

XX signals items of significance to University Council

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 29 May 2018 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 Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students

Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry

Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics

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 Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology Professor Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law

Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics Professor Naomi Elliott, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Professor Cathriona Russell, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology

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 Sally Anne McCarthy, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine

Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology Ms Alice Mac Pherson, Education Officer, Students' Union

Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative Ms Leona Coady, Director of Academic Registry Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer, CAPSL

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Mr Peter Hynes, Head of

Business Support and Planning, Academic Registry and Neil Brennan, Academic Registry, for item USC/17-18/094; Ms Claire Laudet, Department of French, for item USC/17-18/096; Ms Jennifer Pepper, Head of Operations, Academic Registry, and Ms Kelly Byrne, Academic Registry, for item USC/17-18/097; Ms Mary McMahon, Project Officer, TEP, for items USC/17-18/097 and USC/17-18/098; Ms Sheena Brown, Project Manager, TEP, for item USC/17-

18/098

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

USC/17-18/091 Minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2018

The minutes were approved.

USC/17-18/092 Matters arising

USC/17-18/076 A revised draft of the Trinity Employability and Employment Guide had been circulated for the meeting and will be considered for approval at the next meeting of Council. **USC/17-18/083** The Programme Handbook Policy had been revised to incorporate feedback and had been circulated for the meeting. This will also be considered for approval at Council.

USC/17-18/093 Calendar Changes 2018-19

A memorandum, dated 24 May 2018, and changes for the Calendar 2018-19 Part II with respect to the General Regulations section, the Foundation Scholarship section, and course entries in the three faculties and the Two-Subject Moderatorship, had been circulated by Ms Elaine Egan, Administrative Officer, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the purpose of the Calendar is to provide key information at a high level. Members were reminded that the changes in the faculty/course sections are shown via tracked changes in red. Changes carried out by Trinity Teaching and Learning are displayed in blue.

It was noted that a number of sections, including admission, advanced entry, transfer of course, gold medals and prizes, and ordinary degree of B.A. are available in the 'General Regulations and Information' and have been removed from General Faculty Regulations and individual course entries to avoid duplication.

Progression regulations had been deleted from most course entries as they either align with the overall progression regulations in the 'General Regulations and Information' and, therefore, do not need to be repeated in the course entry; or the regulations in the submitted entry did not align with the overall regulations and the programme had not received a derogation for this. The only progression regulation details that remain in course entries are for programmes that had received derogations from the overall progression regulations.

Members were invited to comment on the circulated sections.

a. General Regulations

In response to a query regarding the return of work to students, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that a copy of all assessed work submitted for a programme of study, whether written or recorded, would need to be retained locally.

It was agreed that the description of the teaching terms would be amended to reflect the two teaching periods of 12 weeks, each of which contain one study week.

b. Two Subject Moderatorship

The Director of TSM highlighted the paragraphs that contained substantive changes and explained that these had been aligned with the General Regulations. It was agreed that certain paragraphs would be looked at further to see if repetition with the General Regulations could be avoided; regulations specific to TSM would be retained.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to the regulations covering half-year exchanges, whereby students who go on a half-year exchange will have compensation applied proportionally to the 30 credits that a student takes in Trinity, but compensation will not be applied to the 30 credits a student achieves in the university abroad. The Senior Lecturer enquired whether this situation arose in other programmes but members were unsure. It was agreed that this regulation would be retained for TSM in 2018/19 and would

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be looked at in future years in order to achieve consistency across programmes. Particular consideration would be given to whether compensation should be applied to the 30 credits achieved in Trinity College as students were not required to achieve the full 60 credits for the year.

c. Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

It was noted that the calculation of the degree award at 30:70 over the final two years of the programme would not affect students from TEP Phase II programmes who enter in 2018/19.

It was noted that a few Schools would be contacted to follow up on minor queries.

d. Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Sciences

A member noted the extensive amount of changes required for TEP Phase I programmes and cautioned that this was a lengthy process that would take place again for 2019/20.

It was noted that a stipulation within the Calendar would be included to outline that if a student who entered TR071 in 2017/18 failed and was required to repeat the year, they would have to move to the new course.

e. Faculty of Health Sciences

The use of the phrase 'made withdrawn' in sections relating to Health Screening and Vaccination was discussed. A member noted that this was the accepted terminology across College, but that they would contact TT&L with regard to suitable alternatives.

f. Foundation Scholarship

There were no items for discussion under this item and the section was agreed.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies emphasised the importance of areas reviewing their entries in conjunction with the General Regulations. Elaine Egan will follow up with Schools and programmes on any outstanding queries. Schools and programmes can contact Elaine (elegan@tcd.ie) by 6 June 2018.

