

**The University of Dublin  
Trinity College**

**RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**11:00, Tuesday, 10 June 2025  
Boardroom, Trinity Business School**

**MINUTES**

Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair); Prof. Brian Broderick; Prof. Padraic Fallon; Prof. Joanne Banks; Prof. Pádraic Whyte; Prof. James Hanrahan; Prof. Valentina Colasanti; Prof. Sonia Bishop; Prof. Sharyn O'Halloran; Prof. Nicola Carr; Prof. Ed Lavelle; Prof. Mathias Senge; Prof. Marco Ruffini; Prof. Michael Monaghan; Prof. Frank Wellmer; Prof. Ortwin Hess; Prof. Sarah Doyle; Prof. Eilish Burke; Prof. Anne Marie Healy; Prof. Patrick Geoghegan; Prof. Rhodri Cusack; Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan; Dr Michelle Olmstead; Prof. Martine Smith.

*In attendance:* Audrey Crosbie; Dr Sally Smith; Dr Fiona Smyth; Emma Treacy Matunga; Dr Geoff Bradley; Christoph Schmidt-Supprian; Dr Jennifer Daly.

*Apologies:* Helen Shenton; Elaine Sharkey; Carol Newman; Andrei Parnachev; Lindsey Earner-Byrne; Mark Bell; Michael Reilly; Mark Little; Joseph Roche.

Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Minutes</b>  Minutes for the meeting of May 13 <sup>th</sup> were circulated in advance accepted as read.
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>  <b>RS/24-25/9</b> Trinity Development & Alumni/Fundraising for research: following on from discussions with TDA and the committee, schools and institutes were asked to consult with their schools to consider what would be a priority for philanthropic funding. DOR noted that there was no guarantee that funding would be forthcoming but it would assist TDA in being more strategic in engaging with potential donors.
<b>A.3</b>	<b>RS/24-25/15 Proposal to establish Trinity Ocean Research Centre</b> <i>Prof. Biswajit Basu, Prof. Nessa O'Connor joined the meeting for this item.</i>  The committee received a presentation from Prof. Basu in relation to the proposal to establish a Trinity Ocean Research Centre. It was noted that the founding members of the group had first started meeting informally during Covid with the collaboration evolving into a research group. It was noted that the proposed centre combined historical work with mathematical techniques and had a proven track record of securing funding and industry collaborations. It was also noted that group members were involved in marine spatial planning and fed into evidence-based policy development. It was noted that the committee had recently approved a proposal to establish the Trinity Water Centre and the distinctions between the two centres were outlined.  In discussion with the committee, the following points were raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members of the committee asked about the centre's relation to climate science. It was noted that the centre looked at ocean/atmosphere interaction, terrestrial and marine interaction on coastal regions, how flora and fauna are impacted by ocean currents.</li><li>• Members of the committee welcomed the proposal and noted that ocean research is underexploited in Ireland. In response to a question about the potential for teaching provision in the area it was noted that the group was exploring a taught Masters. It was noted that there was a serious lack of skills in this area which was something that the centre could address.</li></ul> The committee approved the proposal as presented.

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Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
<b>B.1</b>	<p><b>Spotlight: IBM Research Labs</b>  <i>Dr. Juan Bernabe-Moreno, Director of IBM Research Europe for Ireland and UK;  Dr. Martin Mevissen, Senior Research Manager – AI &amp; Quantum, Master Inventor joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>DOR noted that IBM Research Labs was now co-located in the Trinity Business School. The committee was provided with a broad overview of the activities. During the presentation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IBM had been co-located in Trinity since January. It was noted that co-location with a university was their preferred model for collaboration.</li> <li>• It was noted that IBM focused on “platforms” including generative computing/AI, quantum computing. It was noted that IBM’s work on AI did not focus on public models but on enterprise models with different features, tailored with specific data, guardrails, governance etc.</li> <li>• It was noted that IBM were cofounders of Trinity Quantum Alliance. IBM is 10 years ahead of others in this area and was committed to making quantum useful to the world.</li> </ul> <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The colocation model provided perspectives and approaches that IBM would not typically be exposed to. It was noted that the IBM team themselves were very focused on maths, computing etc but were open to examining collaborations in other fields and across all of Trinity’s faculties.</li> <li>• DOR and CIO noted that they would be happy to facilitate meetings, conversations etc between the IBM team and schools, TRIs etc.</li> <li>• DOR noted it was the beginning of colocation and collaboration and looked forward to seeing how it develops over the coming years.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>B.2</b>	<p><b>IReL (RS/24-25/14) and Open Scholarship subgroup (RS/24-25/2)</b>  Christoph Schmidt-Supprian</p> <p>The committee was provided with an update on the IReL transformative agreements with projected end dates for some of the publishing agreements. It was noted that Elsevier had demanded a significant price increase which had resulted in protracted negotiations which were still not resolved. It was noted that most UK institutions had agreed to the price increase but IReL was still negotiating. It was noted that IReL institutions, including Trinity, were examining the potential impact of losing access to some of these databases. In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the committee asked if there was anything they could do to assist with the negotiation process, including withholding peer review services from the publishers in question when the APC caps run out.</li> <li>• New AI clauses had recently become a feature of publishers’ deals/contracts. It was noted that there was some debate around this and also around an author’s right to determine what will happen to their work, controversy around opt in/opt out clauses for LLMs.</li> <li>• It was noted that Plan S had been flagged as an item for discussion by the subgroup. It was noted that the consequences for non-compliance with Plan S were not clear.</li> </ul> <p>The committee was given an update on the activities of the Open Scholarship subgroup. It was noted that an event to clarify and explore open access publishing was to be organised. It was also noted that particular points of focus for the subgroup were a COARA action plan and to review and update Trinity’s Open Access Publications policy. The subgroup would also draft visions and aims for open scholarship.</p>

