



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 12 December 2017 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.

Present: Professor Gillian Martin, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
 Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
 Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
 Professor Kevin Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
 Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business
 Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry
 Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
 Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts
 Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 Professor Stephen Minton, School of Education
 Professor Alan O'Connor, School of Engineering
 Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
 Professor Rachel Moss, School of Histories and Humanities
 Professor Rachael Walsh, School of Law
 Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
 Professor Naomi Elliott, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
 Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
 Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
 Professor Cathriona Russell, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
 Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM
 Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
 Professor Philip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 Ms Alice Mac Pherson, Education Officer, Students' Union

Apologies: Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
 Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
 Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
 Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics
 Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative
 Ms Sally Anne McCarthy, Student Representative

In attendance: Ms Marie McPeak, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Alison Oldam, Director of Student Services;
 Ms Orla Bannon for USC/17-18/27; Ms Leona Coady, Director of Academic Registry for USC/17-18/030a; Ms Mary McMahan, Trinity Education Project for USC/17-18/030

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies opened the meeting with an acknowledgement that there were some issues with BoardPad circulation and to thank members for their presence and participation throughout term. The Secretary noted apologies.

USC/17-18/025 Minutes of the meeting of 21 November 2017

There was one correction regarding attendance to the minutes, Prof Rachael Walsh noted that she had been in attendance at the previous meeting.

The minutes were approved.

USC/17-18/026 Matters arising

USC/17-18/020 Legal opinion regarding the ownership of performance and the distribution of lectures had been sought and Professor Eoin O'Dell, the School of Law, provided this. The opinion stated that performance of lectures falls under Intellectual Property rights and is therefore owned by the College.

The opinion confirmed that where a student contravenes the Calendar regulation and distributes recorded lectures while registered in the College, it becomes a disciplinary matter and is brought to the Junior Dean. If a former student or graduate of the College is found to distribute recorded lectures, then an injunction could be sought.

The Reasonable Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities was discussed at the recent Graduate Studies Committee and there will be a further meeting between the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the Director of the Disability Service to ensure that any changes are incorporated into the policy before it is brought to Council in January.

USC/17-18/021 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies approached the Vice-President of Global Relations on Non-EU intake quotas and the management of incoming student numbers. Global Relations Office noted that currently quotas are not in place, but that there are targets for incoming Non-EU students. These targets had been agreed during previous iterations of the Global Relations Strategy (GRS) and it is expected that incoming student numbers will be discussed as part of the next iteration of GRS. The Vice-President of Global Relations will be invited to the next Undergraduate Studies Committee meeting.

USC/17-18/022a A proposal for the Academic Year Structure for Supplemental and Special Examinations 2017/18 went forward to the Graduate Studies Committee. Members at GSC concurred with USC, favouring Option B due to the provision of two extra working days to support processing examination results. Option B will, therefore, go forward to the next meeting of Council in January.

USC/17-18/022b For ease of access, all teaching resources relating to the Trinity Education Project have been consolidated into one document, which is available on the TEP website. 'Teach Meets' have been publicised and it is planned to host some within the Faculties at the beginning of Hilary Term.

The Workload and Assessment Mapping Tool has also been published on the TEP website. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies extended thanks to members who contributed module outlines.

USC/17-18/022d A proposal for the award of Gold Medals had been presented to the TEP Steering Committee for discussion. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the Chair of Sub-group 6, who previously spoke to this item, to provide an update. The Steering Committee supported the view that marks achieved at re-assessment should count toward the award of Gold Medal, particularly in the spirit of encouraging students to engage in areas outside of their core curriculum. The Steering Committee also suggested that the minimum overall degree mark for the award of a Gold Medal be revised to 75-80. Further discussion around the criteria will take place in order to reflect the new exit opportunities available to students such as major with minor.

Several members indicated that a minimum overall degree mark of 75-80 would be too high for their School. Another member suggested that this issue could be remedied by employing more of the available range in the marking scheme and that this should be discussed further. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that a First Class Honors degree and a Gold Medal are two distinct achievements and that the threshold to achieve a Gold Medal should be higher than '70', which marks a first-class performance. In 2016/17 there were 39 more medals awarded than in the previous academic year.

Several members had discussed the proposed criteria within their Schools and there was great resistance to the inclusion of re-assessment. Another member reiterated that it would be unfair that a student who achieved a pass would not have an opportunity to be re-assessed and perhaps be eligible for a Gold Medal.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies suggested that Sub-group 6 consider the feedback received from members and that a proposal be brought back to USC with a view to finalising the criteria for Council submission in February.

