Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

XX = Item is of
significance to
Council

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 19 February 2019 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.

Present:	Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
	Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
	Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
	Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
	Professor Aine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
	Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business
	Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
	Professor Alan O'Connor, School of Engineering
	Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
	Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
	Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
	Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics
	Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
	Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery
	Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts
	Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
	Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities
	Professor Philip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy
	Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM
	Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
	Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
	Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
	Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
	Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry
	Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer, Students' Union
	Ms Misha Fitzgibbon, Student Representative
Apologies:	Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
	Professor Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law
	Professor Stephen Minton, School of Education
	Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
	Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion
	Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education; Professor Rachel Moss, Department of History of Art, for item USC/18-19/053a; Professor Henry Rice, School of Engineering, for item USC/18-19/053c; Ms Leona Coady, Director of Academic Registry, for item USC/18-19/054

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies opened the meeting and noted apologies from members.

USC/18-19/050   Minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2019
          The minutes were approved.

USC/18-19/051   Matters arising

USC/18-19/044 A decision on the future of the Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study was deferred by Council to its meeting of 13 March 2019.

USC/18-19/043 The proposal for accreditation for the International School in the School of Nursing and Midwifery was approved by Council at its meeting of 13 February 2019.

USC/18-19/046 The proposed Trinity Electives were approved by Council at its meeting of 13 February 2019.

USC/18-19/052   Timetable Policy

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The draft timetable policy, together with a memorandum dated 14 February 2019 from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, had been circulated. Ms Mary McMahon, Project Officer, Trinity Education Project, attended the meeting for this item.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided background information on the requirement for a new timetabling policy. He noted that an outside consulting firm had concluded that Trinity's timetabling practices were poor in relation to peer institutions and showed inconsistent approaches to timetabling and little overall governance. A space audit carried out by Estates and Facilities had shown space usage in Trinity to be highly inefficient.

In November 2018, Council had approved a new approach to timetabling for the shared curriculum of years 1 and 2 of the new common architecture and the phased implementation of the fixed timetable commencing in 2019/20.

The timetabling policy had been developed to support the introduction of the common programme architecture and the development of the central management of timetabling practices for programmes. The policy sets out the procedures and responsibilities in respect of the annual production of the timetable and the use of all teaching and learning spaces. The policy should be read in conjunction with the timetabling procedures document which will be updated annually. The circulated policy will be reviewed in one year to take account of changing structures that will emerge during the transition period involved in mainstreaming TEP and following that revision it is planned that the policy will be a standing document. USC members were asked to approve the policy document (the procedures were circulated for discussion only).

The policy outlined the partial block timetabling that will be used to deliver a common shared timetable for undergraduate programmes where all or part of the curriculum is offered in combinations or where modules are made available to other programmes or visiting students. Timetabling for programmes outside the common shared timetable will be required to make adjustments to accommodate the partial block timetable and to allow the selection of Trinity Electives. Central Timetabling (in ASD) will timetable year one of the shared curriculum for the new common architecture, as an interim measure, until the governance and management of timetabling have been agreed.   For 2019/20, the timetabling policy and procedures will be managed by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

A lengthy discussion took place amongst members. A member referred to the timetabling procedures that outlined that all event types would be rolled over without rooms, and requested that rather than clear all events, rooms could be vacated on request.

It was noted that Theoretical Physics had been omitted from the tables in Appendix 1.

Some members requested that the policy or procedures be amended to take account of family-friendly working hours. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the teaching day was set as Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 18:00 but that individual schools could look at determining the timetabled hours of individual lecturers where possible. Following further discussion, it was agreed that a member would consult with Athena Swan for guidance on appropriate wording for the policy that would allow for family-friendly working hours, in principle, while also noting that it is the responsibility of individual schools to accommodate this.

Members also requested that the policy be amended to state that students and staff must have at least one hour free between 12:00 and 15:00 however it was felt that 'must' might be too constraining. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies assured the meeting that lecturers would not be timetabled for nine consecutive hours, and it was noted that students would have sight of the timetable when they were selecting modules which would allow them to avoid continuous classes without a break. It was agreed that monitoring the working periods for staff and learning events for students would be included as a metric following the rollout of the first year of the timetable.

A member indicated that differentiating between teaching and assessment was difficult in his school due to the performance nature of the curriculum. He noted that students often have the opportunity to perform for the public within the hours of 18:00 to 20:00 and sought clarification on this with respect to the new timetable policy. It was noted that events could be timetabled outside of the core hours but that this should be communicated to and agreed with students in advance. Ms McMahon noted that the timetable would be built in consultation with schools which would help ensure that the needs of individual schools were met, where possible. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed that the wording around teaching outside of core hours would be discussed with the member and the policy amended accordingly.

