IUQB

**IRISH UNIVERSITIES
QUALITY BOARD**

IRIU REPORT

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

~ JUNE 2012 ~

IRIU

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW
OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES**

THE IRIU OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

THE REVIEW REPORT

APPENDICES

FOREWORD BY THE IUQB

The Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) was established in 2002 to support and promote a culture of quality in Irish Higher Education and independently evaluate the effectiveness of quality processes in Irish universities, as required by the Universities Act, 1997.

In 2004, the IUQB and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) jointly commissioned the European Universities Association (EUA) to undertake a customised version of its Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) as the first cycle of institutional quality reviews of the seven Irish universities.

In 2009, following consultation with a range of key stakeholders, the IUQB finalised the process for the second cycle of institutional quality reviews. This process, which operates in line with national legislation and agreed European Standards, is termed the Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU).

Reports arising from institutional quality assurance reviews of and by Irish universities, in accordance with the Universities Act, 1997, are published at: http://reviews.iuqb.net/.
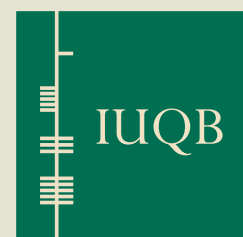
THE REVIEW TEAM

The TCD Review was conducted by the following team of six reviewers selected by the IUQB Board from the IRIU Register of Reviewers on 4th April 2011. The Co-ordinating Reviewer undertook a Planning Visit to TCD on 9th February 2012. The Review Team was trained by the IUQB on the requirements of the IRIU process on 9th March 2012. The Main Review Visit was conducted by the full team between 12th and 15th March 2012. The IUQB Board approved the release of the TCD report for publication on 18 June 2012.

Professor Lynn Meek, Director of the L.H. Martin Institute of Higher Education Leadership and Management , University of Melbourne, Australia (Chair)
» Former Research Chair and Director in Higher Education Management and Policy, University of New England, 1996 - 2008
» Has attracted nearly $3 million in competitive research grants, including six Australian Research Council large grants, five ARC small grants, an ARC SPIRT grant
» Research interests include University governance and management, research management, diversification of higher education institutions and systems, institutional amalgamations, organisational change and comparative HE systems.

Professor Jürgen Kohler, Former Rector, Greifswald University, Germany
» 1994 – 2000: Rector of Greifswald University, prior to that was Dean of the Faculty of Law and Business Management at Greifswald University
» German university representative in the Council of Europe Committee on Higher Education and Research (CDESR)
» Member of the ENQA and EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) Pool of Experts
» Co-editor of the EUA Bologna Handbook (renamed the Journal of the European Higher Education Area) and the Handbook on Leadership and Governance in Higher Education

Professor Gerard Wrixon, Former President, University College Cork
» UCC President 1999-2007
» Review Committee member on the HEA Commissioned Review of the IUQB in 2008
» Chaired UCC's Quality Committee 1999-2007
» NMRC Chair – IS09000 Accreditation Committee 1995-1999
» IRIU Reviewer – DCU 2010

Ms Karina Ufert, ESU Nominee, MA in Social Studies, Vilnius University, Lithuania
» Current Chairperson and former Vice-Chairperson, European Students' Union
» European Students' Union Executive Committee Member
» Member of the ESU Quality Assurance Experts Pool
» EUA IEP Expert – undertaken 2 EUA IEP Reviews in last two years
» Member of the BFUG on Mobility

Professor Paul Ramsden (UK Based) Former Founding Chief Executive of the UK's Higher Education Academy (Retired 2009) and Key Associate of Phillips KPA
» In 2010, advisor to the Irish Government's Strategy for Higher Education
» In 2010, led a major review of the UK's National Student Survey and recently advised the UK Government on the future of teaching and the student experience
» Former Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at the University of Sydney, and the foundation Director of the Griffith Institute for Higher Education at Griffith University.
» Visiting professor at the Institute of Education, University of London, Adjunct professor, Macquarie University, Sydney

