

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, Tuesday, 17 February 2026  
Classroom 119, Portal at Trinity Business School

MINUTES

Prof. Sinéad Ryan (Chair); Prof. Brian Broderick; Prof. Nicole Grimes; Prof. Joanne Banks; Prof. James Hanrahan; Prof. Mary Rogan; Prof. Valentina Colasanti; Prof. Carol Newman; Prof. Paula Mayock; Prof. Benjamin Wold; Prof. Tomás Ryan; Prof. Mathias Senge; Prof. Marco Ruffini; Prof. Frank Wellmer; Prof. Andrei Parnachev; Prof. Susan Murphy; Prof. Ortwin Hess; Prof. Hal Duncan; Prof. Sarah Doyle; Prof. Éilish Burke; Prof. Anne Marie Healy; Prof. Ed Lavelle; Prof. Patrick Geoghegan; Vincent Coole; Dr Chris Keely; Prof. Martine Smith; Dr Laure De Tymowski.

*In attendance:* Dr Sally Smith; Doris Alexander; Elaine Sharkey; Emma Treacy Matunga; Dr Geoff Bradley; Michael Reilly; Dr Jennifer Daly.

*Apologies:* Helen Shenton; Dr Fiona Smyth; Prof. Padraic Fallon; Prof. Nicola Carr; Prof. Catherine Welch; Prof. Mark Little; Dr Nicole Volmering; Prof. Joseph Roche; Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan; Aoife Gleason; Tadhg Caffrey.

<b>Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval</b>	
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Minutes</b> The minutes of the January meeting were amended to note the attendance of Prof. Patrick Geoghegan.
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b> DOR confirmed that feedback from the committee was being incorporated into the TRI policy, alongside further consultation with the TRI Directors. DOR advised the committee that a final version of the policy would come to the committee for approval before the end of the academic year.
	<b>Proposal to establish a Trinity Research Centre: Trinity Centre for Digital Security and Societal Resilience</b> <i>Prof. Hitesh Tewari, Olivia Waters, apologies from Maria Grazia Porcedda</i>  <i>Prof. Hitesh Tewari and Olivia Waters joined the meeting for this item.</i>  The committee received a presentation on the proposal to establish a Trinity Research Centre for Digital Security and Societal Resilience. During the presentation it was noted that Ireland occupies a unique position within the European digital ecosystem, hosting 16 of the world's 20 major technology companies while a significant amount of subsea cables either pass through Ireland or Irish waters. It was also noted that Ireland and the EU are experiencing rapid regulatory change. The proposed Centre seeks to coordinate Trinity's existing strengths, drawing on 25 participating academics across all three faculties, and would prioritise research, incorporating law, governance, finance, ethics and related areas.  In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was confirmed that no new arrangements would be in place for overheads on any grants associated researchers might secure.</li><li>• Members of the committee suggested there was strong potential to connect the proposed centre's activities with microcredentials and teaching. It was noted that forthcoming opportunities such as the Discover Citizens project would address some of this.</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When asked about any possible overlap with AI Accountability Lab it was noted that the centre would focus particularly on cryptographic and systems security so collaboration rather than duplication was expected.</li> <li>• Members of the committee queried defence-related elements related to the subsea cables. It was noted that some aspects of this would not be in scope but there were ongoing projects on marine domain awareness and cable ownership/legal issues.</li> <li>• Engagement with Irish and European-level policy forums was noted.</li> <li>• It was noted that an update on the national digital strategy was forthcoming. Ireland’s lack of preparedness around the HSE cyberattack in 2021 was noted.</li> <li>• The unique research priorities for the proposed centre included development of post-quantum algorithms, cryptographic re-engineering, and vulnerabilities relating to elections, citizen–state interaction, and sectors such as health and law.</li> </ul> <p><i>Prof. Hitesh Tewari and Olivia Waters left the meeting.</i></p> <p>The committee noted the strength of integrating technical and non-technical disciplines, while acknowledging challenges in fostering collaboration across cultures. The committee agreed that the proposal represented a significant opportunity and approved the establishment of the centre.</p>
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**Section B - Items for Discussion Only**