USC/17-18/094 Undergraduate Transcripts

A memorandum from the Head of Business Support and Planning, Academic Registry, dated 24 May 2018 was circulated together with sample academic transcripts. The Head of Business Support and Planning, Academic Registry, and Mr Neil Brennan, Activity Administrator, Data/Systems Management and Reporting, Academic Registry, were welcomed to the meeting.

In May 2015 a report from the Academic Transcript Working Party was presented to USC. One of the key terms of reference for the working party was to provide a College-wide standard for the issue of academic transcripts. USC had approved the recommendations of the working party and the circulated academic transcripts, subject to the incorporation of minor amendments discussed at the May 2015 meeting.

The Academic Registry had recently undertaken an analysis to assess the impact of the introduction of semesterised examinations and the new progression and awards regulations on the previously agreed transcript formats.

The new progression regulations note that a student's transcript will clearly show the examination session in which a mark was achieved. For results achieved from 2018/19 onwards, transcripts will refer to Semester 1, Semester 2, and the re-assessment session as appropriate. Repetition of year will also be clearly shown. For results achieved prior to 2018/19, transcripts will refer to the annual, supplemental or special session as appropriate.

The Academic Registry had created a number of draft sample transcripts and these had been circulated to the meeting. The key to grades was a new and important part of the transcripts and would be tailored to the grades referenced on the transcript, rather than all available grades. Members asked if the key to grades could state the percentages associated with each grade band and also the most regularly used grades, alongside the grades used on the transcript.

In response to a query, the Head of Business Support and Planning advised that a self-serve system, whereby students could print their own transcripts from their portal, was being looked at. This would be facilitated by a third-party company, which provides this service for education institutions worldwide. It was noted that the facility to provide a signed and sealed transcript directly to the relevant stakeholder would continue.

Members had requested that the format of capturing a deferred assessment be amended and it was agreed that the '0%' would be removed and be replaced with 'N/A' or 'Repeat PD'. A member stated that the centile position of the student alongside details of their rotations would be considered vital information for students in his School. It was noted that only details that were recorded in SITS as a module result would be produced on the transcript and that it was not possible for a transcript to cover all scenarios in College. Requests from individual schools for specific information to be recorded on transcripts could be discussed at a later stage.

In response to a query with regard to internships that formed an integral part of some modules, the Head of Business Support and Planning advised that the transcripts would note that students had undertaken an internship in specific years, but would not provide further details of the internship. Some members felt that it was important to note the specific details of internships on transcripts and others thought that this information would be better recorded on a student's CV. The Head of Business Support and Planning highlighted that, for the moment, transcripts were being designed to capture core academic information at the module level and that, in the future, it might be possible to produce a supplementary document to record details of internships and other information that would be provided by the Schools and students.

The Head of Business Support and Planning brought the meeting through the sample transcripts that had been circulated. It was agreed that an explanatory note for the term 'Special Examinations' would be provided. It was also confirmed that subject headings would be removed from joint honors transcripts and module details would continue to be listed within each semester.

The importance of presenting the minor and major subject results in the JS and SS year for those students who are currently on TSM was noted. The minor and major subject results are currently differentiated in TSM, but this will change going forward. It was agreed that the Academic Registry would create a sample transcript for this type of course and would consult with the Director of TSM.

A discussion took place with regard to the recording of an Erasmus exchange and it was noted that, currently, module details taken by students on exchange are not recorded on the Trinity transcript. The host university provides a transcript and grades are recorded in the format of that university. It was noted that even if Schools were to input grades achieved in the host university into SITS, it would not be possible to include this data on the Trinity transcript.

Templates will be revised to incorporate the feedback received and will return to the committee for consideration in September 2018.

USC/17-18/095 Changes to Quota in TSM Subjects

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A memorandum dated 25 May 2018 from the Director of TSM was circulated together with TSM quotas for 2018. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the Director of TSM to speak to this item.

