

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00 – 13:00, Tuesday 24 March 2020  
Conference Call

MINUTES

**Attendees**

Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research (Chair)  
Professor Andrew Bowie, Associate Dean of Research  
Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research  
*Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*  
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business  
Professor Orla Flanagan, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts  
Professor Ann Devitt, Director of Research, School of Education  
Professor David O'Shaughnessy, Director of Research, School of English  
Professor Ahuvia Kahane, Director of Research, School of Histories & Humanities  
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law  
Professor Irene Walsh, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Professor Redmond O'Connell, Director of Research, School of Psychology  
Professor Peter Stone, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Professor Daniele Pevarello, 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 Cairtriona Lally, Director of Research, School of Engineering  
Professor Adrian Bracken, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
Professor Stefan Sint, Director of Research, School of Mathematics  
Professor Marcus Collier, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, School of Physics  
*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 Joan Lalor, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Professor Lidia Tajber, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
*Trinity Research Institutes*  
Professor Kingston Mills, Director, Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute  
Professor Aideen Long, Director, Trinity Translational Medicine Institute  
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director, CRANN  
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director Trinity Long Room Hub  
Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience

Shaz Oye, President, Graduate Students Union  
Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies

**In attendance**

Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Development, Office of the Dean of Research  
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director of European Engagement  
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services  
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, The Library  
Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director, Trinity Research & Innovation

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Dr Raquel Harper, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation  
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

**Apologies**

Professor Clemens Ruthner, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

<b>Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval</b>	
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Minutes</b>  Minutes of the previous meeting on February 18 <sup>th</sup> were circulated in advance and accepted as read.
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>  No matters arising.
<b>A.3</b>	<b>Update from the Dean of Research</b>  The Dean of Research thanked everyone for joining the call and noted that all intended committee business was postponed in the wake of the current Covid-19 crisis. Noted that there has been huge disruption for everyone and noted thanks to everyone for the efforts they were making.  DOR noted that the Office of the Dean of Research was tracking research-related issues using an online form but had not yet fully got on top of resolving queries. Most common issues would be discussed later. DOR noted that there was ongoing sectoral engagement and communication with Government. Encouraged researchers to continue logging issues as they arose so that there would be a full picture of how this has impacted everyone. It was also noted that HR was reviewing contracts due to expire in the next three months with a view to offering redeployment in the public sector.
<b>Section B - Items for Discussion Only</b>	
<b>B.1</b>	<b>Covid-19 and Research</b> Dean of Research  A summary of the most common issues that had been logged so far was presented to the committee. These issues included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to meet project deliverables</li><li>• Loss of data: a two-week closure can set work back much more than this so it's not a case of picking up where they left off</li><li>• Researcher contracts: staff being paid while no research can be done</li><li>• Loss of grant income</li><li>• Loss of access to participants for those working in health sciences</li><li>• Less time for research due to responsibilities at home/increased admin/transition to online teaching</li><li>• Broadband and connectivity</li><li>• Cancelled travel – archive visits, conferences, research trips etc</li><li>• Stress, mental health, isolation</li></ul>

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- PhD students concerned about progression, whether extensions will be granted, how to get feedback
- Long-term closure of campus: will Procurement relax rules so that equipment/supplies can be sent to staff's homes instead of the office
- Implications for staff and students who return to work in healthcare
- Staff who are currently on research leave
- Those doing qualitative research face possibility of data being impacted by Covid-19

The Dean of Graduate Studies commented on some of the issues raised by postgraduate students. Noted that Directors of Postgraduate Teaching & Learning had been advised to show maximum leeway in dealing with students. DGS noted that all extension requests were being granted, with 60 in the last week. Confirmed that there are no fees for these extensions but there was still no clarity on the implications for students holding stipends. Confirmed that Deans of Graduate Studies across the sector were asking for a sectoral response to cover stipends for the duration of any extensions. The committee asked about the implications for Trinity scholarship holders, Provost's PhD Award-holders etc. President of Graduate Students Union noted that there was concern among students that stipends might be stopped. DGS confirmed he would revert with an update.

**RS/19-20/15 Dean of Research proposed a Covid-19 Research Boost Funding Call.**

Fiona Killard presented an outline of the fund and the call to the committee. Advised that it would make €100,000 available to Trinity researchers to assist with Covid-19 related projects. Confirmed that it would be open to all disciplines and all faculties. The committee approved the fund. FK confirmed that the call would be issued after the national funders announced their own calls. DOR noted that the national calls would have a broad range covering health, social sciences and technology.

**ACTION: Launch research boost funding call**

The committee then discussed the various issues that had arisen during the current closure. The issues discussed included:

- Cost implications. DOR confirmed that a sectoral approach via the IUA was being taken. Also noted that there was a need to advocate to keep research on the list of priorities at this time. It was also noted that it was important to have some sense of the losses incurred during the current crisis. It was noted that the Research Development Office could assist in calculating losses.
- The need for flexibility and clarity from funders in relation to deadlines, reporting requirements, unspent monies etc.
- Overheads and maintenance in institutes.
- International visiting researchers – visas may have been extended by the government but will the university extend their access to resources.
- The mental wellbeing of staff and students. Committee shared examples of efforts being made across college to maintain communication. It was also noted that homes are not always havens, and that there was a need to be aware of how this might affect how people could engage with work, the side-effects that people might not be aware of and the need to stay in touch with students and colleagues.
- It was noted that a funding agency had decided to conduct an audit of a school during the campus closure.

Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer noted the anxiety of early career researchers. Also noted the joint statement issued by the IRC, SFI, and HRB. Advised that the IRC would be meeting soon

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	<p>and greater clarity should be available after that. Noted the duty of care funding bodies have to awardees.</p> <p>Helen Shenton noted the efforts being made by The Library to acquire more resources to support online learning and access. Noted that there were specific legal difficulties around some electronic legal deposits, but also noted that a number of publishers were making resources openly available.</p> <p>The committee discussed the implications of restricting access to campus and the procedures put in place to determine who could be on campus. DOR noted that while specific critical tasks needed to be performed, researchers also had to be mindful of the reduced support on campus at this time.</p> <p>The committee also discussed the significance of this moment in history and agreed that efforts should be made to document it.</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>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>RS/18-19/11</b> Members of the committee expressed concern at recent communication from the Research Ethics Policy Committee, DPO for Research, and IT Services regarding tools researchers could use for data collection. It was agreed that further guidance would be issued by the REPC.</p> <p><b>ACTION: REPC to issue revised guidance on data collection</b></p> <p><b>RS/19-20/9</b> It was confirmed that although an awards event could not now take place, the winners of the Trinity Research Excellence Awards would still be announced as planned on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. All winners would be contacted in advance.</p>