Ms Sarah Butler, Special Adviser on Academic Quality (part-time), University of Sussex, UK, seconded part-time as Assistant Director in the Research Development and Partnerships Group, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK (Co-ordinating Reviewer)
» Formerly Director of Academic Support, University of Sussex
» External reviewer for University College London (UCL) Internal Quality Reviews since 2001 and external expert member of UCL's Quality Management and Enhancement Committee 2004-2009; external panel member for various reviews conducted by the universities of Essex, Glasgow and Lancaster
» Member of the Advisory Group for the self-certification of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications(FHEQ) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland against the Framework for Qualifications of the FQ-EHEA 2008
» Work for QAA includes: Assistant Director co-ordinating institutional audits between 2007 and 2009, revision of the FHEQ in 2008 and development of the *HE Credit Framework for England*, developing and revising guidance for inclusion in the UK Quality Code for HE UK, representative on the Bologna network of national correspondents for Qualifications Frameworks

REVIEW REPORT

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

THE UNIVERSITY

Trinity College Dublin (TCD) was founded in 1592 and is Ireland's oldest University. It ranks internationally amongst the world's top research-intensive universities and in several areas is recognised internationally for its research excellence. It occupies an historic campus in the centre of Dublin and has acquired buildings on adjacent sites as it has expanded its activities. It operates Trinity education centres at two main Dublin teaching hospitals. The Trinity College Library is the largest research library in Ireland and one of the largest libraries in Europe. It has extensive holdings of early literary and historical manuscripts and printed materials, maps, music and cultural treasures of international significance. The College has a significant art collection and Schools hold important collections of specimens, artefacts and cultural treasures.

The total student population in 2010/11 was 16,747 of which approximately one-third are postgraduate. 43% of these were doctoral students and Trinity College awarded 24% of the national total of doctorates in that year. In 2011, the number of staff employed by Trinity College was 2,623 (full-time equivalents but excluding staff on the casual payroll) of which 674 were academic staff, 727 were staff funded from external research grant income and 1,222 were professional, technical and support staff.

A process of academic restructuring commenced in 2005/6 and 24 Schools are now in place (comprising either single academic disciplines or two or more related academic disciplines). In 2008, these were grouped into three Faculties (Engineering, Mathematics & Science; Health Sciences; and Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences) each under an elected Faculty Dean to manage general, financial and HR functions but not academic matters. There are four major research institutes and more than thirty research centres.

Trinity College has a partnership with three Associate Colleges of Education (Marino Institute of Education, Froebel College of Education[1], and the Church of Ireland College of Education) with which it has collaborated on teacher education. It also collaborates with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in the delivery of a number of courses of study. Trinity College has double diploma arrangements (mainly in economics and business studies) with a number of European institutions, has participated in Erasmus Mundus programmes and its School of Medicine participates in the Eurolife consortium of eight research-intensive universities in Europe promoting educational interaction and co-operation in the bio-medical sciences. The College's students have the opportunity to spend a year (or part-year) abroad through an extensive network of universities mainly in Europe and North America with which it has agreements.

---

[1] Since 2010/11 responsibility for the delivery and administration of the programmes for the Marino Institute of Education and the Church of Ireland College of Education rests with the Associated Colleges while the University of Dublin continues to accredit them. The nature of the relationship with Froebel College has also changed as it has entered into an institutional alliance with the National University of Ireland at Maynooth (NUIM).

MISSION, STRATEGY AND CURRENT DIRECTIONS

Trinity's strategic plan for 2009/14 articulates the following core values:

- The inclusivity of its community, which offers equality of access and opportunity, seeking out and recognising talent wherever it exists
- International recognition for its research and the building of academic strengths through teamwork and collegiality
- The interdependence of teaching and research and the diversity of its research and teaching methods
- Creativity and innovation, including the development of an entrepreneurial spirit among staff and students, to deliver the widest benefit to society
- The use of the most effective instruments to apply its values, including: autonomy in the management of resources, matched by clear and transparent accountability to society, and academic freedom to pursue all avenues of enquiry and to disseminate the results of research and scholarship.

