



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

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The University of Dublin**

Quality Committee

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the
18 May 2017, 2.30 – 4.30pm, Boardroom House 1

Present:

Professor Chris Morash, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)
Professor Darryl Jones, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science
Professor Gillian Martin, Senior Lecturer
Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer
Professor David Lewis, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Professor Peter Crooks, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Sheila Ryder, Faculty of Health Sciences
Professor Catherine Darker, Faculty of Health Sciences
Ms. Victoria Butler, Secretary's Office
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian
Education Officer, Students' Union
Vice-President, Graduate Students' Union

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office (Secretary)

Apologies:

Professor Mary McCarron, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences
Ms. Geraldine Ruane, Chief Operating Officer
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor John Walsh, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Aonghus McNabola, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services

In attendance:

Professor Oran Doyle, Head of the Law School (for item QC/16-17/052)
Professor David Ditchburn, Head of the School of Histories and Humanities (for item QC/16-17/053)
Dr Alison Oldam, Director of Student Services (for items QC/16-17/054 and QC/16-17/055)

QC/16-17/050 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 20 April 2017

Under matters arising (QC/16-17/043), the Deputy Librarian requested that the wording of the update on item (QC/16-17/026) *AHSS Annual Faculty Quality Report* be amended to read 'With regard to concerns about the impact of the 2013 legislation on the Humanities in terms of access to print monographs, she reported that....'

The minute of item QC/16-17/036 *Annual Faculty Quality Report – HS* should read 'Currently IPL is optional for all but 3rd year medical, pharmacy and physiotherapy students...'

QC/16-17/051 Matters arising

(QC/16-17/026) *Annual Faculty Quality Report for AHSS* – with regard to the issue of how the statutory and legal basis for the restrictions on access to e-legal deposit material can be better communicated within College, the Deputy Librarian reported that the Librarian will speak to the Chair of the Library and Information Policy Committee (LIPC).

(QC/16-17/039) *Estates Strategy and Space Audit*–the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that the Bursar will be invited to attend the first meeting of the new academic year in October.

(QC/16-17/044) *Review of the School of Dental Science* – this was approved by Council on the 10 May and an Implementation Plan will come to the Quality Committee in October.

(QC/16-17/045) *Implementation Plan for the School of Pharmacy* – this was approved by Council on the 10 May

(QC/16-17/046) *Review of the Tutorial Service* – the review report will be considered by Council at its meeting on the 7 June.

(QC/16-17/048) *Review of the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology* – the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that Council had approved the review recommendations at its meeting on the 10 May and agreed to the establishment of a taskforce to be chaired by the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, which would be convened if required. The implementation of any recommendations which are contrary to provisions in existing legal agreements between Trinity and the Trust bodies will be subject to discussions and negotiation with those Trusts, and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer will work closely with the Heads of the Trusts in that regard.

QC/16-17/052 Quality Review schedule

The Quality Officer spoke to a memo outlining the proposed schedule of quality reviews to 2021/22 and the three areas to be addressed in advance of the Institutional Quality Review (2020/21), namely (i) policies, procedures and practices in respect of undergraduate and postgraduate education, (ii) student evaluation and engagement and (iii) governance and management. She reminded the Committee of the requirement to demonstrate in advance of the institutional review that College has addressed key areas outlined in the QQI Policy and associated procedures for Cyclical Institutional Review published in 2016.

Quality assurance of governance and management will be addressed through (i) compliance with the *QQI Sector specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies* and the *QQI Act 2012* with regard to Trinity's Linked Providers and (ii) reviews of units that are linked to College strategies such as the Estates, On-Line Education, IT and Global Relations Strategies, and (iii) assessment of compliance with recently published academic policies and with the *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (CS QAG)* and the *European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*.

Schools that are scheduled for review in the period leading up to the Institutional Review and who are engaged in the Trinity Education Project are being offered the opportunity to consider other ways in which their provision can be evaluated that add value to the quality review process i.e. through a strategic or thematic review of areas of particular interest to the School. The planned thematic reviews of postgraduate education and of entry routes into TSM and other two-subject combinations of dual entry pathways will address cross-College issues regarding postgraduate and undergraduate education, and will input to the Trinity Education Project (TEP).

