Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 19 May 2010 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

Present	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Dr C Laudet, Dr M Ó Siochrú, Dr J Wickham, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Dr V Kelly, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor M McCarron, Professor M Radomski, Dr A O'Gara, Professor G Whyte, Ms A Murphy.
Apologies	Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr E O'Dell, Professor J Fitzpatrick, Dr M Lyons, Dr D O'Sullivan, Dr D Brennan, Dr H Mannan, Ms D Flynn, Mr A Cooke, Ms M Furlong, Mr F Hughes, Mr A O'Callaghan, Mr N Timmon, Ms M Uppal, Librarian.
In attendance	Secretary to the College, Academic Secretary, Interim Chief Operating Officer.
Observer	Secretary to the Scholars (Mr B Roantree).
By invitation	Dr J B Foley (for Actum CL/09-10/167).

SECTION A

CL/09-10/164 **Minutes of the meeting of the 21st April 2010** were approved subject to a correction to CL/09-10/145 to read 'The strand approach has the benefit of increasing the number of students taking specific modules and is likely to increase the overall number of postgraduate taught students.'

CL/09-10/165 **Matters Arising** Responding to a query in respect of Actum CL/09-10/146, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that the partnership agreement between Trinity College and the Associated Colleges of Education contains provision for any party to withdraw without implications for the partnership agreement between the remaining parties. Referring to a query in respect of Actum CL/09-10/152, it was confirmed that laboratory classes only could be held on Open Day 2010 from 2 pm.

CL/09-10/166 **Provost's Report** The Provost informed Council that a response is imminent from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in respect of academic promotions within the current employment control framework and the status of funds derived from self-financing courses. It is expected that the HEA's position vis-à-vis the latter will be favourable. He confirmed in response to a query that junior academic promotions will proceed as normal as these are more correctly related to progression.

CL/09-10/167 **Student Evaluation of Modules** A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 11th May 2010 was circulated together with a memorandum from the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL) and a Report of the Quality Committee and its Working Group on Student Evaluation.

The Provost welcomed the Director of CAPSL to the meeting of Council for this item. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided background information on this item, noting that Council at its meeting of the 8th April 2009 approved the recommendation from the Quality Committee that online module evaluation by students should become mandatory and conducted at School or Course office level (Actum CL/08-09/136). College's Strategic Plan 2009-2014 commits to strengthening the focus on quality assurance and improvement, and specifically refers to making student evaluation of programme modules mandatory, with Schools using student feedback to inform School reviews of the delivery and design of curricula (Action 2.2, p8). He noted the legislative requirement in respect of the Universities Act (1997).

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed Council that the Director of CAPSL addressed the issue of mandatory student evaluations and that both he and the Director met with representatives of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) on this matter. A Working Group of the Quality Committee considered the administration of online surveys. Recommendations from the Director of CAPSL and the Working Group were discussed and approved by the Quality Committee, the Undergraduate Studies Committee, and the Graduate Studies Committee.

The Director of CAPSL brought Council through his report on making student evaluation of course modules mandatory. He provided information on the existing centralised module evaluations, noting that the system has become well established across the College academic landscape. Despite the voluntary nature of the current system, a significant majority of lecturers participate in the process and take follow-up action on the basis of data received from the evaluation process. The Director feels that at the level of teaching, the evaluations are making a positive contribution to quality enhancement. He noted the external case for making student evaluations mandatory, namely that Section 35 of the Universities Act specifically requires the university to establish quality procedures aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university. He also referred to the European Universities Association (EUA) review of quality assurance in Irish universities, commissioned by the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the HEA. This review Team strongly recommended that systematic evaluations of all courses be introduced immediately. The Director commented on the importance of allowing for different modes of evaluations. The recommendations attempt to reflect the principle, implicit in the legislation and the EUA review, that engagement with assessment/evaluation is mandatory, but they also respect the position of those individuals who have particular difficulties with the survey questionnaire instrument as an evaluation tool.

The Academic Secretary referring to the Report of the Quality Committee and its Working Group took Council through the recommendations in respect of the administration of the online student evaluation surveys.

Council welcomed the Reports of the Quality Committee and the Director of CAPSL, and emphasised the importance of both staff and student participation in the process. It was argued that the process should be meaningful with proper feedback to students and, where required, actions taken to remedy shortcomings in the delivery of modules and to improve the curriculum. The Academic Secretary responding to a number of queries, confirmed that the central online student evaluation does not preclude local evaluation arrangements, and emphasised that all modules of individual undergraduate courses must be evaluated within a three-year period. It is within the gift of the School/Course Committee to determine whether course modules should be evaluated within a one, two or three year period. Postgraduate taught courses should have their modules evaluated either yearly or every two years, depending on the course's duration. There was some discussion about lecturer confidentiality in the process and one Council member felt that there should be greater visibility of the outcome of student evaluation at School Executive level. It was also suggested that the outcome of evaluations of modules delivered by Teaching Assistants should be available to the Head of School or Course Director. The Director of CAPSL in response to the latter noted that there are a variety of views as to whether evaluation

outcomes should be open or closed, and some Schools, with the consent of the Teaching Assistants, do discuss openly the outcomes of evaluations. Such behaviours should be commended as models of good practice. The Director of CAPSL, referring to a concern expressed by the Graduate Students' Union representative, confirmed that where other methods of evaluation are used, their administration must conform to high quality standards ensuring student anonymity and lecturer confidentiality; the evaluation must be conducted by CAPSL in conjunction with the relevant administering Office. Council referring to the revised quality review process of Schools (also on the Agenda), welcomed the strengthening of the link between the student evaluation of modules and the quality review process of Schools. It was noted that student and academic services should also be evaluated as part of the student evaluation of modules.

Council noted and approved the following recommendations of the Director of CAPSL:

(i) It should be mandatory for some form of assessment/evaluation of student views to be gathered for every taught module at least once every three years — in line with recommendation 4 of the Report of the Quality Committee and its Working Group (Appendix 1).

(ii) While the use of survey questionnaires is College's preferred mode of gathering assessment/evaluation data, other objective modes of generating evaluation information may be employed. Where individual lecturer(s) may choose not to avail of the survey questionnaire instrument for a particular module, they should be required to designate a preferred alternative means for gathering evaluation information on the module.

Council noted and approved the recommendations of the Report of the Quality Committee and its Working Group on Student Evaluation of Modules as outlined in the document attached in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

CL/09-10/168 **Senior Research Fellow** A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 11th May 2010 was circulated with papers. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed Council that the *Academic Titles in Trinity College* document approved by Board and Council in the Academic Year 2007 instituted the title of Senior Research Fellow. The title is to be held by individuals in recognition of their standing as experienced researchers in the University. An individual may be appointed with this title, or the title may be awarded to Research Fellows currently in employment in College. The Research Committee (RS/09-10/24) and the Personnel and Appointments Committee (PAC 2009-10/19) approved the formation of a Working Group that would make recommendations directly to the University Council in regard to procedures for award of the title of Senior Research Fellow. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer brought Council through the detail of the report and recommendations of the Working Group, drawing Council's attention to the criteria for the award of title, the nomination and appointment procedures, the role and responsibilities and the term of appointment of a Senior Research Fellow.

Council sought clarification in respect of the supervisory remit of a Senior Research Fellow. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that currently a Senior Research Fellow cannot supervise students, and the new policy proposes that a Senior Research Fellow be permitted to supervise both undergraduate and postgraduate students. It was noted that the title is already in common parlance as some Research Fellows have already adopted it. It is important that the bestowing of the title of Senior Research Fellow is based on merit and is not self-awarded.

Council noted and approved the recommendations of the Working Group with regards to the procedures for award of the title of Senior Research Fellow as attached to these minutes in Appendix 2.

CL/09-10/169 **Quality Review Process of Schools** A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 10th May 2010 was circulated together with the Report of the Working Group of the Quality Committee on the Quality Review Process of Schools. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introducing this item, thanked Professor Sheila Greene for chairing the Working Group. He noted that the recommendations attempt to achieve greater coordination of the process and to eliminate duplication, especially in the collection of data. The report considers the specific requirements of multi-department schools and the need for an equitable and meaningful process.

Council welcomed the Report of the Working Group on School Reviews. The quality review process is extremely resource intensive, and Council commended the work of the Group in developing a more streamlined approach to the process and in particular the inclusion of available relevant material and data as part of the self-assessment process. It was felt while the process was resource and time intensive, Schools benefited from engaging in a reflective process and from having an objective external assessment of their strategic direction. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that it is College policy to ensure that the review panel has a gender and a geographical balance. He noted, however, the difficulty in securing international experts for more than two to three days. Council noted the omission of the 'Student Experience' in Section 4 of the Report, and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer undertook to update the report to include this.

Subject to the inclusion of the 'student experience' in the review process, Council noted and approved the recommendations of the Working Group on School as set out in Appendix 3 to this minute.

