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

CONSOLIDATED
ANNUAL FACULTY QUALITY REPORT
2017/18

Introduction

The Annual Faculty Quality Report (AFQR) was introduced in 2015 as part of the [Framework for Quality at Trinity College Dublin](). It provides data that assists in monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of College quality assurance policies and procedures at local level, and informs the production of the Annual Institutional Quality Report to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Institutional Self- Evaluation Report (ISER) for Trinity's next institutional quality review scheduled for 2020/21.

Each of the Annual Faculty Quality Reports is discussed at the Annual Faculty Executive Quality Meetings, attended by the Quality Officer, before being submitted to the Quality Committee for consideration. Following this, a consolidated report is prepared for the University Council that summarizes quality initiatives and good practice across Schools and Faculties and highlights challenges and issues for escalation to College-level. The individual Faculty Quality Reports and the consolidated report are published on the Quality Office website.

The institution of the Annual Faculty Quality Report was recognised by QQI as an example of good practice in the QQI 'Quality with Higher Education Summary Report' in 2016/17.

Executive Summary

The [2017/18 Annual Faculty Quality Reports]() (AFQR) evidence a deepening engagement by Schools in monitoring and reporting on local implementation of quality initiatives and academic policies.

Information provided through the 2017/18 AFQRs provide a more holistic view of quality and includes, for example, commentary by Schools on their engagement with the Athena Swan Awards, the Trinity Education Project (TEP), new legislation and regulations, and other College-wide initiatives.

The reports continue to highlight the on-going challenges faced by Schools in meeting their desired level of quality in teaching and learning as a result of some sub-optimal teaching and learning environments; poor staff:student ratios in many schools; progress in meeting 5 –Year Staffing Plan targets; funding of postgraduate research students, which impacts on the availability of tutors and demonstrators to support undergraduate education provision.

Schools are also responding to external challenges such as introduction of the EU-General Data Protection Regulation (May 2018) and the associated Health Research Regulation (November 2018); and negotiations with partners on sourcing of suitable clinical placements for students that support the attainment of programme learning outcomes and awards.

Faculty Highlights of 2017/18

i. Engineering, Mathematics and Science (EMS) highlighted the entry of the first cohort of students to the new undergraduate Science programme in September 2018; the design and approval of innovative postgraduate programmes; the potential of the new E3 Learning Foundry for student teaching and learning, which is anticipated to respond to an improved student experience.

ii. Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) highlighted the restructure of the School of Religion and the implementation of the new undergraduate programme in the School; the positive impact of Phase 1 of the Arts Block Refurbishment Project on the student experience; the continuing opportunities arising from Columbia University Partnership.

iii. Health Sciences (HS) highlighted the expansion of opportunities for students in Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) that for the first time included students in AHSS School of Linguistics, Speech and Communication Science; the cross-Faculty initiative to fund a position for a Deputy Data Protection Officer for Research to respond to challenges posed by the Health Research Regulation (November 2018): the rollout of training on GDPR to 450 researchers across the Faculty; the funded six workshops on 'Responding to distressed people', which had a focus on enhancing staff capability to respond to mental health and wellbeing needs of students.

The high level issues and challenges that Schools and Faculties reported are outlined in Table 1 (page 9) below. The quality of the teaching and learning space is a common theme across all Faculties, and it is expected that this will be addressed through the Estates Strategy, the Arts Block Refresh, and other existing and proposed capital projects such as the new Trinity Business School, and the E Learning Foundry.

Finally, issues around resourcing are being tackled on many fronts through, for example, commercialization, philanthropy, internationalization and supported, in part, by raising awareness at a national level through such actions as the IUA 'Save our Spark' campaign.

Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Key initiatives

The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) launched the Columbia Dual Degree in 2017/18 across four strands – (i) English Studies, (ii) European Studies, (iii) History, and (iv) Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures. The programme was piloted in 2017/2018 with four students and 38 students registered in 2018/19.

