Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Marino Institute of Education
Associated College Degrees Committee

A meeting of the Marino Institute of Education, Associated College Degrees Committee (MIE ACDC) was held on 1 December 2025 at 2pm at the Trinity Board Room, Trinity College Dublin.

Draft Minutes

Present:

Professor Neville Cox, Registrar, Trinity (*Chair*)
Professor Teresa O'Doherty, President of MIE
Dr Seán Delaney, Registrar, MIE
Ms Shauna Cassidy, Assistant-Registrar, MIE
Professor Vincent Wade, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Ms Patricia Maguire, Academic Secretary, Trinity
Professor Ann Devitt, Head of School Education
Dr Michael Cleary-Gaffney, Interim Quality Officer, Trinity
Dr Aimee Brennan, Dean of Education: Policy, Practice and Society, MIE
Dr Gene Mehigan, Vice President for Education & Strategic Development, MIE
Dr Craig Skerritt, Head of Department of Policy and Practice, MIE

Attending:

Mr Brendan White, MIE IFP Programme Manager for item 4; Ms Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary, Trinity; Ms Ellen Kampinga, Education Support Officer (*Secretary*)

Apologies: Ms Nora Varga, Student Recruitment & Admissions Manager, Trinity Global; Professor Michael Shevlin, Second Representative, School of Education; Mr Conn McCluskey, School Manager, School of Education; Ms Amanda Ryan, Quality Officer, MIE; Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies; Dr Liz Donnellan, Education Policy Developer, Trinity.

A formal note of condolence was included for the current AHSS Faculty Dean, Professor Carmel O'Sullivan, on the passing of her mother. Professor O'Sullivan was a long-standing member of this Committee in previous years in her capacity as Head of School of Education.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/001 Welcome and Changes to Membership

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year for the MIE ACDC. He thanked the MIE Staff present and all others who attended the recent graduation ceremonies, noting that it is great to see well-attended graduation ceremonies which are great events for the students celebrating their accomplishments.

The Chair noted the changes in the membership and welcomed Patricia Maguire as new Academic Secretary and Dr Michael Cleary-Gaffney as interim Quality Officer. The Chair also welcomed Dr Craig Skerritt, Head of Department of Policy and Practice at MIE.

The apologies were noted.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/002 Minutes of the Meeting 15 April 2025

There were no amendments from the Committee for the minutes from the meeting on 15 April 2025 as circulated.

> **Action/Decision**
> **MIE/ACDC/25-26/002.1:** The Minutes for the Meeting 15 April 2025 were approved.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/003 Matters Arising

The Chair noted some matters arising from the minutes.
The Annual Dialogue meeting had taken place e on Thursday May 8th, 2025, organised by the Quality Office.
The Chair also noted two items that were approved at Trinity University Council on May 14th, 2025: the continued suspension for the MES in Leadership in Christian Education and the changes to the Calendar Part II and III.
No further matters arising were noted by the Committee.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/004 Standing update on IFP

The Chair welcomed Mr Brendan White, International Foundation Programme (IFP) Programme Manager to the meeting to present on the memoranda circulated.

The Programme Manager presented the memorandum circulated by Ms Nora Varga, Recruitment and Admissions Manager at Trinity Global. The Programme Manager reported a highly successful recruitment cycle for the 2025/26 intake, with 120 registrations—the largest cohort since the programme began. For the upcoming 2026/27 cycle, the application portal opened on 31 October 2025, and more offers will be issued to offset anticipated attrition after deposit payments. The recruitment team plans proactive engagement with students from high-risk countries to provide visa guidance and maintain close contact with in-country visa offices to stay updated on requirements.

Speaking to the memo on the IFP cohort performance, the Programme Manager highlighted strong progression results, with 84 students from the 2024/25 cohort registering onto Trinity programmes—a 76% progression rate, the highest to date. The current 2025/26 cohort shows improved balance between Business (52 students) and STEM (68 students) pathways. Additionally, 50% of students will benefit from revised Maths progression requirements approved in March 2025, expected to boost future progression rates. Positive feedback was received from the Trinity Open Day on 29 November 2025, and MIE has enhanced integration efforts by collaborating with student representatives and the SU president to organize events fostering connection within the wider student body.