CL/09-10/170 **Modularisation of Postgraduate Programmes** A memorandum from the Dean of Graduate Studies dated 11th May 2010 was circulated. The Dean of Graduate Studies introducing this item noted that the proposal, if approved by Council, would address the Graduate Education Strategy of increasing modularisation, flexibility and quality control in taught postgraduate programmes. A Working Group, chaired by the Dean, was established to consider the implementation of this strategic objective. She took Council through the ten recommendations which address the strategic objectives in respect of postgraduate taught programmes. She noted that there are many postgraduate courses that have no intake of students, or a very low intake, for several years. The number of taught courses increased at a much higher rate (22%) than the number of registered students (14%) since 2002. Approximately 11.5% of taught postgraduate courses across all three Faculties did not run in 2008/09. Of those that were delivered in the same year, 31% had fewer than ten students. The Working Group considered the results of a review of External Examiner reports on taught master programmes: well structured programmes with clear marking schemes are highly commended. There is, however, no correlation between low student numbers and a poor external examiner report. Several external examiner reports comment on the advantage of having greater interdisciplinary opportunities for students reading the humanities. The Working Group noted the late return of external examiner reports as being a problem, and recommend that a standardised tracking system to manage the process be implemented.

Council welcomed the report of the Working Group and noted the need to assess the administrative support, including flexible payment options, to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

Council noted and approved the recommendations of the Working Group listed below and outlined in full in Appendix 4 to this minute:

- Produce a Book of Modules and establish the Module as the main unit of postgraduate education;
- Implement the structures of "course" and "strand";

- Reduce the overall number of taught postgraduate courses by encouraging strands and single module delivery for courses that are currently not thriving;
- New course proposals must demonstrate research strengths and compatibility with the strategic goals of College;
- Flexible options should be implemented;
- Schools with strong research profiles should be encouraged and incentivised to provide taught postgraduate provisions;
- Implement the professional Science Masters;
- Remove the restriction on awarding a second M.Phil. and a taught M.Sc.;
- Quality assurance for taught courses should be enhanced.

CL/09-10/171 **Quality Review of the School of Natural Sciences** A report of the external reviewers including the Provost's recommendations to Council and the responses of the School of Natural Sciences and the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science were circulated. The Provost introduced the reports noting that the School of Natural Sciences comprises four former separate departments. The School is an exemplary example of the success and integration of a multi-disciplinary School in a relatively short period of time. The review report attests to the outstanding quality of teaching and research, and the School's response to the review report is considerate and constructive. The Provost drew Council's attention to the report's executive summary, where the reviewers comment that the School of Natural Sciences is a natural flag-bearer for development of an institute within the topic of transport, energy and environment. It has a strong research base and dedicated staff, but would benefit from a new building and stream-lined administrative organisation with increased decision-making power focused at School level. Administrative layers should be reduced and discipline-driven planning de-emphasised. The reviewers feel there is scope for increased international impact and funding through development of a strategic vision for the school in collaboration with college officers. Key areas of existing and developing research expertise should be highlighted to increase school visibility. Academics' time needs to be freed up to deliver vision through changes in the organisation of teaching and administration. The School would benefit from increased collaboration with research stakeholders and policy makers at national and international levels.

Referring specifically to research and scholarly activity, the reviewers found that the broad research interests in the School and some groups have strong international profiles. Visibility of research could be improved and positioned more clearly within strategic research themes for Trinity, and investment is needed to develop new research links outside the school on topics of global concern and to interact positively with the proposed Environmental Institute at University College Dublin. Publication output is felt to be very good but the reviewers feel that increased focus on less but higher quality publication by senior researchers would benefit the School. The School's recent funding record is very impressive, but new sources (e.g. the business community) are now needed in the current economic climate. The poor physical infrastructure might act as a constraint for further research funding. Research student numbers are very good and their supervision works well, they would, however, benefit from more school-wide activities. International visibility and policy-relevant research could be increased.

Referring specifically to teaching and learning, the reviewers confirm that the teaching appears to be of high quality and the students are well satisfied. There is, however, some duplication in the teaching provision. In comparison with comparable institutions, the teaching loads appear to be heavy, there is probably too much teaching and some compensation for this is needed. Postdoctoral staff appear to be interested in contributing more to teaching, and it would seem valuable to take advantage of this resource and free up time for research among teaching staff. While many students do not get into first choice Sophister subjects, the good quality attention in 4th year seems to ameliorate some of the dissatisfaction felt with this

situation. Students are invariably very supportive of the staff and do see the value of much of their work at Trinity College.

The reviewers were impressed with the School's service to college and society, but felt that participation on administrative committees appears time-consuming and could be streamlined. Referring to resources and governance, the reviewers felt that a new school building and improvement to physical infrastructure is a priority. Centralised administration and increased integration of disciplines in the school would improve efficiency. They propose that the Botanical Gardens should not be classed as normal teaching/research space. The reviewers felt that there should be a concentration of administrative structures and decision-making at school level.

The Provost drew Council's attention to the response of the School to the review report, and in particular noting the School's constructive engagement with the process. On the whole the School values the helpful comments, and in general, accept the suggestions made for improvement, some of which require Faculty and/or College action. Where the School disagreed with specific recommendations, concrete and plausible reasons were provided.

The Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science concurred with the Provost's view that the School of Natural Sciences has made remarkable progress since its inception. He felt that the visibility of the School even within the College needed to improve, and was pleased that the reviewers highlighted this as a matter to address. The resource allocation model seems to penalise the School, despite its best efforts to progress. The need to consolidate administration was a priority and the School and the Faculty have begun to address this. He noted that, as Dean, he would make increased effort to improve the line of communication between the School, the Faculty, and the Centre.

Council agreed with the Provost's view that the review report confirmed the excellent teaching and research profiles of the School of Natural Sciences, and acknowledged the exemplary achievement of the School in bringing together the different disciplines despite the enormous resource and space challenges. Discussing the Provost's recommendations to Council, it was agreed that multi-disciplinary Schools required additional support to achieve academic and administrative cohesion. Council supported the establishment of a working group, chaired by the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, comprising the Heads of multi-disciplinary Schools, Faculty Deans, and relevant administrative officers to make recommendations to Council on the nature of such support.

Council noted and approved the recommendations of the review report on the School of Natural Sciences as follows:

(i) The School is a natural flag-bearer for development of an institute within the topic of transport, energy and environment. The School is well-placed to play a dominant role within the sustainable development theme and could become internationally important.
(ii) A vision and direction for the School is needed and its development is finally under way. The School research committee can act as a forum for strategy development.
(iii) Administrative layers should be reduced in order to streamline multidisciplinarity in the School and de-emphasise discipline-driven planning.
(iv) Remove heads of discipline from the School Executive Committee.
(v) An international dimension to the strategy would be important both in terms of profile and resources. Environmental governance is an example of one promising theme. Target European Union and international funding agencies.
(vi) There is a lack of connection between academic planning at School level and strategic planning at college level which could be rectified by increased consultation.

(vii) The ARAM deficit restricts scope for development. Mechanisms and incentives must be available for staff to deliver strategic priorities. Rewards are needed for delivering goals of the School e.g. new joint MSc courses. Rewards are also needed for excellence in research and teaching.

(viii) Academics' need time to be freed up to deliver vision. The Reviewers suggest that College/School policy should be to reduce UG teaching loads and refocus admin to School level e.g. the successful MSc courses which align with strategic targets in College are in danger of stalling through a lack of School-based administrative support. Redundancy of modules in MSc courses could be diminished through joint interdisciplinary planning.

(ix) The physical infrastructure is of poor quality from an international perspective and should be improved as a matter of urgency if TCD wants to allow for a further improvement of the science profile and international standing of the School.

(x) The Reviewers propose the introduction of a School work-load model. This can be light-touch but particularly in a time of transition, can be helpful in reducing stress and engendering a feeling of fairness.

(xi) The Reviewers were pleased to see that new investment in posts was discussed at the School level and some interesting and innovative choices for recruitment were made.

(xii) The development of a strategic plan for teaching, research and staffing matched to future societal needs and funding sources is urgent and should be prioritised. This will also help to increase the visibility of the School of Natural Sciences outside of TCD. An increase of collaboration with research groups from UCD would also increase visibility in Dublin and Ireland.

(xiii) A small group (e.g. the School research committee) could help with development of future research themes and assist in the active transformation from the present discipline-related structure to one which profiles the School as the main entity.

(xiv) The complete separation of all aspects of microbiology, molecular genetics and physiology to another School has not helped the development of interdisciplinarity or a more holistic approach to research questions concerning climate or environmental change, biodiversity and sustainability. Measures that encourage collaboration between Schools should be developed.

(xv) Improvement of the physical infrastructure (high quality lab space has to be created) in order to allow the continuation of high research profile and to increase the potential of hosting more PhD and postdoc students should be a priority. A new building would help to improve interdisciplinary work and would reduce time needed for meetings (journey time to meeting place). A joint building would also facilitate the development of a new MSc course that includes all disciplines as well as the involvement of postdocs in teaching. This would compensate for work load of researchers who would have more time available for research. Unevenness of technical staff available for research in general would be easier to compensate. In general, technical staff balance between teaching and research support should match the balance of these activities within the School.

(xvi) 'Pump priming' funds should be made available to help the development of pilot projects in new areas. TCD should implement research awards for academic staff which could be given once a year per School – and maybe one per year at College level.