Following a review of the School of Religion in 2016/17, a restructuring of the School was completed in 2017/18 and a new undergraduate programme was developed. On foot of a review of Creative Arts in 2017/18, a taskforce to implement the recommendations of the review has been established.

The Faculty continued to rank highly in the QS subject rankings in 2018, with Classics and Ancient History (13th), English Language and Literature (28th), and Performing Arts (42nd) all ranked in the QS top 50. Furthermore, Classics and English both ranked in the top 10 in Europe. The Trinity Business School was awarded full EQUIS accreditation in December 2018.

The Athena Swan (AS) process was formally launched in the Faculty in 2018 and Athena Swan champions have been appointed in all Schools. Following consultation with staff and postgraduate research students, a process of engagement on key AS themes has been initiated. Submissions from AHSS Schools are expected in November 2019.

Opportunities for Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) were provided to students in Clinical Speech and Language Studies.

The School of Psychology online M.Sc. in Managing Risk and System Change was nominated at the GradIreland Higher Education Awards 2019 in the Best New Postgraduate Course category.

Key challenges reported

- The quality of teaching and learning spaces remains an issue of concern in the Faculty. While the first phase of the Arts Block refurbishment has resulted in improved student amenities, issues remain with wheelchair access, equipment/technical support and noise levels in teaching spaces. Schools located across multiple sites (Creative Arts, Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Social Work and Social Policy) also report issues with the suitability of their learning spaces.
- High staff:student ratios are highlighted as an issue of concern for the Faculty. Seven Schools reported ratios above the College median and some Schools (e.g. Histories and Humanities, Law and Social Sciences and Philosophy) reported figures above those for comparator institutions in the UK. These ratios act as a barrier to quality and in some cases (e.g. Psychology) could result in programmes not meeting the requirements for professional accreditation. The introduction of the capstone project and changes in assessment modalities in TEP is expected to impose further strain on already limited staff resources.
- The lack of a College-wide procedure for raising students on the 2.1/1 borderline without materially altering their result in SITS was highlighted in AHSS and in FEMS.
- Other issues of concern included courts of examiners not having access to results on modules which are assessed in different Schools, and the inability of students to register for modules online. These issues will become increasingly important with the introduction of the new programme architecture in TEP.

Health Sciences

Key initiatives

The Faculty adopted a 'whole Faculty' approach to its Athena Swan (AS) Bronze Award application, which was submitted in November 2018. A Faculty Champion and a Project Officer were appointed to ensure delivery of the submission and to support the implementation of an AS Action Plan 2019-2021.

The Faculty continued to expand and embed its Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) activities in 2017/18. A strategic appointment was made to drive and monitor targets for IPL and funding has been secured for a Visiting Professor in IPL to coincide with a planned Faculty IPL exhibition. The School of Nursing & Midwifery opened the Simulation Suite at St. James' Hospital to provide students with opportunities for inter-professional learning in a clinical environment.

The Dean launched the Dean's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Teaching in Professional Practice in 2017/18 to recognize the significant contribution of clinical staff in the delivery of teaching to students in the Faculty. The Deans Award for Innovation in Teaching, launched in 2014/15, funded five projects in 2017/18 and in 2018/19, winners from previous years were invited to submit proposals for the further development of their innovations with a view to achieving a broader impact.

In 2017/18, the Dean funded six 'Responding to distressed people' workshops. These were designed to equip Health Sciences staff with the knowledge and confidence to support students who are experiencing distress.

In response to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Health Research Regulations, the School of Medicine facilitated training for over 450 research staff across the Faculty.

Key challenges reported

- Despite significant investments in space during 2017/18, the quality of some of the teaching and learning environments remains a critical issue and a possible impediment to further development in the Faculty. In particular, student numbers in the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences have outgrown the teaching space available.

- The provision of suitable student clinical placements remains an issue of critical importance for Schools in the Faculty in line with regulatory requirements for professional accreditation. The Dean is in continuous negotiation with relevant health service partners to secure high calibre clinical placements for students in the Faculty.

- In response to concerns regarding the lack of a clearly articulated focus on the educational and research mission of the New Children's Hospital, the Dean has established a Children's Academic Strategy Group.