USC/17-18/027 Trinity Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholars Programme

A document on the Trinity Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholars Programme had been circulated, together with a memorandum from the Director of Careers, dated 8 December 2017.

The Director of Careers was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

The Director noted that information on the Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholars Programme had previously been presented to USC at its meeting of 10 October 2017. Since that time, representatives from the University of Oxford and University of St Andrews had met those involved in the programme at Trinity, sharing their knowledge, experience and learning as existing participants in the Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholars Programme. A workshop was held on 3 November 2017, where academic staff and students from Trinity collaborated with staff from the University of Oxford to inform the development of the structure and implementation plan for the Trinity approach to the programme.

Acknowledging concerns expressed by USC members at the October meeting, the Director confirmed that the gift letter specifies that the component of the programme pertaining to the research programme must be comprised of two 5-week periods of research carried out over two consecutive summers. Laidlaw Scholars will receive a stipend of €550 per week for the period of their research project. A travel fund will also be available to support Scholars whose research requires travel outside Trinity – Oxford and St Andrews indicated that some participants availed of the opportunity to travel to partner sites of their research supervisor. A payment of €700 for each Laidlaw Scholar is payable to the research supervisor to meet incidental costs and/or towards their continuing professional development.

It is hoped that the recruitment of Scholars will run from late January 2018 with the award of places taking place in March or early April. The Leadership programme events are expected to commence in June.

The proposed eligibility requirements are based on best-practice and ensure that participation in the programme does not impact on a student's final year through targeting students in year two of a 4-year undergraduate degree programme or those in year two or three of 5-year undergraduate or integrated masters programmes. The application process seeks to highlight the development of research and leadership skills by requiring applicants to identify their own projects, to approach potential research supervisors directly, and to engage in their own development through reflection. The Director is in contact with Academic Registry to explore whether participation on this programme might be included as part of a student's academic transcript.

The recent appointment of the Student Employability Officer will support the lifecycle of the process and ensure compliance with reporting and communications requirements. At the end of each cycle, scholars will write a research report of up to 3000 words and create a short video clip, reflecting on their scholarship experience. Scholars will also produce a poster explaining their research project, which will be displayed at the final Laidlaw Scholars 2018 event to be held in October 2019 and will be a public event open the wider College community.

The Director noted that there is extensive rollout of the scholarship programme across the globe, providing opportunities for networking and development to all involved. The Director sought input from members on panel membership, timelines, the development of the Leadership Programme and communications plan.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies indicated that the link between research and leadership could be made more explicit in the documentation and should incorporate an awareness of student ability at this stage in their education. Aspects of the Leadership Development Programme may need to be delivered externally to ensure participants are able to learn and develop leadership skills outside of the research supervisor-student relationship.

In response to a member's query on why the award would be included on a participant's transcript, the Director indicated that the benefactor, Lord Laidlaw, sees the programme as an international benchmark for excellence in research and leadership. She also noted that other participating institutions had implemented this aspect.

A member suggested moving the deadline for submission of applications to one week later as this would allow applicants to make use of the reading week.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and a number of members felt that self-awareness or self-knowledge should be used in place of self-leadership in the documentation. Members also felt that the membership of the review panel should be benchmarked against current practice at other participating Universities.

Subject to the amendments proposed at the meeting and consideration of information regarding review panel membership at other Universities, USC recommended that the implementation plan be brought to Council for approval.

USC/17-18/028 Nursing & Midwifery Revised Undergraduate Curricula Proposal

A document on the Nursing & Midwifery Revised Undergraduate Curricula had been circulated, together with a memorandum from the Director of Undergraduate Teaching & Learning for the School of Nursing and Midwifery, dated 5 December 2017.

The Director indicated that the School of Nursing and Midwifery had undertaken a review of the BSc (Cur) in General Nursing, Mental Health Nursing and Intellectual Disability Nursing, the BSc (Cur) Children's and General Nursing and the BSc (A.Obs) in Midwifery programmes as a result of new education standards and requirements published by the Nursing and Midwifery Board Ireland (NMBI) to take effect in all Nursing and Midwifery programmes in Ireland by September 2018. With these revisions the curriculum will also align with the Trinity Education Project graduate attributes.