(xvii) Postdocs cannot themselves apply for competitive research funds. Special funds, however, might be made available at TCD level, for example for innovative research.

(xviii) The Reviewers argue strongly for a change to the system by which resources are allocated within the School. More resources should be available for collaborative, joint research initiatives that can forge new links between different disciplines. A competitive fund could be established for innovative research at TCD – every scientist (including postdocs) should be able to send in proposals.

(xix) The financial system needs revision since academic staff spend considerable time with these matters.

(xx) The relationship between the TCD research committee and the School is unclear to the Reviewers. How are the college research agenda/priorities driven? It seems bizarre that these were set up without buy-in from staff who are expected to deliver on the aspirations.

(xxi) Summer Schools or general workshops would help to inform all disciplines about research going on (low cost, high efficiency, streamline future research activities and fields) every year for 2-3 days where postdocs, PhD students, staff, etc. could present the most important work in the different projects. This would make expertise visible as well help identify gaps (e.g. GIS problem).

(xxii) The School could benefit from the development of one or two strong, integrating and internationally competitive themes under the flag of the TCD priority theme Transport, Energy and Environment. The Reviewers refer to a realistic example presented as an appendix to the main review report. In this example all available expertise in the School, including the Botanical Garden (mesocosm experiments) and zoological museum (demonstration function), could find a functional place. The integration of all available expertise is of course optional.

Council noted and approved the Provost's recommendation to Council as follows:

(xxiii) The School of Natural Sciences working closely with the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science, and other relevant Academic Officers, should consider the detailed recommendations of the Review Report and draw up an implementation plan for Council approval.

(xxiv) The Staff Office should develop a plan and a timeline to consolidate administrative functions in multi-disciplinary Schools and assists Schools in its implementation.

(xxv) The College Research Forum, comprising all Directors of Research, should normally meet once a term commencing in the academic year 2010/11.

(xxvi) College should develop and implement a strategy to support multi-disciplinary schools achieve academic and administrative cohesion and development.

CL/09-10/172 **Quality Implementation** Progress Reports addressing the recommendations arising from the quality review of the School of Chemistry, the School of Computer Science and Statistics, and the School of Mathematics deferred from the meeting of Council of the 16 March 2010 were circulated. The Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science referring to the progress report from the School of Chemistry noted that the School and Faculty were addressing the introduction of solvent purification columns and added that this general issue needs to be addressed also at the College Health and Safety Committee. Referring to the progress report of the School of Computer Science and Statistics he noted that progress was being made in addressing the evolving nature of the work of technicians, adding that there would be College-wide implications that would need to be resolved at Staff Office level. The difference of opinion in respect of the HEA €5million capital funding allocation has still not been resolved. Referring to the progress report of the School of Mathematics, the Dean noted that the recruitment process to replace the Erasmus Smith's Chair is in train.

Council noted the progress reports addressing the recommendations arising from the quality review of the School of Chemistry, School of Computer Science and Statistics, and the School of Mathematics.

CL/09-10/173 **Academic Year Structure** A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, dated 17th May 2010, was circulated. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic introduced this item noting that Council, at its last meeting, requested that the

Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) should consider ways to release the mounting workload pressure in the second teaching semester (Actum CL/09-10/148). Three options were presented to members of the USC to consider at School level as follows:

A. Commence teaching in Hilary term one week earlier with the insertion of a Gap Week immediately following the Study Week in Hilary term, allowing for Foundation Scholarship examinations to be scheduled in the proposed Gap Week. The Gap week would also facilitate field trips, and trips by student societies and clubs.
B. As (A) above, but with an additional week of revision prior to the start of the Annual Examinations, giving three weeks of revision time in total.
C. No change to the existing arrangements for the Foundation Scholarship examinations and the first week of teaching, but to include a Gap after Study Week resulting in the Annual Examinations commencing one week later.

There was a wide-range of responses to the above proposals, and while there would appear to be some general consensus that an adjustment to the second term was necessary, it was felt that no significant changes could be implemented in the coming academic year due to time constraints and commitments already entered into for 2010/11. A fourth option, specific to the academic year 2010/11, emerged from the consultation process, namely, the insertion of a third revision week before the Annual Examinations.

Council in discussing this item heard that that the Senior Tutor's Office and the Health Centre have recorded unprecedented levels of requests from students for support in response to the annual examinations. One School received, for the first time ever, ten examination deferral requests. There have been unusually high levels of stress, especially amongst final year students, this academic year. It was commented that the pressure on students could be relieved if Schools better coordinated deadlines for submission of assessments. Council expressed surprise that there was opposition in some quarters to the introduction of a Gap Week. One member felt that the main reason for the current pressure relates principally to the fact that College is operating two incompatible structures; on the one hand the curriculum is delivered on a modular platform and, on the other, the examination structures relate to a year-long model. The Students' Union representative strongly supported the introduction of an extra revision week at the end of the second semester for 2010/11, and the introduction of a Gap Week from 2011/12 onwards. Council felt that it was necessary to complete a full year of the new academic year structure to understand the pressure points, and while Council strongly supported the introduction of a Gap Week, it was felt that it was too late to introduce this change for 2010/11.

Council noted and approved:

(i) an additional revision week before the commencement of the annual examinations in 2010/11, and
(ii) that the Undergraduate Studies Committee should review the academic year structure and make recommendations for implementation in the academic year 2011/12 and onwards.

CL/09-10/174 Any other business

(i) *Space:* The Head of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences informed Council of the effect on his School of recent developments, as a result of a shortfall in funding, regarding occupancy of the new bio-science building on Pearse Street. The Provost advised that he would address the issue as a matter of priority with all parties involved.

(ii) *Library:* Council heard that the reference sections in the Ussher and Berkeley libraries are being dismantled to make provision for small group teaching. This development will adversely affect Schools in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer undertook to address this matter at the next meeting of the Library Committee.

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SECTION B

CL/09-10/175 **Graduate Studies Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Graduate Studies Committee from its meeting of 18 March 2010, which had been circulated.

CL/09-10/176 **Student Services Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Student Services Committee from its meeting of 16 March 2010, which had been circulated.

CL/09-10/177 **Information Policy Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Information Policy Committee from its meeting of 18 March 2010, which had been circulated.

CL/09-10/178 **International Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the International Committee from its meeting of 9 March 2010, which had been circulated.

CL/09-10/179 **Personnel and Appointments Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Personnel and Appointments Committee from its meeting of 15 April 2010, which had been circulated.

CL/09-10/180 **Research Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Research Committee from its meetings of 16 March 2010 and 4 May 2010 which had been circulated.

CL/09-10/181 **Quality Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Quality Committee from its meeting of 19 April 2010, which had been circulated.

SECTION C

CL/09-10/182 **Board and Council Meetings 2010** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Secretary to the College, circulated, dated 27 April 2010.

CL/09-10/183 **Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners** The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 7 and 21 April 2010 and noted by Board on 5 May 2010.

(i) **7 April 2010**

(a) **Professional Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

DDentCh Richard Winston Lee Kin.

(b) **Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

PhD Jonathan Alaria; Jackie Blackman; Sandra Ann Bright; Michele Therese Byrne; Francesco Citiulo; Marc Delêtre; Tony Donnelly; Rebecca Monica Duke; Joshua Andrew Edelman; Sarah Jacobson; Johanna Elisabeth Maria Hoorenman; Gavin Kearney; Damien Kelly; Roger Scott Kempers; Gregory Kerr; Julius Akinwumi Komolafe; Patricia Larkin; Alexander Lüthi; Hannah McCabe; Caroline Shirley Murphy; Elizabeth Oliver; Liina Rae; Daniel Ring; Jennifer Roche; Karen Ann Roddy; Friedrich Wetterling; Maria Laura Sudulich.

MSc Peter Ashmore; Sarah Chamney; John Gilchrist; Trevor Hunter; Kevin Kerrigan; Daniel McNally; John Squires;

MLitt Aude Marie Marguerite Bernard; Derek Cannon.

(ii) **21 April 2010 - Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

PhD Aspinas Chapwanya; Paul Anthony Conlon; Niamh Cooke; Brian Davis; Audray Delcamp; Eleanor Donoghue; Stephanie Holt; David Alexander McGovern; Kevin John Murphy; Samantha Louise Newbery; Janis Noonan; Deirdre O'Regan; Julie-Ann O'Reilly; Eoghan Quigley; Renata Tekoriute; Katherine Tansey; Vanessa Ther; Anna Trias Blasi; Tao Zhang.

MSc Hanumantha Kurapati; Robbie Thackaberry.

MLitt Selena Martin; Jonathan Reuben Samuel Schachter.

CL/09-10/184 **Open Day 2011-2012** The Council noted that the Open Day will take place on Friday 2 and Saturday 3 December 2011.

CL/09-10/185 **Headships** The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

(i) **Geography 2010-2013** Professor P Coxon.
(ii) **Nursing and Midwifery**
  (a) **Midwifery** Ms M Carroll, to 31 August 2012;
  (b) **Paediatric Nursing** Professor I Coyne, to 1 September 2010;
  (c) **Psychiatric Nursing** Professor A Higgins, 2010-2011.