The Programme Manager also noted that in November, MIE held a memorial service for Dr. Bill Lynch who led the maths provision on the IFP programme and they invited students from past years to join the service and plant a tree in his honour.

The discussion focused on tracking the progression and performance of IFP students at Trinity. While the Programme Manager welcomed questions on recruitment, admissions, and cohort performance, they noted that progression tracking within Trinity is limited because IFP graduates are not flagged in the Trinity SITS registration system. MIE collects data on subsequent Trinity registrations for alumni engagement, and Trinity Global gathers insights through similar alumni engagement processes, however the progression, performance on average and graduation data of former IFP graduates are not collected from Trinity. Although anecdotal faculty feedback exists, the Programme Manager emphasized the need for hard data to analyse trends across cohorts, given the growing number of graduates. The Chair confirmed there are no major concerns about progression trends but acknowledged the value of systematic tracking.

The Senior Lecturer suggested exploring tracking methods similar to those used for TAP (Trinity Access Programmes) for the Foundation programme graduates and offered to raise this with Academic Registry. Overall, the committee members agreed that formal tracking would benefit programme delivery and strategic planning.

The MIE President also added that the IFP programme currently has enrolled a student from Gaza and a large amount of support and care has gone in to support the student on the programme.

The Chair thanked the IFP programme Manager for his update.
[The IFP Programme Manager left the meeting.]

Action/Decision:

MIE/ACDC/25-26/005.1 The Senior Lecturer to discuss with Academic Registry the possibility to track International Foundation Programme students and their progression similar to the tracking of Trinity Access Programme students to provide data for Marino Institute of Education planning purposes.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/005 Review Report BSc Early Childhood Education

The MIE Registrar explained that the programme does not qualify for the HEA Free Fees Scheme and remains self-funded due to its development timeline. The programme adheres to high Quality Assurance standards and underwent an external review last year, which included a comprehensive self-assessment report. The external review panel commended the programme's high standards, capacity, and recent improvements to assessments. A Quality Implementation Plan is being prepared by the Programme Lead for publication in the New Year.

The Chair acknowledged the positive context and confirmed that the report contained numerous commendations and constructive recommendations aligned with the programme's circumstances. The Committee expressed satisfaction and had no further questions on the report.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/006 External Examiners

    a. **Memorandum on Status of Examiners from the MIE Registrar Dr Seán Delaney**

The Chair asked the MIE Registrar to speak to his circulated memo on the status of the External Examiners for 2025/26.

The MIE Registrar spoke to the changes in external examiners that occurred since last year. For the BSc Education Studies, Dr Deirdre Horgan is new from UCC, Dr T. J. O'Ceallaigh is the new examiner for the Baítsiléir san Oideachas, for the Bachelor in Education and the Máistir Gairimiúil san Oideachas, Dr John O'Shea from Mary Immaculate College is replacing Dr Martin Hagan, who had to step down due to family commitments. Dr Anna Logan from DCU is the new external examiner for the English pathway Professional Masters of Education. Prof. Jennifer Pope is new for the Masters in Education Studies programmes, Early Childhood Education and Intercultural Learning and Leadership.

The position of external examiner to cover the Masters in Education Studies' three specialisation pathways [Visual Arts, Inquiry-based Learning and Christian School Leadership] is vacant, but there are no students in 1st or 2nd year on the programme. A final replacement is Dr Alf Coles as external examiner for the Masters in Education Studies in Primary Maths Education.

    b. **Undergraduate & Postgraduate External Examiner Reports 2024/25**

The MIE Registrar presented the 2024/25 External Examiner Reports, split into undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, noting that responses will be provided at the

February ACDC meeting as per usual practice. A new, more detailed response format will be introduced this year in the form of programme reports, incorporating external examiner feedback, staff and student input, and progression data for a more comprehensive evaluation. While most programmes will adopt this approach, a few may retain the previous format due to staff changes. The MIE Registrar confirmed this change stems from recommendations in the institutional quality effectiveness review and is part of the Quality Improvement Plan.