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<b>B.3</b>	<p><b>Dean of Research Update</b> Prof. Sinéad Ryan</p> <p>Congratulations were noted to Orla Sheils, Jane Farrar and Holger Claussen who were all recently elected as new Members of the Royal Irish Academy. Congratulations were also noted to Jenny McElwain and Johnny Coleman who were elected Fellows of the Royal Society.</p> <p>DOR noted that she had recently written to schools with an update on the proposed new talent fund which would be run as a competitive call by Research Ireland. It was noted that the call was expected to open in July but there was very little clarity as yet. DOR wanted to flag it so that colleagues could begin to have conversations with researchers who were seriously interested in a potential move. It was noted that the expectation was that the whole process would have concluded by end of the calendar year. DOR noted that the list of disciplines announced by DFHERIS was not particularly inclusive. This has been raised as an issue but DOR also noted that this should not deter anyone from applying. In discussion with the committee it was noted proposals did not have to map on to existing posts, there was no appetite for a departure from current salary scales, and most enthusiasm for joint appointments seemed to be for those with other Irish institutions. It was noted that the Minister had also mentioned another PRTL but no further information on this was available.</p> <p><b>RS/24-25/13 HEREG update:</b> It was noted that the flash call had closed, all applicants had been notified of the outcome and funding had now been allocated. As noted at the last meeting in May, the call was seriously over-subscribed with 151 applications received, only 34 of which could be funded. As with the previous call a reserve list would be maintained should more funding be made available. It was noted that some queries had been received from some schools and faculties about the distribution of the funding. It was noted to the committee that the funding was subject to very strict terms and conditions set down by the HEA and was being monitored and audited on an ongoing basis with an interim report already returned on the first tranche of funding and another report due later in the year. Where internally funded boost calls had much greater flexibility in how 'research equipment' could be defined and interpreted, the HEREG call was particularly rigid in what could be considered an eligible cost. DOR noted that this was unfair to many researchers but unfortunately for this particular funding stream there was very little that could be done.</p> <p><b>RS/23-24/6 Researcher Recruitment Policy:</b> The committee was asked to approve terms of reference and membership for the working group. It was noted that Nicola Carr, Sarah Doyle and Marco Ruffini had agreed to be the three academic representatives on the working group. In discussion with the committee it was noted that the first update from working group would be expected by the October meeting of the Research Committee. It was also noted that questions related to general recruitment processes and practices were beyond the remit of the working group. DOR suggested that it would be useful to gather general queries and work with HR to address those. The committee approved the proposed terms of reference and membership of the working group.</p> <p>DOR shared a request from the VP Global Engagement. It was noted that Trinity systems and processes for gathering information on global engagement were inconsistent and there was no clear picture available. DOR noted that Directors of Research and their schools were being asked to review their global engagement activities in the first instance using Boston and Singapore as case studies.</p> <p>DOR noted the difficult conditions for research in the U.S. at present. It was noted that one of the lesser-known impacts has been on databases historically maintained by U.S. agencies which have become global sources of research data, all of which are currently at risk of deletion, corruption, or stagnation. Through Campus Engage there has been a mapping of affected databases. DOR noted that she would like to gather information that could inform conversations with DFHERIS, and noted that ideally there would be a European "mirror" of these databases and repositories.</p>
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<b>Section C – Items for Noting</b>	
<b>C.1</b>	<b>Items for Noting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes from REPC meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> May were noted.</li> <li>• Update memo from REPC outlining its current priorities was noted.</li> <li>• Minutes from the Open Scholarship subgroup meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> January were noted.</li> </ul>
<b>C.2</b>	<b>Items for future discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS/24-25/16 DOR noted the decision of Board last week in relation to the report from the Taskforce on Academic and Institutional International Links and Related Matters. DOR noted that the Taskforce had a significant number of meetings across the entire academic year with very detailed and deliberate discussions. The Taskforce’s report contained principles and procedures that can be applied to any country at any time in relation to egregious examples of human rights violations or other matters of concern. DOR noted that a separate set of recommendations were also submitted to Board by the Taskforce having applied those principles to the current situation in Israel and Gaza. DOR noted that the Board’s decision was not to immediately cut ties, but that all current agreements would be honoured until they concluded at which point no new agreements would be entered into. It was noted that the Provost and Chair of the Board have agreed that all relevant college committees should have the opportunity to consider the report and provide feedback. It was noted that the report would be on the agenda at the committee’s next meeting in September. DOR acknowledged that members of the committee had concerns as to how this might impact research but also noted that it would be inappropriate to discuss the report until it had been received and colleagues had sufficient time to consider it. DOR noted separately that multiple changes to conditions for NIH grants left PIs in an uncertain position. DOR noted that she was working with colleagues in the RDO and FSD to identify who would potentially be impacted, in particular PhDs and postdocs. DOR noted the duty of care Trinity had to students and postdocs and that provision would be made to support them in the event of grants being withdrawn.</li> </ul>
<b>C.3</b>	<b>AOB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee was advised that the end of year survey committee would be circulated later this week.</li> <li>• DOR noted thanks to all Directors of Research who were stepping down from the committee, and to the committee generally for all its hard work over the academic year.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Meeting adjourned.</i></p>