

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE
11:00, 12 September 2023
Boardroom, Trinity Business School
MINUTES

In attendance

Professor Brian Broderick (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Immo Warntjes (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Padraic Fallon (Associate Dean of Research) - *Chair for this meeting*
Professor Nicholas Johnson, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts
Professor Joseph Roche, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Pádraic Whyte, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Mary Cosgrove, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Nathan Hill, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Claire Gillan, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Sharyn O'Halloran, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Eburne Garcia Iriarte, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Benjamin Wold, Director of Research, School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies
Professor Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Mathias Senge, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Marco Ruffini, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Frank Wellmer, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Andrei Parnachev, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Yvonne Buckley, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Hal Duncan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Sarah Doyle, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Sharon O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Eve Patten, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub
Dr Michelle Olmstead, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies
Dr Darren Fayne, Trinity Research Staff Association

In attendance:

Dr Raquel Harper, Head of Research Development, Research Development Office
Ms Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Ms Siobhán O'Shea, Senior HR Specialist, Human Resources
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director for European Engagement, Trinity Research
Dr Gordon Elliott,
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

Apologies

Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research
Prof. Michael Monaghan
Prof. Anne Marie Healy

Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	Minutes Minutes from the last meeting of the committee in May were circulated to the committee in advance for approval. It was noted that a number of those in attendance had been omitted from the minutes. Subject to that correction, the minutes were accepted.

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>RS/22-23/12 The updated policy on Trinity Research Centres was approved by Council and was now official policy.</p> <p>RS/22-23/9 SurveyMonkey enterprise account has been set up and access is being given in a staged fashion as users have to be added manually. The committee was reminded that the agreement with SurveyMonkey does not preclude the use of other platforms. However, if a researcher does not have a very specific requirement (beyond personal preference) it is strongly recommended that they use SurveyMonkey. The committee was informed that Procurement had worked to secure a heavily discounted agreement and that the Dean of Research would cover the cost for year 1 to assess how it works. The contract has an option to renew at same price after year 1 at which point schools will be asked to contribute to the annual cost.</p> <p>RS/22-23/11 The committee was reminded that the Bursar had offered to facilitate visits to Trinity East.</p>
A.3	<p>RS/23-24/1 Policy on Sponsorship of Clinical Trials Dr Ruben Eaven Keane, Head of Clinical Sponsorship Oversight</p> <p><i>Dr Ruben Keane (HCSO), Camille Poisson, and Prof. Martina Hennessy joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>A draft of the proposed Policy on Sponsorship of Clinical Trials was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. The HCSO presented an overview to the committee of the current situation regarding trials and interventions both in Trinity and nationally. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant legislative changes have taken place in the last two years which has seen the introduction of regulations as opposed to previous “directives”. • The new policy proposed to delegate certain levels of approval to the HCSO rather than the Dean of Research being required to approve every proposal. • A new policy would enable researchers to do studies that other sectors would not because it would not be considered commercially viable. The opportunities and potential benefits for patients and the public are significant. • Inadvertent non-compliance was a serious risk to the university. It was noted that researchers might start studies but not realise they were technically clinical trials, resulting in risks to patient safety, the reliability of the trial, and the reputation of Trinity as a sponsor. • The proposed new policy covered more than just regulated clinical trials. It was also noted that funding agencies require named sponsors for studies which means that the role of the HCSO has grown. • The Clinical Research Facility at St James’s is the function in Trinity that enables sponsorship of trials. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sponsor Office and HCSO had oversight of all proposed studies, not just those subject to external grant funding. • At present there was no connection between an ethics review and HCSO review for proposed trials. It was noted that work would be done to ensure that a trigger question was inserted to the REAMS platform that would direct

