Programme Handbook Policy

1.   Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, herein referred to as Trinity, recognises that programme handbooks are a key method to communicate information to students on taught programmes of study. Trinity is committed to ensuring that handbooks on all taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are accessible and meet standards that reflect good practice in higher education.

2.   Purpose

This policy will establish minimum requirements and good practice recommendations for handbooks across all taught programmes within College, improving transparency and accessibility of information for students.

3.   Benefits

3.1   Programme handbooks provide students with information and academic regulations regarding their programme of study and may be utilised to stipulate further programme requirements, e.g. professional placement requirements or study abroad, or to draw attention to the new programme architecture.

3.2   Student awareness of College policies that affect the experience of Teaching & Learning, e.g. [Plagiarism Policy](#) and [Appeals Policy (Academic Progress)](#)

3.3   Handbooks can act as a tool for recruitment, providing prospective students with detailed insight on academic and student life within Trinity.

4. Scope

4.1 A programme handbook will be published annually for each taught postgraduate degree, undergraduate degree, diploma, certificate or foundation course leading to an award by Trinity College Dublin or the University of Dublin. This policy does not apply to courses delivered by Trinity's linked providers.

4.2 The model for the handbook will take the form of a School, Programme, a Year or a Subject handbook. Academic Units are responsible for choosing the appropriate format for the Handbook. This may require the use of two models to address changes where existing programmes are phased out in order to implement new and/or revised programmes. Schools can present information common across programmes in a School/department wide handbook, and provide programme specific information in separate programme handbooks, which link to the School/department wide handbook.

5. Principles

5.1 Handbooks are a key information resource for current and prospective students.

5.2 Information contained in handbooks will be consistent with the information set out in the College Calendar and Academic Policies approved by Board and Council. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the University Calendar and information contained in programme handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations for that Academic Year will prevail.

5.3 Where cross Faculty, School and/or departments contribute to the delivery of the programme leading to an award, such as Joint Honors or Multidisciplinary awards, those areas will collaborate on the design and content of the handbook to ensure consistency of information from the student perspective.

6. Definitions

6.1   A handbook is a document that provides key information to students on matters relating to their programme of study and the College regulations that apply to all students.

6.2   A programme is a coherent offering of modules, including elements such as internships and dissertations, which lead to the achievement of defined learning outcomes and of a particular award (e.g. a degree).

6.3   A programme strand is a series of modules which creates a distinct thematic pathway within a programme.

6.4   A subject refers to a branch of learning or discipline.

7. Policy

7.1   Handbooks will comply with the College design and accessibility requirements in digital and/or printed formats.

   i)   Trinity's Visual Identity Guidelines
   ii)   Trinity Student Handbook Template
   iii) Accessible Information Policy

7.2   Appendix 1 outlines core content items for programme handbooks. The Handbooks will contain items specified in Appendix 1 as core content or will at a minimum signpost where detailed information relating to the core content is available, e.g. VLE, MyTCD, or College web address. Appendix 1 will be updated on an annual basis and published on the Academic Affairs website, and Graduate Studies website respectively for reference. Appendix 2 contains two templates (School/department generic content and programme handbook specific information) that may be used by Schools/departments in developing Handbooks.

7.3   Handbooks will be updated each academic year and will be accessible to students on the Friday preceding the Postgraduate Orientation in Michaelmas Term or College Orientation weeks, as applicable to the programme. Where programmes have approved start dates outside of the normal Academic Year Structure publication will fall no later than the Friday before the start date.

Where core content aligns with the College Calendar and where the Calendar is not available ahead of the deadline for handbook publication, the handbook will reference the web address where the Calendar will be published. Once the College Calendar for that Academic Year is published, the entry from that Calendar will prevail as per the General Regulations of the College Calendar and Principle 5.2 of this policy.

7.4   Handbooks will be published in totality at:

i)   School and/or Programme Website, and/or
ii)   The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE),
      and,
iii) A minimum of one hard copy in large print will be available in the relevant school or programme office, and,
iv)   A hard copy will be made available to students on request.

7.5   Once published, students and staff will comply with the information set out in the handbook for the indicated academic session.

7.6   Changes to the published handbook should be avoided, however:

a.) in rare and exceptional circumstances, and provided the changes do not affect the form, workload[1] or weighting of assessment(s), the award of the degree and/or the programme learning outcomes, changes to the published handbook are allowed through the publication of an addendum to the Handbook. In this case, all students who are affected by the change will be advised in advance of the change.