The Chair thanked the Quality Officer and invited comment from the Committee. In the discussion that followed the Deputy Librarian asked whether the Library should have greater input into academic reviews, both through the provision of information to Schools as part of the self-assessment report (SAR) and by the inclusion of a meeting with the Librarian and relevant team in the on-site schedule. The Quality Officer agreed to work with the Deputy Librarian to establish how this could be facilitated. Following a query as to whether there is a danger that engagement with Schools on their preferred areas of interest for review would result in a bias in favor of teaching and learning, the Quality Officer suggested that the opposite would be the case as much of the teaching and learning provision is addressed through the TEP. As a result, thematic or strategic reviews will focus primarily on structure, governance, research and postgraduate education. She reported that the newly introduced terms of reference for reviews are useful in this regard.

A Committee member asked whether the outcomes of quality reviews will inform the development of the new College Strategic Plan. The Quality Officer explained that the majority of the planned internal reviews on the schedule and the institutional review itself will take place after the development of the new Strategic Plan. She noted however that outcomes from completed quality reviews should inform the development of the next strategic plan.

In closing the discussion the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer emphasized the importance of ensuring joined-up thinking, as areas of overlap exist between the various strategic processes underway in College, and reported that a review of on-line education in College has just been completed.

The Committee approved the schedule of reviews to 2021/22 and the proposed approach to reviews leading up to the institutional review.

QC/16-17/053 Review of the Law Programmes

The Head of the Law School, Professor Oran Doyle, spoke to the review of the Law Programmes, which took place from the 24-26 January 2017.

Professor Doyle welcomed the review as a very helpful process for the School. Addressing the recommendation for a formal review of the year abroad, he undertook to liaise with the Quality Office in this regard and suggested that a College-led review of all undergraduate study abroad programmes should be conducted to assess the quality of provision in partner institutions. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer queried whether the curriculum mapping exercise would address this issue and Professor Doyle clarified that broader student satisfaction issues were not currently looked at as part of the mapping process.

The Reviewers made a number of TEP-related recommendations related to the LLB, which the Head of School suggested require a written response from the College. There is the potential for the TEP to impact the distinctiveness of the core LLB by reducing the number of modules that students can choose from, resulting in a potential skew of law module choices in favor of modules that are perceived to be preferred by future employers. This is a point of concern for the School and the Reviewers supported the School's proposal to address this by enabling 'TEP-approved' modules to include some of the current law modules that have a cross-disciplinary dimension e.g.

Jurisprudence with Philosophy, which if counted as an 'approved module' in TEP would help to ensure that students don't forget to explore the core modules when making their choices.

Professor Doyle reported that the School is also concerned that the TEP architecture poses a threat to the School's study abroad scheme, as it would not be possible for LLB students to study abroad within the TEP architecture while keeping their professional pathways open. The School proposes that this could be addressed if foreign law studied in a foreign university counted as part of the approved modules in terms of breadth, and this proposal was supported by the Reviewers.

In response to an observation from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer that the LLB is a professional pathway for only some students, Professor Doyle clarified that under the TEP architecture, students who undertake a four-year degree will emerge with lower credits than prior to TEP, resulting in less of a differentiation between higher and lower degrees awards.

The Review raised concerns around the teaching of foreign law in the Law and French and Law and German programmes, with a significant amount of the delivery vested in one lecturer in both cases. In relation to the Law and French programme, Professor Doyle suggested that the resulting issues of sustainability and viability may be addressed by the appointment of two permanent lecturers in French Law. In its response to the review, the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies contended that as teaching in German Law is provided by German Law specialists on fixed term contracts supported by the German Academic Exchange Service, issues around cover for sabbatical and maternity leave do not arise for the Law and German programme in the same way as for the Law and French programme. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggested that the issue of foreign law teaching for the Law and Language programmes should be included on the School's and College's risk register.

In terms of the LLM, the Reviewers make a number of recommendations relating to the dissertation including the submission deadline, supervision arrangements and the selection of the dissertation topic. Professor Doyle reported that these will be considered as part of a holistic review of the role of the dissertation in the degree programme which will be undertaken by a School-level working group. Professor Doyle explained that the role of the dissertation in the taught programme has evolved in recent years and is now less a route to a PhD and more about providing opportunities for students to build expertise in particular areas. As a result, the School needs to be able to design a master's programme that works for its students, as this will impact the school's identity and influence its ability to recruit and retain students.

