



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 11 December 2018 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.

Present: Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
Professor Aine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Alan O'Connor, School of Engineering
Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics
Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Christine Poulter, School of Creative Arts
Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Stephen Minton, School of Education
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Professor Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law
Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Misha Fitzgibbon, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry
Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM
Professor Philip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Ms Clodagh Byrne, Mature Student Officer, for item USC/18-19/032; Ms Orla Bannon, Director of Careers, for item USC/18-19/036

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

USC/18-19/030 Minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2018

The minutes were approved subject to the addition of "in most but not all cases" at the end of the sentence "It was noted that ten hours per week would be sufficient for the core teaching hours in a shared curriculum."

USC/18-19/031 Matters arising

USC/18-19/024 It was agreed at the Council meeting of 28 November 2018 that the proposed revisions to language requirements for undergraduate admission would be further discussed with the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies and subsequently brought back to the following Council meeting.

USC/18-19/025 The proposed changes to Calendar Part II 2019/20 were approved at the Council meeting of 28 November 2018.

USC/18-19/026 The proposed Trinity Electives were approved at the Council meeting of 28 November 2018.

USC/18-19/027 The proposed timetable structure for the shared curriculum within the common architecture, years 1 and 2, were approved at the Council meeting of 28 November 2018.

USC/18-19/032 Alternative entry routes into TR004/TR080/TR081 and Maths for STEM**XX****Alternative entry routes into TR004/TR080/TR081**

A memorandum from the Mature Student Officer, dated 4 December 2018 had been circulated. Ms Clodagh Byrne, the Mature Student Officer, was welcomed to the meeting for this item. She noted that the HEA advocates the enhancement of progression routes for Further Education and Training (FET) award holders to higher education (HE). Furthermore, College's Strategic Plan 2014-19 reaffirms College's commitment to increasing the percentage of under-represented groups enrolled on undergraduate courses. Following a proposal approved by USC on 23 May 2017, a FET to HE working group was established in December 2017 to further this agenda.

The Mature Student Officer introduced a proposal to establish entry routes into law, global business, and business, economics and social studies, for candidates from FET cognate courses. She asked that USC approve these entry routes as follows:

- five candidates into law (TR004)
- one candidate into global business (TR080)
- twelve candidates into business, economics and social studies (TR081).

The FET candidates are required to complete their course in one year, to get distinctions in 5 or more of the 8 modules, and meet specific requirements where applicable. Entry will be on a competitive basis amongst eligible applicants where there are more applicants than places available. College will track the progress of the FET students through their degree course.

USC was asked to approve the introduction of the proposed entry routes to commence in 2019/20.

A discussion took place that noted the holistic approach that FET providers offer to their students to assist with the transition to third level. In response to a query, the Mature Student Officer noted that the level of achievement required of the FET candidates for entry into the Trinity courses had been carefully considered and was standard across the sector.

Decision

USC/18-19/032 USC approved the introduction of the proposed FET entry routes to commence in 2019/20.

Maths for STEM

The QQI-FET programme Maths for Stem (5S2246) is an intensive 30-credit special purpose award aimed at addressing the need for adequate mathematical preparation for FET award holders who wish to progress to STEM degree programmes in HE. Maths for Stem has already been recognised as a Higher Leaving Certificate equivalent for the purpose of alternative entry routes by the School of Mathematics, School of Engineering and the School of Computer Science and Statistics. USC was asked to provide formal approval of this.

A member noted that currently Higher Leaving Certificate maths is a minimum requirement for some courses and that Schools may interview candidates to ensure suitability for courses. He was concerned that FET candidates would get a place based solely on achieving the minimum requirements. In response, the Mature Student Officer emphasised the holistic nature of the admissions process for mature students and noted that in practice recognition for Maths for Stem for admission purposes was already in place.

Decision

USC/18-19/032 USC approved Maths for STEM as a Higher Leaving Certificate equivalent for the purpose of alternative entry routes by the School of Mathematics, the School of Engineering, and the School of Computer Science and Statistics.

