

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, Tuesday 12 November 2019  
Arts Building Conference Room 2026, Arts Building

MINUTES

**Attendees:**

Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research (Chair)

Professor Andrew Bowie, Associate Dean of Research

*Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*

Professor Orla Flanagan, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts

Professor Joseph Roche, on behalf of Director of Research, School of Education

Professor David O'Shaughnessy, Director of Research, School of English

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

Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

Professor Mary Rogan, Director of Research, School of Law

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

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

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

Professor Benjamin Wold, Director of Research, School of Religion

*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 Stefan Sint, 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 Lidia Tajber, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

*Trinity Research Institutes*

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub

*In attendance*

Shaz Oye, President, Graduate Students Union

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

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist

Dr Fiona Smyth, on behalf of the Director of Trinity Research and Innovation

Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

**Apologies:**

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research

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

Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry

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

Professor Joan Lalor, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Aideen Long, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute

Professor Kingston Mills, Director of Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute

Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director of European Engagement

Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research and Innovation

Mr David O'Shea, Director of Operations, Trinity Development and Alumni

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<b>Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval</b>	
<b>A.1</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p>Minutes of previous meeting of the committee on 15<sup>th</sup> October were circulated in advance. Accepted as read.</p>
<b>A.2</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b></p> <p>DOR noted that <b>RS/19-20/5</b> Clinical Trials Sponsorship Policy and <b>RS/19-20/3</b> Postdocs and Teaching contracts were on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>It was also noted that Lorraine Leeson will present about Research Integrity at December’s meeting and Leonard Hobbs will present an update on TTEC at a future meeting.</p> <p>DOR noted that the Annual Report <b>RS/18-19/20</b> was still under review.</p>
<b>Section B - Items for Discussion Only</b>	
<b>B.1</b>	<p><b>Clinical Trials Sponsorship Policy (RS/19-20/5)</b> Martina Hennessy and Norah Cassidy (Project and Quality Sponsorship Manager)</p> <p>A revised and updated policy regarding Clinical Trials Sponsorship was brought before the committee for consideration. This policy applies to sponsorship of regulated clinical trials of investigational medicinal products and clinical investigations of medical devices led by authorised academic investigators.</p> <p>Prof. Martina Hennessy and Norah Cassidy presented an overview of the policy, how and why regulated clinical trials might be conducted, and the importance of Trinity’s involvement in such trials as a sponsor to the committee. It was noted that two of the largest hospitals in the country are affiliated with Trinity so the university needs the capacity to take on this level of complex work. The new policy would facilitate Trinity to take on trials that might not have been done before due to a lack of commercial incentive, and is also essential for the success of the new Cancer institute. The updated policy includes new application form, risk assessment form, details relating to clinical registration, and a revised process.</p> <p>Dean of Research thanked Prof. Hennessy and Norah Cassidy for their considerable efforts in revising the policy and invited questions from the committee. The committee discussed the proposed policy in detail including clarifying the affiliation status of those who would be conducting the trials, the stage at which approval for a trial should be sought, and TR&amp;I’s involvement in the new process.</p>
<b>B.2</b>	<p><b>Postdocs and teaching contracts (RS/19-20/3)</b> Human Resources</p> <p>Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources, joined the meeting to discuss the issues surrounding contracts for postdocs. Researcher Career Development Framework was approved by the Innovation 2020 group in April. The framework makes specific</p>

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	<p>commitments with regard to teaching experience, but issues at Trinity persist in this regard.</p> <p>The committee discussed this issue at length with the Director of HR. It was noted that a number of schools have received advice from HR that postdocs are not permitted to teach at all. This has caused significant issues for the professional development of postdocs employed at Trinity, and has placed financial strain on schools who have to hire extra staff in order to deliver effective teaching.</p> <p>It was also noted that Trinity already operates in an extremely competitive landscape being based in Dublin city centre with its attendant cost of living. By allowing the lack of clarity around postdoc contracts to persist this has made Trinity less attractive as a place of work. The committee also noted that a delicate balance has to be found where postdocs are given the opportunity to teach but that this should not interfere with their primary research activities.</p> <p>The committee discussed with the Director of HR the implications for Contracts of Indefinite Duration and it was suggested that there could be specific wording in a postdoc's contract that would facilitate teaching. The lack of clarity around the administration of contracts with regard to start/end dates was also discussed.</p> <p>It was noted by the committee that the definition of what constitutes 'teaching' was quite broad and varied. The implications for postdocs who are paid from an external grant was also discussed. It was noted by the Director of HR that staff have sometimes been let 'drift' into other positions once an initial contract has expired, which has then created an issue around permanency for that staff member. Director of HR agreed that the fixed terms of such contracts needs to be more clearly stated and more effectively monitored.</p> <p>The committee clarified that Trinity's current stance is that postdocs are not permitted to teach at all. The committee then noted that this stance placed Trinity at odds with the National Framework and every other Irish institution that has been able to resolve this issue, and suggested that it is HR's responsibility to find a solution as it appeared to be a matter of interpretation as opposed to resourcing. It was also noted that this issue is a matter of urgency as it has broader implications for Trinity's ability to attract external funding. This stance puts Trinity at odds with the HRS4R and will cause problems with eligibility for European grants if it is not resolved soon.</p> <p>It was agreed that there needed to be a timeline in place from early 2020 to move this issue to a resolution. Director of HR agreed to liaise with Dean of Research to ensure progress is made.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Director of HR to revert to Dean of Research with a proposed solution as soon as possible.</p>
<b>B.3</b>	<p><b>Trinity Centre for Natural Products (RS/19-20/8)</b> Helen Sheridan and Anne-Marie Healy</p> <p>Professor Helen Sheridan and Anne-Marie Healy sought approval to establish the Trinity Centre for Natural Products and delivered a presentation to the committee outlining the activities the centre would engage in and its ambitions for future development. €6 million has already been secured for a research project which would be the anchor tenant for the centre and enable capacity building in research and</p>

