

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

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A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 11.00am in the Board Room.

Present: Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Patrick Geoghegan (*Chair*)  
Dean of Students, Professor Amanda Piesse  
Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms Orla Sheehan  
Professor Dirk Johannsen, Confederal School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics  
Professor Jarlath Kileen, School of English  
Professor Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics  
Professor Graham Harper, School of Physics  
Professor Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities  
Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine  
Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, School of Chemistry  
Professor Pádraig de Paor, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies  
Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
Professor Eleanor Denny, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
Professor Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Professor Mary Lee Rhodes, School of Business  
Professor Dan Bradley, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM  
Ms Cliona Hannon, Director Trinity Access Programmes  
Ms Sinead Leydon, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Christine Poulter, School of Drama, Film and Music  
Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education  
Professor Francis O'Toole, Director of BESS  
Professor Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Professor Dermot O'Dwyer, School of Engineering  
Professor Michael Gormley, School of Psychology  
Professor Ivana Bacik, School of Law  
Professor David Chew, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)  
Professor Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science  
Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet  
Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer  
Mr Daniel Ferrick, Education Officer, Students' Union

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Mr Trevor Peare (Library Representative); Professor Daniel Faas, Department of Sociology (for item USC/12-13/055); Ms Deborah Kelleher, Director, RIAM (for item USC/12-13/056).

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#### USC/12-13/053 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013 were approved subject to the following amendment in item USC/12-13/047 (ii):

*Replace:* The scheme would be run on a pilot basis in 2013/14 for entry in September 2014, and formally adopted in 2014/15 for entry in September 2015.

*With:* The data will be analysed for the students entering in September 2013, to assess the implications, although there will be no changes to the way students are admitted through DARE this year. The scheme will be formally adopted for entry in September 2014.

**USC/12-13/054 Matters arising**

USC/12-13/045: The course proposal for a Bachelor in Science in Radiation Therapy in conjunction with Singapore Institute of Technology had received positive feedback from the external reviewer. The course proposal will be an agenda item for the next meeting of Council.

USC/12-13/046: The report from the Taskforce on Online Education was favourably received by Council. The Dean of Graduate Studies was drafting a business plan for the use of online education in College.

**USC/12-13/055 Report of the Task Force on Mobility**

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The Report of the Task Force on Mobility: Barriers to Outward and Inward Student Mobility, dated March 2013 had been circulated along with a memorandum from the Chair of the Task Force, dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013. The Senior Lecturer welcomed Professor Daniel Faas to the meeting for this item. Professor Faas chaired the Task Force on Mobility which had been established at the request of the Senior Lecturer and the Vice President for Global Relations. Professor Faas spoke to the circulated report.

Professor Faas advised that the Task Force had identified many barriers to both outward and inward mobility in College. Some of the impediments to mobility were of a structural nature, and outside the remit of the USC, and others of an academic nature. Mobility was found to vary greatly across faculties in College. The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences engaged more in student mobility than the Faculties of Health Sciences and Engineering, Mathematics and Science and few courses meet the Global Relations Strategy key performance indicator of sending 30% of a cohort abroad.

The following academic barriers to mobility were noted in the report:

- inadequate provision to repeat assessment where examinations were failed
- issues with coordination and responsibility in some disciplines in College
- insufficient knowledge in some disciplines about new host universities and available exchanges
- a lack of administrative support structures
- issues with the structure of some courses
- language issues; students usually prefer exchanges where teaching is offered through English.

The following points were raised in the ensuing discussion:

- sufficient staff resources must be provided to Schools to support student mobility
- a discipline coordinator should take responsibility for incoming exchange students
- it is often not academically appropriate for a visiting student to take one half of a one-year module
- exchanges that are shorter than one term, and placements that take place outside of the academic term structure, were not captured in the report
- the mission of the new Academic Registry is to provide an integrated customer focused approach to the provision of its services. This new team will include members of the current International and Study Abroad team, and part of its remit will be to provide a quality service to all students including incoming and outbound students.

