

**The University of Dublin  
Trinity College**

**RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**11:00, Tuesday, 8 April 2025  
Boardroom, Trinity Business School**

**MINUTES**

Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair); Prof. Brian Broderick; Prof. Padraic Fallon; Prof. Joseph Roche; Prof. Catherine Welch; Prof. Joanne Banks; Prof. Pádraic Whyte; Prof. Lindsey Earner-Byrne; Prof. Mohamed Ahmed; Prof. Mark Bell; Prof. Sonia Bishop; Prof. Sharyn O'Halloran; Prof. Nicola Carr; Prof. Jacob Erickson; Prof. Mathias Senge; Prof. Marco Ruffini; Prof. Brooke Tornifoglio; Prof. Frank Wellmer; Prof. Andrei Parnachev; Prof. Susan Murphy; Prof. Ortwin Hess; Prof. Sarah Doyle; Prof. Eilish Burke; Prof. Anne Marie Healy; Prof. Kingston Mills; Prof. Eve Patten; Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan; Dr Michelle Olmstead; Dr Emma Connolly.

*In attendance:* Vincent Coole; Audrey Crosbie; Dr Sally Smith; Dr Fiona Smyth; Doris Alexander; Elaine Sharkey; Susan Maguire; Dr Geoff Bradley; Helen Shenton; Dr Jennifer Daly.

*Apologies:* Michael Reilly; Caroline Jagoe; Yvonne Buckley; Mark Little; Michael Monaghan; Rory Connolly.

<b>Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval</b>	
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Minutes</b> The minutes for the previous meeting of March 18 <sup>th</sup> were circulated in advance. The list of attendees was corrected to note the attendance of Frank Wellmer and Nicola Carr and then approved.
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>  RS/23-24/6 HR Researcher Recruitment Process: committee was advised that as agreed at last meeting, the draft policy was now being socialised at other college committees including People & Culture and EOG. Membership of the working group was being finalised and TORs would be presented to the Research Committee.
<b>A.3</b>	<b>RS/18-19/11 Terms of Reference for Research Ethics Policy Committee</b> Prof. Richard Carson, Chair of the REPC <i>Richard Carson joined the meeting for this item.</i>  DOR noted that as part of the annual review of committees etc, TORs have to be regularly updated. It was noted that the main proposed changes were to clarify the length of the role of the Chair, update the membership, and add a requirement to present a work plan to the Research Committee at the beginning of the academic year. The committee approved the proposed terms of reference.  DOR noted that there were REPC items for noting later in the meeting about which the REPC Chair could speak to the committee. In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extended consideration was given to the revision of the membership. It was noted that the REPC believed a clear separation between ethics approvals and data protection was needed, hence the removal of the Research DPO as a member of the REPC. It was noted that the rDPO would continue to be consulted as required.</li><li>• A process was underway to develop a policy for the recognition of approvals granted by external RECs. It was noted that the REPC was examining international best practice in this regard.</li><li>• Communication between the REPC and RECs had been poor up until now. It was noted that this would be formalised and provide greater clarity for REC chairs and members.</li></ul>