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

	<p>researchers to the HCSO should their study fall under the remit of the Sponsor Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no trigger in the process to send a project back to the HCSO should there be amendments. It was noted that the process had to be professionalised and that work would be done to ensure that REAMS and the Sponsor Office processes were connected. • HCSO confirmed that the gender balance of a trail was not under their remit. It was noted that peer review and grant review would assess those aspects of a study. <p>The committee approved the policy subject to the alignment of processes between REAMS and the Sponsor Office, and the incorporation of amendments to the policy from the Research Development Office.</p> <p><i>Dr Keane, Camille Poisson, and Prof. Hennessy left the meeting.</i></p>
--	--

Section B - Items for Discussion Only

B.1	<p>RS/23-24/2 Update from the VP for Biodiversity and Climate Action Prof. Jane Stout</p> <p><i>Prof. Stout joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>The Vice Provost for Biodiversity and Climate Action presented an update to the committee in relation to the Trinity Sustainability Strategy. The draft strategy was now being socialised with different cohorts around college with a view to putting it through the formal review processes over the coming semester.</p> <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal of the strategy was to make sure that people were at the heart of it. Extensive consultation was conducted across the university as part of the work to develop the vision and mission for the strategy. • Biosphere underpinned everything; it would be impossible to meet societal and economic goals if biosphere targets were not met. • Four Pillars of Action in the strategy: research, education, operations, and communities. • Lots of emissions were associated with labs, but also with conference attendance, travel, what is used in research and how it is then communicated. • Healthy Trinity was already a very successful initiative, and there was now a huge opportunity in Trinity East as the new sustainability quarter. • The importance of bringing researchers along with this policy was noted by the committee. It was also noted that Trinity is not necessarily seen as a university that does a lot of work in this space. The committee also noted that the type of research we decide to do would be a huge question in the future. The importance of early engagement in the design of research projects to ensure they are sustainable was noted. • The impact of Trinity’s supply chain and procurement of external services, data centres etc was also noted by the committee. There was an opportunity to have an impact beyond Trinity with suppliers. Prof. Stout noted that Procurement was already implementing a green procurement strategy that looked to go beyond the minimum requirements from government. It was noted that currently the most sustainable option is often the more expensive one. It was also suggested that carbon budgets might need to be considered.
------------	---

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of the committee noted that a high level goal of maximising the impact of the strategy would help to bring these intentions out and spread that influence outside Trinity.• Prof. Stout noted that EDI and Civic Engagement were also involved in the process in an effort to avoid inadvertent negative effects on inclusion and accessibility. It was noted that unintended consequences were a huge challenge for this area. <p>ACTION: the committee was asked to review the actions under the Research pillar of the draft strategy and feed back suggestions and observations to the VP for Biodiversity and Climate Action.</p> <p><i>Prof. Stout left the meeting.</i></p>
B.2	<p>Update from the Dean of Research Associate Deans of Research</p> <p>Prof. Fallon noted thanks to Directors of Research who had stepped down from the committee over the summer months.</p> <p>It was noted that the new Head of Research was expected to take up the position in early October and would attend meetings of the committee.</p> <p>RS/19-20/1 The committee was advised that QS had opened submissions for new survey contact lists. The Office of the Dean of Research would follow up with requests for information in relation to this. The deadline to submit new lists to QS was noted as January 2024.</p> <p>RS/23-24/3 Postdoc Academy: Prof. Warntjes noted to the committee that the goal for this academic year was to move the Postdoc Academy from a virtual space to a community-building space in an effort to create a more positive culture for all postdocs in Trinity.</p> <p>RS/18-19/19 NORF: Prof. Warntjes noted that NORF had initiated the national action plan and at least five new actions would be subject to funding calls over the coming years. The committee was advised that Trinity had applied as a lead organisation on two actions (public engagement and rights retention). It was also noted that researcher assessment would be crucial in this space and that Trinity had signed COARA last year. In discussion with the committee it was noted that RSS would need to be reviewed on the basis of new definitions for researcher assessment. IW noted that the review needed to happen first and then RSS could be adapted as it was an in-house system.</p> <p>In response to a question from the committee regarding the possibility of postdocs becoming personal tutors, it was noted that Trinity Research supported anything that helped career development. It was unclear if this would be HR compliant, however, particularly for those funded by grants.</p> <p>ACTION: HR would review and provide an update.</p> <p>RS/22-23/11 Trinity East: Prof. Broderick noted that the refurbishment project had been initiated, and a governance structure and ideation working group was now in place. It was noted that two architects had been appointed. The refurbishment project would be a multi-annual research project itself. It was noted that a process for selecting the best mix of researchers to inhabit the space needed to be identified. It was also</p>

