



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

**XX** = Item is of  
significance to  
Council

**A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 2 October 2018 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.**

Present: Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)  
Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students  
Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor  
Professor Aine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education  
Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business  
Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry  
Professor Jonathan Dukes, 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 Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law  
Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology  
Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics  
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine  
Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics  
Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion  
Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM  
Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies  
Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer, Students' Union  
Ms Misha Fitzgibbon, Student Representative

Apologies: Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary  
Professor Christine Poulter, School of Creative Arts  
Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities  
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor Philip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

In attendance: Ms Marie McPeak, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Mr Peter Hynes and Mr Neil Brennan, Academic Registry for USC/18-19/016; Ms Orla Bannon, Director of Trinity Career Service, for item USC/18-19/017

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

**USC/18-19/013 Minutes of the meeting of 11 September 2018**

The minutes were approved.

**USC/18-19/014 Matters arising**

**USC/18-19/005** The Proposal for Scheduling of Semesterised Examinations 2018/19 has been approved by Council at its meeting of 26 September 2018.

**USC/18-19/006** The Additional Undergraduate Degree Destinations for the International Foundation Programme were noted by Council at its meeting of 26 September 2018.

**USC/18-19/007** At its meeting of 26 September 2018, Council also noted the Termination of the Contract between Trinity College Dublin, and the International Foundation Course delivered in Bangor, Wales. The final intake from this programme will be September 2020.

**USC/18-19/015 Chair's Report**

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided an update to members on the New Academic Year Structure and Appeals Process for 2018/19.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that in 2016/17 the University Council approved the recommendation from the Progression and Awards Subgroup of TEP Strand 1 to discontinue special examinations with effect from the 2018/19 academic year.

Special examinations were previously permitted in exceptional circumstances by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, usually on a recommendation from a Court of First Appeal, or permitted by the Court of Academic Appeals. Now that special examinations are no longer available, it is important to discuss the types of recommendations that the Courts of First Appeal and Academic Appeals will be able to put forward in the future and the role Courts of Examiners may have in this process.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies queried members on whether Courts of Examiners should be allowed to take mitigating circumstances into account when progressing students. He further noted that a student might be required to delay their graduation by a year due to genuine circumstances beyond their control. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited members to discuss the matter.

In response, a member stated that adjusting marks on the margin can be an uncomfortable process and where there are mitigating circumstances these should be considered outside of the Court of Examiners.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that a Court of Examiners is allowed to adjust marks. He further queried if they should be allowed to permit students to carry a failed module into the following academic year and what this would look like on a transcript.

One member noted that the timeline for Courts of Examiners and Courts of Appeals for the Re-assessment week in 2018/19 fall in Freshers Week and the first week of term respectively, which leaves a very tight turnaround for Schools and may also lead to students not filing appeals when necessary. Another member noted that with the new progression regulations there should be fewer appeals than in previous years.

The Dean of Students noted that allowing a student to carry a module can create a cascade effect where they carry more modules in the following academic years. He further noted that in cases where a student is citing an ongoing illness as contributing to their inability to progress at re-assessment and they are seeking 'Medical Repeat' status, it is difficult to see that they may have recovered in the short period between the re-assessment week and the start of the following academic year.

Several members agreed that there should be a separate mechanism for the consideration of mitigating circumstances and that carrying failed modules impacts on the achievement of an award. One member noted that where an acute instance has led to a student's failure they should be allowed to carry modules.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that previously where a student deferred an examination at Annuals, they had been advised that they were not automatically entitled to a Special examination if they failed at Supplementals.

Several members noted that a student who experiences an acute instance at re-assessment will still be able to apply for offbooks for the purposes of assessment (OBA) either directly to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or through the Court of First Appeal.

The Senior Tutor noted that the Court of Appeals does not have the authority to change marks and that the Court of First Appeal mainly presides over the mode of repeat a student wishes to undertake.

