



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

XX = Board relevance

**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 29 June 2016 at 9.00 am in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Dean of Graduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Vice-President for Global Relations, Professor C Morash, Professor A Holohan, Professor J Walsh, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor R Dahyot, Professor M Clarke, Ms S Cameron-Coen, Ms M Kenny.
<i>Apologies</i>	Dean of Research, Dean of Students, Professor D Faas, Professor G Watson, Professor J Jones, Professor I Donohue, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor C Comiskey, Professor J P Spiers, Professor P Cronin, Dr S Bloomfield, Professor D Kelleher, Ms P O'Beirne, Mr J Bryant, Mr D Whelehan, Dr G Hegarty, Mr M McInerney, Mr A McDermott, Librarian and College Archivist.
<i>In attendance</i>	Academic Secretary, Secretary to the College, Dr A Oldam (Director of Student Services), Ms S De Brunner.
<i>Observers</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Mr S Johnston).

SECTION A

The Provost requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda items. None was declared.

CL/15-16/230 Minutes

A correction was made to CL/15-16/203 (iii) to amend the fourth bulleted point to read 'the plan to reduce the assessment of students was welcomed but another member thought that one week of examinations at the end of each semester was insufficient, especially given the proposed level of optionality, and is out of line with high ranking international universities, and that it will damage the international reputation of our courses in some areas;'

Council approved the minutes of the meeting of 8 June 2016.

The Secretary to the College joined the meeting.

CL/15-16/231 Matters Arising

CL/15-16/205: The Provost advised that the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and he had met with the senior academic leadership in the School of Computer Science and Statistics to discuss the outcomes of its quality review. He noted that members of the School asserted that its strategic plan was underpinned intellectually, however, this had not been explicitly stated in

the document. The next step for the School will be the addition of this dimension to its strategic plan.

CL/15-16/232 Course Proposal: Level 5 Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice

A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 31 May 2016, was circulated with a proposal concerning a course leading to a Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice at Level 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that a priority task identified in the transfer of the National Institute for Intellectual Disability (NIID) to the School of Education, and its subsequent re-launch as the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID), was the establishment of the NFQ level of its course offering thereby formalising the resulting award (CL/13-14/189(v)). She noted that this course replaces the existing Certificate in Contemporary Living and that, if approved, would be Trinity's first award at Level 5 on the NFQ.

Compared to the current course in Contemporary Living, the new course is more academically focussed, it has standardised entry requirements, and module and programme learning outcomes, which are aligned to Level 5, have been developed. The curriculum is organised under six interdisciplinary themes: advanced learning theories and self-development; applied research theories and practice; applied science, technology and maths; business and marketing; advocacy, rights and culture; and fine arts and languages. Holders of the Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice will be able to pursue further studies and will be in a stronger position to compete for employment.

Council noted that the proposal was externally reviewed by Professor Richard Rose, Professor of Inclusive Education at the University of Northampton, who praised the proposed course.

A member queried the eligibility of students to access the Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that students on this course, and on the current Contemporary Living course, are ineligible for state supports offered to third-level students, despite significant engagement with the Higher Education Authority on this matter. Students are likely, however, to receive support from the Health Service Executive (HSE) or from specific non-governmental organisations in relation to fees and maintenance.

The proposal was commended by several members. Council approved the proposed new course leading to the Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice, at NFQ Level 5, to replace the existing Certificate in Contemporary Living course, and noted that it is due to commence in September 2016.

The Registrar joined the meeting.

CL/15-16/233 Criteria for Tenure Track Assessment

A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, dated 24 June 2016, was circulated. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the item and commented that recruitment processes for the majority of the Ussher II assistant professor positions were nearing completion. Qualifying criteria for tenure, which cover the areas of education/teaching, research and engagement have been developed and require approval before being communicated to successful candidates. She noted that the overarching criterion of engagement includes service to the University.

In addition to appointees receiving these criteria, heads of schools, at an early stage, will clarify the immediate priorities and objectives for the first year of employment and will provide guidance on what the formal tenure review will entail. The discipline specific expression of the criteria will be agreed by the head of school with the appointee, in the context of the Performance Management Toolkit developed by Human Resources.

