

XX = Council relevance

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 19th May 2015 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin (*Chair*)
 Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
 Ms Katie Byrne, Education Officer, Students' Union
 Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
 Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet
 Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative
 Professor Jarlath Killeen, School of English
 Professor Derek O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 Professor David Wilkins, School of Mathematics
 Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 Professor Christine Poulter, School of Drama, Film and Music
 Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Professor Charles Patterson, School of Physics
 Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
 Professor Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
 Professor Des Ryan, School of Law
 Professor Rachel Moss, School of Histories and Humanities
 Professor Howard Smith, School of Psychology
 Professor Fáinche Ryan, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology (Confederal)
 Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine
 Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
 Professor James Hanrahan, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
 Professor Sarah Smyth, Director of TSM
 Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer

Apologies: Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes
 Ms Ciara Coughlan, Student Representative
 Professor Elaine Moriarty, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
 Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
 Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry
 Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education
 Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Director of Academic Registry, Ms Leona Coady, and Mr Neil Brennan, Academic Registry for item USC/14-15/070; Ms Ewa Sadowska and Ms Sarah Coyle, Trinity Teaching and Learning, for item USC/14-15/077

USC/14-15/070 Report of the Academic Transcript Working Party

A report and sample transcripts from the Academic Transcript Working Party had been circulated. The Director of Academic Registry, Ms Leona Coady, and Mr Neil Brennan, attended the meeting for this item.

A working party, chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, had been set up in March 2015 to consider standardisation of transcript production and issue across the College. The Academic Registry enhancement programme provided an opportunity to deliver on the implementation of the recommendations of the working party. The terms of reference of the working party were to:

- Define a College-wide standard for academic transcripts;

- Consider the centralisation of transcript production to the Academic Registry;
- Consider the standardisation of charges for the issue of transcripts;
- Implications for adherence to data protection College policies and legislation.

The working party recommended the centralised production of transcripts within the Academic Registry and acknowledged the requirement to provide transcripts in line with College policy and data protection legislation. Further functionality in SITS would be required from the software provider, Tribal, to enable centralised production.

The working party recommended the standardisation of charges as follows:

- Allowing students to view their transcript, with a watermark, via the MyTCD portal, without charge;
- Official transcripts would only be produced by the Academic Registry on official headed paper and would be provided to students prior to completion of their studies, without charge;
- An official detailed transcript would be provided to all students following the award of their qualification and upon completion of studies for visiting students, without charge;
- Requests for additional copies of official transcripts from the Academic Registry would incur a charge; the level of charge will be subject to further discussion.

The working party collected information on current practice and obtained sample transcripts both in College and from other universities across Ireland and Northern Ireland. The data that will appear on the transcripts must first exist in SITS; therefore, Schools who do not process examination results in SITS will continue with their current mechanism of transcript provision. The Director of the Academic Registry will liaise with the relevant Schools on this matter.

It was noted that where a student has passed by compensation or aggregation, this would not be noted on the first page of the transcript that provides the overall degree result; however, it would be referenced on the subsequent pages where the breakdown of marks is provided. The Director of TSM requested a change to the structure of the transcript in order to reflect more accurately the contribution of marks in the JS and SS years in TSM. In response to a member's query, it was advised that a transcript cannot be produced with a more detailed description of particular modules: this information should still be sought from the relevant School. However, acquiring this functionality will be considered for the second stage of the process.

USC approved the recommendations of the working party and the circulated academic transcripts, subject to the incorporation of minor amendments discussed at the meeting. The revised transcript templates will be circulated to USC for noting.

USC/14-15/071 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st April 2015 were approved.

USC/14-15/072 Matters arising

USC/14-15/064 The discontinuation of the Moderatorship in Irish Studies had been approved by Council at its meeting of 13th May 2015. The final intake of students will enter College in September 2015.

USC/14-15/066 The Trinity proposal in response to the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education Professional Development Framework had also been considered by Directors of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning and would now proceed to the Academic Administration Group for further consultation.

USC/14-15/067 Council had approved the extension of the Trinity Feasibility Study in Admissions for 2015/16. Should a further extension to the study or a change to the current parameters be sought, the proposal would return to Council to seek approval.

USC/14-15/034 The SITS User Group had met on two occasions and had discussed the issues previously raised by USC. It was noted that many of these issues were

categorised as process issues by the user group and should be followed up at a different forum. A list providing an updated status of the issues was tabled and would be further updated following a future meeting of the user group.

USC/14-15/06 A member raised a concern regarding the strategy of recruiting non-EU students for a four year undergraduate degree at the same time as promoting the 2+2 structure of a joint award.