USC/18-19/033 Proposal for ECTS Accreditation for International School Programme

A memorandum from the Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning and Director of International Initiatives, School of Nursing and Midwifery, dated 5 December 2018, had been circulated.

The Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in the School of Nursing and Midwifery introduced the proposal for module accreditation for a two-week school for international healthcare students delivered by her School. The programme had been in place since 2010, consists of a winter option and summer option and had seen increasing student numbers over the past few years. The Director noted that prospective partner institutions have indicated a preference for credit-bearing programmes and felt that accreditation was necessary to sustain and increase the level of student participation.

The Director advised that this was a standalone programme solely for international students and was intended to provide a sample of what Trinity could offer. It was intended that the 5 credits would be transferred to the international students' own universities. USC was asked to approve the proposal that the international school be accredited for 5-ECTS from January 2019.

A discussion took place and members raised a number of concerns. Members were concerned that the assessment and reassessment methods may not adequately examine all nine learning outcomes. Members noted it was unclear whether the students' home institutions could convert and accept the 5 credits. A member wondered whether there might be issues around garda vetting and insurance but the Director noted that issues had not arisen in the eight years of the course. A member queried whether there was a process for appeal and if Academic Registry had been consulted regarding the proposed start date, the provision of credit, and the issue of whether a transcript could be provided.

Actions

USC/18-19/033.1 It was agreed that the assessment would be looked at in further detail.

USC/18-19/033.2 It was agreed that clarification would be sought on whether the international students' home institutions could accept the 5 credits.

USC/18-19/033.3 It was agreed that the School would consult with the Academic Secretary and the Academic Registry regarding the provision of credit, provision of transcripts, and the start date.

USC/18-19/033.4 Following the above clarifications, the proposal will be brought back to USC for approval.

USC/18-19/034 Irish Survey of Student Engagement Report 2017/18

XX

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement Report 2017/18 had been circulated. The Dean of Students spoke to this item.

Council had considered the report and noted that as this is the fourth year of the survey, the trends have become clear and Trinity should pay attention to the data. The Dean emphasised the importance of ISSE as an internal tool to inform improvement strategies in College. He noted that while institutional comparisons may not be particularly useful, Faculty comparisons could be used to identify and share good practice. The survey will provide important data on assessing the effectiveness of TEP initiatives.

The Dean highlighted certain aspects of the data to the committee and noted that while Trinity did not always score well against the ISSE average, there are some areas where above average scores were achieved. He noted that there is a consistent upward trend in results from the first to the final year in almost all indices. He spoke of the six areas where Trinity consistently scored poorly and emphasised the need to look at the Schools and Faculties behind the data and the need to address the key issues raised in the report.

A discussion took place regarding the statistical reliability of the data. Approximately twenty-five per cent of eligible students had replied to the survey and members noted that while this is a statistically viable percentage, it should be acknowledged that it is also a self-selected percentage. Some members noted that the questions will have different meanings across different Schools and that poor scores may be a reflection of a lack of resources. The Dean of Students and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies emphasised that rather than trying to find issues with the reliability of the data, the report should be used as an opportunity to engage with students on their experience of Trinity. We now have definite trends that should be taken seriously and Trinity should embrace the opportunity for self-reflection and improvement.

The Dean noted that the Academic Secretary had been asked to bring a proposal on how to address key concerns identified in the data. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that Schools should use the data as a starting point for conversations amongst staff, and for staff-student liaison. He suggested that each School should prepare a response to their School-level report and this could acknowledge issues like resource constraints where necessary. A member referred to other forms of quality assurance data that was captured across College, including module evaluation and School reviews, and wondered whether the varying data points could be analysed and responded to collectively.

A member noted that it would be helpful to receive information on the staff:student ratios and class sizes along with the School reports. Members requested that the School reports are sent to DUTLs as well as School Managers.

Action

USC/18-19/034 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Academic Secretary will consult on a proposal on how key issues identified in the report should be addressed.

USC/18-19/035 Request for a Derogation to the Progression and Awards Regulations from the School of Nursing and Midwifery**XX**

A memorandum from the Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, dated 21 November 2018, had been circulated.