Another member noted that where a student has departed on Erasmus, but has not passed at re-assessment they are often allowed to carry modules and repeat the examinations at the next examination session.

Several members agreed that a clear communication should be issued to students stating that there are no longer special examinations and that it would not be possible to carry modules from one academic year to the next. The communication should state that there are two attempts at passing within an academic year and where this is not possible the student will be required to repeat.

The Education Officer noted that OBA is not suitable for students from outside of Dublin due to accommodation costs and that carrying modules should be considered as an appropriate mechanism in some cases.

The Student Representative noted that students may push themselves to pass examinations at a cost to their mental or physical health if the only option is to repeat.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised members that this item would return to Committee for discussion at a later date.

**USC/18-19/016 Undergraduate Transcripts: Semesterised Examinations and Progression & Awards Regulations**

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A memorandum and draft Academic Transcripts from Mr Peter Hynes, Head of Business Support and Planning, Academic Registry, dated 24<sup>th</sup> Sep 2018 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Mr Peter Hynes and Mr Neil Brennan, Academic Registry, to speak to this item.

Mr Peter Hynes noted that an analysis to assess the impact of the introduction of semesterised examinations and the new progression and awards regulations and on previously Council-approved transcript formats and revised undergraduate transcripts had been discussed at USC on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018. A number of recommendations were made at that meeting.

It is proposed that the revised transcripts will refer to the Annual, Supplemental or Special session as appropriate for all results achieved prior to 2018/19 and repetition of a year will be clearly indicated on a transcript. Deferred assessments will be captured on transcripts by using 'N/A' instead of using 0% as proposed previously.

The 'Key to Grades' table will show all standard grades and will dynamically present any further grades referenced on the transcript. An explanatory note for the term 'Special Examinations' will also be provided on transcripts where appropriate.

Subject headings have been removed from Joint Honors programmes and module details will be grouped in the Semester of Assessment only. Transcripts for students on Two-Subject Moderatorship programmes will continue to differentiate major and minor subjects in Junior Sophister and Senior Sophister years.

Members were invited to provide further feedback on the draft Undergraduate Transcripts.

In response to a member's suggestion, Mr Hynes stated that there is a link on transcripts that provides external bodies with information on Trinity, however an FAQ or similar which explains compensation regulations and other pertinent details could be developed to enhance the information available. Mr Hynes noted that it would be difficult to include all of this information in an appendix to the transcript due to the complexity or marking schemes across programmes and modules and that a webpage allows the information to be dynamic.

The Dean of Students noted that a very clear definition on compensation should be made available externally as there is a misconception that compensation is the transfer of marks from one module to another.

One member noted that the language with regards to the moderatorship for TSM requires a slight correction.

Another member queried if in future the intention is to make the transcripts available to students through MyTCD. Mr Hynes noted that it is hoped that transcript issuance will be hosted through a third-party digital repository, which would make the transcripts available to students through Trinity systems. It would be hoped that there would be no charge to students for transcripts.

Undergraduate Studies Committee approved the draft transcripts subject to the incorporation of minor changes. This item will then go forward to the next meeting of Council.

#### **USC/18-19/017 Trinity Employability Awards**

A memorandum from Ms Orla Bannon, Director of Careers, Trinity Teaching and Learning, dated 25 September 2018 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Ms Orla Bannon to speak to this item.

The Director of Careers noted that the Trinity Employability Award was introduced as a pilot in 2016, in an initiative led by the Careers Service in partnership with Intel Ireland. The award combines industry-led training in specific transferrable skills with a university-led workshop to help students reflect on and articulate their learning. It also supports student development of the Trinity Graduate Attributes and employability skills. The award is undergoing a period of change and development in order to expand the offering to more students.

