

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

22 January 2019, 11:00-13:00

Arts Building Conference Room 2026, Arts Building

Attendees

Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research (DOR)

Professor Andrew Bowie, Associate Dean of Research

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Ruth Barton, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts

Professor Ann Devitt, Director of Research, School of Education

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English

Professor Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Irene Walsh, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Studies

Professor Redmond O'Connell, Director of Research, School of Psychology

Professor Agustín Bénétrix, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science

Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Caitríona Lally, Director of Research, School of Engineering

Professor Adrian Bracken, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Director of Research, School of Mathematics

Professor Marcus Collier, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences

Professor Jeff O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science

Professor Louise Gallagher, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Professor Helen Sheridan, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science

Trinity Research Institutes

Professor Orla Sheils, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub

In attendance

Mr Oisín Vince Coulter, President, Graduate Students Union

Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division

Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services, Innovation and Digital Platforms, IT Services

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library

Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation

Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation

Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research (Secretary to the Committee)

Apologies

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research

Professor Brian Brewer, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law

Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Daniele Pevarello, Director of Research, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology

Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry

Professor Maria Brenner, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery

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Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	<p>Minutes Minutes from the last meeting of 11 December 2018 were circulated in advance. Accepted as accurate record.</p>
A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes All matters arising due to be addressed.</p>
A.3	<p>Update from the Dean of Research</p> <p>DOR informed the committee that the Research Strategy (RS/18-19/3) was approved by Council, and thanked Helen Shenton for support. Some changes were suggested by Council and further feedback from the Research Committee needs to be incorporated before the strategy is sent to Board. Helen Shenton noted that the strategy's ease of progression through Council was testament to the amount of consultation that went into its development. DOR noted that discussing the implementation and status of the strategy will be a permanent item on the agenda at each Research Committee meeting. DOR informed the committee that the development of a new College strategy is now in progress, under the guidance of Vice Provost Chris Morash. Noted that it will be important to ensure that all strategies exist in harmony with each other.</p> <p>DOR noted that the SFI annual plan and IRC indicative call schedule were now available. Some changes to the SFI schemes were noted as were the smaller grant amounts. The news that there is no IRC Laureates scheme planned for the coming year was greeted with dismay by the committee. Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer noted that the IRC Laureates programme is not yet embedded, and that there is also alarm at the lack of progress on the issue of a living stipend for Early Career Researchers. Prof. Ohlmeyer noted that the Laureates programme is being held up as an example of excellent practice across Europe at a time when the government is reluctant to guarantee continued support for the programme.</p> <p>The committee discussed at length the serious funding crisis that the third level sector has been experiencing. It was noted that huge investment would be needed to address the crisis across all disciplines. The committee expressed considerable alarm at the lack of urgency or interest shown by successive governments in this regard. The failure to provide appropriate financial support to the third level sector will lead to a systemic failure that will have significant impact on undergraduate and postgraduate education, as well as the research landscape. Ireland's reputation as an innovator with a highly educated and skilled workforce will be severely damaged unless major action is taken soon. DOR noted that she and the Provost had a brief meeting with Minister Humphreys recently at which they raised these issues. The committee also noted that the negative impact of the conflict of interest in having a Chief Science Advisor who is also the Director of SFI is becoming ever more apparent.</p> <p>The committee agreed that a co-ordinated argument from the university sector as a whole across all disciplines is necessary to provoke any kind of reaction from government. ADOR Bowie suggested focusing on three specific messages and framing communications around these: the crisis in the sector; examples of best practice such</p>

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as the IRC Laureates and SFI Investigator programmes; the positive impact achieving GDP target for investment in sector would have. DOR noted that it would be helpful to have someone who could focus on this to ensure that there is constant pressure on relevant stakeholders to take action.

ACTION: DOR to nominate individual to help coordinate communications around this issue.

DOR informed the committee of recent funding successes. 6 out of 20 SIRG awards were given to Trinity researchers. Each institution was only allowed to submit 12 applications so a 50% success rate for Trinity is excellent news. Trinity also received 9 EPA awards, its best result. Other awards have been secured but not officially announced yet. DOR also noted the importance of acknowledging the efforts of those who continue to apply for funding even if the application is not successful. DOR informed the committee that the EU Universities Network was officially launched. Structure within college still has to be formalised. DOR also commended Trinity Research & Innovation on the success of its recent awards night.

DOR and Helen Shenton informed the committee of the Open Scholarship taskforce's plans for the coming year. It was noted that humanities researchers have voiced serious opposition to Plan S. Committee was advised that any specific feedback could be sent to ADOR Leeson and Helen Shenton.