The Director spoke to the item and noted that the revised curricula for the Nursing and Midwifery programmes contain two modules per nursing discipline and two modules in midwifery of 10 ECTS value in JF year that contain both theoretical and practical (clinical placement) components. The theoretical and practical components must be assessed and passed separately in line with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) educational standards and requirements. Previously theoretical and practice-based modules were of 5-ECTS value and assessed separately. The standards and requirements of the NMBI does not allow compensation between theoretical and clinical practice placement assessments.

Under TEP progression and award regulations, students who fail to satisfy the requirements of their year at the reassessment session are required to repeat the year in full, i.e. all modules and all assessment components, or appeal to repeat the module on an off-books taking assessment (OBA) basis. This OBA has presented an issue for those students repeating any of the combined theory/clinical modules on nursing and midwifery programmes as nearly twice as many students fail theoretical components compared to those failing clinical components, and to facilitate additional practice placements would place significant strain on the clinical learning environment and its resources.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery requested a derogation, from the academic year 2018/19, that where a student repeats the year off-books for the purpose of assessment and is required to repeat a module with both clinical and theoretical components, they could repeat only the failed component as appropriate. Where a student has failed both components they would be expected to repeat the module in full.

Decision

USC/18-19/035 USC approved the derogation as requested.

USC/18-19/036 Iveagh Fellowship Programme

A memorandum from Ms Orla Bannon, Director of Careers, dated 4 December 2018, had been circulated. The Director of Careers was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

The Director noted that the Iveagh Fellowship Programme launched by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Saothar, aims to assist Irish students to identify and participate in high-quality internships in international policy organisations. Five fellowships will be available nationally in 2019 to full-time Irish undergraduate and masters students of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences interested in careers in international policy. The fellowships will provide mentorship to help secure an internship at an internationally-recognised organisation and provide an award of €5,000 once an appropriate internship has been secured.

Each participating third level institution in Ireland was asked to nominate two students by 15 January 2019 to be considered for the fellowship. Due to the tight turnaround time, the applications process had been opened. Applicants had been asked to submit their CV and a statement of purpose. The Director of Careers sought advice from USC on how to best shortlist and select applicants for nomination.

In the discussion that followed, members noted the unfairness of targeting students of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and of targeting Irish students. The committee agreed that a

panel, including an external member, should be convened to assess the applications and should use the same assessment criteria as DFAT will use when shortlisting applicants. Following this shortlisting process, applicants may be called for an interview.

Decision

USC/18-19/036 The committee agreed the shortlisting process for applicants as noted above.

USC/18-19/037 Proposals for Trinity Electives

XX

A memorandum from Professor Aine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education, Chair of Workstream 3 TEP Features and Professor Declan O’Sullivan, Trinity Electives Champion, dated 6 December 2018, had been circulated.

The Associate Dean spoke to this item and introduced three Trinity Elective proposals for approval for rollout in 2019/20 and three for rollout in 2020/21. Three of the proposals were under the category of the University’s research themes, and three were under key societal challenges and languages. The Trinity Electives Subgroup had evaluated the proposals and confirmed they met the principles of the Trinity Electives. A copy of the proposals are attached to these minutes.

In response to a query, the Associate Dean confirmed that all the proposals were of a multi-disciplinary nature.

Decision

USC/18-19/037 USC approved and recommended to the University Council the proposed Trinity Electives.

USC/18-19/038 Any other business

In response to a query regarding the processing of provisional examination results, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that students may view examinations scripts within a certain timeframe and with the understanding that the scripts are provisional. It was agreed that an email would be issued to students about this.

USC/18-19/039 Minutes

USC noted the minutes of the Royal Irish Academy of Music Associated College Degrees Committee of 21 February 2018 and 30 May 2018.

USC/18-19/040 Items for Noting

USC noted the following items:

1. First Report of Trinity Teaching and Learning 2018
2. TEP Phase 4: Trinity assessment assistants and Trinity assessment fellows, memorandum from Dr Ciara O’Farrell, dated 5 December 2018.