CL/09-10/186 **School Directors** The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

(i) **Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences - 2010-2012**
Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate): Dr J Kallen.
(ii) **Medicine - 2009-2010**
Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate): Dr J Gormley, for the remainder of this academic year.
(iii) **School of Natural Sciences - 2010-2011**
Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate): Dr I S Sanders;
Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate): Dr R J Edwards;
Director of Research: Professor C V Holland.
(iv) **Nursing and Midwifery - 2010-2012**
Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate): Dr A-M Brady.
(v) **Psychology – 2010-2012**

Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate): Professor H Garavan;
Director of Research: Professor M MacLachlan.

(vi) **Physics - 2010-2012**
Director of Research: Professor I Shvets.

CL/09-10/187 **Course Directors – School of Natural Sciences** The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

(i) **MSc in Environment and Development - 2009-2012** Dr C Raleigh;
(ii) **MSc in Development Practice - 2009-2012** Dr P Carmody;
(iii) **Moderatorship in Earth Sciences - 2010-2013** Dr R J Edwards.

CL/09-10/188 **School of Engineering – Abridged Entry and the Award of the BA Degree** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Administrator, School of Engineering, circulated, dated 5 May 2010.

CL/09-10/189 **School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Studies** The Council noted and approved a request for degree courses to be taught outside the new two-term teaching structure.

CL/09-10/190 **School of Chemistry – TR076 – Title Revision** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Course Director, Physics and Chemistry of Advanced Materials, circulated, dated 12 May 2010.

CL/09-10/191 **Admissions – Changes to Admissions Requirements** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, circulated, dated 12 May 2010.

SECTION D

In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted.

Signed .....

Date .....

Appendix 1 to Actum CL/09-10/167

STUDENT EVALUATION OF MODULES

Report of the Quality Committee and its Working Group

February 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

Council at its meeting of the 8th April 2009 approved the recommendation from the Quality Committee that online module evaluation by students should become mandatory and conducted at School or Course office level (Actum CL/08-09/136). College's Strategic Plan 2009-2014 commits to strengthening *' the focus on quality assurance and improvement'* and specifically refers to making '*student evaluation of programme modules mandatory, with Schools using student feedback both to inform School reviews of the delivery and design of curricula…*' (Action 2.2, p8). The Universities Act (1997) requires that a university, in performing its functions shall, among other things, facilitate '*an assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university*' (Section 35, 2b). The European Universities Association (EUA) conducted institutional quality reviews of Irish universities in 2004-05, and recommended that "*The Irish universities need to ensure coherent and regular student feedback on all courses and modules, and for this feedback to be an explicit input to the QA process."*

A working group[1] of the Quality Committee was established in Michaelmas Term 2009 to:

i. Review College's code of practice for student evaluation of courses/modules;
ii. Recommend a software solution for administrating questionnaires;
iii. Define the framework for devolution;
iv. Develop guidelines for the administration of surveys;
v. Prepare a report and recommendations for the Quality Committee; Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee.

Dr Brian Foley, the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL), was asked to consider issues arising from Council's approval that module evaluations should become mandatory. Dr Foley's considerations are presented in the accompanying documentation to this Report.

2. COLLEGE'S CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSES/MODULES

The Working Group considered the existing Code of Practice[2] for obtaining student feedback on courses/modules and felt that there was no requirement for significant change.

3. MANDATORY EVALUATIONS

The Quality Committee, taking into consideration Dr Foley's presentation, felt that it was necessary to continue to develop and support a culture of quality improvement, and to conform with the requirements of the Universities Act (1997) to facilitate '*an assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university*' (Section 35, 2b).

Recommendation 1: ***Student evaluation of modules should be mandatory. The College's preferred method of evaluation is by means of online surveys. It is recognised that in some instances online surveys may not always be the most appropriate or preferred means of evaluation.***

[1] *See Appendix A for membership of the Working Group.*
[2] *See Appendix B.*

Other methods of evaluation may be considered in certain circumstances, and their administration must conform to high quality standards ensuring student anonymity and lecturer confidentiality and conducted by the relevant administering Office.

4. SOFTWARE SOLUTION FOR ADMINISTRATING QUESTIONNAIRES

The Working Group considered a report on four survey software solutions (SNAP, Electric-Paper, Survey Monkey & Moodle) which were assessed using the following criteria: (i) ease of use, (ii) training and support, (iii) ability to provide anonymous surveys, (iii) reporting functionality, (iv) ability to export data, (v) installation and maintenance costs, and (vi) security.

Two software solutions were recommended, namely, Survey Monkey and Moodle. The use of Moodle, a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) open platform, would only be economical to employ if this software were used as the VLE tool in Trinity College. The Centre for Learning Technology is currently conducting a pilot study on the use of Moodle with a number of academic staff. If College selects Moodle as a preferred virtual learning tool, then this software would also provide an excellent student evaluation option, and College might consider using this tool for student surveys of teaching modules.

A number of pilot questionnaires were set up on Survey Monkey and from these the software was judged as intuitive and easy to use, it facilitates the production of reports, and satisfies College's security needs. A pilot exercise was conducted with the School of Computer Science and Statistics. A total of 959 students were surveyed across 20 modules, and eighteen academic staff volunteered to participate in the exercise. The outcome of the pilot is positive (see report from Amy Murray in *Appendix C)*.

Recommendation 2: The Working Group recommends the use of Survey Monkey for online student evaluation of programme modules.

5. DEFINE THE FRAMEWORK FOR DEVOLUTION

The working group considered the advantages and disadvantages of devolving the administration of the surveys to Schools.

Devolution of the administration of student surveys to Schools is problematic for the following reasons:

(i) in order to ensure lecturer confidentiality, it would be necessary to have at least 24 survey monkey accounts. Anyone using an account will be able to view the outcome of other surveys conducted within that account, and the Working Group felt that this would compromise lecturer confidentiality - a primary criterion in student evaluation of modules;
(ii) it would be unwieldy to provide on-going training to staff in the administration of surveys and difficult to ensure a degree of uniformity in approach across all 24 Schools;
(iii) consideration would have to be given to set up separate accounts for cross- School/Faculty teaching modules and this would further compromise lecturer confidentiality.

Furthermore, while Survey Monkey protects students' identity, in smaller modules this could unwittingly be compromised.

Recommendation 3: The Working Group feels that the administration of undergraduate student evaluations should be managed by CAPSL in conjunction with the Directors of Teaching and Learning (UG) and in consultation with Course Offices[3].

Given the increased workload, it is recommended that the administration of postgraduate student evaluations should be managed by Faculty Offices in conjunction with CAPSL and the Directors of Teaching and Learning (PG).

6. DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEYS

6.1 Questionnaires

The current paper-based questionnaires evaluate teaching on an individual basis. The system has an agreed bank of questions, some of which are standardised. The Working Group reviewed standard

[3] *Mainly in the Course Office of the large programmes of TSM, BESS, and TR071*

questions and it was felt that there was some duplication that could be avoided. The advisability of keeping surveys short and simple was noted. In order to ensure simplicity and ease of comparability across modules and Schools it is necessary to retain the current practice of a set of standard questions. The inclusion of questions for open comment is recommended.

The online-evaluation system is on modules rather than individual teaching staff.

The Working Group agreed a set of revised questions for consideration by the relevant College Committees.

Recommendation 4: Directors of Teaching and Learning should review the questionnaire templates at School level and provide feedback to CAPSL.

CAPSL in conjunction with the relevant Directors of Teaching and Learning and the Lecturer(s) will agree any additional module-specific questions before administering the online questionnaires.

Recommendation 5: The following principles of administration are recommended:

5.i Schedule of Evaluations

- Schools in conjunction with the relevant course committees develop a three-year rolling schedule for the survey of undergraduate modules (can be less than three-years but not more).
- Postgraduate modules[4] of one-year duration should be reviewed annually, and courses of two-year duration should be reviewed every two years.
- Courses that are professionally accredited may require all modules to be evaluated at a certain time.
- Evaluation schedules should be posted on the CAPSL website.

5.ii Exceptions to 5.i

- All new modules are surveyed in the year that they are first delivered.
- Modules that are taught by new lecturers on a contract of more than one year will be surveyed in their first year.
- Where an evaluation highlights an issue for concern, that module should be reviewed again during the following term/year to ensure that concerns raised have been adequately addressed.
- Modules that have been significantly revised should be reviewed during/after their first delivery.
- In specific circumstances and in consultation with the Director of Teaching and Learning, class student representatives can request an evaluation of a module.

5.iii Questionnaires

- Only College agreed survey template and core questions should be used as part of the central online evaluation system[5]. The common core questions will allow for comparability across modules. These will be reviewed annually.
- Schools can include up to four additional questions agreed between the Lecturer(s) and the Director of Teaching and Learning. This does not preclude Schools from requesting customised questionnaires when necessary.

5.iv Administering surveys - timing

- Modules should be surveyed at the most optimum time in the teaching year and a schedule of modules to be surveyed together with proposed timing should be published at the beginning of each teaching term.