The Chair thanked the Head of School and invited comment from the Faculty Dean. Professor Jones welcomed the report and endorsed the points made by Professor Doyle, noting that many of the reviewers' recommendations are operational in terms of the School. He expressed concern regarding the issues raised in the Law and French programme, and stressing the need to find a solution, agreed to work with the Heads of the School of Law and Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies in this regard.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Professor Doyle, who left the meeting along with the Dean of Graduate Studies who is a member of the Law School.

The discussion was opened to the Committee, who suggested that in relation to the quality assurance of placements, there is an opportunity to learn from Schools that already have systems in place. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that as part of the Trinity Education Project, existing systems for assuring the quality of internships and placements are being studied with a view to rolling them out to all Schools whose programmes have an off-site element. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the recommendation to encourage senior staff to teach on the foundation programme. The Deputy Librarian suggested that the issue of postgraduate space needs to be

considered, as the 1937 Postgraduate Reading Room is heavily used, and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggested that this be raised with the Bursar. Noting the concerns expressed by the

reviewers regarding the Law and Languages programmes, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stressed that it was unlikely that either of these programmes would cease mid-stream. She welcomed the recommendation to establish individual oversight Committees for each programme. With regard to the recommendation to appoint an overall programme co-ordinator for the Law and Business and Law and Political Science programmes, she noted that models exist for overall and subject co-ordinators that work well.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commended the School's detailed response to the report, noting that the School had engaged intelligently with the recommendations and provided valid reasons where recommendations were not being implemented. He closed the discussion and the Committee recommended the report for consideration by Council.

The Dean of Graduate Studies returned to the meeting.

QC/16-17/054 Review of the School of Histories and Humanities

The Head of the School of Histories and Humanities, Professor David Ditchburn, spoke to a report on the review of the School which was undertaken from the 13-15 March 2017.

Professor Ditchburn welcomed the Reviewers' report and commended staff in the School and the Quality Office for their work on the review. He noted that the overall reaction of the review team to the School's activities was positive, reporting that he shared the Reviewers' concern that there is a crisis of morale in the School attributed to three major issues - the Library, Space and Staffing. Noting that the Library is a crucial resource for students of the School, Professor Ditchburn reported that the implementation of the majority of the Reviewers' recommendations concerning the Library is outside the remit of the School and will require resourcing at College level.

The Reviewers make several comments on space and endorse co-location of the School. They note that 'some teaching rooms are not fit for purpose' and that space for postgraduate students is very limited. While some of these issues will be addressed by the Estates Strategy, Professor Ditchburn acknowledged that others will remain unresolved without decisions at Faculty level and committed to working with the Faculty Dean in this regard. The Reviewers make several recommendations regarding staffing, particularly in relation to the viability of the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, and Professor Ditchburn expressed concern that delays in clarifying the new budgetary situation have had a knock-on effect in terms of staffing plans and teaching for the next academic year.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Head of School and invited comment from the Faculty Dean. Addressing the staffing issues raised in the review, Professor Jones reported that a number of vacant posts had been filled in the last year and that outstanding staffing issues will be addressed in the next staffing plan. He noted however that it will not be possible to replace senior staff at the same level. He acknowledged the issues regarding the Library and the provision of adequate space for postgraduate students, noting that the space constraints in the 1937 postgraduate reading room were also raised in the Law review

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Office thanked the Dean. He invited comment from the Committee and in the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. The expansion of the School will be impacted if the issue of access to facilities (e.g. the Stables) and co-location of the School's disciplines is not addressed;
2. The Library-related issues raised by the Reviewers are now all on the Library's agenda and involvement of the Library in quality reviews of the School will be increased in the future;
3. While the overall tone of the report is positive there is an underlying criticism of systems. The

crises of morale within the School may stem from the inability of processes and systems to support the academic and administrative staff. Many of the administrative processes are unduly onerous and require streamlining to improve efficiencies. Others, such as the return of course-work policy, need to be better enforced, particularly in the light of recent student feedback;

4. The imminent or recent retirement of a number of staff has resulted in an imbalance between senior and junior staff. While this change in the staff profile has led to uncertainty, there is still sufficient seniority within the school to ensure succession. The challenge now is to build the school's identity around its junior staff;
5. The preservation of the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies needs to be addressed, particularly as it was a recommendation from the 2009 review;

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Head of School, who along with Professor David Crooks, a member of the School left the meeting.

