



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of Trinity Elective Sub-Committee

Monday 10 February 2025 at 10.00 in the Arts Building Conference Room

Present: Chair: Professor Mark Sweetman, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice
Professor Nollaig Bourke, Health Sciences Representative
Professor Tylor Brand, AHSS Representative
Mr Shane Coultry, Academic Registry
Mr Eoghan Gilroy, SU Education Officer
Ms Ciara Conlon, Representative from Academic Affairs
Ms Joanna Kozielec, Second Representative Academic Affairs

Apologies: Prof. Rachel McDonnell, STEM Representative

In Attendance: Secretary: Ms Ellen Kampinga, Academic Affairs; Ms Leticia Peralta, Quality Office (for item 011 and 012); Mr Grant Goodwin, Quality Office (for item 011 and 012).

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the committee to the second meeting of TESC in the 2024/25 academic year. He thanked the ADUSE for his service as Chair during the previous meeting and academic year. The Chair also welcomed Ms Joanna Kozielec, who will replace Ms Ciara Conlon. Introductions of the membership followed around the room. The apology for Prof. Rachel McDonnell, the STEM representative, was noted.

TESC/24-25/011 Draft Minutes of the meeting on 25 November 2024

Minor change is suggested by the Chair. On page 2, under item TESC/24-25/004 Proposals, the line should read 'The ADUSE welcomes the proposal.' This change was noted,

With this amendment, the minutes of the meeting 25 November 2024 for TESC were approved.

TESC/24-25/012 Matters Arising

The Chair updated the meeting on matters arising from the last meeting.

- The proposal for Histories and Futures of Climate Change was approved at USC in December and was approved at Council on February 5th.
- The Updated TESC Terms of Reference were approved at USC in December and was approved at Council on February 5th.
- The Trinity Elective Annual Report was approved at USC

No other matters were arising from the last meeting, and the committee does not have any other matters arising to add at this point.

TESC/24-25/013 Semester 1 Student Survey Results Update from Quality Office

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Ms Leticia Peralta and Mr Grant Goodwin from the Quality Office to present on the semester 1 survey results. Ms Peralta presented the student survey results for the first semester of 2024/25, noting overall positive feedback.

Suggestions included spreading assessments throughout the semester, setting deadlines for late submissions and feedback, condensing module content, focusing more on language aspects in respective modules, reducing group project workload, and addressing timetabling issues.

The Quality Officer discussed the low response rate, with suggestions to improve it by incorporating the survey into the VLE and involving academics.

The percentage of students getting their first choice dropped to 84%, possibly due to an increase in the number of students. A waiting list for OME enrolment was proposed.

The value of group work was discussed, with suggestions for how to support staff to consider assessment of group work including a shift towards assessment of process (v product) including peer assessment.

The Chair inquired about support for module coordinators, and specific support for Trinity Elective module coordinators in terms of guides for how to assess and support groupwork. The Head of Academic Practice responded that this was an area that they had discussed within the Centre and they were aware needed further work/supports, (e.g. in context of problem-based learning) but unfortunately they did not have the resources to support at present.

TESC/24-25/014 Adding Inclusive Curriculum Question to Survey with Quality Office

The inclusive curriculum team proposed adding questions to the student survey. The Chair and Quality Officer agreed that adding too many questions could reduce response quality. It was suggested adding one question or a set of statements instead.

There were discussions about the challenges in meeting accommodations from LENS reports. The need for better support for module coordinators was highlighted. The Head of Academic Practice noted that if inclusivity-related evaluation data was being gathered from students, it was important that module coordinators were supported, and empowered and enabled to respond to that feedback via their practice.

The Quality Officer emphasized that implementing UDL across all modules could be a college-wide initiative and suggested a designated survey to gauge accessibility-related issues, outside of the scope of Trinity Electives. The Head of Academic Practice noted that discussions were ongoing re strategies for mainstreaming inclusivity in teaching and learning across all curricula.

Concerns were raised about inconvenient timeslots, particularly late times on Thursdays. The possibility of flexibility in timeslots was discussed.

The committee approved updating the inconsistent bands of hours in the student workload question.

The next student survey will be held in semester 2, in two months.

The Chair thanks the Quality Office for their contribution. Ms Leticia Peralta and Mr Grant Goodwin leave the meeting.

Action/ Decision

014.01 TESC approved the addition of question 3 as suggested in p.2 of memorandum on inclusive practice to be included in the Trinity Elective Semester Survey going forward.

TESC/24-25/015 Review of Change of Mind Policy for 2025/26

The change of mind policy is reviewed annually and is currently working well.

A waitlist for Trinity Elective enrolment is being developed to better gauge demand and manage places.

There is a fairness issue where students denied enrolment after max capacity is reached can sometimes enrol through module coordinators.

Capacity is set by module coordinators based on assessment methods and room capacity. It is reviewed annually, but communication to coordinators can emphasise potential for capacity changes.

Requests from visiting students may need to be handled separately due to their unique requirements.