It also identifies four themes to underpin and inform a series of planned activities:

- Education
- Knowledge generation and transfer
- Student experience
- Engagement with society

The aim of the strategic plan is to establish Trinity as one of the elite group of universities that shape its world.

In this context, the senior management team emphasised the need to re-establish a more equal balance between research and education (whilst re-enforcing their mutual interdependence) and to ensure that research was embedded in the curriculum as a distinctive feature of the student experience at Trinity. Another key area identified by the College was its intention to develop a Globalisation Policy following the appointment of a Vice-Provost for Global Relations in September 2011.The aim is to increase the proportion of international fee-paying students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and to promote staff mobility.

Alongside the other universities in Ireland, Trinity finds itself operating in a period of financial constraints. Since 2008, core grant funding by the State has reduced by 41%.The economic downturn in Ireland has led to public austerity measures including the Employment Control Framework which places controls on staff numbers and recruitment replacement and promotion practices. The effectiveness of the College's cost-saving activities has meant that the College had no accumulated recurrent or capital deficit at the end of the 2010/11 year. The College assumes that the current financial context is likely to remain constrained for the foreseeable future and has assumed further reductions of core grants in future years in its financial planning model. It intends to increase its proportion of non-Exchequer income through new initiatives in commercialisation, internationalisation and philanthropy. To date, Trinity has appointed 40 new posts (short-term contracts) from non-Exchequer funding in key strategic areas to underpin research and ensure the continuation of research-informed teaching. These have mostly been junior appointments because of the current restrictions on recruitment at senior levels.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Board of Trinity College is its governing body, the responsibilities of which derive from the Universities Act, 1997 and the College Statutes. Its composition is set out in The Trinity College, Dublin (Charters and Letters Patent Amendment) Act, 2000. This latter Act makes provision for only two external members of the Board. The University Council is the supreme academic authority of the University. The Board established a Committees Review Group in 2008 to revise the committee structure in order to take account of the academic restructuring, to achieve greater efficiency and accountability, and distinguish between management functions and policy development.

In 2008, the Board approved the Trinity Code of Governance which lays down a high level Code of Practice for the Board and, in 2010, revised terms of reference for the Principal Committees were approved following recommendations from the Committees Review Group. Functions delegated to the five Principal Committees of Board (Estates, Finance, Human Resources, Library and Information Policy, and Student Services) are the development of policy for approval by the Council and monitoring of progress. The first report of the Committees Review Group in 2009 made recommendations for the arrangements for the University Council whereby four existing committees (Graduate Studies Committee, International Committee, Research Committee and Undergraduate Studies Committee) should be become Academic Committees of Council. Alongside these there are four Compliance Committees (College Safety Committee, Equality Committee, Irish Language Committee, and Quality Committee) which are perceived to fulfil legal requirements and which report to the Board or jointly to the Board and Council. The constitutions of committees include key academic officers to ensure the primacy of academic concerns, student representation to ensure input to the decision-making process and key administrative officers to inform on matters of implementation. The Review Team heard from student representatives that they felt valued as committee members and had opportunities to put forward their views.

It was not clear to the Team that the current committee structure was effective in monitoring and overseeing quality assurance and enhancement issues. The Council receives Quality Review reports and subsequent reports following up action plans but there were doubts as to whether this committee was at the appropriate level to drill down to the recommendations (and responses to them) in sufficient detail. By contrast, the Quality Committee was entrusted with the design of the process but was not required to engage fully with the outcomes nor on how these might impact on educational provision. Similarly, responsibility for developing and implementing policy in relation to student evaluations and analysing results appears to rest with the Quality Committee. However, as this committee appeared to run in parallel to the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees (without any obvious transverse communication), it was unclear how conclusions reached by the Quality Committee influenced College-level bodies responsible for teaching provision. The Team was of the view that the College might usefully review the role of the Quality Committee, not only in terms of how it related to the business of the Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committees (which was unclear) but also in terms of its authority to systematically monitor the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement processes and outcomes.

