

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, Tuesday 9 February 2021 via Zoom

MINUTES

Attendees

Professor Andrew Bowie (Associate Dean of Research, Chair)

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 Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English

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

Professor Roja Fazaeli, on behalf of Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law

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

Professor Peter Stone, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Professor Eoin O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, Director of Research, School of Religion

Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science

Professor Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry

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

Professor Gareth Bennett, Director of Research, School of Engineering

Professor Jane Farrar, 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 Lator, Director of Research, School of Nursing & Midwifery

Professor Lidia Tajber, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Trinity Research Institutes

Professor Aileen Long, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute

Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of CRANN

Professor Kingston Mills, Director of TBSI

Professor Eve Patten, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub

Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director of TCIN

Mr. Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation

Dr Darren Fayne, Trinity Research Staff Association

In attendance:

Dr Raquel Cabral Harper, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library

Dr Geoff Bradley, Director of IT Services

Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Development, Office of the Dean of Research

Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director of European Engagement, Trinity Research & Innovation & Global Relations

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

Apologies

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research

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

Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English

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

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Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	<p>Minutes Minutes of the meeting of January 12th were circulated in advance. Amended to reflect Prof. Brady attended on behalf of School of Nursing & Midwifery. Accepted as read.</p>
A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes RS/20-21/8 ADOR Bowie advised the committee that SFI was pushing for 4 north-south centres. All dependent co-funding from the Northern Ireland executive.</p> <p>RS/20-21/5 Prof. Stone provided a brief update on the Good Research Practice Policy. Changes were made to include new links to health research guidelines following amendments to those guidelines in January. It was noted that two specific places in the policy where specific lengths of time were stated for retaining primary data raised concerns around anonymization and data protection. Some members of the committee expressed concern regarding conflicting advice, particularly around health research regulations. REPC did not insert a blanket length of time for data retention preferring to allow schools flexibility and autonomy to apply appropriate local arrangements so if this caused a conflict it would need to be flagged with the REPC asap. Geoff Bradley confirmed that this was a known issue and it was intended to be clarified in the final version. Committee requested clarification surrounding 10 year rule, whether local policies would override College policies. Committee also noted that some timeframe was required in relation to students who might collect data and retain it when no longer registered students. Committee asked if the current version of the policy was the final version. This was to be clarified with the intention of bringing final version to committee for approval.</p> <p>RS/20-21/9 Issues relating to research and Brexit were on this meeting’s agenda and would be discussed later.</p> <p>RS/18-19/9 Committee was advised that Trinity’s access to Epigeum’s research integrity training had been extended in mid-January while the IUA was negotiating a new access agreement with Epigeum. New access agreement expected to be in place in Q2 2021. In response to a question about the 1st year PhD module CA7000, committee was advised that Epigeum training had been removed from the module for 2020/2021 due to uncertainty around access arrangements. Module co-ordinator Niamh Brennan best placed to advise on alternative arrangements for PhD candidates.</p> <p>Helen Shenton advised the committee that a webinar on Plan S was due to take place.</p> <p>RS/19-20/2 Following requests from the committee, Dr Killard was preparing a video of the rankings presentation and would share it once it was ready for circulation.</p>
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
B.1	<p>Update from Associate Dean of Research Prof. Andrew Bowie</p> <p>ADOR Bowie welcomed the announcement that the IRC increased PhD stipend from January 1st for all current active IRC students. It was also noted that the Laureate programme would hopefully be relaunched after increase in IRC’s funding. In response to a question from the committee, the TRSA representative confirmed that postdoc salaries would also be increased but amounts not known yet. Raquel Harper noted that Q3 would see a number of large funding calls open at the same time which would be unworkable for many PIs and research offices. Confirmed that RDO was campaigning for calls to be spread</p>