Action/ Decision

015.01 TESC approved the change of mind policy for the academic 2025/26.

TESC/24-25/016 Trinity Elective Proposal Introduction to Medicinal Plant Use

The Chair noted the resubmission with addressed changes for the proposal for Introduction to Medicinal Plant Use and Integrative Medicine from the School of Pharmacy. A memorandum was included in circulation from the proposers addressing suggested changes from the November meeting.

The committee noted that the proposers have responded to the suggested changes in detail and addressed these appropriately in their revised proposal.

Action/ Decision

016.01 TESC approved the proposal for Introduction to Medicinal Plant use and Integrative medicine and for it to progress for approval to USC.

TESC/24-25/017 Trinity Elective Proposal Entrepreneurial Action

The Chair introduced a new proposal titled “Entrepreneurial Action” from Portal.

The committee noted that this elective might be popular with students and praised its well-structured and organized content.

There was a discussion about the low contact hours (6 hours) with an additional 18 hours online, emphasizing teamwork. The low number of contact hours might be due to group work scheduled in specific rooms, with most contact hours being online.

The Director of Academic Practice noted that it was a strong proposal.

It was noted that all student cohorts are currently allowed to take this elective, with a high capacity of 150 students. There might be a need to exclude cohorts with significant overlap in the field, which can be clarified with the module proposers.

Action/ Decision

017.01 TESC approves the proposal Entrepreneurial Action, pending clarification of the cohorts allowed to pick elective, the proposal will progress for approval to USC.

TESC/24-25/018 Changes to Trinity Elective Requirements for 2025/26

The Chair spoke to the memorandum documenting requests for moderate changes, suspensions, and cessations of modules.

“The Art of the Megacity” is returning from suspension.

Continued suspensions for language and culture modules are mainly due to staffing issues. Modules suspended for 3-4 years may need case-by-case evaluation or a blanket cut-off.

Suspended modules will not be visible on the website for students.

The Chemistry of Periodic Elements is requested for cessation due to staffing issues, despite being popular among students.

The capacity for “Creativity and Technology” will increase to 50 students for 2025/26 and 60 students for 2026/27.

Action/ Decision

018.01 TESC approves the continued suspension due to staffing issues of TEU00181/182, TEU00191/192, and TEU00331/332 in German Beginner, Advanced and Italian Advanced language and culture respectively for AY 2025/26.

018.02 TESC approves the suspension due to leave of absence or by promotion to college officer of TEU00121/122, TEU00062, and TEU00481 (Cancer: the Patient Journey, Engaging in a Digital World, Black studies Sem 1) for AY 2025/26.

018.03 TESC approves the cessation of TEU00351 The Chemistry of the Periodic Table.

018.04 TESC approves the increase in max capacity of 50 students TEU00502 Creativity and Technology for AY 2025/26.

TESC/24-25/019 Return from Suspension request; The Art of the Megacity

The Module Coordinator is redesigning a module to fit with the ESD initiative and requests time for redevelopment over the summer. The Chair suggests a two-part approval process, approval of return from suspension now, and review of the revised module descriptor via Summer Circulation.

The module should be available for Online Module Enrolment by the end of July. Clear agreements will be made to ensure this timeline.

[The Student’ Union Education Officer left the meeting at this point]

The Director of Academic Practice noted that she has been in discussions with the module coordinator regarding this elective, particularly in relation to embedding ESD within the revised curricula. As noted in the memo, the module coordinator intended to work with the ESD team regarding module redesign over the coming months.

The Head of Academic Practice raised the module coordinator's query regarding the possibility of Creative Arts students also taking the module as part of their elective options. The Chair confirmed that the module would be open to Creative Arts students without needing a derogation to breadth requirements.

The initiative for discipline-specific ESD modules is welcomed, as it aligns with maintaining academic/disciplinary autonomy while meeting ESD objectives.

Action/ Decision

019.01 TESC approves the return from suspension of TEU00262 The Art of the Megacity for AY 2025/26, pending approval of revised module descriptor via Summer Circulation. The Chair will respond to the questions about eligible cohorts raised by the module proposers.

TESC/24-25/020 TESC Membership 2025/26

No changes are suggested to the membership.

Action/ Decision

020.01 TESC approves the membership for 2025/26.

TESC/24-25/021 Any Other Business

The Chair notes that some points were raised by Module Coordinators as a result from the annual reminder communications to submit moderate changes or suspension/cessation requests. A small number of issues were noted, in response to communications to the Chair from module coordinators:

- Students leaving a module after not being allowed to form groups with friends. The Chair noted that policy allows students to leave modules, and that some movement of students was unavoidable.
- There was a discussion on how to incentivize attendance, but the Committee noted that this issue was ultimately up to the module coordinator.
- Different schools have varying approaches to AI. A college-wide statement has been issued, and guidelines have been developed to help staff and students understand AI use in assessments. The Chair flagged this as an issue that may require further attention in the context of Trinity Electives, where differing approaches from Schools or disciplines may need to be reconciled in the context of a single elective.
- Reviews of Trinity Electives on forums like Reddit are noted as normal and expected.
- Differences in marking scales between faculties are acknowledged, and no central scale will be mandated.

No other business was noted, and the meeting was concluded.

The Chair thanked all the committee members for their contributions. The next meeting will be set depending on the Trinity Elective results deadline in April and will be communicated via the secretary.