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[1] Workload refers to duration of examination, word-count, number of lab reports, etc.

b.) where changes to the published handbook do affect the form, workload or weighting of assessment(s), the award of the degree and/or the programme learning outcomes, a formal notification will be sent to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Dean of Graduate Studies. They will confirm if the change can be implemented or if it must wait until the following academic year. Where approved, the school will consult with the affected students and/or their representatives prior to implementing the change.

8. Responsibility

8.1 Directors of Teaching and Learning, or their nominees, will ensure the accuracy of programme handbook information and that the policy is implemented at local level. In order to facilitate a review of handbooks, programme staff will circulate handbooks to appropriate Directors of Teaching and Learning prior to publication.

8.2 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies oversees this policy for handbooks relating to undergraduate programmes.

8.3 The Dean of Graduate Studies oversees this policy for handbooks relating to postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes.

9. Related Documents

9.1 [College Calendar](#)

9.2 [NALA Plain English Guidelines](#)

9.3 [Trinity Student Handbook Templates](#)

9.4 [Trinity Accessible Information Policy](#)

9.5 [Policy on Trinity Virtual Learning Environment](#)

9.6 [Trinity Visual Identity Guidelines](#)

10.   Document Control

10.1   Date approved: 20 June 2018

10.2   Date of most recent review: March 2020

10.3   Date of next review: Academic Year 2023/2024

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*Please note the order of items in the appendix is not prescriptive. Programmes should use their local expertise and student feedback to ensure items are in an order appropriate to their programme. This version of the Appendix applies to Academic Year **2021-22**.*

Please note that reference/source URLs may change due to the updating of policies.

Content of a generic nature – can be provided in a stand-alone School/department handbook. School/department Handbook template (see Appendix 2).

Section General	Item	Description/Further Information	Reference/Source
Organisation & Structure	Title Page	Stating the School, Programme, Academic Year and Year of Study, if applicable	Trinity Visual Identity Guidelines Trinity Student Handbook Template
Organisation & Structure	Organisation	Contents Page Glossary **Standard Text:** Alternative formats of the Handbook can be made on request.	Trinity Student Handbook Template Accessible Information Policy
Organisation & Structure	Statement on General Regulations	**Standard Text:** In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the University Calendar and information contained in programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.	Calendar, Part II, General Regulations and Information, Section II, Item 12 Calendar, Part III, General Regulations, Section I
General Information	Student Supports Co-curricular activities TCDSU, GSU & student representation structures	PDF developed, maintained and hosted by Student Services.	Student Supports
General Information	Emergency Procedure	**Standard Text:** In the event of an emergency, **dial Security Services on extension 1999** Security Services provide a 24-hour service to the college community, 365 days a year. They are the liaison to the Fire, Garda and	

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		Ambulance services and all staff and students are advised to always telephone extension 1999 (+353 1 896 1999) in case of an emergency. Should you require any emergency or rescue services on campus, you must contact Security Services. This includes chemical spills, personal injury or first aid assistance. It is recommended that all students save at least one emergency contact in their phone under ICE (In Case of Emergency).	
General Information*	Data Protection	Link to website	Data Protection for Student Data
General Information*	Research Ethics	On relevant programmes, Schools should provide relevant links and information on good practice in research, as well as information on College and Faculty policies and procedures.	Policy on Good Research Practice
General Information	Key Locations	Include Programme Offices, Laboratories, Online Learning Environments, Libraries, Academic Registry, Places of Faith/Prayer Rooms, Photocopiers and any relevant introductory information on these locations	Blackboard Academic Registry
Teaching & Learning	Plagiarism & Referencing Guidance	**Standard Text** to be copied from the Calendar with a link to the Plagiarism Policy included. A link to the Library Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism and a link to the Declaration text for submitted assignments.	Calendar, Part B, General Regulations and Information Calendar, Part III, General Regulations & Information, Section I 'Plagiarism' Plagiarism Policy Library Guides - Avoiding Plagiarism