The Director advised that the intake and quotas for TSM are regularly reviewed and are realigned when necessary. The proposed changes had been discussed at the TSM Management Committee and with the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Director referred members to the circulated documentation and outlined the proposed changes. It was noted that the quota for TSM German would be maintained at 32. It was noted that the quota for Russian had been significantly reduced to better reflect the reality of the intake most years. By contrast, the quota in Mathematics had been increased. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that quotas should continue to be reviewed in the context of new joint honors programmes.

USC recommended that the revised quotas for TSM Subjects in 2018/19 be brought to Council.

USC/17-18/096 Changes to Admissions Requirements, Modern Languages

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A memorandum from the DUTL, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, dated 28 May 2018 was circulated. Professor Claire Laudet, Department of French, was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

Professor Laudet advised that arising from the revisions to the structure of TSM, from 2019/20, the quotas for language courses will be combined and, as a consequence of this step, the subject requirements for admission will need to be standardised across the various languages. Currently all languages require a H4 for entry with the exception of French and German, which require a H3. It has been proposed that the H3 requirement in French and German be revised downwards to a H4.

It was noted that consideration would need to be given, if this had not happened already, to revision of the minimum grade for candidates presenting with A-Levels.

USC approved the proposal to revise the entry requirement in French and German to a H4 as presented. The A-level scores should, if appropriate, be revised in line with this change.

Members availed of refreshment in the Ante Room

USC/17-18/097 Modelling for the Examination Timetables 2018-19

A memorandum from the Head of Operations, Deputy Director of Academic Registry, dated 25 May 2018 was circulated. The Head of Operations, Deputy Director of Academic Registry, Ms Jennifer Pepper, and Process Analyst, Ms Kelly Byrne, were welcomed to the meeting along with Ms Mary McMahon, TEP Project Officer.

The Director noted that Academic Registry had recently undertaken analysis to assess the introduction of semesterised examinations from 2018/19. The analysis had been completed on the basis of the Module Manager submissions received from Schools in April 2018. The

data showed that Schools have indicated that 30% of modules are to be taught and assessed in Semester 1 and 70% of modules are to be taught and assessed in Semester 2.

Parameters had been defined to ensure that individual students would take a maximum of two exams per day and that a maximum of three exam sessions would be scheduled per day.

Council had approved that the examination sessions in Semester 1 would take place 10 December – 15 December 2018. Semester 2 examinations had been approved to take place over 23 April – 27 April 2018, 30 April, 2 May 2019. It was noted that both periods include examinations on Saturday.

USC was now being asked to approve that, if needed, the morning of Wednesday, 1 May 2019 and the full day of Friday, 3 May 2019 could also be used for Semester 2 examinations. In response to a query on whether the time to mark would be similarly extended, the Senior Lecturer noted that there was more flexibility in Semester 2 than Semester 1.

Members noted that it was vital that the proposed schedule be tested with 2017/18 student data and it was agreed that this would be carried out over the summer. It was pointed out that the testing should not merely be a test of the number of possible sittings per student, but that real student exam timetables should be modelled. Members agreed that this modelling should be conducted immediately and the results made available as soon as possible. Members also wondered what the next steps were if it proved unworkable.

The student representative requested that the scheduling of exams in the morning and evening sessions be minimised for individual students as it was not possible to switch off from exam mode in the hours between exams. The Head of Operations advised that it would be very difficult to include this constraint and noted that the use of Simmonscourt as a venue for future examinations would provide students with separate space and a study room. Academic Registry would work with the Students' Union to best allocate the space to students.

A member raised a concern that having two exams in one day would be particularly difficult for a student if the exams were in different subjects. In response to a query about moving the exam sessions forward it was noted that this would clash with the revision week and it was not desirable to erode students' revision time.

In response to a member's request to approve the proposed extra days for examinations in 2019 and into the future, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the situation should be monitored, rather than taking a decision on this at the present time. 2018-19 was a transition year and further changes are anticipated with the introduction of fewer, more meaningful assessments under TEP regulations. The member noted that his School had modelled the proposed timetable for its students and it had worked with the extra days incorporated, but not within the one-week examination period. The examinations team will contact the member to request this modelled data. A member noted his concern with holding the re-assessment session over a single week and felt it would present a number of issues.

With regard to exams for students with special accommodations, it was noted that the exam venue at Simmonscourt would allow for greater flexibility with space, including having more students in smaller groups and the examinations team would continue to work with the Disability Service to manage this. In response to a query from a member as to whether the length of exams could be standardised, the Director of Academic Registry noted that this

would be very welcome and would allow the scheduling of extra exams sessions per day without having to extend the exam periods.