It is recognised that the teaching of some modules involves several staff especially where problem based learning is in use. In such instances, an open question on delivery should allow for distinguishing, if necessary, different teaching staff.

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[4] *Includes structured PhD modules*

[5] *This does not preclude course evaluations from taking place at School/Course Committee levels*

6.2 Response rates

The current method of paper-based questionnaires assesses about 10-15% of existing undergraduate and postgraduate modules.

The response rate to online questionnaires is typically lower than that of a paper-based system which is administered at the beginning of a timetabled class. It is important that students are aware that student evaluation is facilitated by online questionnaires. This can be achieved in several ways:

- Lecturers can inform students when the surveys will be administered for their module.
- Information on student evaluation of modules can be included in course handbooks, and on the School/Course webpage.
- Student class representatives and Student Union Officers can inform students of the process.
- Drawing students' awareness to the schedule of evaluations for their course.

Recommendation 6 ***The Code of Practice (Appendix B) recommends that Schools use several methods to obtain student feedback. While the use of questionnaires is College's preferred method, student representatives on School and College committees, as well as group discussions with staff and students are also ways of providing feedback.***

6.3 Administering Questionnaires

The following procedures (which do not differ significantly from existing procedures) are recommended.

a. School/Course committee or Director of Teaching and Learning as appropriate agrees which modules to survey (three-year plan).
b. The Director of Teaching and Learning consults staff involved in the module delivery and agree any additional questions for inclusion in the questionnaire.
c. The Director of Teaching and Learning (UG) submits a survey request to CAPSL with these details. The Director of Teaching and Learning (PG) submits a survey request to the relevant Faculty Administrator with these details.
d. CAPSL and/or Faculty Offices prepare the questionnaire template for each module requested.
e. E-mail lists for students are generated by IS Services on a module, course and course/subject bases (e.g. within TSM you can get a subject specific list): this is generated electronically - see http://isservices.tcd.ie/email/lists.php.)
f. Students are notified by email and referred to a web-link.
g. Responses are required within five working days: a reminder is sent two days before deadline.
h. Office responsible for administering surveys will issue a report to the relevant Lecturer(s) and Director of Teaching and Learning.
i. Any urgent matter arising from the evaluation should be dealt with promptly by the Lecturer(s) and the Director of Teaching and Learning involved.
j. A summary report of modules reviewed as part of a course should be synthesised, unidentified, and used as part of the quality improvement process and to provide feedback to students.

6.4 Closing the loop

Student evaluation of programme modules is one method of ensuring quality of delivery and contributes to the ongoing development of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It is necessary that student feedback is used constructively and appropriate action is taken to remedy, where necessary, any shortcomings in the delivery and/or in the quality and standards of our programmes.

It is necessary, therefore, that individual Schools/courses devise a way of providing feedback to students shortly after a module has been reviewed. Students should be made aware of any perceived difficulties and informed of the recommended actions to address these. The approach will be different depending on the nature of the course; however, one of the following methods can be used:

- Students are informed in person by either the lecturer concerned or the Director of Teaching and Learning.
- Students are informed via email or directed to a secure site on the course/school webpage. Lecturer confidentiality must not be compromised if this method is used.

6.5 Reports

a. The Office administering the surveys will provide the Head of School and the Directors of Teaching and Learning with a school report at the end of each semester which will be a composite report of all modules surveyed..

b. The Head of School and Directors of Teaching and Learning will make recommendations to address matters arising (e.g. revise module curriculum, provide development workshops, staff development programme).

c. The Office administering the surveys will coordinate the compilation of a College annual report on student evaluation for the Quality Committee. This report will include a composite overview of all modules reviewed and actions taken to remedy any shortcomings in the provision of quality education across College.

d. Council and Board will receive the minutes of the Quality Committee and any specific recommendations arising from these reports.

6.6 Review of the process

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that a review of the process is conducted every three years

Appendix 2 to Actum CL/09-10/168

Senior Research Fellow in Trinity College Dublin

(a) Criteria for award of the title: Senior Research Fellows will be holders of a PhD degree, or other postgraduate or professional qualification. They will have very significant post-qualification research experience (at least 6 years experience is expected). They will have a track record of high-quality publications in accord with the norms of their discipline.

(b) Nomination and appointment procedures:

a. **For appointment with the title of Senior Research Fellow**, a recruitment process chaired by the Faculty Dean (or nominee) is required. The appointment committee, which may have external membership, shall be approved by the University Council. In deciding the case for appointment the committee shall satisfy itself that the criteria in Appendix 1 to this document are met; otherwise appointment as a Research Fellow is appropriate.

b. **For award of the title to members of staff who are Research Fellows**, the applicant shall prepare the documentation as outlined in Appendix 1. The Faculty Dean shall assess whether or not a *prima facie* case exists having regard to the criteria given in Appendix 1. If it is decided that a *prima facie* case exists, an interview, chaired by the Faculty Dean (or nominee) shall be held to reach a decision whether or not to award the title.

(c) The role and responsibilities. Senior Research Fellows are experienced researchers in the university holding leadership roles in research groups, research centres, and research institutes. In addition to the role performed by Research Fellows, Senior Research Fellows may

a. Hold research grants in their own name as lead Principal Investigator (PI);
b. On grants where they are lead PI [not on grants where they are co-PI] they may be Principal Supervisors of research students in the same way as Professors and Lecturers, i.e. on the nomination of the School's Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) for appointment as a supervisor by the Dean of Graduate Studies.
c. contribute to teaching with the agreement of the Head of School.

(d) The term of appointment is determined by contract. There is no defined College salary scale for Senior Research Fellows, and no defined implications for pay as a result of the award of the title.

[Appendix 1]

Panel convened by the Faculty Dean (for appointment as a Senior Research Fellow or for interview to award of the title to current Research Fellows) shall include
- Faculty Dean (or pro-Dean)
- Head(s) of School and/or Directors of Research
- Senior members of the Faculty as nominated by the Faculty Executive
- Faculty HR Advisor (Secretary to the Committee)

Criteria

Applicants given the title of Senior Research Fellow shall be assessed according to the following criteria

1. Number of years of post-PhD research experience (at least 6 is expected)
2. Significant publications as assessed by the norms of the discipline, i.e. quality of academic publisher, citations, ranking of journal publications, etc

3. Experience of successful supervision of students, including where appropriate contributing to undergraduate project supervision and Masters dissertations on taught programmes
4. Experience in a leadership role in a group or laboratory
5. Demonstrated capability to exercise independence in research as evidenced by, for example, senior authorship/sole authorship of publications, and invited presentations at conferences

Documentation submitted to the committee

1. Application form
2. Two research references external to College
3. Reference from TCD Principal Investigator
4. Reference from Head of Discipline and/or relevant Director of a Research Centre or Trinity Research Institute

Appendix 3 to Actum CL/09-10/169

REVIEW OF QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS FOR SCHOOLS

Report of the Working Group on School Reviews

1. INTRODUCTION

Council at its meeting of the 28th October 2009 approved a recommendation from the Quality Committee that a working group be established to review the procedures for quality review of Schools (*Actum* CL/09-10/040). The first cycle of reviews (1999-2004) concerned departments, and the procedures used in the second cycle (2005-2012) were modified to reflect the new School structure. Current procedures[6] are reviewed annually to take into account the feedback from external reviewers and from Schools which have undergone the review process.

A working group[7] of the Quality Committee was established in January 2010 and met on four occasions in Hilary Term 2010. The terms of reference of the working group are:

(i) to review the effectiveness of the current quality review procedures for Schools, and
(ii) to make recommendations to the Quality Committee for improvements to the current system.

In reviewing the current procedures and identifying key issues for consideration, the group conducted an on-line survey of previous participants in School reviews, and considered comments from external reviewers on the process and feedback from members of the group itself.

2. PURPOSE OF THE QUALITY REVIEW OF SCHOOLS

The Working Group considered the purpose of the quality reviews of academic units, and concluded that the aims as described in the existing '*General Procedures and Protocol for Quality Reviews of Schools'* reflect adequately the purpose of quality reviews.

2.1 It is recommended that the following aims of the quality review of Schools be retained:

- to provide a structured opportunity for a School to reflect on its activities and plans for development, and to benefit from a constructive commentary by senior reviewers external to the College;
- to ensure that quality and standards in teaching, research, and administration are being maintained and enhanced, and that any areas of concern in this regard are identified and addressed.

2.2. It is recommended that the current objectives of the review process be slightly modified as follows:

- to review the quality of the student experience and standards of attainment on programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level (including the range of influences which shape it such as teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment, resources to support learning);
- to evaluate the teaching profile of the School in the context of available resources;
- to evaluate the research activity and output of the School and the strength of the research profile of staff within the School in the context of research facilities and the most recent research plan of the School;
- to assess the quality of the support and working environment for staff in the School in relation to both teaching and research;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of student support structures;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's administrative and quality improvement structures;
- to provide constructive commentary on the strategic direction of the School.

In order to ensure that these aims and objectives are realised, the Working Group considered how best to capture the necessary information for input into the review process. The existence of multi-disciplinary Schools, created through the formation of two or more former departments, means that the evaluation of

[6] See http://www.tcd.ie/vp-cao/qu/vpadr.php. for *General procedures and protocol for quality review of Schools*
[7] See Appendix 1 for Membership of the Working Group

key activities and the collection and collation of large amounts of data are resource and time intensive, and can be difficult to complete to a satisfactory level before a review visitation.