Further explanation was provided around the programme and module learning objectives, which utilise verbs that are consistent with those employed by the NMBI and professional practitioner programmes. In recognition that the clinical placement module in final year requires contact hours that exceed what would be considered normal practice for the awarding of 30 ECTS, the Director explained that the placement and hours are a prerequisite for registration with the NMBI and students receive more than the ECTS for this contact as it is a paid placement, which contributes to the manpower planning of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

The Director indicated that the NMBI requires a submission for each course by 23 February 2017 and that details of the curricula revisions are accompanied by reports on programme

governance and resources. Submissions must be approved by the College prior to submission to the NMBI.

The review has led to the introduction of more interdisciplinary modules and more modules of 10 ECTS. Increasing the size of modules to 10 ECTS has led to a reduction of the number of overall modules and assessments which is in line with recommendations from external examiners. A new module entitled 'Electives for Nursing & Midwifery' will enable students to broaden their learning in 2nd and 3rd year of their programme.

In response to a member's query regarding the definition of interdisciplinary and interprofessional learning in the documentation, the director clarified that the NMBI treat Midwifery and Nursing as separate professions. Members from the Faculty of Health Sciences indicated that there is interprofessional learning between schools and programmes, though it is challenging to find times suitable to all students in the healthcare disciplines.

The Senior Tutor queried how students admitted on the old course, but who may need to go off books or repeat a year, would be managed. The Director advised that they have established a group within the School which is looking at curriculum mapping and how best to manage these issues if they arise.

Several members queried whether the forthcoming Trinity Electives would be incorporated into the programme architecture or whether the nursing and midwifery electives could be opened up to a wider student population. The Director indicated that the School is open to this provided it fits into the timetable, noting that some students in Nursing & Midwifery currently undertake modules in the Broad Curriculum.

It was acknowledged that the School employed an appropriate range of assessments on the revised curricula. In response to a comment on the level of learning outcomes, the Director indicated that as part of the new requirements there are yearly learning outcomes, which is meant to enable greater mobility for students on nursing and midwifery courses throughout the European Union.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised members that USC was being asked to recommend the proposals to Council. However, in light of the fact that they are not new course proposals, rather revisions to existing curricula, and that each proposal will undergo rigorous external review by various bodies once approved by Council, including the Education and Training Committee, she proposed that it would not be necessary to send them out for additional external review prior to submission to Council.

USC agreed to recommend that these revisions go forward to Council without the need for an external review due to the robust review processes within the NMBI.

USC/17-18/029 Revised Hong Kong Second-Level Examinations and Minimum Admission Requirements

A memorandum on revisions to minimum admission requirements for applicants presenting with the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) had been circulated, dated 12 December 2017.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies opened the discussion with an apology for the late submission of the memorandum, indicating it was a matter that requires resolution as soon as possible in order to support the international recruitment cycle for 2018-19.

The Global Relations Office had requested that Academic Registry perform a review of the admissions requirements for students presenting results from the Hong Kong Diploma of

Secondary Education (HKDSE), specifying that Trinity currently requires 3 electives, while most students in Hong Kong will choose to take only 2 electives. It was also put forward that the levels set for minimum entry requirements were high when viewed alongside comparator third-level institutions.

It was proposed that instead of the current minimum requirement of 4 core subjects at level 3 or above plus 3 elective subjects at level 5 in the HKDSE, prospective students would continue to be required to present six subjects to include English, mathematics and a language other than English. Within the six subjects a minimum of three core subjects must be at level 4 or above and two elective subjects at level 4 or above. It was noted that Level 4 in another language may be accepted in lieu of Core Chinese to satisfy minimum entry requirements.

The proposed admissions requirements were benchmarked against peer-Universities, such as University of Warwick and University of Birmingham.

Members queried if it was possible to review how students from Hong Kong had performed while at Trinity, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that she did not have this information. Also, due to low recruitment levels from Hong Kong to date it would be difficult to use the information to establish a standard for admission. In response to another member's query, it was clarified that international admissions requirements are matched against Leaving Certificate and A-level requirements for matriculation.

In response to a member's suggestion that a number of non-EU students in recent years have presented with excellent written English, but had difficulty in verbal exchanges, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged that this raised broader questions surrounding the efficacy of the IELTS examination for English language assessment and she pointed to work being undertaken by Professor Sarah O'Brien in the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences in the context of the summer pre-session course on development of Trinity-specific assessments.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies informed USC members that she was seeking further clarification on setting Level 4 as a minimum entry requirement. Unusually, in light of the time sensitivity of the issue, she was requesting that USC approve that the proposed revisions to the admission requirements for 2018-19 be brought to Council, incorporating any amendments arising from this clarification. The item with any amendments will then be brought back to USC in January for noting.