USC noted and approved the following recommendations:

*Recommendation 3.1.1: Outward mobility: Students are obliged to follow local regulations in so far as they exist. Where repeat exams do not exist, students in consultation with their TCD mobility coordinators should seek alternative assessments from the host institutions. Inward mobility: Where an international (Erasmus, non-EU exchange or Visiting) student fails a Trinity examination an alternative assessment such as an essay should be set by the host institution.*

Recommendation 3.2.4 was amended and subsequently approved. The approved amended recommendation is:

*One semester modules should be self-contained with regard to both content and assessment. Where visiting students take a one-term module, appropriate assessment will be available to them during that term.*

Recommendation 3.2.5: *Where pre-requisites (i.e. mandatory modules) exist students in consultation with their mobility coordinators are asked to identify equivalents in their host institution. Where Disciplines/Schools are able to identify equivalents, these should be highlighted to students and noted within the Discipline/School. Where Disciplines/Schools are unable to identify equivalents, efforts should be made to look for alternative host institutions. Some Disciplines/Schools within the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science could explore the possibility of setting up Erasmus exchanges where an agreement has been made with institutions abroad that students can be nominated after their Senior Freshman examinations in May.*

Recommendation 3.2.7: *In the interests of fairness the same conversion tables should be used for all Trinity students who return from an EU or non-EU exchange. In the first instance we propose that the tables in Appendix 2 be adopted across College. However, we recognise that these will need to be reviewed on an annual basis by the Global Relations Committee, as more information becomes available and new exchange agreements are signed with other institutions. Schools/Disciplines that have more refined tables, for instance for universities within a specific country, may continue to use these as long as they are broadly in line with the grade categories proposed in this report. The new tables in Appendix 2 replace any existing College conversion schemes including the Study Abroad US Grades Conversion Table approved by Undergraduate Studies Committee in June 2010. (Appendix 2 is attached to the minutes)*

Recommendation 3.4: *Each School's Teaching and Learning Committee should review annually the International Student Barometer results and consider appropriate changes at the programme or course level. We note that the Vice President for Global Relations has been asked by Planning Group to develop an implementation that further responds to these issues.*

The Senior Lecturer thanked Professor Faas and the Task Force for their work.

#### USC/12-13/056 Course Proposals - from RIAM for accreditation

- XX A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and course proposals for the Bachelor in Music Composition and the Bachelor in Music Performance had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Director of the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) to the meeting for this item. The Senior Lecturer advised that RIAM had recently become an associated college of Trinity and students entering their programmes in 2013/14 will have their degrees conferred by the University of Dublin. An Associated Colleges Degrees Committee (ACDC) for RIAM would shortly be set up and would be chaired by the Registrar. The ACDC would be responsible for quality assurance processes pertaining to degrees from RIAM which would be accredited by Trinity. The Senior Lecturer noted that the course proposals had received strong support from the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Director of RIAM introduced the two course proposals.

#### Bachelor in Music Composition

This programme aims to bring students to the highest level in music composition, supported by academic and performance studies aimed at developing a composer with the skills and attributes to make a successful professional career. The annual cohort is approximately four students.

Bachelor in Music Performance

This programme aims to bring students to the highest performing level, and to enhance the interpretative and intellectual qualities of their performance through supporting academic and professional practice studies. The course was created for exceptionally gifted students and has a number of well-known, successful graduates. The course is very attractive to the global market. The course has two pathways: instrumental and vocal. The annual cohort is approximately sixteen students.

All modules for both courses are delivered by RIAM staff at the RIAM premises in Westland Row. The library representative noted that although the RIAM students would not be registered students of Trinity, they would be able to access Trinity's library resources through the 'Music PAL' scheme.

Admission to the courses is currently administered through direct application to RIAM. In response to a question, the Director advised that she would consider alternative admission routes for the courses- such as entry through non-traditional entry routes.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the Director for presenting the course proposals to the meeting. Members welcomed the collaboration with RIAM and approved the two course proposals. The proposals would be sent for external review and to Council for approval.

**USC/12-13/057 Senior Lecturer / Dean of Undergraduate Studies' Update**

1) The Senior Lecturer reported that the Central Scholarship Committee had recently met prior to the announcements on Trinity Monday. It had noted that, despite there being more female than male students, less female students present for the Scholarship examinations. This matter would be an agenda item at a future USC meeting.