The Working Group reviewed the existing input into the process and recommends a stepped approach to the review process as outlined below and in *Appendix 2.*

3. PREPARATION FOR THE REVIEW

3.1 Step One – Conduct of SWOT analysis and self-review

Schools in preparing their self-assessment report are currently expected:

- To conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the School;
- Conduct a **self-review** of the following:
  - ✓ Research and Scholarly Activity
  - ✓ Teaching and Learning
  - ✓ Service to the College and Society
  - ✓ Resources: staff, physical infrastructure, student services
  - ✓ Organisational Structure and Planning.

Information available to the Working Group confirmed the value of the SWOT analysis and self-review process to the Schools in critically evaluating key activities and identifying areas of concern to be addressed in the review.

3.1.1 It is recommended that:

- Schools continue the practice of conducting a **SWOT** analysis as it is generally felt to be both a useful and informative exercise. The importance of the SWOT analysis in identifying and setting the objectives for a School review is a key part of the process, and the Quality Office should provide support to Schools in conducting a SWOT analysis.

- The current broad focus of the review be retained but that the **self-review** should reflect the key areas of the College Strategic Plan 2009-2014[8] as follows: *Education, Knowledge Generation and Transfer, Engagement with Society*, *and the Student Experience.*

- The information and data required for the **SWOT analysis** and **self-review** should be drawn from centrally-held College sources and any existing School-held documentation, and as much as possible of the evaluation and critical analysis be done in advance of the review.

3.2 Step Two – Evaluation and critical analysis of current activities

Schools are scheduled for a quality review within a seven-year cycle and have prior knowledge of the review well in advance of the year in which they are due to be reviewed. Following the SWOT analysis and self-review:

3.2.1 It is recommended that:

- An evaluation and critical analysis of education is conducted using extended external examiners' reports, student evaluation reports, accreditation reports (where applicable), any other relevant information, and an assessment of undergraduate and postgraduate education is produced by the Directors of Teaching and Learning which will be included in the Schools self-assessment.

- An evaluation and critical analysis of research is conducted using the Research Quality Metrics (RQM) data and other relevant information such as the quality review of linked Research Institutes[9] and Centres, and an assessment of research activity is produced by the Director of Research which will be included in the School's self-assessment.

- The School should review and update its School Strategic Plan (including its research plan).

There are concerns that the current **one-size-fits-all model** does not adequately address the needs of multi-discipline Schools. The main concern relates to the thoroughness of the review when there are several distinct disciplines in a School. In considering this, the Working Group felt that the complexity

[8] See https://www.tcd.ie/info/strategicplan/assets/pdf/strategic-plan/TCD_StrategicPlan2009-14_English.pdf

[9] It is currently a requirement that Trinity Research Institutes be reviewed as part of the quality review cycle.

and variability that exists in multi-discipline Schools should be recognised. The composition of the review panel for a multi-discipline School normally comprises discipline experts representing each of the departments within the School. While such a composition serves to ensure that the broad disciplines within the School are represented, it may not be sufficiently competent to address cross-School issues in respect of education and research as well as organisational structure and governance.

3.2.2 It is recommended that:

- The Head of School in consultation with the Dean, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, and the Academic Secretary agree the size and composition of the review panel to reflect the priorities of the School[10]. Provided the review fulfils the key criteria of assessing teaching and research, it can otherwise be tailored to suit the individual needs of the School.

4. STEP 3 - COMPLETION OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT[11]

4.1 Knowledge generation and transfer

A proper assessment of the quality of the School's research output is difficult in the limited time available to external reviewers to conduct a quality review. Reviewers have expressed concern about their ability to adequately review key elements of a School's activity, in particular research, given the time constraints of the review schedule.

The introduction of Research Quality Metrics (RQM) at School/discipline level will provide reviewers with a broad overview of the quality of research output.

4.1.1 It is recommended that:

- The Reviewers be provided with the following key information in order to allow them to make an informed appraisal of the quality and direction of a School's research:
  - ✓ The most recent RQM data;
  - ✓ Access to the Research Support System (RSS) and where appropriate details of H-factor/impact status for each staff member, (the RSS should be upgraded to allow for the collation of the latter)
  - ✓ A critical assessment of the School's research activity by the Director of Research;
  - ✓ Relevant data on research student numbers, research degrees awarded etc. drawn from central sources;

- Staff be given the option of submitting a short statement about their best piece of research/publication for the consideration of the reviewers.

The Working Group considered the input of Trinity Research Institutes (TRI) and Centres into the review process. The policy document[12] on research groupings states that "*A TRI will normally be granted approval for a period of 5 years. During its fifth year, the TRI will be subject to an external quality review under College Quality Review Procedures. If the review is satisfactory, the TRI would be formally recognised for a further period of up to 5 years*." There is currently no College policy on the quality review of Research Centres.

***4.1.2 It is recommended that*:**

- Trinity Research Institutes be reviewed within the seven-year cycle and, where relevant, that the last review output is fed into the School self-review process and included in the Appendices of the School self-assessment report.

- Research Centres, approved by the Research Committee, be included in the quality review cycle and, where relevant, that the last review output is fed into the self-review process and included in the Appendices of the School self-assessment report.

[10] The recommended optimum size of the review panel is three/four reviewers.
[11] See Appendix 3: Proposed revision to the structure of the self-assessment report.
[12] See https://www.tcd.ie/research/dean/

- Schools comment on knowledge transfer in the Self-Assessment report with regard to the impact of its research (social, cultural, public policy), and how the results research are disseminated both within College and to the wider academic and non-academic community.

4.2 Education

The assessment of education is an on-going process and includes student evaluation of course modules, external examiners reports, curriculum review by course committees, and a critical assessment of the teaching and learning by the School's Directors of Teaching and Learning.

4.2.1 It is recommended that:

- An extended external examiners' report[13] for each subject of a course (undergraduate and postgraduate) be completed within the three-year period prior to the School review. The extended report should include a review by the examiner of the subject and recommendations, if any, for improvement. These reports should feed into the SWOT analysis and inform the assessment by the Directors of Teaching & Learning (UG and PG) on the School's undergraduate and postgraduate education.

- The outcome of the last professional accreditation exercise, where relevant, should be considered in the Directors of Teaching and Learning assessment and included in the Appendices to the self-assessment report.

- Where relevant, the timing of the School review should be synchronized with professional accreditation visits.

- Undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the School should have their modules evaluated by students within the three-years prior to the review and the output of these evaluations should be included in the self-review of education, and made available to the review panel.

- Structured PhD programmes should be evaluated as part of the process. Where appropriate, reviews by external funding bodies should be fed into the self-review process.

4.3 Engagement with Society and Service to College

The current process requires Schools to comment on '*Service to the College and Society'* under the following headings:

- A description of service to College and Society, using the following evidence, as appropriate:
  - ✓ A description of service to the College.
  - ✓ Contributions of staff and students to public debate and formulation of public policy.
  - ✓ Use of research results to make a difference to people's lives.
  - ✓ Local outreach activities of the School.
  - ✓ Activities to commercialise intellectual property.
  - ✓ External relations with the wider community, including other educational institutions in Ireland and abroad, industry, public agencies, and professional bodies.
  - ✓ Other service activities.

4.3.1 It is recommended that:

- The Section on 'Service to the College and Society' be replaced with 'an assessment of *'Engagement with Society and Service to College'*

4.4 Resources: Staff, Physical Infrastructure and student services

Staff

The current process requires School to provide a description of staff-related aims and objectives in the School Strategic Plan, and

- A description of staffing in the School, using the following evidence:
  - ✓ Profiles of all academic staff sourced from the RSS,

[13] See Appendix 4: Extended External Examiners Report

- ✓ Profiles of administrative and service support staff
- ✓ A description and analysis of staff composition and status, including gender balance.
- ✓ An outline of workload assignments of all School staff.
- ✓ A description of how staff development needs are identified and supported in relation to the School and individual aspirations in relation to teaching and research.

o Evaluation of current staffing in comparison to the School Strategic Plan
o Plans for changes in order to improve the quality of staff and staff development in the future.

Physical Infrastructure (Development Control Plan)

Schools are also required to provide a brief description of the physical facilities available to the School, using the following evidence:

o Description of teaching spaces: lecture and seminar rooms, laboratories and equipment.
o Description of research spaces: postgraduate research facilities, research laboratories and equipment.
o Description of office space for staff, research assistants, and postgraduate students.
o Description of social spaces for School meetings and informal gatherings of students and staff.
o Description of any additional physical infrastructure.

Schools are required to conduct an evaluation of current facilities in comparison to the School Strategic Plan, and provide any plans for changes in order to improve physical infrastructure in the future. Where possible, Schools should draw their data from the TCD Space Atlas[14]

Student Services

Schools are required to provide a description of aims and objectives in the School Strategic Plan relevant to support services. They should:

o provide a description of the use of College support services by the School, including:
o Library;
- ✓ IT Services;
- ✓ Student Support Services;
- ✓ Other College support services.

o Evaluate the use of support services in comparison to School Strategic Plan.
o Provide plans for changes in order to improve use of support services in the future.