USC/17-18/030 Trinity Education Project

a) Proposals for the Scheduling of Examinations from 2018/19

A memorandum setting out eleven modelled options for the scheduling of examinations in the new Academic Year Structure, commencing in 2018/19, had been circulated from the Director of Academic Registry, dated 7 December 2017.

The Director presented the analysis undertaken within the Academic Registry to assess the introduction of the new academic year structure in 2018/19 and semesterised examinations. The new structure suggests that end of semester examinations should be conducted over six or seven consecutive days, excluding Sunday. The variables in each of the modelled options incorporate the six or seven day examination period, as well as the number of examination sessions possible per day. A number of assumptions had been made in modelling the options, including that there would be no rescheduled examinations within a session, that a balanced distribution of student workload including assessment across both semesters would exist and that external venues would be available for use in both semesters.

In 2016/17 there were over 79,000 examination sittings over a four week period. For the purposes of modelling, this number was divided evenly between the first and second semester examination periods. It was established that two examination sessions per day would not be sufficient over the proposed six or seven day examination period. Through running examinations from 9am to 9pm up to 6 or 7 examination sessions could be held each day. Of the 11 options presented, the Director felt that options I & J were the most workable. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stressed that the options and modelling presented are based on the status quo and it is expected there will significant changes to the number of examinations as the Trinity Education Project is implemented. It was also emphasized that this was very much a first attempt at modelling.

Members felt that there are more elements to consider before establishing the best model for the examination schedules. One member noted that the division of larger credit modules into smaller credit modules may lead to double the number of examination sittings, but decreased examination duration. Another member noted that where examinations of varying durations were held in the same venue this was quite disruptive to other students and items such as travel-time between venues and contingency for issues with examination papers should also be taken into account. Cross-compatibility for electives, as well as the diversification of assessment and the use of event-based assessments, such as School scheduled performances and presentations within the examination period, are other items for consideration. Other concerns expressed by members indicated that running examinations up to 7pm is reasonable, but that 9pm would have a severe impact on students with caring duties or who live outside of Dublin city. Members indicated that cross-compatibility requirements for electives may also impact available sittings.

The Director noted, that until such time as Schools and Course Offices have defined their semesterised curricula and assessments, it is not possible to model workable solutions. A request for each programme's module size, occurrence and assessment will be sent to schools from the Academic Registry in January with details to be returned no later than March.

Some members expressed the view that colleagues may be hesitant to make significant changes to assessment modalities during an academic year in which so much change will be occurring and others felt that having to decide upon assessments in March for the whole of 2018/19 may be counterproductive in terms of encouraging progress toward fewer summative examinations.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies asked members whether it would be more helpful if the assessment requirements from TEP were more prescriptive; for example, specifying the length of examination for a 5 or 10 ECTS credit module. Views on this were mixed.

Discussion of this item will continue at future meetings of USC.

b) Nomenclature of Awards

A memorandum from the Chair, TEP Sub-group 6: Progression and Awards, Fixed Timetable, Learning Spaces Design had been circulated, dated 8 December 2017.

The Chair reported that the sub-group had considered the nomenclature of degree awards within the context of the new programme architecture and the new progression and awards regulations. The new programme architecture approved in 2015/16 [CL/15-16/203 (ii)] and being implemented on a phased basis starting in 2018/19 introduces different programme pathways by which students may reach their degree award.

The common architecture is predicated on a programme comprised of a two-year freshman cycle followed by a two-year sophomore cycle. The award of the final degree is governed by completion of foundation modules and by the amount of accumulated credit in the sophomore years at the appropriate academic level.

During the course of discussions at the Progression and Awards subgroup of Strand 1 in 2016/17, and more recently by Sub-group 6, it was agreed that no changes were required to the award titles for graduates from Single Honors programmes; Multidisciplinary programmes; Professional programmes or Clinical programmes.

However, in relation to Major with Minor and Single Honors with Minor, it is proposed that they be merged into one award – Major with Minor. This is based on a comparison between the two paths which illustrates a minor difference in the award requirements. A Major with Minor degree will be awarded where one subject at entry (major) is studied continuously over the course of the four years of the programme and a second subject (minor) is studied continuously over at least three years of the programme. A student would need to achieve a minimum 60 ECTS in Subject 2, with a minimum 20 ECTS at level 3 or above in the subject. The degree will be awarded as ‘Subject 1 **with** Subject 2’.