2) The Senior Lecturer reported that he is continuing work on the Trinity Education document. He will shortly circulate this document to members and will bring a draft discussion paper to the next Council meeting.

3) A reception had taken place in the Provost's House to thank the student ambassadors who had taken part in the Trinity Explore website. Details of Trinity Explore had been sent to all schools on the island and a good response was received. The Senior Lecturer noted that the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills had spoken at the reception and had praised the students for their involvement. Trinity Explore was now in Phase two which would involve videos of courses and also clubs and societies.

4) Members of the USC will be aware of publicity about the Minister of Education and Skills' announcement about the progress made on supporting the transition between second level and higher education for students. The areas being addressed are outlined in a paper, Supporting a Better Transition from Second Level to Higher Education: Key Directions and next Steps which contains three key commitments to: reduce the number of degree programmes in higher education and make them more broadly-based; reduce the number of grading bands (A1, A2, B1, B2 etc); and address problematic predictability in the Leaving Certificate exams.

The Senior Lecturer noted that, further to Trinity's agreement to reduce its number of course codes, the CAO would be unable to use the proposed suffix system for TSM courses in 2013/14.

5) The Senior Lecturer drew interested members' attention to the publication of an article on Trinity's admission feasibility study in the Harvard Gazette. The Senior Lecturer advised that he and the Access Officer would attend the Harvard Summer Institute on College Admissions.

**USC/12-13/058 Recommendations for the overhaul of the student evaluation system**

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A memorandum from the Assistant Academic Secretary, dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 had been circulated with the report of the IRIU Working Group sub-group, dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013, and a proposed implementation plan on the recommendations. The Assistant Academic Secretary spoke to the documents. She noted that the review of College which had been carried out on behalf of the IRIU in 2011/12 had recommended that the student evaluation system should be overhauled. In particular, the reviewers had noted that the evaluation system should be mandatory and reviews should take place at programme level.

The IRIU Working Group set up a subgroup, chaired by the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, to consider how the reviewers' recommendations could best be met. The Undergraduate Studies Committee was asked to consider, in particular, the sub-group's recommendations that:

- there should be mandatory annual evaluation of undergraduate modules
- there should be regular (every two years) programme evaluation surveys
- there should be regular (every two years) surveys of the student experience and student services
- Schools should hold mandatory curriculum reviews linked to the existing cycle of School reviews.

Members discussed the issues surrounding the proposed changes to the student evaluation system. Many members welcomed the proposed changes and in particular welcomed the opportunity to usefully apply the feedback received from students. The Assistant Academic Secretary wondered if there was a case to be made that module evaluations conducted at School-level receive a higher response rate than when they are conducted centrally. Whatever the format of evaluation it should include a question on overall satisfaction with the module which can be used for comparative purposes. It was noted that questions should not solely be based about a student's enjoyment of a module/programme, but also how efficiently a student felt it prepared them and equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills. While one member noted that it may not be reliable to carry out a module evaluation while a module was ongoing, it was noted that this allowed for efficient closing of the feedback loop and ensured that students were easily contactable within College. A member commented that students could be surveyed a few years following graduation to review how successfully Trinity had prepared them for life and employment after College.

Members raised a number of concerns regarding the proposals. There was unease about the extra workload that annual module evaluation would bring to Directors of Teaching and Learning. Many courses are externally accredited and there is already a large workload associated with this process. The possibility of overloading students with surveys was also a concern. One member of the committee raised strong concerns about the initiative. He advised the committee of a wider debate concerning the use of student surveys as an evaluation mechanism. He felt the survey response rate was often too low to be reliable and did not think substantial changes should be made to courses based on a 35% or lower response rate from students. He also voiced his concerns with ranking lecturers based on student feedback. The Senior Lecturer invited the member to send to him the relevant literature and references surrounding the wider debate about the student evaluation process. The Senior Lecturer confirmed that student surveys would not be used in the promotions process.

The Senior Lecturer thanked members for their contribution. Discussion at this meeting will inform the proposals on student evaluation which will be brought to Council.