4.4.1 It is recommended that:

o The Subsection on 'Student Services' be removed and that an assessment of the how well the School is supported by Central College Services be inserted under section 4.5 below.

4.5 Organisational structures and planning

In the current process Schools are asked to provide a description of organisation/planning aims and objectives in the School Strategic Plan. They should:

o Provide a description and analysis of the organisational structures and planning processes of the School, using the following evidence:

- ✓ Description of management structures within the School;
- ✓ Description of School committees and structures;
- ✓ School budget allocation, and planning and decision-making related to budget;
- ✓ Description of the means of communication between the School and staff, students, Faculty office, and other Schools in College;
- ✓ A description of the extent to which students are involved in School decision-making.
- ✓ An assessment of how well the School is supported by central College services such as ISS, the Library etc.

o Evaluate current organisational structures and planning in comparison to the School Strategic Plan

[14] See http://www.tcd.ie/Buildings/spacemanagement/spacemanagement.php

5. REVIEW PROCESS

5.1 The following process is recommended:

- **Step One**: Conduct a SWOT analysis and self-review using data collected from central sources and existing School documentation. Consult College Strategic Plan and the Development Control Plan.

- **Step Two:** Conduct an evaluation and critical analysis of current activities to include: evaluation of curriculum, student evaluation of course modules, School research quality metrics computed, accreditation reports, review of Institutes/Centres, any other evaluation of School activity completed for consideration during the SWOT analysis, and included for Reviewers' information if appropriate. Where available, College centrally-held information should be used. The information generated from this evaluation is used to update/review the School's Strategic Plan and produce a critical assessment of (i) research, (ii) undergraduate and postgraduate education and (iii) engagement with society & service to College which will feed into the self-assessment report.

- **Step Three:** Complete a Self-Assessment Report.

- **Step Four:** Conduct a Site Visit and generate Reviewers report. School responds to Review Report, and the Review Report and School response are considered by Council.

- **Step Five**: Implementation Plan drawn up and approved by Council. Monitoring of progress in implementing the School-level recommendations conducted one year after Council approval of the Implementation Plan. Faculty-level recommendations; and College-level recommendations also considered by Council and their implementation monitored.

5.2 It is also recommended that:

- Review recommendations in respect of Faculty and College should be subject to monitoring and that an implementation plan on College and Faculty level recommendations is submitted to Council for approval and monitoring. The Working Group wishes to emphasise the importance of monitoring the implementation of recommendations and closing the feedback loop.

6. ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVIEW

The Working Group endorsed the importance of senior College Officers' involvement in the quality review of Schools. This high level involvement attests to the commitment of College to quality assurance and improvement, and signals respect for the Reviewers and the process. The importance of selecting international experts in the relevant disciplines and of achieving both a gender and geographical balance was also considered an essential aspect of the process. The Working Group confirmed the value of the role of the Internal Facilitator.

6.1 Some aspects of the administration process could be improved and the Working Group recommends the following:

- Currently the Faculty Dean, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, and the Academic Secretary select nominations provided by the School for the review panel. The Head of School should be included in the nomination and selection of reviewers.

- The documentation/data required for the review should be streamlined. This can be achieved by aligning the requirements with information/data that is already available through the RQM, RSS etc. Schools are encouraged to be succinct and to the point in compiling their self-assessment report.

- The schedule of meetings should be organised in such a way that Reviewers have adequate private time.

- Secretarial support should be available to the Reviewers should they require it.

- School staff (administrative, technical, academic and research) should appoint their own representatives to meet the Reviewers, and if feasible, all staff should have the opportunity to meet with the Reviewers.

- Students should appoint their own representatives to meet the Reviewers, and where possible, all student representatives should have the opportunity to meet with the Reviewers.

- Wherever possible, the data used in the Review should be drawn from official College sources such as the RSS, the RQM, the College's Green Book, the Senior Lecturer's Annual report, the Graduate Studies report, the College's space atlas and central information management services.

- The self-assessment report should only provide a summary and strategic analysis of activity in the School and ideally should be no longer than 30 pages. Statistics and evaluative data and other supporting documentation should be presented in the Appendices (see Appendix 3 for proposed revision to the structure of the self-assessment report and Appendices).

7.0 Conclusion

In addition to the recommendations outlined in this report, the Working Group would also like to recommend to the Quality Committee that the current cycle of reviews be extended from the current seven-year cycle to a ten-year cycle[15], to reflect the resource and staff constraints imposed by the economic downturn. The Working Group would endorse a ten-year cycle with a built-in requirement for a mid-term self-review and written report. This recommendation could be implemented on a temporary basis with the facility to revert to the previous cycle length if circumstances improve.

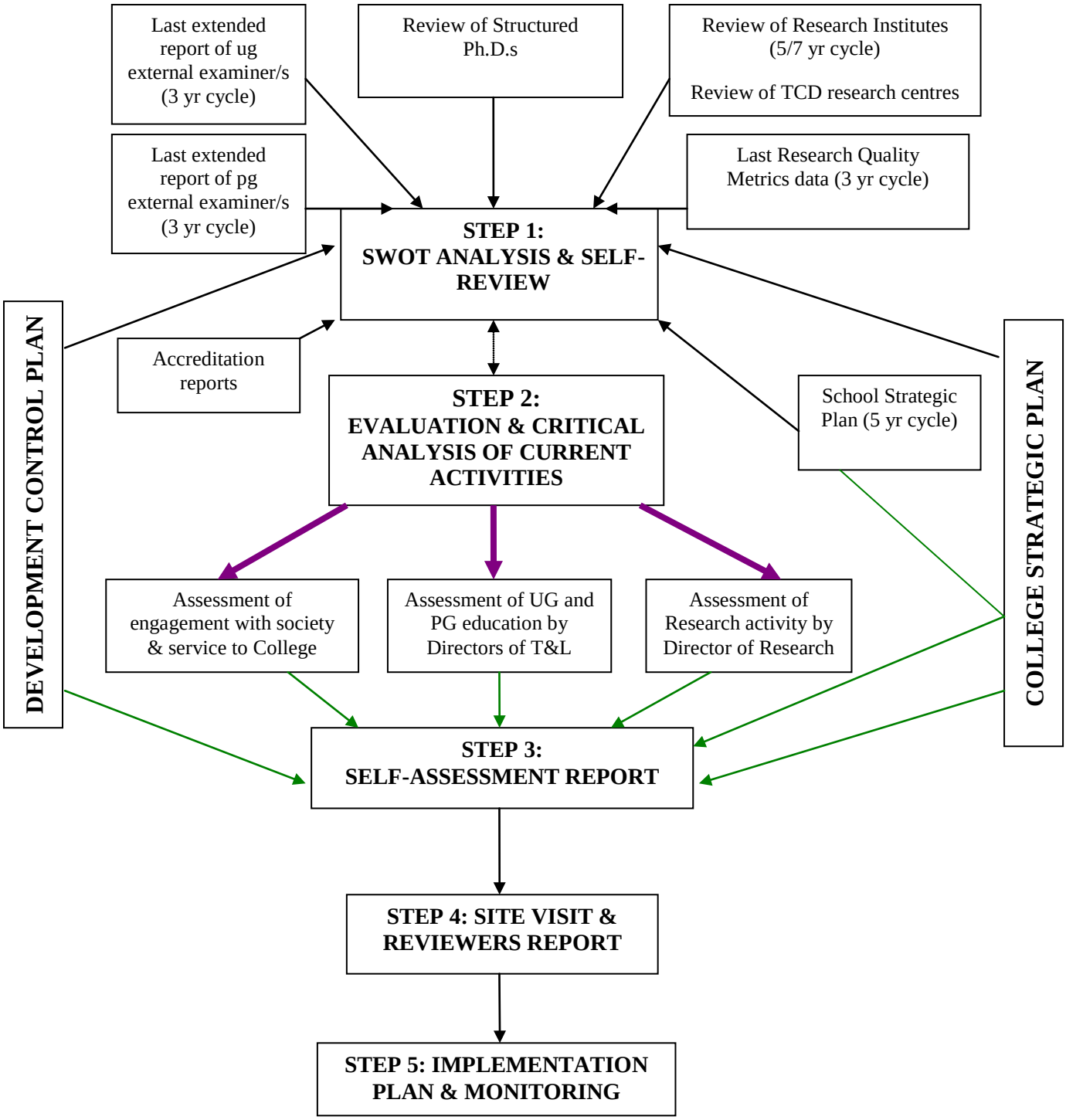
[15] See the Irish Universities Act 1997 at http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1997/en/act/pub/0024/sec0035.html#zza24y1997s35

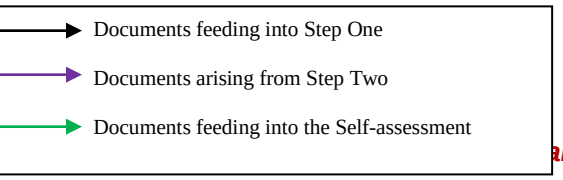
[**Appendix 1]: Membership of the Working Group**