- The School highlighted staff resource issues in the Academic Registry as an issue of concern, particularly during peak work times. In 2017/18, the School of Nursing & Midwifery and the Academic Registry established the Academic Registry Operations Group to improve communications between the two entities.

- The funding of postgraduate students for their work as demonstrators, their input to the capstone projects, and their facilitation of small group teaching is a challenge for Schools in the Faculty. This will continue to be an issue with the implementation of TEP.

Engineering, Mathematics and Science

Key initiatives

The implementation of the new UG Science programme was a key achievement in 2017/18. A number of innovative UG programmes are been developed as part of the E3 project. In the School of Natural Sciences, a joint Honours Geography and Computer Science Moderatorship is at an early stage of development and the pedagogic potential of the E3 Learning Foundry is being incorporated into the School's plan for teaching and learning.

The Faculty's portfolio of postgraduate taught courses expanded in the areas of Immunology, Energy Science, Genomic Medicine, Computer Science and Engineering. A proposed new M.Sc. in Immunotheraputics, developed in consultation with the biopharma industry, is the first of its kind in the country.

Building on the success of the Thapar Programme, the Faculty is developing new partnerships with third-level institutions in the US (Columbia), China (UM-SJTU Joint Institute (JI), UBST Beijing), and India (Manipal Universit).

In 2017/18, three Schools submitted applications for their Athena SWAN (AS) Silver awards and the remaining five Schools expect to submit applications for AS Bronze Awards by November 2019. The Faculty provided financial support for the applications and will recruit an AS Officer to project manage the submissions. AS Champions are appointed in all Schools.

The Schools in the Faculty continue to experience an upward trend in QS subject rankings. In 2017/18, Computer Science and Information Systems, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geography, and Materials Science all ranking in the top 100. Two broad subject areas also ranked in the top 100 globally – Engineering and Technology (88th) and Life Sciences and Medicine (89th).

Key Challenges reported

- Progression rates across the Faculty averaged 85%, which falls below the College target of 90%. Four courses with progression below 90% have been amalgamated into the new four-stream Science course and it is hoped that aligning students with their area of interest will boost progression rates. The remaining courses will be evaluated to determine if there are any underlying reasons for the low rates.

- The sub-optimal quality of some of the teaching and learning space in the Faculty, particularly in Goldsmith Hall, continues to impact the student experience. A review of Goldsmith Hall was commissioned by the Faculty Dean and College Safety Officer. The proposed E3 Foundry building will address some of the Faculty's space needs but in the short term the lack of growth space for Schools poses challenges, among them the recruiting of world-ranked academics.

- The lack of global geographical diversity in the student population, particularly at postgraduate level, was highlighted as a challenge. The Faculty would welcome College-wide initiatives to track diversity at the application stage, and proactive initiatives to encourage diversity in student recruitment.

- The co-ordination of the undergraduate science websites remains an issue and may be a barrier to Non-EU student recruitment.

- The funding of postgraduate students for their work as demonstrators, their input to the capstone projects, and their facilitation of small group teaching is a challenge for Schools in the Faculty. This will continue to be an issue with the implementation of TEP.

Faculties at a glance (Refer Appendix 1)

Module evaluations

All three faculties reported undergraduate module evaluation rates greater than 98% in 2017/18, an increase on rates reported for 2016/17 (95% average across the three Faculties). A variety of student feedback methods were reported, including staff:student liaison committees (Chemistry, Engineering, English, Law, LLCS, LSCS), mid-term evaluations (Law, Psychology), focus groups (LLCS), and meetings with DTLUGs and course co-ordinators (LLCS, Law). Faculties reported on resolutions implemented by Schools in response to issues raised by students, and some of these also align with the introduction of the new TEP curriculum. For example, in the School of English, the Capstone handbook was revised in response to student requests for more information, and a dedicated Capstone coordinator was appointed by the Head of School.