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A member commented that setting the responsibility for the interpretation of the criteria at a local level will lead to workload disparities amongst this cohort of assistant professors. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, responding, noted that this aspect was discussed during the consultation stages of the development of the criteria and it was deemed preferable that heads of schools and departments would be responsible for ensuring that specified workloads merit tenure in the context of faculty norms, the Performance Management Toolkit and in addition to discipline specific considerations. On the topic of service to the University, there were opposing views expressed as to whether or not those recruited under the Ussher Scheme should take up tutorship or course directorship roles. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer clarified that the purpose of the criteria is to offer clarity on those activities which can be considered by the review panel in the evaluation of candidates for tenure rather than enumerating tasks which must be carried out by candidates. Tutorship and/or course directorship, if undertaken by a candidate, will be reckonable under the engagement criterion.

Council approved the proposed criteria, as circulated, and noted that these would apply to those due to commence employment in Trinity in September 2016 under the Ussher II scheme.

Professor A Holohan joined the meeting.

CL/15-16/234 Trinity Education Project

Dr A Oldam joined the meeting.

(i) Academic Year Structure

A report from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 24 June 2016, concerning a proposed academic year structure was circulated. Speaking to the item by way of a presentation, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer reminded members of the two academic year structure options presented at the previous meeting (CL/15-16/203(iii)) and noted that Council sought further clarification and analysis in relation to three specific issues: (i) how the cultural change would be managed and achieved to successfully implement one week of assessment at the end of each semester; (ii) the possibility of reducing the marking/results period by one week in Trinity term; and (iii) the practicalities of introducing an afternoon in each teaching week which would be free from timetabled classes.

In relation to the first of these, she noted that formal examination sessions occupy six weeks in the current academic year structure, four for the annual examination session and two for the supplemental, whereas, in the proposed structure, these combined would occupy three weeks. She highlighted the fact that approximately 79% of all annual examination sittings take place during the first two weeks of the annual examination session, showing that there is already scope to reduce the duration of the annual examination session. In relation to the cultural change required, she commented that a number of courses had already significantly reduced the number of examinations held or had removed them completely. These courses, along with a number of professional courses, could provide exemplars of innovative assessment methods to be drawn on by other schools. She stated that work will have to be undertaken to map assessments for each undergraduate course and that the relationship between credit weightings and the length of examinations will be reviewed. The theme of assessment will be a main focus for the Centre for Academic Practice and eLearning over the coming years.

In relation to the length of the marking and results period, she stated that it would be hard to reduce the specified duration at this juncture, given the number of activities which must be carried out within it, however, as is the case now, some courses will be able to conclude their marking and results processes earlier than others.

Speaking in relation to the possible implementation of a free afternoon in each teaching week, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that the spread of scheduled classes is relatively even across the teaching week. The impact of removing a half-day each week from the timetable was reviewed and it was seen to have a significant impact, particularly in the sciences, where 33 hours of scheduled laboratories would be lost. Heads of schools have also voiced concerns about the disruption it would cause to the logical sequencing of classes and the negative impact it would have in relation to facilitating and promoting elective modules.

Consequently, she confirmed that option 2 was the recommended academic year structure proposed and outlined the benefits associated with it. She noted that it would reduce the intensity of teaching; provide space for independent reflective learning practice, collaborative tasks and field work; provide time for co-curricular activities; it underpins the objectives of a new approach to assessment within the context of programme-focussed curricula; and it supports the achievement of research-centred curricula.

Responding to questions, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer confirmed that the course in Dental Science operates outside of the current academic year structure and it would be unlikely to fit into the proposed option given the proportion of clinical placement hours which must be completed. She noted that coursework submission deadlines are set by those responsible for programmes. In relation to a question about using computer laboratories for examinations, she noted that this would fall within the brief of the group looking at learning spaces in Trinity.