Following a brief discussion during which the need for the School to address system and administrative issues in the Implementation Plan to follow was emphasized, the Committee recommended the report for consideration by Council.

Professor Peter Crooks returned to the meeting. The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences left the meeting and the Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science joined the meeting.

QC/16-17/055 Progress reports for the Student Counselling Service (SCS) and the College Health Service (HS)

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Director of Student Services, Dr Alison Oldam, to the meeting to speak to the Progress Reports for the Student Counselling Service and the College Health Service. Dr Oldam began by acknowledging that the developments that have taken place in both services since their respective quality reviews have been done without additional resources.

Student Counselling Service

Dr Oldam discussed staffing in the Student Counselling Service and reported that two of the three intern posts recommended by the review had been filled. Plans to fill the third post involve conversion to a 50% nine month contract at Admin 1.1, for which renewal is currently being sought for 2018. Future plans may involve streamlining positions into usual Trinity HR grades, which would result in fewer posts at higher salaries. This would impact waiting times and service provision. The Reviewers recommended the appointment of a Case Manager, for which additional funding is currently being sought. This post would provide multidisciplinary and holistic support for students who disclose a mental health disability by facilitating access to the College Disability Service, the Health Centre, and the Student Counselling Service, as required, and also by acting as a liaison person with external Health Service provisions. Dr Oldam reported that Health Service Executive cuts have resulted in pushback to College services and that negotiating what is dealt with in College and what is referred externally is a key piece of work. This is particularly important for students coming to College from outside Ireland who are removed from their local support services or for students whose relationship with their existing service providers has broken down. In the interim a procedure has been developed for responding to international students in crisis, the co-ordination of which will be undertaken by Global Relations staff with support from the Health and Student Counselling Services regarding clinical aspects. The Deans Consult, which has functioned as a coordination group with respect to crises impacting the wider College Community, is being reviewed. Dr Oldam noted that the €2000 for Non-EU students (above the baseline) is proportionally split between CSD, ASD and FSD. Due to significant budget reductions, the CSD proportion has filled that funding deficit and therefore no additional resource has been made to student services from non-EU student income, and that she had raised this at the recent Global Relations review.

With regard to the recommendation to establish a rotating out-of-hours on-call service for the College, Dr Oldam reported that this has not been implemented as it would require significant resources and would need to be integrated into and dovetail with other College systems. The accommodation needs of the Service remain an issue of concern and are impacting on service delivery during busy months. The Reviewers recommended targeting Trinity alumni as part of a fundraising campaign but engagement with the Development and Alumni Office has not moved this forward, as this is not currently in the Campaign Cabinet.

The expansion of the Student Learning Development service to provide a one-stop-shop for academic support services was recommended by the review. The Director reported that while this is unlikely to be implemented, there has been increased partnership between Student Learning Development and colleagues in the Disability Service. Different models of service provision are also being explored including less one-to-one engagement with students and more workshop-like initiatives such as the module in Personal and Professional wellbeing currently being run in collaboration with the Business School. Dr Oldam praised the funding of a two-year intern S2S post by the Students Union, which she reported will bring increased stability to the service.