As in 2016/17, taught postgraduate programme evaluation rates of 100% were achieved in HS and AHSS. In the Faculty of EMS, 95% of postgraduate taught programmes were evaluated (18 out of 19), an increase of 12% on 2016/17. A range of evaluation methods were reported, including for example the use of in-class, online surveys, focus groups and meetings with class representatives.

External Examiner reports:

There was an increase in the percentage of undergraduate external examiner (EE) reports returned compared to 2016/17 in all three Faculties, with the Faculty of EMS reporting the highest return rate (97%). Issues raised by UG External Examiners in 2017/18 included reluctance to mark at the higher end of the range, disparity of marks from overseas project

supervisors, lack of written feedback on scripts and resolution of moderated grades. Enhancements implemented by Schools in 2017/18 in response to EE recommendations included workload evaluations, improved annotation on scripts, and a standard process for recording the rationale for moderated grades.

In relation to PGT External Examiner reports, there was a decrease in the percentage received in EMS compared to 2016/17 (76% vs 80% respectively), and a slight increase in HS (89% vs 88%). The EMS return rate is due to a low rate of return in Engineering (54%) and course directors in the School are liaising with the externs to hasten the return of reports.

An external examiner enhancement project was undertaken in 2017/18, which included (i) a new EE website providing a single point of access to information for examiners and Schools, (ii) a centralized folder for storage of and easy access to EE reports by Schools, (iii) a single email address for submission of EE reports (externreports@tcd.ie) facilitating ease of submission of reports and monitoring of return rates. Other enhancements to the process include a revised EE annual report template, which requires examiners to confirm in writing that they have securely disposed of any examination material in electronic or hardcopy (scripts, student course work, theses) at the end of the examining process, to align with GDPR requirements.

Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

The Senior Lecturer requested via the Undergraduate Studies Committee that all Schools report via the Annual Faculty Quality Reports on actions in response to ISSE Survey

outcomes at School-level. Concerns were expressed by Schools on ISSE scores on Quality of Interactions, Supportive Environment and Student-Faculty Interaction. Schools reported increased efforts to ensure feedback was provided to students within 20 days (UG) and 30 days (PG) timeframe outlined in the Return of Coursework Policy, and where timeframes could not be met to communicate with students on when feedback on assignments would be available.

2017/18 saw the implementation of the ISSE postgraduate research pilot-survey. Many Schools responded to issues raised by PGR students in respect of opportunity to integrate into the research environment in Schools and across College, and to share their research with other PGR students and academics. Lack of funding and designated work-space continued to be raised by postgraduate research students in AHSS.

Progression & Retention

A College 'retention rate' of 96% was achieved in 2017/18. 'Retention' is defined as students who progressed to Year 2 (88%), repeated Year 1 (3%) or who transferred to another course within College (5%). 'Progression' is defined as progressing within the course that the student first enrolled. A 'progression rate' of 88% was achieved from Year 1 to Year 2; this is less than the 90% target outlined in the College Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

AHSS had the highest intake of new entrants and achieved a progression rate of 91%, the only Faculty to meet the strategic plan target of 90% in 2017/18. Two-Subject Moderatorship (TSM) programmes had a progression rate of 84%.These results are similar to rates achieved in 2016/17 (AHSS-90%; TSM-86%).

EMS has the second highest intake of new entrants and the lowest overall progression rate (85%), down from 90% in 2016/17. Several of the courses with progression rates

below 90% have been amalgamated into the new four-stream Science course and it is hoped that aligning students with their area of interest will boost progression rates. The remaining courses will be evaluated to determine if there are any underlying reasons for the low rates.

HS had the lowest number of new entrants and achieved a progression rate of 89%, down on the 2016/17 rate of 95%. The Faculty typically has a high rate of transfer between programmes, 2.5% overall, but up to 4-6% in individual programmes and this is reflected in the retention rate of 94%.

Accreditation

Accreditation visits were recorded in all three Faculties in 2017/18. In Health Sciences, the B.Sc. in Physiotherapy and the B.Sc. in Human Nutrition and Dietetics were accredited by CORU until 2021 and 2023 respectively.