It was evident that principles of collegiality and academic pre-eminence underpin Trinity's governance structures. However, the Team also heard concerns that 'collegiality' could also apply brakes to decision-

making and that resistance to change (offered in the name of collegiality) often represented self-interest rather than that of the College. It was also clear that Schools could effectively opt out of some policies without any sanction and that implementation of policy was variable rather than systematic. Students offered the opinion that 'Trinity's embedded culture was its own worst enemy'. The Team was of the view that greater emphasis needed to be placed on governance structures on the central setting of standards and norms and their strict implementation by the College's constituent Schools (see also USING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES TO DELIVER SYSTEMATIC ENHANCEMENT in section 5).

A modern research-intensive university needs to be outward focussed and to learn from a wide spectrum of practices elsewhere. The Review Team was of the opinion that the College Board was limited by the inclusion of only two external members. It suggests that there would be merit in further reflection on this as, in times of crisis and financial stringency, the inclusion of a larger number of high calibre external members with extensive experience of strategic planning to achieve goals could support the College in the development, validation and implementation of its aspirations. This could be achieved without increasing the size of the Board. The Team recommends that the College should address ways of more fully engaging external stakeholders in the governance and management of its operation at all levels and that, in particular, Advisory Boards be established in all Schools (at School or programme level) (see section 3, STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SELF-EVALUATION AND EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS below).

Trinity College has a complex portfolio of academic officerships which include the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Dean of Research, the Senior Lecturer, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Students, the Registrar, the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation, and Deans of Faculties. The Team was not convinced that this degree of complexity added value. Rather, it seemed to contribute to a 'silo' mentality and the Team supported the observation in the Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost that academic leadership was overly distributed and could result in lack of clarity, poor communication and confusion (see also section 5, USING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES TO DELIVER SYSTEMATIC ENHANCEMENT below).

According to the ISAR (1.8.2), the three faculties and Faculty Deans were established in 2008 to strengthen academic governance and to address issues of central support to Schools. However, the Team was informed that Faculty Deans were involved in strategic planning and the oversight of budgetary, staffing, and general management of their Schools but had no role in the oversight of academic affairs nor in the enhancement of the student experience within their faculties. This division seemed somewhat arbitrary and it was difficult to understand how Faculty Deans could discharge responsibilities for strategic planning and staffing without taking cognisance of research, teaching and learning and the student experience. The Team was of the view that further thought should be given to the totality of this role and the adoption of international best practice with respect to performance of academic as well as administrative leadership. Faculty Deans are currently elected; in the Team's view, more effective governance would be secured if they were appointed by internal or open competition (for which there is provision in the Roles and Responsibilities approved by the Board).

The Team also noted that Heads of Schools took office for relatively short periods of time and then returned to their academic posts. Some staff observed that this could foster a culture of inertia rather than change and also led to discontinuities of approach within Schools (where, for example, new Heads were unaware

of College policies). Periods of financial crisis have led other research-intensive universities to review their governance and management in order to remain internationally competitive. The Team was of the view that Trinity needed to consider professionalising executive management in the light of best practice.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE STUCTURES

In order to fulfil its aspirations, a modern research-intensive university also needs administrative and support services with structures which can respond rapidly to a changing environment and have the ability to deliver a challenging agenda. Originally, it had been envisaged that administrative and support structures would adapt to support the academic restructuring but this did not occur. In 2008, revised administrative and support arrangements (including an Academic Management Group and a Senior Administrative Management Group) were put into place under a newly-established post of Chief Operating Officer (COO). Full-scale administrative restructuring was put on hold to allow the academic restructuring to settle.

During the course of the review, the Team heard from students that there was widespread dissatisfaction with support and administrative services in terms of their complexity, lack of connectivity, insufficient customer focus and lack of transparency in terms of access and responsibilities. Administrative and support staff echoed concerns about the frustration of working in silos and the inability to achieve more effective and dynamic practices and identified an appetite for change. Overall administrative and support service structures were characterised as antiquated. The 2011 Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost identified a number of themes which appeared to exemplify issues across all the administrative and support structures, including the need for clarity about roles, responsibilities and accountabilities (including for the enforcement of College decisions), effective communication between Schools and administrative and support units and the need for a greater focus on the student experience.