The 2-year pilot has engaged undergraduate and postgraduate students from Schools of Engineering, Computer Science and Statistics, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. In the pilot programme students were required to engage in 30 hours of extra-curricular activities, such as societies, sports, internships and volunteering, a 'Make it Count' workshop delivered by Trinity Careers Service/SLD, and Intel-hosted workshops on Model-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making with Data or LEAN Management. The pilot successfully completed with 39 students in 16/17 and 54 students in 17/18 obtaining a certificate of recognition. Ten

shortlisted candidates have received an Intel-powered device and two overall winners receiving a prize of €2000.

The Director of Careers noted that from the pilot, it was discovered that the programme was not suitable to postgraduate students. Feedback from the pilot also indicated that Engineering students wanted to begin engaging with employers from first year. This has led to the development of the Trinity Employability Award - First Steps for 1<sup>st</sup> year Engineering students, launching in 2018/19. This award comprises of two levels. The first level is 'Participation', where a student will receive a certificate of participation once they have completed 20 hours in extra-curricular activities and attended one workshop at Intel. The second level of the award is 'Completion' in this level a student submits their CV and a 250-word reflective piece to Trinity Careers and these items are assessed by Trinity Career Consultants. Once a student completes Level 2, they will receive an 'Employability Award – First Steps' certificate.

Further developments to the Trinity Employability Award have opened the programme to third year students from Schools of Business, Creative Arts, Psychology, Social Science and Philosophy, as well as those involved in the pilot programme, Schools of Engineering, Computer Science and Statistics, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. It is expected that approximately 65 students will participate in this iteration in 2018/19. As part of the application process, students are required to submit a statement of what they hope to achieve through the award. These statements are reviewed and students are granted places on that basis. Applications and administration of the programme will be managed through MyCareer.

A new award structure has been adopted for Trinity Employability Award for participants from 2018/19. There are 3 levels to this new structure: Level 1 – Participate; Level 2 – Complete; and Level 3 – Compete. All participating students are required to achieve the minimum requirements of Level 1 to be eligible for a certificate of participation. Students can then opt to complete additional activities to be eligible for higher levels of the Award and potential prizes. The Careers Service will be involved in assessment to ensure students clearly demonstrate their development and understanding of the Trinity Graduate Attributes through their participation in the Award.

In order to allow for the involvement of a wider group of undergraduate students the Trinity Employability Award – Professional Services Pathway (PSP) will also be run on a phased basis from October 2018. The PSP will have a broader range of employers and will have an initial focus on Professional Services. Four companies – Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC – will be involved in the first phase of the Employability Award – PSP. Recruitment will be from a broad range of disciplines and this award will be open to all undergraduate students in their second to final years with 100 places available in 18/19. The PSP Award will follow the revised award structure outlined for the Trinity Employability Award. Employer workshops will cover a number of areas including resilience, design thinking, business chemistry, blockchain, developing your personal brand, innovation and data analytics. Participating students who proceed to Level 3 will be eligible to compete for prizes with those employers whose workshops they attend. The PSP Award will be used as a pilot to determine scalability and expansion potential for this and other similarly structured Pathway Awards in the future.

The Director of Careers also noted that the Careers Service has recently launched a new website.

One member noted that their School had been involved on the pilot award and it had been a brilliant opportunity for students, however scalability is a concern and an automated system for awarding places would simplify the process.

The Director of Careers noted that numerous national and international models for the award were reviewed and it had been decided to use the same application process for the Intel-based award, but the use of MyCareer in the application process had streamlined the application process.

In response to a member's query on whether the award overlaps with TANGENT, it was noted that the Director of Careers had met with the Head of Student Entrepreneurship to ensure the Trinity Employability Award is a unique offer. It was also noted that innovation and entrepreneurship is accepted as extra-curricular activity towards the Trinity Employability Award.

It was noted in response to a member's query that the make-up of participants is monitored to ensure that it is representative of the student population.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the partners to date are those with whom there are longstanding relationships and queried if there are other potential partner companies or if it would be possible to work with a conglomerate of Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It was confirmed that Careers are looking at other companies and sectors, as well as linking in with IDA Ireland to explore broader possibilities for partnership.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that as part of the 'Compete' level of the award, students may compete for an internship with one of the companies involved.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Director of Careers for their contribution to the meeting.