An accreditation visit by the Medical Council took place in October 2018 to accredit the undergraduate medical programme. The School of Medicine is addressing some of the issues raised, especially in relation to student wellbeing, in the Council's verbal feedback to the School. A final report has not as yet been received from the Medical Council.

An accreditation visit by the Institute of Physics was deferred from 2017/18 to November 2018, to allow consideration of the new course structures in TEP.

In AHSS, the Bachelor in Social Studies was accredited by CORU until 2022. Both accreditation bodies for the B.Sc. (Ling.) (CORU and the IASLT) expressed the desire for a formal quality assurance process relating to clinical placement sites. Other issues raised by accreditation bodies include the impact of increased workload in Schools, high staff:student ratios and concerns regarding the availability and condition of teaching and learning spaces.

Table 1: Issues raised by Schools/Faculties in 2017-18

Issue	Reported Risks	Action already taken:	Governance and Strategy
Space • Condition and availability of fit-for-purpose teaching & learning spaces (e.g. Arts Building, School of Law, School of Creative Arts, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science), Nursing and Midwifery, Goldsmith Hall, TBSI, and hospital sites (Tallaght and St James).	(i) Quality of student experience, (ii) Health & Safety, (iii) inability to grow student numbers (iv) continued accreditation of education programmes.	✓ Phase 1 Arts Building refresh, refurbishment of Sth. Leinster St, Hamilton building improvements, new student space in TBSI, 1937 Reading Room refurbishment, Trinity Business School.	✓ Bursar via Estates Strategy ✓ Future developments include TTEC and Grand Canal Innovation District, E3 Foundry
Placements • Provision of (i) additional and (ii) high-calibre student placements and (iii) clinical supervisors (Nursing and Midwifery, Medicine).	○ Risk to continued professional accreditation if suitable placements are not available for students. ○ Risk to sustainability of programmes.	✓ School of Medicine has established placements at Nobel's Hospital, Isle of Man and is in discussions with Peamount Hospital and the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group.	✓ Faculty Dean in consultation with Health Service Executive/Providers. ✓ Issue to be placed on the College Risk Register
Systems • Strategy to support technology enhanced learning across the College and implementation of blended curricula necessary (HS) • Flexibility and responsiveness of AR and SITS admission process (Nursing & Midwifery) • Online module registration.	○ Impact on engagement of academics and students with technology ○ Reduced quality of student experience of the admissions process ○ Ability to respond swiftly to external funding opportunities	✓ Current review of On-line Education ✓ An Academic Registry Operations Group was jointly established between Academic Registry and Nursing and Midwifery to improve communication and troubleshoot operational issues. ✓ Online module registration is part of the TEP–SITS enhancements	✓ COO and Director IT Services (Online Education Strategy/ Trinity Digital Strategy. ✓ TEP enhancements in SITS. .

Table 1: Issues raised by Schools/Faculties in 2017-18			
Issue	Reported Risks	Action already taken:	Governance and Strategy
	o Visibility of modules assessed in difference Schools and online module registration are critical to the implementation of TEP (Trinity Electives).		
Resources (all Faculties) • Staff: Student Ratios (AHSS) • Funding for Teaching Assistants (HS/FEMS) • Funding for Postgraduate Research Students.	- Insufficient staff to deliver teaching, supervise theses, second mark, conduct tutorials - low staff:student ratios impact on the student experience, implementation of TEP, accreditation and growth of student numbers - insufficient TAs/ demonstrators impacts TEP implementation.	✓ The Dean of Graduate Studies is reviewing the 1252 postgraduate awards in consultation with Schools. ✓ Additional staffing as part of the Trinity Business School, TTEC and the E3 Foundry initiatives. ✓ The Ussher Assistant Professor II Development Programme 2016-2021 provides strategic, new-blood posts to attract early career academics.	✓ Decisions on strategic recruitment in Schools are devolved to the Faculty Dean and based on the multi-annual (5-year), strategic staffing plans provided by Schools, on a rolling basis.
Recruitment • Recruitment of a globally diverse student population (EMS) • Develop a coherent approach to student recruitment (including NEU)/marketing strategy (FEMS, HS)	- Lack of diversity in the student population is a risk to full integration of non-EU students.	✓ The FEMS Global Strategy Group has been established to implement a co-ordinated approach to NEU recruitment.	✓ GRS3 commits to further diversification and growth of the student body.
Legislative compliance • Adverse implications of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and associated Health Research Regulations (AHSS, HS).	- Risk to ongoing and future research activities	✓ Faculty Deans in conjunction with the College Secretary have agreed to fund a Deputy Data Protection Officer for Research (currently advertised).	✓ GDPR Implementation Plan with agreed budget of €663k in progress and includes posts of GDPR Project Lead, Data