In 2011, the Provost tasked a working group (chaired by the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation) to commence the process of administrative and support services reform in order to establish an efficient and cost-effective service capable of supporting and securing a student-centred, research-intensive and globally competitive university. It was also tasked with examining the suitability of the dual academic and administrative oversight currently in place. The 'Supports in Trinity: Administrative Review and Transformation' (START) has produced two reports, the second of which was provided to the Team. The Team was impressed by the START process in terms of the quality of:

- its self-reflection and analysis of strengths and weaknesses
- its recognition of the need to develop a service culture with ownership and accountability
- its outward focus in terms of benchmarking peer institution's operational structures, and
- its inclusion of external experts on the group.

It commends the roll-out of the START process as a means of modernising management, support and service structures and delivering a focus on the student experience. In particular, the Team supported recommendations relating to a change management process (including professional management training), transfer of more executive decision-making to unit directors and academic officers, and the process

of the appointment of Faculty Deans by competition rather than election. It was understood that the recommendations made in the Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost would be implemented as part of the START process. While commending the START process and report, the Team was conscious that at the time of the site visit, the status of the report was that it was yet to be considered by the Board. The Team strongly urged that the recommendations of the START project be implemented as a matter of urgency.

The ISAR identified that Trinity College's current student administration system was technically out -of-date and inadequate for the management and academic information needs of the College. It reported that the College Board had approved a budget to replace the existing system with SITS: Vision used in 70% of UK universities including the majority of the Russell Group. The GeneSIS project was responsible for implementing the new system and progress was in train. It was clear to the Team that the project would also provide opportunities for re-aligning and integrating functions, streamlining activities and simplifying administrative processes.

In tandem with the implementation of SITS, the College is planning to upgrade its VLE in 2012/13 to provide a versatile platform to support teaching and learning and direct communication. The ISAR acknowledged that the College was not yet clear about how the new VLE would be extended and supported nor the expertise and staff development required to support this (see also section 4, DEVELOPING, ENCOURAGING AND REWARDING STAFF INVOVED IN SUPPORTING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE below).

Staff members who met the team were excited about the benefits which SITS would bring and the opportunities for more effective management, monitoring and enhancement. However, the Team was conscious that that much of the success of the new system depends on the adoption of a harmonised marking and awards scheme (see also Section 3, ASSESSMENT below) and there was a danger that Schools' arguments for exceptions could derail the process. In the Team's view, it was necessary to minimise exceptions and ensure consistency and simplicity. The Team recommends that the GeneSIS project be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

The ISAR did not identify underlying principles or an overarching approach to quality assurance and its strategic use for enhancement. When asked by the Team, staff indicated that quality assurance was embedded in all its processes. Clearly, in terms of education, Trinity College has in place Quality Review Processes that embrace both Schools and administrative and support services, it has a well-established external examiner system, procedures for programme and module approval and over 50 of its courses have professional accreditation by professional and statutory bodies (PSRBs). It also initiated a process of mandatory student evaluations in 2009. In the Team's view, Trinity College was not yet exploiting the benefits of quality assurance processes to support the strategic and systematic enhancement of its academic portfolio. Quality assurance processes did not appear to inform routine strategic planning to be integrated with ongoing delivery of teaching and learning; rather, they sat alongside these activities in a parallel process. This is discussed further in sections 4 and 5 below.

COMMENDATIONS

The Review Team commends Trinity College:

1.1   On the operation of the START Taskforce (in terms of its approach, methodology and focus) as a means of modernising management, support and service structures and delivering a focus on the student experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends that:

1.2   The College addresses ways of more fully engaging external stakeholders in the governance and management of the College.

1.3   The College might usefully review the role of the Quality Committee not only in terms of how it relates to the business of the Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committees but also in terms of its authority to systematically monitor the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement processes and outcomes.

1.4   Trinity should consider enhancing the professionalisation of executive management in the light of international best practice.