Concerns were raised in relation to reducing the length of time provided for formal examinations in the proposed academic year structure, particularly given the number of students who currently report high levels of stress and anxiety around examinations. There is a danger that the new timeframe would push up the number of examination sessions per day, from two to three, and it was suggested that certain limits be put in place. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer confirmed that parameters would have to be developed and that there would be further engagement with schools and students.

Council approved the second option in relation to the academic year structure, as circulated, noting that timetabled classes would take place between 9am to 6pm thereby allowing time for co-curricular activities. Council also noted that the assessment strand within the Trinity Education Project would be strengthened to ensure that the necessary cultural change to underpin implementation occurs.

(ii) Status Report, for information

Council noted the interim report on activities under the Trinity Education Project from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 24 June 2016, as circulated.

CL/15-16/235 Non-EU PGT Applications and Admissions

A memorandum from the Dean of Graduate Studies, dated 22 June 2016, was circulated. Introducing the item, the Dean of Graduate Studies noted that Trinity is an attractive destination for non-EU students wishing to undertake taught postgraduate courses, which can be seen from the increases in applications from this cohort on an annual basis. She noted, however, that it appears to be the case that Trinity does not respond quickly enough to non-EU applicants to secure acceptances and subsequent enrolments. Accordingly, she asked Council to endorse the following procedural approach in dealing with applications from this cohort:

- Each taught postgraduate course has an overall quota and a minimum of 20% of this quota must be designated for non-EU applicants.
- There will be a rolling admissions policy for all non-EU applicants and each application will be dealt with upon receipt of the application. The non-EU quota will be filled on a first qualified applicant basis. Admissions decisions will be issued within two weeks of receipt of the submitted application.
- In the event that the course committee, or director, does not evaluate the applications and make recommendations to offer places to qualified applicants within the two-week deadline, then the Dean of Graduate Studies will instruct the Academic Registry to offer a place to the first qualified applicant(s) until the non-EU quota is filled.
- The procedure would not apply to courses where registration or membership of an Irish regulatory body is a mandatory requirement for the course (e.g. Nursing /Pharmacy/ Psychology).

The Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that applicants are responded to on a rolling-basis rather than on a block-basis in most postgraduate taught courses. She noted that Council considered this matter previously in June 2010 (CL/09-10/203) and approval was given in principle at that time, however, College did not then have the requisite systems to implement the procedure. It is now possible to make a conditional offer, with the offer made unconditional following the submission of further required documentation by the applicant. She confirmed that all new courses are required to have both EU and non-EU quotas which are approved as part of the course proposal process.

The Vice-President for Global Relations voiced her strong support for the proposal and concurred with setting the minimum quota at 20% for non-EU students to ensure alignment with Trinity's Global Relations Strategy. A member raised a concern in relation to the potential loss of EU students due to a strict adherence to reserving a minimum of 20% for non-EU students. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that only a small minority of postgraduate taught courses reach their full quota, therefore, this is unlikely to be an issue. It is the case, however, that Trinity is losing potential students in the current circumstances. A case was made for the M.Phil. in Creative Writing, along with those courses which require registration or membership of an Irish regulatory body, to be exempt from this procedure. It was stressed that such applications must be reviewed qualitatively before any sort of an offer could be issued and, in any case, this M.Phil. course always meets its quota in full. Responding to a query about courses with several strands, the Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that the 20% minimum quota would apply to the programme as a whole rather than to each individual strand.

Council approved the proposed policy and procedure and agreed that the aforementioned course in Creative Writing and those courses which require registration or membership of an Irish regulatory body would be exempt from the procedure. Council noted that the procedure would apply to the current admissions round.

CL/15-16/236 Any Other Urgent Business

A member highlighted queries being raised by students in the aftermath of the British referendum in which exiting the European Union was favoured ('Brexit'). The Provost stated that the full implications of this decision were not known and would depend on exit negotiations. He affirmed Trinity's policy in relation to applying the fee status at the point of entry to the duration of a student's course of study and noted that this would be communicated to students in due course.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Provost thanked all outgoing members for their service on Council, and, in particular, he acknowledged the work of the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Registrar, the Senior Tutor and the Dean of Graduate Studies, each of whom had reached the end of their term in office.

Signed

Date