An editor from The Conversation recently conducted a training session at Trinity. DOR attended and noted that the majority of attendees were postdocs. DOR encouraged all to consider writing something for it as the articles tend to gain good exposure. Some frustration was expressed by committee members that Trinity has refused to sign up to RTE's Brainstorm. It was also noted that contributors to The Conversation are not paid for their work, whereas Brainstorm does pay for published articles.

A database of honours – not funding – that academics have won was discussed. DOR also asked committee if there are prizes for which people could be nominated. Noted the importance of exploiting all opportunities to recognise the work of the Trinity community. It was noted that the RSS system has an awards section and this would be more efficient than maintaining a separate database.

Section B - Items for Discussion Only

B.1 Research Ethics Policy Committee (RS/18-19/11)

Professor Orla Sheils

Prof. Orla Sheils provided an update from the Research Ethics Policy Committee. Noted ethics committees provide essential oversight within the university. Prof. Sheils discussed the ongoing issues with the pilot application system. Increased urgency to resolve this in light of GDPR concerns.

REPC have put together working groups to examine the compliance of forms and variation across same, and to develop clarity around the Dept of Health's regulations. Prof. Sheils noted that the Irish interpretation of GDPR has been quite stringent which has had unforeseen consequences for researchers and existing data sources such as biobanks. This is having a huge detrimental effect on medical research.

The committee discussed the merits of an in-house application system versus a commercial system. It was noted that there is a lack of clarity as to where the funding

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	<p>for either option would come from. All were agreed that this is an issue that needs to be resolved as soon as possible.</p> <p>ACTION: DOR to follow up with Prof. Sheils and Dr Geoff Bradley.</p>
B.2	<p>GDPR and Research (RS/18-19/12) Ms Jennifer Ryan, Data Protection Officer</p> <p>The committee had a detailed discussion with the Data Protection Officer, Jennifer Ryan, about the impact GDPR has been having on the ability to conduct research at all levels. The narrow interpretation in Ireland is causing serious problems for clinical trials, chart reviews, and even the types of research projects that undergraduates can conduct.</p> <p>The Research Committee noted extreme anxiety at the lack of resources in Trinity to support the impact of GDPR on research, and the huge risk this poses for the entire university.</p> <p>The DOR asked the DPO if there were particular areas that the committee should focus on considering the DPO would soon be leaving the university. DPO informed the committee that John Eustace is the new GDPR project lead and that this would hopefully free up the new Data Protection Officer to move forward with other work. DPO noted that the two biggest issues in Trinity relate to governance and accountability, and guidance. DPO noted that certain mandatory standards need to be implemented. However, standards are irrelevant if they are not monitored and if there is no clear train of accountability and responsibility. DPO also noted that it has been virtually impossible to produce any guidance as the role is chronically under-resourced. The need for extra resources specifically dedicated to dealing with how GDPR impacts on research has been noted. DOR noted that there seems to have been a lack of understanding about how profoundly research was going to be impacted by the implementation of GDPR.</p> <p>The committee discussed the issue of guidance and who is best placed to produce it. Government bodies and funding agencies have attempted to place this burden back on universities and researchers rather than issue clear guidelines themselves. DPO also noted that there is little to no case law in this area so definitive answers are not always possible. It was noted that DPOs at some other universities are working exclusively in relation to breaches and also have no capacity to issue guidance. The committee noted the impact that GDPR was having on data sharing agreements, consent, governance, and audit trails. It was also noted that an open science framework adds a further layer of complication.</p> <p>It was noted that Horizon Europe projects require a data analysis within the first three months which must be signed off by an independent ethics advisor. Unclear what constitutes “independent”. There was also further discussion of the necessity for a compliance function in relation to all of these issues; the current state of play is that there is no clear distinction in the university between what is optional and what is required. DOR noted that clarifying issues like this are a central part of the new research strategy.</p> <p>DOR wished DPO the best for her new role. Prof. Louise Gallagher and Prof. Orla Sheils also noted their sincere thanks for her assistance with the various issues that have arisen.</p>

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Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	Items for Noting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Trinity Research Centres: DOR informed the committee that a light touch review of the centres would be conducted this year in order to identify those that are still functional. Intention is to host a showcase of all centres once the review is completed.• Trinity Visiting Academic Programme: committee was reminded that TVAP is still available.• Unboxing Open Scholarship: DOR informed the committee that an event would be held to mark the beginning of a series of activities around Open Scholarship.
C.2	Items for future discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application from the School of Nursing & Midwifery to establish the Trinity Centre for Maternity Care Research will be brought to the committee in February.
C.3	AOB <p>Dr Geoff Bradley informed the committee of Data Protection Day.</p> <p>Dr Jennifer Daly reminded the committee that Epigeum research integrity training is available for anyone who needs to complete it.</p>