USC/14-15/073 Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's report

TGRUSE

The revised grading bands for the Leaving Certificate had been announced and will be in operation in 2017. This necessitates the development of a new common points scale and Council at its meeting of 13th May had approved four underlying principles, which will inform the development of the scale. TGRUSE will continue to work on the new points scale in conjunction with admissions officers over the next months. The proposed model will be brought to Council for approval in September 2015. Trinity will also need to translate its minimum subject requirements by September 2015 to the new grading bands. It will be necessary to ensure consistency in translating the new grades across HEIs and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer will be in further correspondence with members about this issue. It will also be necessary to further recalibrate the value of an A-Level in line with the revised LC grading bands.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer reported that no changes will be made to matriculation requirements in the foreseeable future and furthermore there will be no changes to the autonomy of university councils in determining their own admissions policies.

Prospectus 2016

A first draft of the undergraduate prospectus 2016 had been sent to the designer and a hard-copy draft was due to be received at the beginning of June. The Admissions Forum will consider the draft and whilst large scale changes could not be made at that stage, it would be possible to make minor amendments. Work to complete the prospectus will be carried out by the Marketing Manager.

Trinity Teaching Innovation Grants

The Trinity Teaching Innovation Grants will be launched in September 2015. The grant scheme is funded by a donor and will be a competitive process, intended to reward innovation in the design and delivery of research-based teaching. It is anticipated that approximately 5 awards will be made next year, up to a maximum amount of €20,000. CAPSL will be available to provide support to staff who are successful in obtaining a grant. Further information will shortly be circulated about the scheme.

USC/14-15/074 Update on the Education Project

The Education Project Steering Group had met on a further two occasions since the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer last reported. The focus of the meetings had remained on defining the attributes considered desirable in a Trinity graduate in 10 years' time. The steering group had considered the graduate attributes encouraged in other leading universities and also the work carried out by previous Senior Lecturers on the distinctive aspects of the Trinity education.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer delivered a presentation to the Committee. A narrative describing the desirable attributes of a Trinity graduate in 2025 had been developed. Graduate attributes are often linked with employability and citizenship. The three overarching or 'enabling' attributes could be acquired either inside or outside of a student's discipline. Fostering the achievement of the 'translational' attributes should be owned by individual disciplines and embedded into curricula, although they can also be developed through co-curricular activities. It will be vital to provide supports for students in acquiring these attributes, and also to support staff to enable students to better articulate their learning. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer emphasised that it will be a holistic, institution-wide process to identify and achieve the desirable attributes.

Members commented that the narrative represents a graduate of an excellent calibre, but that College must understand that it is impossible to excel at everything and indeed to prove that you have excelled at everything. Members felt College should approach the process carefully to ensure that students do not feel under more pressure to achieve in an already competitive environment. It was suggested that we should review the structure of our academic year in order to build in some 'space' for students. The Dean of Students, who was a member of the steering group, advised that this process has come about as a way to drive change and that it recognises that learning takes place outside of the classroom as well as within. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked members for their comments and asked that any further feedback be sent directly to her.

USC/14-15/75 Northern Ireland Feasibility Study

The 'Interim Report on Northern Ireland Engagement Programme (NIEP) 2014-15 and on the Feasibility Study in A-level Admissions' was circulated. The Feasibility Study in A-level Admissions, to be tested in the first instance for students from Northern Ireland, was launched on 3rd July 2014. The aim of the study was to explore if there was a fairer way of admitting A-level students to Trinity. The first students to have applied via the feasibility study will enter College in September 2015. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer reported that a total of 725 applications from Northern Ireland had been received for 2015/16, and of these, 211 were through the Feasibility Study.

One of the main challenges in terms of applications from Northern Ireland (and more broadly from A-level applicants) is converting offers to enrolments. Although the CAO system is arguably more straightforward than UCAS, the idea of conditional offers does not exist in the former. This factor may impact negatively on the conversion of offers to enrolments.

An announcement has now been made that the proposed recalibrated A-level conversion scale will be introduced for entrants in 2016/17. There will have to be a further recalibration in light of the introduction of new Leaving Certificate grading bands for 2017/18 entrants. A decision will have to be taken whether to run the feasibility study in parallel with the new conversion scale for 2016/17 entrants. It will be important to have an objective justification for continuation of the study in 2016/17.

USC/14-15/076 Report of the Plagiarism Working Group

A 'Draft Report of the Working Group on Plagiarism', dated May 2015 was circulated, together with a memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and Dean of Graduate Studies, dated 15th May 2015.

A Plagiarism Working Group was established in March 2015 and jointly chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The aims of the working group were to 1) consider the current definition of plagiarism in the Calendar, 2) to consider appropriate methods of dealing with plagiarism cases, and 3) to review current and future means of educating the College community on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

The group collected feedback from Directors of Teaching and Learning (PG and UG), reviewed policies and practices in other institutions in Ireland and abroad to identify best practice, and consulted with the Junior Dean. Current procedures and penalties were reviewed and on the basis of the group's research, the Calendar entry was reordered, presented in a more 'reader friendly' manner without compromising the content, and new examples of plagiarism were added. A matrix was also created to detail the varying levels of plagiarism in a more nuanced manner. It is hoped that the identification of different levels of plagiarism will provide more guidance to individuals when dealing with plagiarism cases.