**USC/18-19/018 Revised Procedure for Electronic Transfer to External Examiners of Students' Exam Scripts and Coursework**

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A memorandum from Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer, Trinity Teaching and Learning, dated 1 October 2018 had been circulated.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies spoke to this item. A draft of this procedure had been presented and discussed at Undergraduate Studies Committee on 11 September 2018. Since that time the procedure had been revised to include a number of recommendations made by members.

File size parameters had been included for each of the approved file transfer platforms and further advice added with regards to using caution where an email address is automatically selected by Microsoft One. An "Advisory on General Data Protection Regulation" had been developed which Schools may provide to new and continuing External Examiners when transferring student coursework from 2018/19.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that a request had been made to the Examinations Office with regards to changing the format of examination script booklets to facilitate ease of scanning. A response had not been received to date. The revised procedure will be considered at Quality Committee on the 4th October for final approval. Once approved the procedure will be uploaded on the Academic Policies section of the Trinity Teaching & Learning website.

Members were also advised that a new External Examiners website will be available in the coming weeks.

USC approved the revised Procedure for Electronic Transfer to External Examiners of Students' Exam Scripts and Coursework.

**USC/18-19/019 Any other business**

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that in the coming weeks module information for programmes of study would be sought from members and their School colleagues in order to support fixed timetabling. Information such as level, year of delivery, and whether a module is core-mandatory or core-optional is likely to be sought. He further noted that cross-year teaching may be problematic to the timetable structure and that programmes may need to adjust programme elements to minimise cross-year teaching.

To support this exercise, curriculum mapping should take place across all available pathways on a programme of study. This mapping should acknowledge that students may enter a programme via different routes, but should achieve the same learning in order to exit with the same award. Programmes should be structured in a way to accommodate as much flexibility for students as possible.

One member noted that it would be very difficult to advise what the offering to fourth year students will be in five years.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that these details may be sought in conjunction with Academic Registry in order to support assessment scheduling for 2019/20. Programmes will also be asked to provide curriculum information where a student may pick up a subject in second year and may choose to exit with a minor in that subject. The content and timing of modules leading to the award of minor should be coherent. A list of modules available as Approved Modules will also be provided and programmes will need to indicate which modules are suitable.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that the availability of a minor subject from second year encourages cross-year teaching across subjects, which is more easily fit into a fixed timetable. Cross-year teaching in the same subject is more problematic.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that schools would be consulted in developing an intuitive way to return this information.

One member noted that in some programmes cross-year teaching supports a research-led curriculum and that eliminating this would be a radical departure that would place a strain on resources.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that provision of the curriculum information would help establish what types of cross-year teaching may be available to programmes, as well as the scope of what new subjects would be available to students.

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education advised members that a template with regards to the Capstone would also be circulated in the coming days. In response to a member's query, it was noted that the information sought would be on plans established to date and that it is understood these plans may not be finalised at this time.

One member noted that rooms and facilities limit the offering of Approved Modules, in response the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that one of the goals of the fixed timetable is to ensure efficient use of space.

Several members commented that IT facilities in some teaching spaces are outdated and have led to delayed or cancelled lecture. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies

noted that clarity would be sought on how to minimise these issues and ensure where they occur that there are mechanisms to ensure they are resolved efficiently.

Several members noted that clarity on term-test arrangements in order to support students registered with the Disability Service and advice on the communication of provisional marks is urgently required as part of the transition to the new programme regulations and assessment framework. It was noted that a communication on provisional marks would be circulated within the next few weeks.

Members noted that a communication regarding the Council-approved schedule for Semesterised Examinations 2018/19 should be circulated to colleagues and students as soon as possible.

**USC/18-19/020 Items for Noting**

USC noted the following items:

1. Green Paper on Assessment of Learners and Learning

DRAFT