**USC/12-13/059 Calendar Changes 2013-2014**

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Calendar changes for course entries in the three faculties and in the Two-Subject Moderatorship had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Office of the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, to the meeting for

this item. Ms De Brunner advised that further work on harmonisation was required for certain courses. User acceptance testing of SITS was ongoing with the GeneSIS team and it had been highlighted that in some areas, relevant staff members were not familiar with the new harmonised regulations. Directors of Teaching and Learning were asked to ensure the relevant people in their areas were made aware of harmonisation regulations.

The annual editing and reviewing process for Calendar changes was ongoing and Ms De Brunner advised that further changes to course entries should be submitted by the following week. Changes in the General Regulations section of the Calendar would be brought to the next meeting of USC. Calendar changes would be brought to a future meeting of Council.

**USC/12-13/060 Any other business**

A member voiced concerns that the draft examination timetables had been circulated to Schools with little time for checking and in a format which made that checking difficult.

**USC/12-13/061 Items for noting**

USC noted the following item:

Course Proposal from Marino Institute of Education for validation, Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education), dated 2013.

**Appendix 2a: European Erasmus/Study Abroad Conversion Table**

<b>IRELAND Trinity College</b>	<b>F 0 – 39</b>	<b>III 40 – 49</b>	<b>II.2 50 – 59</b>	<b>II.1 60 – 69</b>	<b>I 70+</b>
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	5 Nicht genügend	4 Genügend	3 Befriedigend	2 Gut	1 Sehr Gut
<b>BELGIUM</b>	0 – 9	10 – 11	12 – 13	14 – 15	16+
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC*</b>	4	3**	3**	2	1
<b>DENMARK</b>	-3 – 0	02	4	7	10 – 12
<b>FINLAND (2 scales)</b>	0	1 – 2 1 – 1.5	2 – 3 2	3 – 4 2.5	4 – 5 3
<b>FRANCE</b>	0 – 7	8 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 15	16+
<b>GERMANY</b>	6.0 – 4.7	Noch ausreichend – Noch Befriedigend 4.5 – 3.7	Befriedigend to Noch Gut 3.5 – 2.7	Gut to Sehr Gut 2.5 – 1.7	Sehr Gut to Ausgezeichnet 1.5 – 1.0
<b>GREECE</b>	0 – 5	5 – 5.9	6 – 6.9	7 – 8.4	8.5+
<b>ITALY</b>	0 – 17	18 – 22	23 – 26	27 – 29	30 – 30 e lode
<b>MALTA</b>	F 0 – 44	D – D+ 45 – 54	C – C+ 55 – 69	B – B+ 70 – 79	A – A+ 80+
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	0 – 5.7	5.8 – 6.4	6.5 – 7.2	7.3 – 8.2	8.3+
<b>POLAND</b>	0 – 2	3 – 3.5	4	4.5	5 – 5!
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	0 – 9	10 – 11	12 – 13	14 – 15	16+
<b>SPAIN</b>	Suspensio 0 – 4.9	Aprobado 5 – 5.9	6 – 6.9	Notable 7 – 8.9	Sobresaliente 9 Sobresaliente Sobresaliente 10 Matricula de honor (80+)
<b>SWEDEN</b>	U 0 – 49	G** 50 – 55	G** 56 – 70	VG** 71 – 90	VG** 90+
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	0 - 2.75	3 – 3.5	3.75 – 4.25	4.5 – 5.5	5.75 - 6
<b>TURKEY</b>	0 – 49	50 – 64	65 – 74	75 – 84	85+
<b>UK (England, Northern Ireland &amp; Wales)</b>	F 0 – 39	D – D+ 40 – 49	C – C+ 50 – 59	B – B+ 60 – 69	A – A- 70+
<b>UK (Scotland)</b>	0- 8	9 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 17	18 - 20
<b>RUSSIA</b>	20+ 2	30+ 3	40+ 4 –	50+** 5 (Excellent)**	50+** 5 (Excellent)**

**IMPORTANT:**

- The aim of the conversion table is to ensure that all results are treated equally by all disciplines.
- If for exceptional reasons a discipline deviates from the table, they must inform the International Admissions and Study Abroad Office in writing, stating the reasons for the deviation. Approved deviations include the School of Business (for Business Schools in France only) and the School of Law which uses more refined university by university grades conversion tables in line with the above grade categories.
- Where there is a range of equivalent results, the top of the range should be used unless evidence is provided to suggest otherwise.