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		Should there be local policy on referencing or programme copy of the Plagiarism declaration, relevant links and/or details to inform students.	Plagiarism Declaration
Teaching & Learning	Explanation of ECTS Weighting	**Standard Text:** The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives of a module or programme of study. It is designed to enable academic recognition for periods of study, to facilitate student mobility and credit accumulation and transfer. The ECTS is the recommended credit system for higher education in Ireland and across the European Higher Education Area. The ECTS weighting for a module is a measure of the student input or workload required for that module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, laboratory classes, examinations, clinical attendance, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate. There is no intrinsic relationship between the credit volume of a module and its level of difficulty. The European norm for full-time study over one academic year is 60 credits. 1 credit represents 20-25 hours estimated student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 200-250 hours	Description of ECTS for use in Course Handbooks

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		of student input including class contact time, assessments and examinations. ECTS credits are awarded to a student only upon successful completion of the programme year. Progression from one year to the next is determined by the programme regulations. Students who fail a year of their programme will not obtain credit for that year even if they have passed certain component. Exceptions to this rule are one-year and part-year visiting students, who are awarded credit for individual modules successfully completed.	
General Information	Health and Safety Statements	Applicable information relating to health and safety in the classroom, laboratories or other locations as relevant	
General Information	COVID-19 Information	Information and links relating to COVID-19 updates.	TCD Coronavirus TCD Statements HSE Coronavirus
Scholarships & Prizes	Foundation Scholarships	Details on the College regulations for achievement, as well as the structure and duration of the examinations for the programme.	Calendar, Part II, Foundation and Non-Foundation Scholarships
Scholarships & Prizes	Prizes, medals and other scholarships	Locally awarded items, including eligibility and information on how each item is awarded.	
Teaching & Learning	Absence from Examinations	**Standard Text** to be copied from the Calendar.	Calendar, Part B, General Regulations and Information Calendar, Part III, Section III, 'Examinations, Assessment and Progression' Academic Policies

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Teaching & Learning	Reference to Relevant University Regulations	Add links to University regulations, policies and procedures	Academic Policies Student Complaints Procedure Dignity & Respect Policy Equality Policy

Core Content for Programme Handbooks. Programme Handbook Template (see Appendix 2).			
General Programme Information	Introduction	To be written by the Head of Programme or their nominee	
General Programme Information	Contact Details	Contact details for all staff members in the School can be provided in the School/department handbook. A list of staff involved in the management, coordination and delivery of the programme should be provided in the programme handbook.	
General Information	Key Locations	May include Programme Offices, Laboratories, Online Learning Environments, Libraries, Academic Registry, Places of Faith/Prayer Rooms, Photocopiers and any relevant introductory information on these locations	Blackboard Academic Registry
General Programme Information	Key Dates	Important dates and submission deadlines	
General Programme Information	Timetable	Where the timetable is through MyTCD a statement stating this to be provided. Where it is published elsewhere, a clear statement on accessibility of timetable.	My TCD
General Programme Information	Internships/ Placements for Credit	To include information about Field Trips, Professional Placements or Internships.	Internship and Placement Policy
Teaching & Learning*	Programme Architecture	Information on the programme's architecture and the available pathways to award.	Trinity Education Programme Architecture and Pathways

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		Undergraduate programmes. This information should include the following caveat: Available pathways are subject to change and may be dependent on capacity. For Postgraduate programmes, this would include pathways towards a Certificate, Diploma, or Masters.	
Teaching & Learning	Programme Structure & Workload	List of modules identified by code and title, their ECTS weightings, and a general statement on the learning workload to include approximate hours of self-directed learning or research.	
Teaching & Learning	Study Abroad	Specific to the Programme	
Teaching & Learning*	Registration (UG only)	Insert one of the following, if appropriate: **Registration for JF students on year 2 pathway for Academic Year 21/22** Students in Year 1 of INSERT COURSE NAME HERE will be invited during the Trinity term to select the year 2 pathway, which may include taking up a new subject as a minor (SH programmes only) in Year 2; taking Open Modules & Trinity Electives, and/or core-optional modules. Students will be advised of how they will do this and where they will find relevant module information several weeks before they are invited to register. Timetabling may restrict the	

		availability of modules to individual students. **Registration for SF students on year 3 pathway for Academic Year 21/22** Students in Year 2 of INSERT COURSE NAME HERE will be invited during the Trinity term to indicate their preferences for Year 3 of their studies, including Trinity Electives and Open Modules as per their course structure. Students will be advised on how to do this, and where to access the relevant module information several weeks before they are invited to register. Timetabling may restrict the availability of modules to individual students.	
Teaching & Learning	Coursework Requirements	In-course assessment and examination arrangements, including marking conventions, rubrics and grade descriptors, as well as, guidelines on presentation and submission of work for assessment purposes (including details of penalties applied for late submission, word count and declaration for plagiarism). Reference to academic support services or online modules may be relevant here.	Student Learning Development
Teaching & Learning	Marking Scale	All undergraduate programmes will be required to provide clear grade descriptors representing a pass. (Regulation 3: Progression Threshold) Where the Institutional Marking Scale is employed programmes may refer to the Calendar.	Calendar, Part B, General Regulations and Information