It was noted that exam scheduling was particularly problematic in 2018/19 due to the dates of Easter week and Trinity week. The constraints that evening exams might place on staff and students had been taken into account when setting the cut-off of 7pm. It was agreed that Academic Registry would look at the impact of having an evening exam followed by a morning exam.

USC approved the inclusion of the morning of Wednesday, 1 May 2019, and the full day of Friday, 3 May 2019 in the examination period as a contingency measure for the Semester 2 examinations in 2018/19.

It was agreed that Academic Registry should as a matter of urgency model the scheduling of examinations based on the recent Module Manager returns from Schools on a range of programmes, including Engineering, BESS and Biological Sciences. The outcome of the modelling should be advised to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the earliest opportunity before it is presented to USC in September.

It was also agreed that the outgoing and incoming Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies would prepare a discussion document on standardising the length of examinations. This will also be brought to the first meeting of USC in the new academic year.

USC/17-18/098 Trinity Education Project

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a) Proposals for Trinity Electives

Proposals for Trinity Electives, together with a memorandum dated 21 May 2018 from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies had been circulated. The TEP Project Manager, Ms Sheena Brown, was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

The first students to take Trinity Electives will be those who enter the new programme architecture under Phase 1 in 2018/19: the majority of those programmes under Phase 1 eligible to take Trinity Electives will take them from 2020/21. Students who enter College in 2019/20 under Phase 2 will be eligible to take Trinity Electives from 2020/21. In addition, currently registered students who are eligible to take Broad Curriculum modules on their programme will be eligible to take Trinity Electives from 2019/20: this will facilitate the cessation of Broad Curriculum after 2018/19.

The circulated proposals had been received i) from Research Theme Leads; ii) in response to a call for proposals for Trinity Electives that address key societal challenges; and iii) from those areas running stand-alone Broad Curriculum modules who were invited to re-align these to the principles of the Trinity Electives. Subgroup 3 had reviewed all submitted proposals and grouped them into three categories: proposals that were ready to be brought forward to USC and Council now; proposals that would require some further work and would be brought forward in September, and proposals that did not meet the requirements for Trinity Electives, but could be amended and potentially resubmitted in a future call. Additional proposals linked to the Research Themes are also being developed for submission in September.

USC was asked to consider and approve the circulated proposals on the basis of their academic merit. If approved, they would be brought to Council for noting and would be developed for rollout in either 2019/20 or 2020/21.

A lengthy discussion took place and concerns were raised by a number of members. Members noted that the DUTLs had not been included in the provision of feedback from

Subgroup 3 on the proposals and as such they did not feel they understood the reasons why some of the proposed Electives had not met the requirements and why the circulated Electives had met the requirements. The TEP Project Manager advised that feedback was given to the Module Coordinators who had submitted proposals.

It was considered that for those Schools and disciplines that had not had a proposal approved, there would be an imbalance in FTEs with their students taking the electives run by other areas without any corresponding intake of students to their area. Members who raised this as an issue requested time to consult with their Heads of School prior to approval of the circulated electives. It was reiterated that the role of USC was to approve proposals based on their academic merit. Matters of resourcing would be dealt with through the TEP governance strictures and will involve Heads of School. Heads of School had been asked to sign off on all proposals for Trinity Electives that had been submitted.

Trinity Electives will be 'housed' in Schools, but could have teaching and administrative input from other areas: members felt it was necessary to clarify the resource implications of this. The TEP Project Manager advised that discussions around resourcing would be held prior to development of the modules and that approval by USC was on the basis of academic merit and would not obligate a School to run the modules.

A member raised a concern with the possible cost implications to students with regard to some items that had been mentioned in the proposals (e.g. software, clickers). It was noted that this currently happens in existing modules.

In response to members concerns, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the TEP Project Manager emphasized that it was solely the academic merit of the proposals for which approval was sought. They also highlighted that a limit on the number of Trinity Electives had not been set and that it was very likely that there would be another call for Trinity Electives in the following academic year. A probability analysis had been conducted in relation to potential numbers taking Trinity Electives and if it is considered that greater capacity is required, another call would be issued for additional proposals. As part of mainstreaming, a committee would be established to monitor and review Trinity Electives, to ensure that a sufficient number and quality of Trinity electives is maintained.

The majority of members indicated that they were happy to approve the proposals based on their academic merit. The TEP Project Manager agreed to meet with the DUTL of Engineering to address his particular concerns.