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	<p>out. Committee noted the low consumables budget on IRC grants had not been addressed. Also noted that the ongoing issue of the shortfall on PhD fees.</p> <p>ADOR Bowie noted that 50 Provost PhD awards were recently announced.</p> <p>RS/20-21/2 The second round of funding for HEA Covid-19 costed extensions was launched on Feb 8th. It was noted that eligibility criteria had been expanded. Members of the committee asked to encourage applicants to apply asap and to consult the FAQs (https://www.tcd.ie/research/dean/hea-2020.php) before doing so.</p> <p>RS/19-20/3 ADOR Bowie advised committee that he and ADOR Leeson met with Antoinette Quinn and Siobhan O'Shea of HR and shared the results of the survey the committee completed. AQ committed to having a draft proposal ready to bring to the next meeting of the committee in March. The proposal should be appropriate for all schools. It was also noted that HR now understood how far behind other universities Trinity is on this issue.</p>
B.2	<p>RS/20-21/9 Brexit and Research Evelyn Fox, Data Protection Officer for Research</p> <p>DPO Research Evelyn Fox joined the meeting to provide an update on Brexit-related research issues. Noted that a transitional period is in place until 1st May 2021 with a possible extension of a further two months if both sides agree. DPO provided committee with an overview of what constitutes a data transfer, the definition of processing, and what might be affected by Brexit. DPO explained how an adequacy decision might work and noted that should the UK receive an adequacy decision agreements would still need to be put in place but no further measures would be required. However, DPO noted that it was not guaranteed that an adequacy decision would be granted.</p> <p>DPO noted that in the absence of an adequacy decision, standard contractual clauses would be the next best measure. In order to put SCCs in place, DPO advised that a data mapping exercise was required and that schools had been asked to assist in the compilation of the list to identify affected contracts. DPO noted that where SCCs were not possible, explicit consent of the individual would be required. As a result of legal decisions last year, SCCs were insufficient for U.S. transfers and supplemental measures would be required. A similar data mapping exercise was being conducted as a result. DPO noted that the supplemental measures required would be measures researchers would normally use anyway. DPO also advised the committee that UCD had recently been fined €70,000 for various multiple breaches of the GDPR. Noted that universities are being monitored and Trinity needed to ensure it was compliant with legislation in so far as possible.</p> <p>The DPO took a range of questions from the committee. In response to a question as to whether a data transfer was involved if a student was currently based in the UK or USA DPO confirmed this does constitute a transfer. Also advised that it would have to be looked at. In relation to school RECs, especially in the Health Sciences where arrangements are dependent on multiple clinical sites, DPO advised that a memo had been prepared for researchers and would share this with relevant schools.</p> <p>DPO was asked if data transfer etc had implications for journal editors handling papers and working with colleagues in other jurisdictions. It was noted that publishers had not addressed this issue either. Some members of the committee noted that the review process by its nature implied consent for the papers to be sent out. Other committee members suggested the DPC might take a different view. DPO noted that this would require more consideration.</p>