A member highlighted the difficulties of timetabling space in some disciplines within the School of Medicine as teaching could take place in day rooms, wards, etc, and involved doctors that may need to change their schedule at very short notice. It was agreed that the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies would follow up with the member outside of the meeting.

Some members raised concerns about all teaching space being made available in the system. Ms McMahon advised that Board had mandated that all teaching spaces be visible in the system and centrally bookable. The designation of teaching space as central or local would happen under the auspices of the new governance structure. A member noted that certain spaces, e.g. labs, were not suitable for opening up for general use.

In response to a member's concern regarding the use of 'must' with regard to scheduling compulsory modules into the core contact hours within a block of 10 hours for that subject pillar, it was noted that Central Timetabling would work with timetablers to find space for additional time where it was necessary.   It was agreed that the wording of paragraph 6.1.2 would be reviewed.

It was noted that the policy did not address the issues of cross-year teaching as this raised issues in years 3 and 4. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged that the policy had focused on years 1 and 2 and confirmed that cross-year teaching would be discussed at a later stage.

The pivotal position of Geography was noted as it would be available through Joint Honors, Science and other programmes. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that Geography must fit into a pillar and Science would need to work around this.

In response to a query on whether IS Services would support the maintenance of seminar room equipment, it was noted that discussions would have to take place on this within the new governance structures for timetabling.

USC approved the timetabling policy for recommendation to Council.

Decision
USC/18-19/052.1 USC approved the timetabling policy for recommendation to Council.
Actions
USC/18-19/052.1 Theoretical Physics will be included in the tables in Appendix 1.
USC/18-19/052.2 A member will consult with Athena Swan on appropriate wording for the policy that would allow for family-friendly working hours, in principle.
USC/18-19/052.3 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies will discuss teaching outside of core hours with a member and the policy will be amended.
USC/18-19/052.4 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies will follow up with a member regarding timetabling of space in the School of Medicine.
USC/18-19/052.5 The wording of paragraph 6.1.2 will be reviewed.

USC/18-19/053   **Course Proposals**
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a) History of Art and Architecture new single honors programme
A proposal for a new single honors programme in History of Art and Architecture from the School of Histories and Humanities had been circulated. Professor Rachel Moss, Head of Department, Department of History of Art and Architecture, presented the proposal to the meeting.

The proposed full-time course would commence in September 2020 and involve 10 EU and 3 non-EU students. Professor Moss explained that the quality review of the School of Histories and Humanities had led to a recommendation that a single honors programme in History of Art and Architecture be established as the only programme of its kind in Ireland. The introduction of a new curriculum, which will be shared in part with joint honors students, is also necessary to accommodate the new fixed timetable and TEP compliance

Currently, History of Art was only offered as a component of the TSM programme. The flexibility offered through the implementation of a common architecture allowed for the reshaping of the curricula into the proposed course and also the opportunity to partner with Columbia University in the delivery of a dual award programme. The proposals for the two courses were being made in tandem and a proposal for the dual award programme would be brought to the next meeting of USC. Much of the teaching would be shared between the two programmes and the costs had been split between the two proposals.

In response to a query regarding the staffing requirement, Professor Moss advised that approval was in place for a 3-year assistant professorship and it was hoped that revenue generated from the additional students on the courses would allow for a further assistant professor post to be filled by the fourth year of the course.

Professor Moss advised that the course structure permits students to participate in study abroad programmes for one semester or a full year. She also noted that the proposal included a 5-credit practice module in History of Art that would provide students the opportunity to incorporate work placements or other practice-based activities into their curriculum.

A member noted that the proposal would need an employability guide prior to submission to Council. In response to queries it was noted that some of the modules would be offered as approved modules and that a curriculum mapping exercise had been carried out.

USC recommended the course for external review, in advance of consideration by Council.

Decision
USC/18-19/053a USC recommended the new single honors programme in History of Art and Architecture for external review, in advance of consideration by Council.

b) Chemistry with Biosciences, new moderatorship option from Chemical Sciences TR061
A proposal for a Chemistry with Biosciences as a new moderatorship option within Chemical Sciences (TR061) had been circulated. Professor Paula Colavita, Director of Teaching and Learning in the School of Chemistry, presented the proposal to the committee.