With regard to outstanding items to be addressed, Dr Oldam reported that securing additional resources through commercial funding remains a challenge. She explained that it is difficult to engage health providers as sponsors, as they are primarily interested in developing research partnerships with the College. She is, however, working with the Commercial Revenue Unit (CRU) in this regard.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Dr Oldam and reported that the Chief Operating Officer is constantly exploring ways to raise funding for College Services. He noted that discussions are continuing with the Students' Union regarding a student levy to support these vital services and remarked that Trinity students pay comparatively less for services than students in other universities. He acknowledged the very proactive and supportive engagement of the Students Union with these issues, and invited comments from the Committee.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. The most likely way of attracting sponsorship from Alumni is via the Campaign Cabinet;
2. Engagement with the Trinity Association Trust regarding funding should be explored; Traditionally money raised for welfare by the Trinity Foundation goes to TAP but methods of changing this should be explored;
3. While the Students Union does not endorse the introduction of an additional student levy to support student services, they agree that there should be parity of esteem between mental and physical health;
4. A data protection review has revealed no issues in the Student Counselling Service with regard to student records;
5. There may be opportunities to tap into international trainers with mental health expertise who are on campus as part of the Global Brain Health Initiative (GBHI).

College Health Service:

The Director of Student Services reported that a key recommendation of the review of the Health Centre concerned the provision of appropriate facilities. This has been addressed by the allocation of space for the Service in the new Oisín House development, which is now in progress. In the interim, additional storage space has been found which will release space in the existing premises, and an external, covered waiting area for staff and students has been erected. Dr Oldam explained that the possibility of running satellite clinics as recommended by the Reviewers is limited by the existing in-house IT system, which does not have the capacity to be accessed off-campus. The new Helix Health System to be rolled out in late summer 2017 will deal with specific requirements, such as on-line booking and self-check in, and will hopefully support the development of an off-site facility.

With regard to funding for the Service, Dr Oldam reported that work with the Commercial Revenue Unit and with external organizations' to source additional income is ongoing. The distribution of funding

from international students to support additional student services posts was raised as a risk at the recent Global Relations review and discussions with the SU about a student levy are ongoing. A Registered Nurse in the Health Centre has commenced training as a Nurse Prescriber, in response to the Reviewers' recommendation and costs of this training are being met by the College. Dr Oldam concluded by highlighting that the number of GPs in the Health Service has decreased from 4.4 FTE (2007) to 3.3 FTE, even though there has been an increase in the number and demographics of students. She praised both the Health Service and the Student Counselling Service for the outstanding work that they have done with very limited resources, and stressed the need to look forward and plan for the future.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Dr Oldam and noted that resourcing is a key issue for both services, particular in relation to maintaining service quality. The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science reported that provision for student services had been built into the business plan for the E3 project, and stressed that it is not practical to separate service provision from any plans to increase the student population through strategic initiatives.

The Chair thanked Dr Oldam for the presentation of both progress reports, and recommended them for consideration by Board with the minutes of the discussion.

QC/16-17/056 Progress report for the School of Chemistry

The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science spoke to the Progress Report for the School of Chemistry.

He reported that the School has engaged significantly with the implementation of the review recommendations, and has reviewed and renewed its strategic plan. Work on aspects of the Plan is ongoing, and the new financial allocation model under development with the Chief Financial Officer will impact on the School's financial and staff planning. Professor Cahill remarked that resourcing is a challenge for the School as there are high non-pay costs associated with the discipline such as securing laboratory space and equipment, provision of demonstrators, purchasing chemicals etc. He suggested that a faculty-wide strategy is required to address this.

Space remains an issue for the School, with the fragmentation of the School over eight different sites posing challenges in terms of maintaining a focal point for the discipline. The Dean reported that there are plans to redevelop the Chemistry building in the context of Estates Strategy.

The Review highlighted issues around the relationship between the School and its related Research Institutes (e.g. AMBER) in terms of strategic decision making, staff appointments and distribution of overheads. The Dean reported that this is not just an issue for the School of Chemistry, and that work has commenced at Faculty and College level to address the relationship through (i) the instigation of regular meetings and workshops between Heads of School and Directors of Research Institutes, (ii) engagement with FSD and the VP/CAO in relation to the development of a workable and equitable overhead distribution policy.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Professor Cahill and reported that issues relating to space and resourcing for the AMBER Research Institute are currently on the audit log to be addressed. He stressed the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the Institute given its importance to the University, noting that it is heavily dependent on competitive research funding. He closed the discussion and recommended the progress report to Council for approval, as part of the minutes.

QC/16-17/057 Any other business

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that the Student Partnership Agreement had been approved by Council at its meeting on the 10 May.

He concluded by thanking Committee members for their work during the year, and in particular the Student Union reps who were completing their terms of office.