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	<i>Richard Carson left the meeting.</i>
<b>Section B - Items for Discussion Only</b>	
<b>B.1</b>	<p><b>Dean of Research Update</b></p> <p>DOR noted congratulations for the following research announcements:</p> <p>Two Trinity projects were awarded over €5million from Research Ireland. The Trinity College Dublin awardees represent two of nine funded projects, worth over €5million combined. The awarded projects and lead researchers from Trinity are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NMR Centre of Expertise led by Prof. Mathias Senge, Chair of Organic Chemistry at Trinity College Dublin will provide advanced NMR techniques for chemistry research, including a multi-channel 600MHz NMR and a 400MHz instrument for high-throughput analyses. (€2,649,497)</li> <li>• Photon Counting CT for Cardiovascular and Oncology Research, Trinity College Dublin, led by Prof. James Meaney, will expand imaging capabilities with a Photon-counting CT scanner for advanced medical imaging in oncology and cardiovascular research. (€2,721,339)</li> </ul> <p>Four Trinity-led projects secured funding to inspire STEM public engagement Funding from the Research Ireland Discover Programme will enable project teams to enhance public engagement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The Trinity projects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OurKidsCode: family coding clubs: OurKidsCode is a growing community of family creative coding clubs across Ireland.</li> <li>• Pytch: an inclusive platform to bridge block to text programming: Pytch uses the common programming language Python and relies on a community of young coders and educators to improve a fantastic resource for students and new programmers.</li> <li>• Testing the waters: an art/science project between artist William Bock, a community group, and scientific specialists in water quality, soil and biodiversity. The team will develop a site-specific artwork in the Carrowbeg River in Westport to spark conversations about the role of water quality, sustainability and biodiversity in Irish towns.</li> <li>• VISION CODE: a special programme to enable young people with vision loss to learn how to code and develop their skills in this area.</li> </ul> <p><b>RS/24-25/13</b> DOR noted that the HEREG flash call was now closed and applications had moved to review stage. It was noted that the call was heavily over-subscribed with only €1.4million to distribute and 151 applications received; many will not be funded. DOR also noted the IUA's new campaign to highlight importance and societal impact of research funding with case studies to shed light on people behind the research and the need for research infrastructure. It was noted that the timing was deliberate to be in the public eye as budget negotiations begin. Encouraged committee to boost the message.</p> <p>DOR noted that Research Ireland recently held some events as part of its corporate plan consultation with many members of the committee attending plenaries and workshops. In discussion with the committee about the consultation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the committee noted that the workshops were generally well-run with interesting discussion. Topics discussed included how Research</li> </ul>

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	<p>Ireland could support international recruitment, developing a more equitable and diverse research culture, and suggestions for improvements to current funding programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some members noted that TUs had very different approach to traditional universities as to how funding should be allocated.</li> <li>• Members of the committee noted that while the consultations were generally positive it was unclear how the feedback would be incorporated into the plan. It was also noted that the interim plan had not yet been approved by the government. Members of the committee noted that the timing of the consultation process was strange given the interim plan had not been approved and the CEO position was still vacant.</li> <li>• Members of the committee noted that there did not appear to be any desire on the part of Research Ireland to lobby for an increase to the organisation's budget. It was noted that the agency had a branding issue and a clear identity had yet to emerge.</li> </ul> <p>DOR thanked everyone who had attended workshops and taken part in the consultations. DOR noted that senior members of Research Ireland had re-engaged with the IUA VPDORs group and that the committee would be kept updated as to how these discussions proceed.</p>
<b>B.2</b>	<p><b>Postgraduate Renewal Project</b> Dean of Graduate Studies</p> <p>It was agreed that this item would be held over until the next meeting.</p>
<b>Section C – Items for Noting</b>	
<b>C.1</b>	<p><b>Items for Noting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes from the REPC meeting of January 28<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Update from the REPC (memo)</li> <li>• Update from the Open Scholarship sub-group (memo)</li> </ul>
<b>C.2</b>	<p><b>Items for future discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full update from Open Scholarship subgroup would be received at the June meeting</li> <li>• Development of the Laidlaw Library: the committee was advised that architects had been appointed and the Library team was now visiting committees and groups to gather input. Committee was advised that an extended discussion would take place at the June meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>C.3</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that there was no specific guidance for researchers travelling to the US. Current status was to follow Dept of Foreign Affairs advice which was updated at the beginning of April to note that anyone travelling to the U.S. should consider travel insurance, register their details with the DFA in case of emergency, and “remain vigilant and exercise appropriate caution”.</li> <li>• In discussion about the questionnaire circulated by DOGE, it was noted that the survey requested an institutional response and Trinity's stance was that individual researchers should not respond. It was noted that Trinity had not directly received the survey to date and was aware of it via reports from other institutions. DOR noted that general consensus across other institutions and LERU colleagues was not to engage with the questionnaire.</li> </ul>