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	<p>training. The vision is for a national centre that looks to land, sea, water for treatments. It was noted that the centre would cover a huge range of activities that are already underway in Trinity. The natural synergies with existing centres and external agencies and companies were also noted, as were the sustainable models of major international centres that NatPro is hoping to model its structure on.</p> <p>The DOR thanked Prof. Sheridan for the presentation which the committee felt was outstanding. The committee unanimously supported the proposal with Natural Sciences and Medicine noting particular support for such a centre. The committee discussed a number of issues with Prof. Sheridan, including issues around the exploitation of indigenous knowledge. Prof. Sheridan noted that NatPro is cognisant of all legal frameworks and conventions, and is very aware of the need to be respectful of communities. Also noted that the centre would provide an opportunity to create training and research networks with developing countries that were much more symbiotic than such connections usually are.</p>
<p><b>B.4</b></p>	<p><b>Spotlight: Biochemistry and Immunology</b> Emma Creagh</p> <p>Professor Emma Creagh presented an overview of the research activity of the School of Biochemistry and Immunology, which is the only school that is 100% based in TBSI. The school has 26 PIs, all of whom are research active, and has secured on average €8-11 million in funding over the last three years. Five of the school's researchers were included in 2018's Highly Cited Researchers list. The school's transgenics facility is the only one in Ireland, and recently secured H2020 funding. A major research area is cancer immunotherapies. The school has around 80 undergraduates each year, about half of whom go on to do PhDs in Trinity or internationally.</p> <p>The school has a good spread of funding from various agencies, but over half is from exchequer sources. Recent funding success has seen Lydia Lynch and Tomás Ryan named SFI Future Research Leaders, as well as other funding for David Finlay and Luke O'Neill. Two MSCA ITNs – TRACT and INITIATE.</p> <p>Prof Creagh noted that the school has many of the same concerns that others have: space, funding, support for early and mid-career PIs. The school is limited in terms of space in TBSI with many PIs already sharing offices, and the school can't grow to its potential at present. It was also noted that, as with many other disciplines, a small number of PIs are generating the vast majority of the funding even though everyone is doing impactful work.</p>
<p><b>A.3</b></p>	<p><b>Update from the Dean of Research</b></p> <p>The Dean of Research noted that budget funding requested to embed the IRC Laureates scheme as an annual programme was not allocated which is a huge blow to the system. It was noted that the Laureates programme was recognised internationally as an excellent way to fund research. Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer noted that the scheme will continue but one cycle has to finish before another can start which undermines the momentum of the entire programme. Prof. Ohlmeyer also noted that budget submissions were made to request a living stipend but this was also unsuccessful. DOR urged the committee to speak out on these issues whenever possible.</p>

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	<p>DOR noted congratulations to Lydia Lynch, who won the Early Career Researcher of the Year award, and Danny Kelly, who won the Industry Partnership Award at SFI's annual summit. DOR noted that many Trinity researchers regularly feature in researcher of the year awards.</p> <p>Professor Andrew Bowie updated the committee on news from the SFI summit which the committee discussed in detail. The committee expressed grave concern at SFI's proposed collaboration with Elsevier that was discussed at the summit, noting a lack of clarity around the use of data, intellectual property rights, consent and privacy. DOR noted that in this environment, not-for-profit organisations are more appropriate models that universities should be looking to. Also noted that she would be raising the issue with the IUA's VPDORs group.</p>
<b>Section C – Items for Noting</b>	
<b>C.1</b>	<b>Items for Noting</b>
<b>C.2</b>	<b>Items for future discussion</b>
<b>C.3</b>	<b>AOB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Festive Research Showcase – December 4<sup>th</sup>, Science Gallery</li><li>• Epigeum Research Integrity</li><li>• School spotlight – December</li></ul>