Existing information sources across College were reviewed and the group agreed that there are a number of useful resources on integrity in academic writing and on avoiding plagiarism; however, the information is somewhat fragmented and difficult to find. The working group recommends the creation of a central online repository that will contain a centralised bank of material and provide a common source of reference for all students and staff. The Library has agreed to host this repository. The Calendar will contain a link to the repository and all course handbooks should do the same.

Another recommendation of the working group is that all students complete a signed cover sheet when submitting work for continuous assessment, confirming that the work is their own, that they understand that plagiarism is a serious offence and that they have read and understood the guidelines. This declaration should be standardized across College.

It is further proposed that an implementation group be set up to educate students on plagiarism issues. This will likely be achieved through an online module which students would be required to complete, and might be either an online package or based on the online resources created by CAPSL.

Members raised a concern that the suggested procedure for level one plagiarism - that a student should correct the work and resubmit without penalty - could be seen to confer an unfair advantage over students who had resubmitted the original work on time. Other members agreed it was appropriate to deal with level one plagiarism without penalty, but rather as a learning experience for the student. It was suggested that the working group should consider a regulation governing students who willingly provide their work to be plagiarised. Other comments included: considering use of a stamp for the submission of lab reports as the frequency of their submission could make use of the cover sheet overly burdensome, that the issue of copyright should be included, and that a section should be created to outline that borrowing from an author for language purposes (rather than for content) is also a form of plagiarism.

Members further suggested a number of editorial changes which would better articulate the meaning of parts of the document. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer outlined that while the proposed regulations are more specific than current regulations, they also allow for discretion. Further comments may be submitted directly to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer.

- XX** The document will be presented to the Graduate Studies Committee on 21st May 2015 and the comments agreed there and at USC will be incorporated prior to submission to Council.

USC/14-15/077 Joint and Dual Awards Policy

A draft of the policy on joint and dual awards, dated 14th May 2015, was circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Ewa Sadowska and Ms Sarah Coyle, Trinity Teaching and Learning, to the meeting for this item.

Offering joint and dual awards widens Trinity's collaboration with HEIs both nationally and internationally and encourages diversity in the educational opportunities for students and staff. It bolsters Trinity's reputation and enhances its profile as a leading university on the world stage. Trinity currently offers two joint awards - one in conjunction with UCD and the other with DIT; however developing strategic partnerships nationally and internationally and creating new innovative joint programmes are objectives within the Strategic Plan and it is now necessary to create a policy covering these types of awards.

Two main categories of programme structures delivered in inter-institutional partnership and the associated awards are recognised in Trinity:

1) Joint programmes

A joint programme is an integrated curriculum designed, developed and delivered collaboratively by partner HEIs. A joint programme can lead to a joint award or a multiple joint award. A joint award is conferred on behalf of all the partner institutions involved and is recognised nationally in each of the relevant jurisdictions. The award is issued through a single parchment carrying the logos of each participating HEI at a graduation ceremony which takes place in a designated partner HEI. A multiple joint award involves each of the partner institutions conferring on graduates a joint award through the issue of its institutional parchment that bears the logos of all participating HEIs. Students on joint programmes can register either with each of the partner institutions or with one designated home institution.

2) Dual programmes

A dual award is conferred upon successful completion of a linked inter-institutional programme consisting of two separate curricula, provided by two partner institutions and leading to an award from each institution. Each institution is primarily responsible for its own programme of study and the rules and regulations of each institution apply to their own programmes and awards. Each partner institution will hold the position of either first or second institution; the first being the institution where a student registers to commence the programme and undertake the first part of the curricula, and the second is where the student completes the programme following which the student may be conferred with the two awards. The conferral of the award for study in either institution can only be triggered following completion of study in the second institution. It is anticipated that Trinity will enter partnerships as the second institution.

XX USC approved the policy. The policy will be considered by the Graduate Studies Committee and the Quality Committee and subsequently proceed to Council for approval.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked Ms Sadowska and Ms Coyle for bringing this item to the attention of the Committee.

USC/14-15/078 Any other business**Self-evaluation of USC**

Members of USC had been invited to complete a short survey on the effectiveness of USC in 2014/15. Responses to the survey were anonymous and the closing date was 25th May 2015. A report on the survey results would be compiled and presented to USC on 1st September 2015. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer encouraged members to complete the survey.

USC/14-15/079 Items for noting

USC noted the following documents which had been circulated for information:

1. **Calendar Changes 2015/16**
 - a) Medicine
 - b) General Regulations
2. 'Guidelines for students and staff on the modification of examination and assessment arrangements for students with disabilities', dated April 2015, and memorandum from Mr Declan Reilly, dated 6th May 2015
3. **TGRUSE: Common Entry Points Scale**, memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 6th May 2015