Professor Colavita outlined that the new moderatorship would not entail a new CAO entry route; European applicants would apply through TR061 Chemical Sciences. The quota for the proposed moderatorship to commence in 2020 was 5 EU and 5 non-EU students. The moderatorship was designed to reflect student interest for Chemistry and Biology which was not currently enabled by any of the existing Science moderatorships. Most of the modules are already offered but would now be packaged in a way that would facilitate new module combinations.

The creation of a new moderatorship allows control over student numbers and module capacity and allows for it to be marketed as a 4-year programme to international students.

A member noted the disparity in the number of learning outcomes across the modules and was advised that these reflect the current practice of these modules. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that a broader discussion on assessment practice across College was required.

USC recommended the proposed moderatorship option for external review, in advance of consideration by Council.

Decision
USC/18-19/053b USC recommended Chemistry with Biosciences as a new moderatorship option within Chemical Sciences (TR061) for external review, in advance of consideration by Council.

c) Engineering / UM-SJTU Joint Institute, articulation route into the 4th year
A proposal for an articulation programme between Trinity and University of Michigan – Shanghai Jiao Tong University Joint Institute (UM-SITU Joint Institute) had been circulated. Professor Henry Rice, Head of School of Engineering, attended the meeting for this item.

Professor Rice indicated that the University of Michigan is ranked no. 21 and Shanghai Jiao Tong University no. 59 in the QS World University Rankings (2019). The proposal was for a 3+1+0.5+1 programme that would involve students completing three years of study at the UM-SJTU JI followed by two years of study in the Trinity Engineering programme, and includes a summer semester at their home university between years 4 and 5. Professor Rice advised that the format was similar to the Double Diploma with INSA Lyon which was found to be a model that worked very well.

Entry was proposed for September 2019. Successful completion of the five years would lead to the award of MAI. Students who leave after the 4th year of study in Trinity would not receive a Trinity award.

Fourth year fees would be waived for two students annually who would enter the programme under a student exchange agreement. Trinity and UM-SJTI would guarantee to offer students approved accommodation for all years.

It was noted that there was an outstanding matter relating to progression of students from the fourth to the fifth year of the programme. Currently progression to the MAI is based on achieving a minimum of II.1 at the first attempt of the 4th year assessment. Students may not currently repeat passed modules in order to improve performance so as to progress to the MAI whereas a student who fails the 4th year could repeat and progress to the MAI if they achieved the threshold mark. The School of Engineering feel that the current regulation is inconsistent with TEP regulations which do not allow for capping. The School now wish to allow students to take previously passed modules at the reassessment session for the purposes of progression to the MAI. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed to follow up on this aspect with the School.

USC recommended the articulation route to proceed to external review, prior to consideration by Council.

Decision
USC/18-19/053c USC recommended the Engineering / UM-SJTU Joint Institute articulation route for external review, in advance of consideration by Council.

USC/18-19/054   **Assessment**
a) Conduct of examinations
A memorandum from the Head of Operations, Academic Registry, dated 14 February 2019 had been circulated. Ms Leona Coady, Director of Academic Registry, attended the meeting for this item.

Ms Coady explained that the Academic Registry has a role in the implementation of semesterised examinations. She outlined the different profiles for semester 1 and semester 2 with semester 1 comprising 5 approved days and 1 contingency day, and semester 2 comprising 7 approved days and 1.5 contingency days.

The contingency day was used in the semester 1 session in order to minimise back to back scheduling as much as possible. Some students had 4 back to back examinations in a 24 hour period so the timetable was manually manipulated to move these; the examinations could not be moved for 4 students. 254 students had 3 back to back examinations in 24 hours. Ms Coady advised that the system allows for a constraint to be set for specific days and not for a 24 hour period. She noted it was unlikely that 3 back to back examinations could be avoided for students.

Parameters in the system meant that students could have a maximum of 2 papers per day and would not be required to travel between the RDS and Trinity campus sites on the same day. The RDS venue would be utilised in the first instance, and Trinity campus sites used as an overflow venue.

In the semester 1 session, examinations lasted between 1 and 3 hours and examinations of varying durations were held in the RDS venue. Students were grouped by examination duration in order to minimise the disruption to other students. The Trinity campus venues were used for disability accommodations. 33% of all 2018/19 modules were assessed in semester 1.

Ms Coady referred to a number of issues that arose in the semester 1 examination session. She noted that there had been a delay of 1.5 hours in the evening session at the RDS venue as the alphabetical seating list did not match the numerical list that was used by staff at the

venue. Academic Registry had been unsuccessful in recreating this problem but will ensure full scrutiny of seating lists for all examinations going forward.

