idea to give each other mocks), and (if not on the examination panel) your supervisor may be available for this.

The viva will be recorded.

#### **4. Capstone: summary timeline**

April of your Third year: contact your Trinity Academic Advisor, explaining what topic(s) you are interested in pursuing. If you are planning to do a Columbia Senior Thesis, you should mention this, and explain the relation between the two projects (so that the Advisor can determine whether they are sufficiently distinct).

The Academic Advisor will help you to find a Trinity supervisor. You can also email potential supervisors directly.

Summer between Third and Fourth year: do as much of the capstone work as possible, to reduce your workload in Fourth Year. Ideally, you should have a rough draft at least of the research proposal by the end of the summer.

Last day of Trinity Semester One in your Fourth year: **deadline** for submission of research proposal for assessment. To be submitted via Blackboard.

End of March in your Fourth year: **deadline** for submission of the 5000-word written component for assessment. To be submitted via Blackboard.

April-May: Viva to take place online.