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	<p>In response to a question as to whether collaborative funding bids with UK institutions would be impacted DPO noted that this would not be impacted at the application stage, but if the collaboration moved to start collecting research data then the DPO would need to be consulted.</p> <p>Committee discussed the nature of the breaches which resulted in UCD being fined and noted that it was in relation to the handling of personal data in an email account. Committee discussed the implications of staff using non-TCD email accounts for work purposes and various options to ensure compliance. DPO confirmed in response to a question that there was no all-island agreement in place and the data transfer rules would apply between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Members of the committee noted that universities could do more to communicate back to the European Commission the problems caused by the imposition of restrictions.</p> <p>ACTION: Circulate DPO's slides to committee</p>
B.3	<p>RS/20-21/7 TR&I Research Expansion Funding Strategy Leonard Hobbs</p> <p>ADOR Bowie noted that robust feedback had been received after the last meeting in January, both on specific issues related to the document and on more general issues related to research expansion. Issues raised included the focus of the plan, the scale of the plan and how it would be funded, and the governance and oversight of its implementation. Many schools asked if this was the right time to embark on such a plan. Some of these issues had been dealt with since the last iteration: On governance, DoR and RC input had been agreed. AB noted that a review would be built in for Q4 in order for the new Provost and Dean of Research to consider if the plan was appropriate at that stage. AB noted that the RDO expansion plan was one piece of the jigsaw in research expansion, but that other pieces also needed to be in place such as an increase in PI numbers, the right type of School administrative support, and post-award support. AB noted there was a clear need for fit for purpose post-award support and a survey of the Research Committee would be conducted to gather suggestions for how that could be shaped to best effect. Noted that the plan could not work without the recruitment of new PIs which would be a separate piece of work. AB advised that EOG had not signed off on the plan as yet and had asked for more specific KPIs, clarity around how the plan would be funded, more detail on RPO job specs (with a need for flexibility in their roles), and a plan to slowly ramp up staff numbers rather than appoint them all in one go, with a necessity to fill essential positions first. On essential posts, it was noted that there is currently only one person working on SFI even though it accounts for 40% of funding.</p> <p>Leonard Hobbs presented an overview of the updated plan which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Noted again that EOG wanted more details on KPIs. Also noted that post-award support was not part of the expansion but would be a consequence of expansion. LH noted that the plan could only be successful if post-award support was addressed. LH advised that a project management and governance piece would be implemented. Noted that detailed analysis would be done on the overheads the expansion would generate. LH advised the committee that existing funds would not be used and that the programme would be largely self-financing with some support from college.</p> <p>Raquel Harper outlined the measurements that would be used to ensure the plan was progressing. Noted that KPIs would be presented at the next meeting of EOG. RH noted that the Research Development Office was suggesting using overall institutional metrics to track how Trinity was performing with regard to applications. Also important to track additional hires into the RDO and academic staff as this would have an impact on financial metrics.</p>

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	<p>Other activity measures for the RDO around training, participation by academic staff, mentoring metrics, and an annual RDO case study.</p> <p>LH noted that much of the feedback from the committee raised the lack of post-award support. LH suggested that a proposal would be brought to EOG to start with a study and consultation process to identify specific needs. Fiona Killard noted that the Research Committee had previously approved a pilot post-award scheme to be run out of the Office of the Dean of Research.</p> <p>LH noted that the project management and governance would see the RDO providing weekly reports, the Research Committee receiving monthly updates, and consultation with Dean of Research on non-pay budget. Noted that all items in the current version of the plan were indicative and would consult with new DOR on what would be supported out of non-pay.</p> <p>Prof. Clarke asked if the governance aspect of the plan was for information or consultation and what power the DOR would have in relation to spending. Also asked if KPIs would be used for measurement or if they would trigger next phases/moratorium. LH noted that the plan would not do anything that was not consistent with DOR plans. Noted monthly consultation with DOR regarding non-pay.</p> <p>Prof. Gallagher noted issues in relation to where clinical research would fit into the plan as it currently stands. LH noted that a follow on piece of work would need to be done on this.</p> <p>Prof. Ramaswami suggested using different indicators of success such as getting more young researchers involved, measuring first major grants people secure. Noted that amount of money secured is not always the best measure. Also noted that funding comes into college that does not require RDO support and it would be inappropriate to use this as a measurement of success.</p> <p>Prof. Stefan Sint noted that the plan sought to maximise research income but failed to acknowledge that most research grants are loss-making for college as overheads are not usually sufficient to cover indirect costs. Also noted that Trinity would become more beholden to prioritisation by government and funding agencies instead of college setting its own direction. Many researchers need time more than money. Noted that it is dangerous to be heading for a situation where staff would be made to apply for grants for the sake of it, would lead to increased pressure on staff and result in mediocre research.</p> <p>ADOR Bowie reiterated that the plan was now a standing item on the committee's agenda and advised that the committee's feedback was being brought to EOG.</p>
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	<p>Items for Noting No items for noting.</p>
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <p>RS/19-20/15 Committee was advised that a proposal would be brought to restart the research boost programme. The first opportunity to do so would likely be September. FK confirmed that it would be at the same level as the first round of funding.</p>
C.3	<p>AOB No other business.</p>