<b>B.1</b>	<p><b>Proposal to establish a Trinity Research Institute: LONGLIFE</b> Prof. Rose Anne Kenny, Prof. Cathal McCrory</p> <p>DOR noted that this item was a late addition to the agenda, emphasised that it was for discussion only and that no decision was required of the committee at this time. It was noted that the committee would receive a presentation on the proposal, have an opportunity to pose questions to the presenters, and would then receive the full proposal documents via email at which point they would be expected to consult with their schools and colleagues for feedback and comments. DOR noted that the proposal would then come to the committee as a full item for discussion and decision at either the March or April meeting.</p> <p><i>Prof. Kenny and Prof. McCrory joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>The committee received a presentation on the proposed new institute during which the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland’s life expectancy continues to rise, while healthspan is not keeping pace, leading to increased pressures on health, welfare and social cohesion.</li> <li>• Trinity has significant existing strengths in longitudinal and lifecourse research, including TILDA and other national datasets. However, capacity to exploit this data remains limited. A TRI would consolidate expertise and position Trinity as a global leader.</li> <li>• Alignment with <i>Thrive</i> was noted, as well as opportunities for impactful training, evidence-based policymaking, grant capture, and philanthropic engagement. It was noted that TILDA has been cited in 498 national and international policy documents. A WHO designation further supports international positioning.</li> </ul> <p>During discussion with the committee the following points were noted:</p>
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- The relevance of the UN's forthcoming Treaty on Rights of Older People and opportunities for further collaboration in this space.
- Opportunities for greater use of longitudinal data held by the CSO were flagged but current constraints around access were noted.
- Members of the committee asked about possible overlap with TRISS and TRIC. It was noted that the proposal sought to collaborate with current entities.
- Clarification was sought regarding the decision to pursue Institute status rather than propose a centre particularly in light of the current TILDA operations. It was suggested that the Institute model offered greater capacity and visibility, and more control over resources. It was also noted that there were no plans to move from the current locations, but that the focus of the institute would be on education and training.
- In response to a question about finances, it was noted that the external review of the proposal advised that Trinity should provide support of €100k per year. It was also noted that additional overhead was available that would support growth and investment.

*Prof. Kenny and Prof. McCrory left the meeting.*

During discussion among the committee the following points were noted:

- Members of the committee expressed concern about the focus on education and training for a proposed research institute.
- Some members of the committee questioned the decision to propose an institute rather than a centre. DOR emphasised that institute proposals are not routinely considered in the same way that centre proposals are given the additional institutional supports for TRIs. It was noted that a TRI proposal would also have to be approved by Planning Group and Finance Committee, but could not proceed to either without approval from the Research Committee.
- Members of the committee noted dissatisfaction in some schools with the proposal development process, noting a lack of consultation with key stakeholders.

**B.2 Update from the Dean of Research**

Prof. Sinéad Ryan

DOR noted the following in her update:

- Congratulations were noted to Prof. Yvonne Buckley who has been honoured with the 2026 Royal Irish Academy Gold Medal in the Environmental Sciences, Geography and Geosciences.
- Thomas Chadefaux, Professor in Political Science in Trinity's School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, has secured European Research Council Proof of Concept funding to develop tools that will bridge the gap between cutting-edge research and real-world conflict prevention.
- As of January the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office (IMSCO) had transferred into Research Ireland. The IMSCO houses the National Delegate and National Contact Point for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), as well as the National Contact Point for the European Research Council (Social Sciences and Humanities) and the Global Challenge Cluster 2 (Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society) – all funding schemes under Horizon Europe. The IMSCO was previously housed within the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and operated under a partnership with the Irish Research Council.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland’s hosting of the EU Presidency: DOR noted that further discussion would occur at the next meeting, but members were asked to flag any relevant events to Trinity Research.</li> <li>• DE TE Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity (Sept 2025): DOR encouraged members to review the report’s 85 actions across six thematic areas.</li> <li>• <b>INSPIRE update:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DFHERIS/HEA/RI webinar prompted extensive sector feedback.</li> <li>○ Phase 1 expected to open soon, with €98m sector-wide.</li> <li>○ Institutional allocations will be administered by HEA; Research Ireland will run Phase 2 as a competitive call.</li> <li>○ DOR urged early planning for shared advanced infrastructures and identification of transformative opportunities, noting the need for multi-HEI partnerships.</li> <li>○ Uncertainty remains regarding eligibility, call parameters, and the status of entities such as Tyndall and NIBRT.</li> <li>○ In discussion with the committee members raised questions regarding replacement infrastructure, software eligibility, scale of future RI infrastructure calls, and structuring of proposals. It was noted that many elements remain subject to clarification pending publication of call documents.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Section C – Items for Noting</b>	
<b>C.1</b>	<b>Items for Noting</b> No items for noting.
<b>C.2</b>	<b>Items for future discussion</b> The committee was advised that Lisa Keating would attend a future meeting to discuss work of the Irish Universities Association.
<b>C.3</b>	<b>AOB</b> No AOB.