

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

**RESEARCH COMMITTEE
11:00, Tuesday, 21 April 2026
Boardroom, Trinity Business School
MINUTES**

Prof. Sinéad Ryan (Chair); Prof. Padraic Fallon; Prof. Joseph Roche; Dr Louise Caffrey; Prof. Joanne Banks; Prof. Lindsey Earner-Byrne; Prof. Mary Rogan; Prof. Valentina Colasanti; Prof. Carol Newman; Prof. Benjamin Wold; Prof. David Loane; Prof. Mathias Senge; Prof. Marco Ruffini; Prof. Bidisha Ghosh; Prof. Frank Wellmer; Prof. Andrei Parnachev; Prof. Susan Murphy; Prof. Ortwin Hess; Prof. Sarah Doyle; Prof. Eilish Burke; Prof. Anne Marie Healy; Prof. Ed Lavelle; Prof. Mark Little; Prof. Patrick Geoghegan; Prof. Rhodri Cusack; Prof. Martine Smith; Vincent Coole; Dr Chris Keely.

In attendance: Dr Sally Smith; Tadhg Caffrey; Dr Fiona Smyth; Doris Alexander; Elaine Sharkey; Aoife Gleason; Dr Geoff Bradley; Helen Shenton; Michael Reilly; Dr Jennifer Daly.

Apologies: Prof. Catherine Welch; Prof. Nicola Carr; Prof. Clare Clarke; Prof. Eoin O’Sullivan; Prof. Brian Broderick; Prof. James Hanrahan; Prof. Sonia Bishop; Prof. Tomás Ryan; Emma Treacy Matunga.

Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	Minutes Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as circulated.
A.2	Matters Arising from the Minutes DOR reminded the committee that feedback on the recent Pathways call should be submitted by April 30 th . DOR noted that there were significant constraints imposed by Research Ireland but constructive feedback to improve internal processes was welcomed. DOR noted a late amendment to the agenda with the proposal to establish a TRI delayed until the next meeting in May. This was requested by the PIs leading the proposal to allow sufficient time to consider and respond to the committee’s feedback.
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
B.1	Update on Serials Crisis and Open Scholarship paper Christoph Schmidt-Supprian, Head of Content Management & Open Scholarship The Committee received an update following on from a presentation at the January meeting on the ongoing serials crisis and developments in open scholarship. It was noted that the paper had been discussed at a number of internal and external fora. The feedback so far noted the perceived link to reputation and rankings; the risk of making research (and teaching) more difficult; probable decline in gold open access publishing; and that HS and STEM Faculties would be affected the most. Feedback also noted the balance between mainstream (widely available) content and niche (hard to get) content provision; that institutions must be prepared to cancel agreements rather than agree to egregious terms; the power of researchers should be leveraged more forcefully; collective action was needed at national and EU level via the IUA, LERU etc. The committee was advised that the current provisional conclusions included no precipitous cancellations at this time, supporting IReL in upholding its Negotiation Principles, developing mitigation plans for potential loss of access and APCs, continuing internal conversations and stakeholder engagement, reducing dependency on ‘high impact’ journals via Trinity’s CoARA Action Plan, and contributing to a LERU Position Paper on Publication Culture. It was proposed that a further update would be brought to the committee during the next academic year. In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOR noted that it would be useful for a similar consultation to take place with the IUA’s VPDORS group as it touches on aspects of research assessment and research culture. • Members of the committee noted the intersections between research assessment processes at institutional and sectoral levels and research assessment reform more broadly. It was noted that any move towards an open access culture could not be realised without also fully reforming how research and researchers are assessed including internal promotions processes. • It was noted that more careful shepherding of the open access concept was needed to avoid a repeat of the current situation where the move to open access has mainly grown the profit of journals. The committee debated whether open access had failed as a system and whether it had reached a point where step back to recalibrate was now needed. • Members of the committee have noted that some funders and publishers have moved to a publish-review-curate model but that this required courage on the part of researchers as there was still a perceived prestige attached to certain publishers. It was also noted that external funders explicitly instructed evaluators not to consider the prestige of publications but to consider the quality of the actual work. Members of the committee noted sectoral developments such as changes to evaluation processes by funders, COARA, DORA etc.
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Policy Engagement Mapping Dr Fergus McAuliffe, Head of Engagement and Impact, Trinity Research</p> <p>The Committee received a presentation on initial findings from the mapping of policy engagement activity across the University. During the presentation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trinity has a rich tradition of research-policy engagement but lacks a coordinated, strategic approach. • The mapping exercise was conducted in the context of national and EU agendas including evidence for policy functions in government departments, the Civil Service Research Network, and the emerging policy focus for the EU on science diplomacy. • A survey was conducted of existing activity around Trinity which identified current engagements, funding mechanisms, enablers, barriers and motivations etc. • Survey responses returned six broad themes: admin and staffing support; time and workload relief; funding and budgets; training, guidance and an advice hub; recognition and career structures; lack of wider applicability or policy dimension to their work. • Suggestions arising from the findings include: a dedicated unit or person, dedicated web presence, brokerage function, seed funding, and explicitly recognising advocacy, relationship-building, and impact-focused work in formal structures such as promotions. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOR noted that the absence of a coherent approach in Trinity risks our ability to contribute in the future, particularly when peer institutions are much more organised in this space. • Members of the committee welcomed the work and were enthusiastic about the suggested actions. The benefit a ‘front door’ that govt departments could access as a first point of contact was noted.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the exercise currently had a mainly national scope, significant activity at an EU and international level was acknowledged. • Members of the committee noted that any approach that ended up being another thing to report on should be avoided. Mechanisms to tag existing work, research etc were being explored.
<p>B.3</p>	<p>Update from the Dean of Research Prof. Sinéad Ryan</p> <p>DOR noted congratulations to all new Fellows and Scholars announced at Trinity Monday.</p> <p>DOR also noted congratulations to Prof. Padraic Fallon on his election as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. PF noted his thanks to the committee and also noted that attending the committee had been a privilege that enabled him to see the full breadth of work happening across Trinity.</p> <p>Recent COALESCE funding announcement by Research Ireland included two projects involving Trinity researchers: MAMMI and the workplace: Enhancing female equity, parental resilience, and maternal health in the workplace – Dr Sinead Monaghan and Prof. Deirdre Daly (Trinity College Dublin), and RADIUS: Regional Analytics for Digital Inclusion and Urban Sustainability – Dr Marie Ryan (University College Cork) and Prof. Ashish Kumar Jha (Trinity College Dublin).</p> <p>It was noted that the Research Ireland Centres Call announcement was expected on June 10th. DOR also advised the committee that interviews for the Global Talent programme were being conducted this week. It was noted that Trinity had 15 proposals shortlisted, 14 progressed to second round, and 7 called for interview.</p> <p>DOR noted that Research Ireland had published its Programme Plan for 2026. The main points to note were the inclusion of a Strategic Institutional Funding Mechanism (SIFM) which would consolidate funding for certain streams into a block allocation for institutions. It was noted that this would place a significant additional administrative burden on institutions. It was also noted that the INSPIRE call was listed in the plan as opening in September but unclear if this is the RI phase 2 or if it was related to the HEA phase 1. In discussion with the committee the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee noted serious objections to the SIFM, in particular the pushing of nationally awarded funding such as PG and postdoctoral fellowships back on to institutions. Concerns were noted that this would devalue the perception of the awards as they would be seen as coming from the institution rather than a national competitive process. • Additional concerns relating to the administrative processes, existing relationships with partners, and how that funding should cascade within institutions were also noted.
<p>B.4</p>	<p>Timetabling Project College Bursar</p> <p>The committee received an update on the timetabling project in the context of estate utilisation, sustainability objectives and the College Masterplan. The committee was advised that a key finding from the masterplan is that Trinity does have a lot of space but is not using it efficiently. It was noted that teaching space utilisation remains very low at just 17% and that timetabling would be a critical enabler of more effective use of existing space, particularly in light of forthcoming developments such as the E3</p>