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		Programmes where this scale is not in use, such as a number of those in the Faculty of Health Sciences, must include information on the School/Programme Marking scale.	
Teaching & Learning	Progression Regulations	Where a Programme or Subject has specific regulations, or where there are derogations to the General Regulations, these must be published in full in the handbook	[Calendar, Part II, General Regulations & Information](#) [Calendar, Part II, Part C](#) [Calendar, Part III, Section III 'Examinations, Assessment and Progression' and 'Assessment and Progression Regulations'](#)
Teaching & Learning	Awards	Degree Options available to Students on the undergraduate programmes, e.g. Single Honors, Joint Honors, Major with Minor, or Multidisciplinary, where Exit Awards (B.A. (Ord.) exist this information must be included. For postgraduate taught programmes, e.g. PGrad.Cert, PGrad. Dip, MSc or MA, where Exit Awards (PGrad.Dip) exist this information must be included. A statement on the QQI – NFQ Level must be included.	[National Framework for Qualifications](#) [Trinity Pathways](#) [Trinity Courses](#)
Teaching and Learning	Professional and Statutory Body Accreditation	Where the programme is subject to professional accreditation, an overview of additional requirements and links to the body and relevant policies	
Teaching and Learning	Careers Information & events	Specific to the Programme and links to Trinity Careers Service	[Trinity Careers Service](#) [MyCareer](#)
Teaching & Learning*	External Examiner	The name and title of the External Examiner.	[Procedure for the transfer of students assessed work to external examiners](#)

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		If the External Examiner is from outside the EU/EHEA the student is to be informed that their personal information i.e. exam script is going outside the EU/EHEA.	
Teaching & Learning	Learning Outcomes	Programme/subject level learning outcomes for all award pathways at undergraduate-level, or postgraduate-level, e.g. PG. Cert, PG. Dip, or MSc, in which the content is offered.	
Teaching & Learning	Graduate Attributes (UG Programmes)	A clear statement on the graduate attributes that are achieved within the programme/learning outcomes	
Teaching & Learning*	Capstone (UG Programmes)	The Capstone project — though defined differently by different subjects — is the common element across all degree exit routes and is weighted at 20 ECTS. It requires a significant level of independent research by the student. The Capstone should: • be an integrative exercise that allows students to showcase skills and knowledge which they have developed across a range of subject areas and across the four years of study. • result in the production of a significant piece of original work by the student. • provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their attainment of the four graduate attributes: to think independently, to communicate effectively, to develop continuously and to act responsibly. Students should refer to School and College Policies and Procedures with regards to	[Capstone website](#) [Policy on Good Research Practice](#)

		Research guidelines and ethical practices.	
Teaching & Learning*	Module Descriptor Preface	Insert Text: The School reserves the right to amend the list of available modules and to withdraw and add modules. Timetabling may restrict the availability of modules to individual students.	
Teaching & Learning	Module Descriptors & Compulsory Reading List	Full Module Descriptors for Core and Open Modules	A link to College-hosted website or VLE may be used in place of full descriptors.
Teaching & Learning	Attendance Requirements	Both College-level and Programme-Level, programmes should include information on self-certification procedures, and where medical certificates should be returned to. Where the professional statutory accreditation bodies specify attendance requirements, including those that apply to professional placements, these should be in the handbook. Regarding attendance requirement during COVID-19 refer to statement above under **General Information**	Calendar, Part B, General Regulations and Information Calendar, Part III, General Regulations and Information, Section I 'Attendance and Off-Books'; Section II 'Attendance'; Section III 'Attendance, Registration, Extensions'; Section IV 'Attendance and Examinations'
Teaching & Learning	Feedback and Evaluation	Statement on College requirements for evaluation and feedback, as well as, an outline of additional feedback practices at a local level	Student Evaluation and Feedback Student Partnership Policy Procedure for the conduct of Focus Groups