The Academic Secretary asked if responses to external examiners' reports would be combined with – or kept separate from - Programme Review reports., The MIE Registrar clarified that the new format aims to provide a broader, contextualized review beyond the external examiner's perspective. The Committee acknowledged the process as resource-intensive, and MIE will review its impact after implementation. A new appointment has been made to support data collection for these reports. The Senior Lecturer emphasized maintaining the strong voice of external examiners and suggested a hybrid approach to reduce workload, while the Head of School of Education proposed using Trinity's quality template for efficiency. The Interim Quality Officer confirmed this template includes examiner feedback, student input, progression data, and action plans. The Chair concluded by asking the Interim Quality Officer to share the template with MIE.

> **Action/Decision:**
> **MIE/ACDC/25-26/006.1** The Interim Quality Officer to share (programme) Quality Review Template with Marino Institute of Education.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/007 Module Amendments

The Chair asked the MIE registrar to speak to the module amendments as circulated. The MIE Registrar assured the Committee that all suggested module amendments had been brought through Programme Board and Academic Council at MIE and welcomed any questions on the circulated documents. The Chair commented that all reports show a very reflective approach in improving their modules and that they read as well rationalised changes for the three changes circulated. No further comments are made and the module amendments were approved and noted.

> **Action/Decision**
> **MIE/ACDC/25-26/007.1:** The amendments to Special Educational Needs modules 1, 2 and 3; ES8109, ES8210 and ES8311 - [BSc Education Studies] were approved.
> **MIE/ACDC/25-26/007.2:** The amendments to Comparative Education module ES8408 - [BSc Education Studies] were approved.
> **MIE/ACDC/25-26/007.3:** The amendments to Creative Technologies module PM9203 - [Professional Masters Education] were approved.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/008 Review of Agreements, Policies and Processes

    a. **Review of TCD Policy** *Approval of Linked Providers' Quality Assurance Procedures*

The Trinity Interim Quality Officer presented on the proposed review of the Trinity Policy *Approval of Linked Providers' Quality Assurance Procedures* and the Trinity Procedure *Linked Provider Appeals Procedure*.

Speaking to the review of the Quality Assurance procedures, the Interim Quality Officer explained that this review intends to reflect the maturity of the relationship between Linked Providers and Trinity in 2026, while also maintaining an appropriate level of oversight as part of the requirements as the Designated Awarding Body. The proposal will provide greater clarity on the differentiation of academic policies and non-academic policies which will enable a more efficient approval process. For non-academic policies, the Linked Provider will provide evidence of external review (in instances where there is a statutory basis), this draft policy will be noted by Trinity Quality Committee. While for Academic policies, amendments will be categorised as minor and major amendments, with a minor amendment seeing an expedited approval process. The Quality Office will consult with both Linked Providers to ensure that any amendments enhance the process for approving QA policies of Linked Providers.

On the Linked Provider Appeals Procedure, the Interim Quality Officer reported that it is unlikely there will be substantial change as the procedures aligns to the requirements of the QQI Act.

The Chair asked if the difference between major and minor changes are defined. The Interim Quality Officer confirmed that modifications to the programme architecture change would be considered a major change, whereas a modification within a module which does not directly impact on Programme Learning Outcomes would constitute a minor change.

The MIE Registrar commented that they welcome the review and asked for clarification on who has final say over policies in MIE and how these are approved. In his experience, approval of a policy must be complete in MIE before submission to Trinity, but subsequent amendments can be sought by Trinity Quality Committee which can slow down the overall timeline for approval and implementation of a policy or procedure.
The Trinity Quality Office would encourage MIE to submit their draft policies for review before being formally submitted to MIE's governance in order to minimise further amendments when formally submitted to Trinity's Quality Committee. The Interim Quality Officer noted that the proposed amendments to the policies will be discussed in consultation with Linked Providers before March 2026.

The Committee noted that Trinity has statutory QA responsibilities to MIE as the Designated Awarding Body, so both institutions must agree on academic policies. MIE noted that some

policies, such as academic integrity, require agile responses, yet the current approach can be time-consuming. While maintaining the integrity of the review process is essential, reducing delays is a priority. The MIE President highlighted that MIE relatively recently (2021) implemented a large suite of policies as the first step in initiating the institutional effectiveness review which was conducted in 2023. This was a challenging experience and so they welcome a more collegial and consultative process.