Prof. Sheila Greene, Children's Research Centre/School of Psychology, *Chair*
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Dr. Michael Wride, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science
Prof. John Parnell, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science
Dr. Aideen Long, Faculty of Health Sciences
Prof. Veronica Campbell, Faculty of Health Sciences
Prof Roger Stalley, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Ms. Jackie Sharpe, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Dr. Liz Donnellan, *Secretary*

Note: Representatives from the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Union were invited to sit on the Working Group

Appendix 2: Proposed steps in the Quality Review Process >


Last extended report of ug external examiner/s (3 yr cycle)
Review of Structured Ph.D.s
Review of Research Institutes (5/7 yr cycle)
Review of TCD research centres
Last extended report of pg external examiner/s (3 yr cycle)
Last Research Quality Metrics data (3 yr cycle)
STEP 1: SWOT ANALYSIS & SELF-REVIEW
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN
Accreditation reports
STEP 2: EVALUATION & CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES
School Strategic Plan (5 yr cycle)
COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN
Assessment of engagement with society & service to College
Assessment of UG and PG education by Directors of T&L
Assessment of Research activity by Director of Research
STEP 3: SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT
STEP 4: SITE VISIT & REVIEWERS REPORT
STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & MONITORING


Documents feeding into Step One
Documents arising from Step Two
Documents feeding into the Self-assessment

Appendix 3: Proposed revision to the structure of the self-assessment report

The self-assessment should include the following:

1. An **introduction** and overview from the Head of School.

2. An assessment of **research activity** under the **Knowledge Generation and Transfer Section** at the School from the Director of Research to include comment on:
    - the research facilities available to the School;
    - the coherency of the School's research strategy;
    - an evaluation of current research activities against the School's strategic plan;
    - the relationship between the School's and the College's research strategy;
    - the research funding received by the School;
    - the link between the School's teaching and research;
    - other research activities in the School which are not directly linked to the School's research strategy – importance of the lone researcher;
    - social, cultural and policy impacts of the School's research;
    - knowledge transfer/intellectual property;
    - identification of barriers to conducting high quality research at the School.

3. An assessment of **education:**

    - an assessment of **undergraduate education** at the School from the Director of Teaching & Learning (UG) to include an evaluation of current activities against the School's strategic plan and suggestions/plans for improvement.
    - an assessment of **postgraduate education** at the School from the Director of Teaching & Learning (PG) to include an evaluation of current activities against the School's strategic plan and suggestions/plans for improvement.

4. An assessment of the **School's Engagement with Society and Service to College**

5. A commentary on **resources** (staff and physical infrastructure)

6. A summary of **organisational structures and planning** in the School

7. **Additional information** specific to the focus of the School review

8. The **Appendices** should include the following:

    a. School Strategic Plan;

    b. College Strategic Plan;

    c. Research Quality Metrics data;

    d. Access to the RSS and details of H-factor/impact status for each staff member (this must be automatically generated by the RSS);

    e. College's Development Control Plan;

    f. Official Student Data (to be provided by the Quality Office and to include student numbers, exam results, FTSEs, staff:student ratios etc.)

Appendix 4: Template for expanded External Examiner's Annual Report

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
Trinity College

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Name of External Examiner: ..... **Year of Appointment:** .....

Name of University/ affiliated institution: ……..

Course Title: ..... **Academic Year:** ...../.....

Subject(s):
.....

Please comment under the headings below and on any aspect which you feel is worthy of comment (*use a continuation sheet if necessary*).

1. ***Comment on the information provided to you in advance of carrying out your duties. Please make reference to the provision of course outlines and draft examination papers.***
.....

2. ***Comment on standards set in examination papers, quality of candidates, the pass rates and the distribution of results in terms of degree classes.***
.....

.....

3. ***Comment on the marking schemes and assessment procedures adopted.***

.....

.....

4. ***Course Structure***

4.1 ***Please comment on the course curriculum: its content, structure, resourcing and coherence.***

4.2 ***Please comment on how the course compares with that of similar courses elsewhere.***
.....

.....

5. Course development

5*.1* ***What in your opinion are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?***

.....

5.2 ***What, in your opinion, are the priority areas for improvement of the course (e.g. development and integration opportunities?)***

.....

.....

6. ***Are there any examples of good practice relating to the area you have examined to which you would like to draw attention?***

.....

.....

7. ***Are there any other comments you wish to make?***

.....

.....

Signed: ..... **Date:**

.....

External Examiner

Appendix 4 to Actum CL/09-10/170

Modularisation of Postgraduate Programmes

Recommendations

1: Produce a Book of Modules and establish the Module as the main unit of postgraduate education

As available in other Universities, such a book of modules should contain a list of all postgraduate modules available across College. Introduce a 'light' approval process for Masters and PhD modules which may exist with or without being formally part of an existing course, but which nevertheless accrue RPM benefits (and costs) proportionally to the provider. The possibility of offering stand-alone modules should allow Schools and Departments with specific interests to offer their expertise and receive the appropriate rewards, without having to offer a full course in what may be a niche area. This will also offer the option of creating flexible, and possibly interdisciplinary, programmes from a wide variety of modules on offer across the University.

2: Implement the structures of "course" and "strand"

Both would be supported centrally and, most importantly, each can be marketed as a separate entity for recruitment purposes. A *course* would be an administrative unit, with a Course Director that has overall responsibility for directing the course, who would be the main contact for College administrative functions. New courses must all go through the College's formal approval procedures (i.e., GSC, Council etc...). However, a *strand* would also have an identity within the course, and could have its own strand coordinator local to the School. It will be branded and advertised in the same way as a course – it will have its own identity and the students on the strand should have the same experience as if they were on a full course on the topic. On the other hand, greater flexibility will be possible by allowing different elements of strands to be combined. Strands should be encouraged for offerings with low student numbers, along with flexi-masters and consolidation of courses where synergies exist.

3: Reduce the overall number of taught Postgraduate courses by encouraging strands and single module delivery for courses that are currently not thriving

This can be achieved by reducing the overall number of courses in College to a target of **100** in total and recruiting more students onto fewer, well-defined courses with multiple strands. Based on current student numbers, this means that a "course" should have **20+** students on average; a "strand" should have a minimum of **5** students;

Furthermore, quotas on all courses should be strictly implemented; the option of running a course or strand only every other year should be considered if achieving the minimum number of students is not achievable on a yearly basis.

During discussion, it was noted that the target of 20+ students per course was an average number, as there may be valid reasons why a course may need to run with smaller student numbers, so flexibility will be needed to deal with discipline-specific differences. It was agreed that a formal case should be made to justify why a course should run with less than 20 students, and in particular why it is not possible for a course with low numbers to become a strand within an over-arching course. An absolute lower limit of 7 students for a course was agreed, and only in exceptional cases. It was also noted that financial viability is not the only metric to be applied to measure the success or otherwise of a Taught Masters course. For example, some courses can provide many excellent students for research purposes. However, the mechanism of strands within a larger course structure may still be feasible in these circumstances.

4: New course proposals must demonstrate research strengths and compatibility with the Strategic goals of College

The course proposal template should be revised and made more stringent in this regard.

5: Flexible options should be implemented

All courses should be allowed propose a "Flexi-" option: This could use the instrument of continuation years, up to a maximum of 2 continuation years. Fees would be front-loaded. This offer would be open to all Schools.

All Schools should be allowed to propose a general Flexi-Masters/PGDip: This type of Masters/PGDip would combine existing modules, including modules from other Schools, and involve an "advisor" to guide the selection and ensure its coherence. Consideration must be given to pre- and co- requisites.

6: Schools with strong research profiles should be encouraged and incentivised to provide taught Postgraduate provisions

There are a number of such schools who provide no taught masters at all.

7: Implement the Professional Science Masters

This model, common in some countries, is akin to an MBA for science professionals. This could potentially be piloted in disciplines such as Chemistry and Pharmacy and in collaboration with the Innovation Academy.

8: Remove the restriction on awarding a second M.Phil or taught M.Sc.

Potentially, this could be achieved by introducing one or two new awards denoted "Continuing Education" or similar. There is a growing market of those who wish to re-train, up-skill or continue their professional development in areas other than that of their original Masters. It would be useful to find a mechanism for allowing them take a second M.Phil/M.Sc. in a different discipline.

9: Guidelines for the role and duties of external examiners should be made more specific

The Extern's role is one of oversight and quality control and not as a 2nd or 3rd marker. As such, full expertise in the subject matter of each dissertation or module may not be as important as the ability to review the overall curriculum and academic processes.

10: Quality assurance for taught courses should be enhanced

- Course numbers and examiners' reports should be reviewed every 3 years, perhaps within the Faculty and aligned with School reviews
- Courses that raise cause for concern should be reviewed and appropriate measures taken
- Data on student numbers should be published in the GSO Annual Report.
- Regular local reviews should be undertaken by the DTLPG and processes put in place to ensure that examiners recommendations are acknowledged and acted upon
- The implementation of a College-wide deadline for external examiner reports should be considered