In order to attain a Joint Honors degree it is proposed that a student would study two subjects continuously over the course of the four years of the programme, obtaining a minimum of 100 ECTS in Subject 1 and Subject 2 and a minimum of 50 ECTS in Subject 1 and Subject 2 in sophomore years at level 3/4. The degree will be awarded as ‘Subject 1 **and** Subject 2’.

Further recommendations in relation to the awarding of Science degrees were also proposed. Currently, the subject area of the Moderatorship is not included on the degree parchment. It is proposed that, in future, the named Science subject is included on the degree parchment as is the case in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; however it will differ slightly in that it will continue to reference that the award is B.A. (Mod.) in Science – Subject.

Within the new programme architecture, the calculation of the degree award is based on the results from the JS year (30%) and the SS year (70%). The final recommendation of the memorandum proposes that the results from the JS year in Moderatorship programmes be referred to as Moderatorship Part 1 and from the SS year as Moderatorship Part 2.

In response to a member’s query on the possibility of a student achieving a minor while on a professional degree programme, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that in previous discussions with Schools involved in the delivery of professional courses there had been little to no appetite for this option, but that it could potentially be revisited in the future

Several members noted that clear and specific information would need to be made available to students with regard to their options within the new programme architecture and awards available to them. This would reduce the risk that a student could find themselves in a situation where they were not eligible for any award after 4 years. A suggestion that Academic Advisors, who would support students with these choices, may be a potential solution. Another member suggested that programme architectures could be built into online module registration, alleviating the need for advisors.

The Director from the School of Law asked that very clear information on the differing requirements for obtaining the professional qualification of LLB and a Single Honors award in Law where a student initially entered via a Joint Honors programme be provided.

Several members queried if the nomenclature for Science programmes should simply change to BSc as opposed to the BA; however, it was pointed out in response that there had been little support for this option previously.

USC supported that the recommendations go forward to Council. Clarification on the query from the School of Law should be obtained.

c) Update on Non-Satisfactory Attendance

The Chair, TEP Subgroup 6: Progression and Awards, Fixed Timetable, Learning Spaces Design provided an update on the Non-Satisfactory Attendance Policy.

The Chair noted that Subgroup 6 discussed the Non-Satisfactory Attendance and Coursework policy. Available information suggests that the non-satisfactory attendance policy had only been invoked on a few occasions in recent years, i.e., a discipline had sought to have a student prevented from presenting for examinations on the basis of not fulfilling attendance requirements.

A number of points arose from the discussions at Subgroup 6. Overall it was felt that the policy is seen as a useful deterrent to keep students engaged with their programme. However, initial recommendations suggest that it should be used on a module by module basis, where programmes define elements within modules/components that are essential to the student's education in the subject. A clear path for escalation and communication should also be established to ensure consistency is applied.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies suggested that the matter should be explored further with Schools through specific questions on their management of the policy with responses collated for further discussions at the next USC in January.

d) Revisions to Derogations of Council Approved Regulations

A document containing additional derogations to Council Approved Regulations was circulated to members.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that these derogations are in addition to, and not revisions of, those circulated at the previous USC on 21 November 2017. The derogations included refer specifically to programmes in Nursing and Midwifery and Medicine and relate to non-compensation of modules. However, further information is expected from the School of Nursing and Midwifery on compensation within modules in light of the curriculum review process. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies Committee requested that the derogations be recommended to Council with incorporation of the additional information from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and that the document return to a future meeting of USC for noting.

The USC recommended that the derogations go forward to the next Council meeting with clarification on the outstanding derogation matters. The item will then return to USC for noting.

e) Upcoming Matters

1. Broad Curriculum Transition
2. Approved modules

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided a brief update on ongoing work in Sub-group 3: Trinity Electives and Approved Modules on managing the transition from Broad Curriculum to Trinity Electives.

She also reminded members that whilst the Guidelines for Approved Modules had been available since last May, there was little sense of activity 'on the ground' in terms

of identifying modules which could be opened up to students from other disciplines. It was now time to reactivate the discussion. She noted that Directors will be key in moving this forward and flagged that these items will be discussed more fully at the next Undergraduate Studies Committee in January.

USC/17-18/041 Minutes

USC noted the following minutes:

- 1. Minutes of the Marino Institute of Education Associated College Degrees Committee (MIE ACDC), Wednesday 10th May, 2017**