The Senior Lecturer shared that he has worked on a similar review with Trinity Schools by moving consultation earlier in the process to shorten timelines. The Assistant Academic Secretary suggested sharing Trinity Teaching & Learning's forward-looking workplan of upcoming Trinity policy review, to help facilitate collaboration. The Committee agreed that early engagement and streamlined workflows will support efficiency without compromising quality.

The Chair thanked the Interim Quality Officer for his presentation.

b. Presentation on new Trinity Academic Policies

The presentation on the New Trinity Academic Policies workplan was presented by the Assistant Academic Secretary (AAS).

The presentation included the overview of new and updated policies as completed over 2024/25, which came into effect on 1 September 2025 for the current academic year.

The AAS explained the relevance of the updated suspension and cessation policy, where all processes to suspend and cease a module and/or programme including validated programmes are described.

The list of policies scheduled for review in 2025/26 was presented, including several new additions. The Senior Lecturer noted that the policies on late submissions and Garda vetting had been revised to reflect changes in legislation and evolving expectations. The MIE Registrar confirmed that the MIE Garda vetting policy had also been updated. In a similar vein, MIE plans to revise its student disciplinary policy. The Chair added that Trinity has updated its own student disciplinary processes and procedures as part of last year's amendments to the Trinity Statutes and will share these updates with MIE for reference.

> **Actions/Decision:**
> **MIE/ACDC/25-26/008.1:** The Chair is to share the updated Statutes describing student disciplinary policy and process with Marino Institute of Education.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/009 Standing Update on Quality Assurance of Linked Providers
   a. **Update from MIE on status TrustEd Ireland Quality Mark Application**

The MIE Registrar highlighted that TrustEd Ireland Quality mark is a significant priority for their institution, particularly in relation to International Foundation Programme (IFP) students. Changes to the visa process for international students mean that MIE requires the TrustEd Quality Mark to ensure visa applications remain viable for IFP students.

MIE received QQI feedback at the initial application phase stage that in order to be successful, relevant policies for international student recruitment would need to be created in-house. Due to the nature of the TrustEd Mark needing to be awarded to both institutions involved in the IFP, MIE will now submit an updated application during the second TrustEd window before the end of March 2026. The MIE Quality Officer is prioritising the development of MIE international recruitment and promotion policies and resources. Consultation has taken place with Trinity's Interim Quality Officer and the Academic Secretary to ensure these policies are approved by Trinity ahead of the submission deadline. The goal is a successful application in this window.

The Chair thanked the MIE Registrar for the update, and the Committee agreed that achieving accreditation in the second window is the desired outcome for all parties.

The Chair asked whether there is broader interest at MIE in recruiting international students for other programmes. The MIE President noted that additional marketing resources would be required and highlighted that education programmes generally attract lower interest from international cohorts. Entry requirements for teacher education courses also present challenges for attracting international students. While an international Bachelor of Education was considered, it would require separate accreditations and significant resources, making it a lower priority for now, though it remains open for future review. There is some interest from U.S. students, particularly if the Irish teaching qualification were recognised in the United States, which could in turn create further opportunities for other graduates. The Head of the Department of Policy and Practice added that they have explored the possibility of an online Master's programme for students outside Ireland, which could still present a viable opportunity.

   b. **Update from Quality Officer on current QQI Consultation Papers**
The Interim Quality Officer updated the committee on two QQI Consultation Papers.

   1. Draft Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines on Programmes Involving Work-integrated Learning

The guidelines relate to any programme which involves any form of work integrated learning. The proposed guidelines will require that the provider ensures that programmes which have work integrated learning elements reflect this in the programme level outcomes. The draft guidelines recognise the requirements of a programme to align with

accrediting body standards, such as the Teaching Council. This Consultation closed in October and QQI will publish the white paper in early 2026.