USC approved the circulated proposals for Trinity Electives.

b) Update from the Project Manager

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the Project Manager, Trinity Education Project to speak to this item.

The TEP Project Manager provided the meeting with an overview of the work of TEP. The project was now entering its fourth and final phase, Implementation and Mainstreaming, with an overall project end-date of September 2020. The large amount of work that had been achieved to date was highlighted, including the agreement of a university-wide set of graduate attributes, a new programme architecture, a revised academic year structure, standardised progression and awards regulations, and standardised module sizes. She advised that information on Approved Modules had been received and was now being mapped to the timetable pillars prior to consideration by Subgroup 3 and that next steps would be communicated to Schools subsequently.

It was noted that reconfigured TEP governance structures would be put in place from 2018/19 for the final phase of the project which would focus on preparation for mainstreaming including re-configuring committee and administrative strictures where necessary. A particular focus would be on providing support for staff in the area of assessment.

A member noted that the recommendation for fewer, more meaningful assessments should not be seen as an assumption that current assessment is not meaningful. It was clarified that the intention is for current assessment to be reviewed to see if different forms of assessment could be introduced, but that it is recognised that the move away from summative examinations may not be appropriate for all programmes.

The Student Representative urged that the students' voice is carefully listened to in this time of change.

USC/17-18/099

Annual Report of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies 2016-17

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The draft Annual Report of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies 2016/17, together with a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 28 May 2018, had been circulated.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to the previously circulated Academic Registry Annual Report 2016/17, which covered the breadth of Academic Registry (AR) operations and provided extensive data on undergraduate operations. The Annual Report of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies provides insight into and commentary on activities and developments in relation to the undergraduate student lifecycle, informed by the data included in the AR Annual Report.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies drew members' attention to specific items in the circulated report, including the importance of establishing a College-wide admissions strategy committee that would engage in evidence-based, integrated, admissions-related strategic planning, as well as the need for a consistent and reliable data collection mechanism in SITS to ensure that all key institutional data are available on request. It further recommends that data on completion of the student lifecycle should be included in future versions of the AR Report in order to inform strategic planning and decision making.

It was noted that the standardisation of progression regulations under TEP provides a transparent and consistent basis for decision making and this has created opportunities to simplify other aspects of practice such as the award of Gold Medals.

Feedback was requested from members and a discussion took place about the increase in the instances of plagiarism recorded in 2016/17 when compared to 2015/16. It was suggested that the practice of recording cases of plagiarism in SITS was introduced in 2015/16 and may not have been implemented consistently in all plagiarism cases, thereby contributing to the low figure that year.

A member wondered whether analysis should be carried out to monitor cases of plagiarism specifically in the visiting student population as different cultures have different understandings of plagiarism.

It was noted that the increasing number of students taking examinations under special conditions was beginning to create pressure on space and that the introduction of the Reasonable Accommodation Policy in January 2018 may help address this through having clear deadlines for registration with the Disability Service so as to avail of examination accommodations.

Also noted was the increase in the number of applicants in 2016-17 and 2017-18 from Northern Ireland. However, preliminary figures for 2018-19 indicated that the figure had dropped back to the 2015/16 level. It was thought that this was related to Brexit and the fact that clarification on the fee status of NI entrants had been received very close to the 1 February CAO deadline. The fee status for 2019/20 entrants from Northern Ireland and, indeed, other UK entrants, is as yet unknown.

A small number of editorial issues were pointed out. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies requested that any further comments be sent directly to her.

The Annual Report of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies 2016/17 will be brought forward to the next meeting of Council.

USC/17-18/100 Any other business

Members were advised they would be sent a survey on their experience of USC in 2017/18.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked members of USC, who were finishing their term. She also thanked Ms Elaine Egan and Ms Marie McPeak for the minute-taking and committee support, and the Academic Secretary.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies introduced Professor Kevin Mitchell as the incoming Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and wished him luck.

Members of the committee thanked the outgoing Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, for her hard work and dedication over the years.

Section B (Minutes)

There were no items for discussion under this section.

Section C (For information)

USC/17-18/101 Programme Handbook Policy

A memorandum and revised policy from the Education Support Officer, dated 23 May 2018, had been circulated. This item was noted and approved.

USC/17-18/102 Employability Statement

A memorandum and revised Employability Statement from the Director of Careers, dated 25 May 2018, had been circulated. This item was noted and approved.