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

	<p>noted that Trinity was taking an ideas first, implementation second approach and opportunities would be brought to committee over the coming year/years.</p> <p>RS/20-21/4 REAMS: Prof. Fallon advised the committee that REAMS had undergone a dramatic overhaul over the summer and most changes requested by the RECs were implemented. It was noted that the DPO had been separated from REAMS. The committee was advised that a training protocol was being developed for RECs, schools etc and would be communicated in due course. In discussion with the committee it was noted that it was not expected that UG and taught PG students would be able to use the platform from September. It was also noted that REAMS now incorporated a trigger question to direct proposals to consult the DPO before submission as the previous process was creating a bottleneck for applications. Members of the committee noted the need for a policy on JREC approvals. PF noted that JREC was formally allowed but this was not sufficiently clear. PF also noted that the chair approval process was out of date and the REPC chair was consulting with RECs to address this.</p> <p>RS/23-24/4 Research Integrity: Prof. Fallon advised that an external audit of integrity processes in 2021 had flagged some changes that needed to be made to Trinity's internal processes and systems which were in the process of being implemented.</p>
<p>B.3</p>	<p>Research Committee overview for 2023/24 Dean of Research</p> <p>The committee was provided with a brief overview of the induction session for new members that took place on September 6th. The committee was reminded of the importance of reporting back to their schools about topics discussed at meetings, and of communicating feedback to the committee and DOR from their schools.</p>
<p>Section C – Items for Noting</p>	
<p>C.1</p>	<p>12.50 Items for Noting</p> <p>There were no items for noting.</p>
<p>C.2</p>	<p>12.50 Items for future discussion</p> <p>RS/23-24/5 Researcher Recruitment Project: Siobhán O'Shea provided a brief update to the committee regarding this project, noting that the committee had endorsed the approach in March. It was noted that a fuller update would come to the committee in October. The committee was advised that the intention was for this to become a college policy so it would have to go through the various approvals processes. The current aim was to present it to Board in December with a view to rolling out the process in Q1 of 2024. In response to questions from the committee it was noted that postdocs would be covered by the policy under their appointment as 'research fellows', and that the intention was to appoint postdocs on salary scales with inbuilt annual increases. It was noted that some awards do not allow for increments but this would be reviewed.</p>
<p>C.3</p>	<p>12.50 AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee was reminded that START/European Researchers' Night was taking place on Friday, September 29th and that all were welcome to attend.

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prof. Eve Patten updated the committee on the inaugural Trinity Arts & Humanities festival which would take place from September 25th - 29th. Prof. Patten noted that everyone from all faculties and divisions were welcome to attend.• RS/23-24/5 Old Library Redevelopment Project: In response to queries from Prof. Ohlmeyer, the College Librarian Helen Shenton provided a brief update on the project. It was noted that the project went back to Board in June. It was clear that the project was subject to spiralling construction inflation, and initial estimates were coming in hugely over budget. The revised project that went back to Board was a distilled version of the original proposal and incorporated fire protection and prevention, conservation of the building, research study centre and the Book of Kells exhibition. HS noted that it was essentially the same scope, but because of EU procurement rules it had to go out to tender again. HS confirmed to the committee that the revised scope did include the research collection study centre. HS also noted that decant of 750k volumes out of Old Library was nearly finished and that they were approximately six weeks from completing the alternative research study centre in the basement of Ussher Library. HS noted her commitment to keeping everything available to researchers during the redevelopment project. |
|--|---|