2. Micro-Credentials and the short programmes that lead to them

This green paper intends to provide clarify on what constitutes micro-credential, the threshold of ECT credit that can be assigned to a micro-credential and the potential to stack single micro-credentials to form non-major awards or to facilitate advanced entry to major awards via Prior Recognition of Learning. The Quality Officer will notify the ACDC on any updates in relation to these matters at the next meeting.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/010 Standing Item on Communication
   a. **Inter-Institutional Collaboration**

The MIE President was asked to provide an update on inter-institutional collaboration. She reported on a meeting that took place with the Department of Education on the policy landscape on the 2nd of October 2025. MIE and the School of Education both attended and the event was very useful on collaboration initiatives and to hear the priorities of the Department of Education. The Head of School of Education noted that the RIAM Director had shared compliments to both Trinity and MIE of excellent institutional leadership in policy and curriculum design presented at this meeting. The MIE President added the meeting was a useful platform as there has been a lot of change in the Department of Education. It was noted that the HEA were not present at this meeting, which, as a key funding body for many of the initiatives discussed, such as special needs education and placements, would have been welcome.

The MIE President also spoke on the collaboration that was previously noted on the delivery of Modern Foreign Languages initiative with aid from the School of Languages. It proved that collaboration with the School on this initiative was not feasible and MIE has found alternative language tutors to provide the required classes.

The Vice President for Education & Strategic Development was asked to provide a verbal update on the development of the new MES in Primary Literacy Education. The feedback received on the initial outline was welcomed by the development team and it affected both the scope and the assessment formats in the subsequent development stage. The development team was reported to be on track to submit an advanced outline for the January deadline submission to the ACDC secretary.

The Dean of Education: Policy, Practice and Society was asked to speak on the development of the restructuring of three MIE programmes to integrate the modern foreign language modules as part of the new requirements. She reported that the primary curriculum review has completed and programme board meetings are ongoing. The team are aiming to bring the updated structures for the programmes to the next ACDC meeting in February. They are not expecting major structural changes, rather the integration of 2 new modules in line with

Modern Foreign Language Initiative and Digital Literacy and other minor module changes including year of delivery for certain modules. An agreed template has been used for the submission format.

The Head of School of Education reported on the status of the Irish Upskilling Programme, which is recruiting a second cohort in January. Discussions have been had on alignment of the timing to September start date, which will be discussed further.
She added that the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) Conference occurred 26-19 August 2025, led out by MIE in collaboration with the School of Education which proved a great success.

The Chair thanked both the MIE President and the Head of School of Education for their updates.

b. Policies and Procedures relevant to MIE
The Senior Lecturer spoke to three strategic areas that Trinity Teaching & Learning is working on.
- Education for Sustainable Development is being incorporated into all new degree proposals and degree revisions, with a new Programme Learning Outcome needing to be focused on sustainability. Support for staff on incorporating sustainability in teaching will be mainstreamed in the form of workshops for staff and academic training for sustainability and coaching on to integrate the topic and practice into teaching, learning and assessment into existing modules.
- Universal Design for Learning and inclusive education will be mainstreamed this year. A dedicated position of Senior Academic Developer has been created in the Centre for Academic Practice to increase the number of services available. There is already training resources available on UDL and inclusive practice and this will be extended with additional resources and a central hub with information on how to apply UDL for all existing modules.
- Generative AI is an area under continuous development, with new guidelines and operating policies being developed. AI literacy training for academics was mainstreamed to train common understanding to focus on how to use the functionality and specifically in the education context. The Research and Innovation Hub was launched with 5 new projects being supported, of which 3 focus on AI. One by the School of Education on teaching methods, One from the School of Pharmacy on soft skills training through AI, and one for the School of Engineering which includes a pipeline of tools to provide focused and customised chatbots for certain areas.

The Trinity Open Day on 29 November 2025 was a success with 13,000 students registered, which was the highest number ever, with 10,000 students attending the day. There was a

full day of presentations and it seemed that moving the Open Day to later in the Academic Year has a significant effect as students were reportedly more focused on their interest as they are closer in time to submitting their CAO application forms.

MIE/ACDC/25-26/011 Any Other Business
There was no other business.
The Chair thanked all for attending, wishing everyone a happy Christmas and good luck with end of term.
The Committee thanked the secretary for arranging the meeting.

The next MIE Meetings are
- 24 February 2026, in-person on Marino Institute of Education Campus
- 14 April 2026 online meeting via Microsoft Teams

The meeting was closed.