On 29 January 2019, provisional results were released to nearly 12K students via my.tcd.ie portal. This high traffic led to a difficulty logging in and students had to make repeated attempts to access their results. Academic Registry are working with IS Services on this issue and it was agreed that in future students will receive their results via email in addition to the portal. It is also hoped that results will be made available via an app. This will reduce the pressure on the portal and avoid difficulties in students getting results.

The module mark entry area in the my.tcd.ie portal will be reopened to users from February 15 to 19 for inputting or updating semester 1 provisional results. The marks will be validated by the Academic Registry on 20 February and the updated results will be released to students via the portal on 21 February. Semester 2 results would be released in the same way as previous years

A lessons learned workshop was being held on 25 February and key stakeholders had been invited to review the end-to-end semester 1 examination experience and identify improvements for future examination sessions. The Academic Registry have started data modelling based on desired revisions to the approved examination schedule profile. If all examination sessions started 30 minutes earlier it would facilitate 3-hour papers to be scheduled across two sessions daily. In addition, a meeting with the SITS vendor would take place to discuss the possibility of constraining the scheduling of three examinations back to back in a 24 hour period, as opposed to in one day. Data modelling will demonstrate if the late submission of examination requirements by some schools contributed to the high volume of back to back examinations as is suspected.

Academic Registry was working with Schools to finalise semester 2 examination requirements prior to scheduling the examinations. Ms Coady advised that a documented emergency management protocol should be put in place prior to the semester 2 session and she proposed that Academic Registry work on this with the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Furthermore Ms Coady noted that the display of information available to students in the RDS would be improved and the student experience in that venue would be mirrored on the Trinity experience.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Ms Coady and Academic Registry on the work that had been carried out to investigate the issues in semester 1 and to ensure that future examination sessions ran more efficiently.

A number of members thanked Ms Coady for the assistance that Academic Registry provided to their schools when issues arose. Members raised issues that had affected students in their schools including a student with 5 examinations in a 48 hour period; some results were not available in SITS when the provisional Court of Examiners took place; some students' timetables listed examinations in a non-chronological order which led to students missing examinations; a generic email was sent to all students about the release date of the results but some courses had a derogation in place to release the results at a later date; a member noted the higher than usual instance of missing scripts and the suspected incorrect recording of student attendance. Another member noted the importance of learning from the experiences of the conduct of semester 1 exams in order to ensure that these irregularities are not repeated in Semester 2 exams, and to anticipate and prevent irregularities in supplemental exams that are conducted under a considerable time pressure.

It was noted in the discussion that the main difficulty regarding the scheduling of examinations was the requirement to fit such a high volume of examinations in to a short time frame.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Ms Coady for presenting this item to the meeting.

b) Assessment loads in the new academic year structure
A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 14 February 2019 had been circulated.

This item was deferred to the following meeting of USC.

c) Absence from examinations without permission
The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies briefly introduced this item but noted that a fuller discussion would take place at the following meeting of USC. He advised that the practices of coding a student absent for an examination without permission varied across College with some schools using AR which conferred an automatic right to sit at the reassessment session and other schools using AB which involved an exclusion for the student to be reassessed and required application to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies to have the exclusion lifted.   Schools had been asked to use AB in the semester 1 session. The regulations around non-satisfactory coursework would also be discussed at the following meeting.

USC/18-19/055   Moderatorship name change

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A memorandum dated 14 February 2019 from Ms Mary Foody, School Manager, School of Natural Science, had been circulated.

The Director of Teaching and Learning in the School of Natural Sciences noted that the moderatorship name had previously been changed from botany to plant sciences and the School were now requesting approval for the name to be changed back to botany. The name change request had been approved by the School Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee, the School Executive Committee, and the Trinity Science Programme Management Committee.

This change would come into effect for students in TR071 entering their Junior Sophister year in the academic year 2019/20. Students entering their Senior Sophister year in TR070 will graduate with a moderatorship in plant sciences. The name of the moderatorship available under the new TR060 programme is botany.

USC approved the name change.

Decision
USC/18-19/055
USC approved the name change from moderatorship in plant sciences to moderatorship in botany, for students entering their Junior Sophister year of TR071 in 2019/20.

USC/18-19/056   Any other business
There was no other business.

USC/18-19/057   Items for Noting
There were no items for noting.