Table 1: Issues raised by Schools/Faculties in 2017-18			
Issue	Reported Risks	Action already taken:	Governance and Strategy
		✓ 1,000+ staff completed online GDPR training module and 70+ workshops conducted with Schools and Units. ✓ School of Medicine providing extensive training in DP compliance for researchers. ✓ Following lobbying from Irish Universities Association, date on which the Health Research Regulations (HRR) will come in to force extended to August 2019. ✓ Further amendments to HRR are currently being considered by Department of Health which is reviewing legislation in conjunction with the Office of DP Commission.	Protection (DP) Solicitor and GDPR Project Executive.

Appendix 1

	Faculty	Health Sciences	Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	Engineering, Maths & Science
1	Percentage and no. UG Modules evaluated	100% (*338*)	98% (*1249 of 1276*)	99% (*562 of 566*)
2	Percentage and no. PG courses/ programmes evaluated	100% (*42*)	100% (*67*)	95% (*18 of 19*)
	Percentage and no. External Examiner reports returned[1]	UG 79% (*48 of 61*) PGT 89% (*39 of 44*)	UG 88% (*57 of 65*) PGT 91% (*71 of 78*)	UG 97% (*37 of 38*) PGT 76% (*16 of 21*)
4	No. of programmes accredited in 2017/18	• Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI) (1) • CORU (2)	• CORU (1)	• Institute of Physics (IoP) (1)
5	Quality Review (QR), Implementation Plan (IP) and Progress Report (PR)	• Nursing & Midwifery (QR) • B.Sc. Human Nutrition & Dietetics (IP) • Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Science (PR) Dental School (PR)	• Trinity Long Room Hub (QR) • Religions (QR) • Histories & Humanities (IP) • Law Programmes, M.Th., English (PR)	CRANN (Desktop review and IP)
	New entrant progression[2] & retention[3] *Total new entrants 2017/18 = 2397*	668 students of 748 (89%) progressed 27 students (3.6%) repeated 19 students (2.5%) transferred 714 students (95%) retained	877 students of 966 (91%) progressed 10 students (1%) repeated 41 students (4%) transferred 928 students (96%) retained	733 students of 862 (85%) progressed 35 students (4%) repeated 60 students (7%) transferred 828 students (96%) retained
	Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) *Total respondents = 2005*	411 respondents - 20% (224 YR1, 128 YRF and 59 PGT)	1,045 respondents – 52% (432 YR1, 286 YRF and 327 PGT)	549 respondents - 27% (321 YR1, 136 YRF and 92 PGT)
	ISSE PGR Pilot 2017/18 *Total respondents = 379*	61 respondents (16%) *55 Doctorate, 6 Masters*	155 respondents (40%) *152 Doctorate, 3 Masters*	163 respondents (43%) *156 Doctorate, 7 Masters*

[1] External examination of HS programmes occurs at each cohort level in order to satisfy Professional Statutory Body requirements. Therefore there is a many:1 and 1:many relationship between external examiner reports, taught programmes and strands within programmes..

[2] Progression is defined as the number of students who progress from first to second year within the same course.

[3]Retention is defined as the number of students who are retained in College i.e. either progress from first to second year in the same course, repeat the year in the same course or transfer to another course within College..