**FOOTNOTES:**

\* Charles University in Prague might provide more detailed results on request. Students should take a copy of the Trinity grading scheme with them and present it to individual lecturers on arrival as agreed with the International Office in Prague.

\*\* Where a mark spans two Trinity grades the higher grade may be awarded where supporting documentation is received.

## Appendix 2b: Non-European Study Abroad Conversion Table

### Current Exchanges:

IRELAND Trinity College	F 0 – 39	III 40 – 49	II.2 50 – 59	II.1 60 – 69	I 70+
AUSTRALIA	0 – 49 Fail	50 – 59 Pass	60 – 69 H3	70 – 79 <sup>a</sup> H2A - H2B	80 – 100 <sup>1</sup> H1
CANADA	0 – 49 F	50 – 59 D – C	60 – 69 C+ – B-	70 – 79 B – B+	80 – 100 A – A
CHINA	0 – 59	60 – 69	70 – 79	80 – 89	90 – 100
JAPAN	0 – 59	60 – 69	70 – 79	80 – 89	90 – 100
SINGAPORE	0 – 3.19	3.2 – 3.49	3.5 – 3.99	4.0 – 4.49	4.5 – 5.0
USA	F 0	D – D+ 0.7 – 1.3	C – C+ 1.7 – 2.3	B – B+ 2.7 – 3.3	A – A 3.7 – 4.0
<p><b>Important:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where there is a range of results, the top of the range should be used unless evidence is provided to suggest otherwise.</li> <li>It may be necessary to revise this table annually as new exchanges and information and feedback is received.</li> </ol>					
<p><b>ECTS equivalents:</b></p> <p>Please see the ECTS Equivalents Credit Table for UK &amp; Non-European Study Abroad for detailed information of ECTS equivalents for each of the above countries.</p>					
<p><b>Footnotes:</b></p> <p>a. Some Australian universities consider 85 – 100 as a First and 75 – 84 as an Upper Second.</p>					

### Potential Future Exchanges:

IRELAND Trinity College	F 0 – 39	III 40 – 49	II.2 50 – 59	II.1 60 – 69	I 70+
BRAZIL	0 – 49	50 – 64	65 – 74	75 – 84	85+
INDIA	0 – 39	40 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65 – 100

## Appendix 2c: ECTS Equivalents Credit Table for UK & Non-European Study Abroad Exchanges

### Current Exchanges:

Country	University	ECTS Equivalent
AUSTRALIA	University of Melbourne (Victoria)	50 Points = 30 ECTS (e.g. 12.5 points module = 7.5 ECTS)
	Australian National University (Canberra)	24 Units = 30 ECTS (e.g. 6 unit module = 7.5 ECTS)
CANADA	McGill University (Quebec)	1 credit = 2 ECTS (e.g. 10 credit module = 20 ECTS)
	University of Toronto	0.5 FCE = 6 ECTS (e.g. 1 credit module = 12 ECTS)
CHINA	Beihang University Tsinghua University Peking University	TBC
JAPAN (AHSS Faculty students only)	University of Tokyo	TBC
SINGAPORE	National University of Singapore	0.7 MCS = 1 ECTS (e.g. 7 credit module = 10 ECTS)
UK	All	2 UK credits = 1 ECTS
USA	Boston College Georgetown University University of California University of Chicago University of Massachusetts Amherst The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University of Notre Dame	US Universities operate on either a Semester or Quarter system.  1 Semester credit = 2 ECTS (e.g. 10 credit module = 20 ECTS)  Or  1 Quarter credit = 1.25 ECTS (e.g. 10 credit module = 12.5 ECTS)

### Potential Future Exchanges:

Country	University	ECTS Equivalent
BRAZIL	University of São Paulo	TBC
INDIA	TBC	TBC