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	<p>Learning Foundry. The committee was advised that the HEA was increasingly focusing on institutions' space utilisation which may impact future efforts to secure funding for space. It was also noted that the current timetabling system would need to be replaced by 2030.</p> <p>The committee was asked to consider what researchers would like a new timetable to enable and how that could be translated into a new system. In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of initiatives at a local level that might have a positive impact included one non-campus day per week for schools. • Members of the committee stressed the importance of a reliable and predictable annual timetable that was known well in advance as a key enabler of research activity. Integration of teaching and meeting calendars was also noted. • It was confirmed that PG taught students would be included in the timetabling exercise. It was noted that a fixed timetable would free up access to spaces around college that could be repurposed for other uses such as PG space etc. • Members of the committee discussed the merits of a local, flexible arrangements over a centralised system. It was noted that a centralised timetable that everyone worked to across the institution would allow Athena Swan obligations to be met and would schedule the bulk of activity within core hours. <p>It was agreed that the committee's feedback would be collated and returned to the Bursar.</p>
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	<p>Items for Noting</p> <p>The approval of the Conflict of Interest Policy by Board in March was noted along with its publication on the Policies Hub, together with associated guidance. DOR advised the committee that standard narrative for letters of support would need to reflect the new policy.</p> <p>The Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment's (DCEE) Statement of Research and Innovation Needs and its Research and Innovation Strategy to 2030 were noted along with their relevance to the policy engagement agenda. It was noted that the DCEE's work to articulate its research needs were an exemplar for the sector.</p>
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p>
C.3	<p>AOB</p> <p>DOR advised the committee that Trinity had recently engaged with external specialists to support an institutional project that seeks to improve Trinity's awareness of key drivers in international rankings exercises. To support this project three Faculty-based sessions will be held during the week of 18th May 2026. The sessions will be open to all academic and professional services colleagues with an interest in rankings. The sessions will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An overview of the main rankings exercises ○ Information on how data is used for rankings exercises ○ Trends across the key rankings drivers relevant to Trinity College Dublin ○ Q&A