1.5   The key recommendations of the START Taskforce are implemented as a matter of urgency.

1.6   The GeneSIS project is brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (ISAR)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISAR

An Institutional Review Steering Group was established to manage the review process on behalf of College and to develop the ISAR. It was chaired by the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, and comprised College Officers, student representatives, Chief Operating Officer, Academic Secretary, Quality Officer, and a Quality Committee representative. The Steering Group met on five separate occasions from mid-September to early November and produced a number of initial drafts of the ISAR prior to College-wide engagement and consultation. All staff and students were informed of the institutional review and directed to a designated webpage which outlined the process in full.

A draft ISAR was circulated to the following College Committees between mid-October and the beginning of December 2011, with subsequent drafts emerging throughout the process in order to capture and reflect feedback received during the consultation period: Quality Committee; Research Committee; Undergraduate Studies Committee; Graduate Studies Committee; the Senior Administrative Management Group; University Council; and Executive Officer Group. A draft ISAR was also made available to, and discussed at, the Faculty Fora, Undergraduate Student Forum, and the Postgraduate Student Forum. In addition, an on-line consultation process with all College staff and students was facilitated during one week in November 2011. The draft ISAR was circulated to the Provost for final comment and approval at the end of December prior to submission to the IUQB.

Staff and students whom the Team met were certainly aware of the Institutional Review preparations and the on-line consultation process (but few seemed to have engaged with it). On the whole, the Review Team believed that the process had been conducted in a comprehensive and appropriate manner.

COMMENTARY ON THE ISAR AND HOW THE COLLEGE ENGAGED WITH THE IRIU PROCESS

The Review Team found that the ISAR was predominantly descriptive and had insufficient self-critical reflection. As such, it was disappointing as an example of engagement with a key quality assurance process. In the Team's view, it was unlikely that the College would have learned substantially from the preparation of the ISAR, or gained much insight into the strengths and weaknesses of its own operations as a result; however, the Team did not have enough time to fully explore this during the course of the visit. Similarly, there were very few documents evidenced by Trinity in the ISAR and its Appendices which illustrated the College as a genuinely reflective institution. Those which the Team found most useful (for example, the Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost and its implementation plan, the report of the START Taskforce, the report on Harmonisation of Academic Assessment and Progression Regulations) were provided at the Team's request or located separately by the Team.

Equally, Trinity College is a highly complex institution and the Review Team did not always find the description as illuminating and clarifying as it might have been. A considerable number of documents were requested at the Planning Visit in order to inform the Team's understanding but at this juncture, there was little time for the provision (and absorption) of the information before the Review. The Team was of the opinion that the fact that the ISAR did not follow the structure and content suggested by the IRIU Handbook hindered the explication of issues to an external audience. In advance of the Review, the Team was frustrated by changes to the review timetable made by the College as late as the Friday before the Review commenced and which affected meetings which the Team believed had been secured at the Preparatory Meeting. Nevertheless, during the course of the Review itself, the Team was delighted to find that staff, students and stakeholders were fully engaged in the process and candid in their observations and responses. The College team supporting the Review met requests for additional documentation with alacrity and everything was done to accommodate the Team's needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends that:

2.1   In any future review, Trinity College should exploit the opportunity to undertake a more self-critical examination of the effectiveness of its quality assurance and enhancement processes.

QUALITY ASSURANCE/ ACCOUNTABILITY

ADDRESSING THE OUTCOMES OF THE LAST INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

The European Universities Association (EUA) conducted the last external review of Trinity College Dublin in 2004 and in its report of November 2004 it made recommendations in three broad areas:

- Academic re-structuring and resource allocation
- Evaluation of courses by students
- Changes to the quality review process

As noted above, a comprehensive academic restructuring of the College has taken place and a thorough reform of administrative and support structures is now planned. Alongside the academic restructuring, an academically-driven resource allocation model (ARAM) was developed to align resource allocation more closely with the relevant level of decision-making and strategic planning. Various factors impeded the full implementation of the ARAM and a simplified and more transparent system was requested by Schools. In 2009, a new Resource Planning Model (RPM) was approved in order to introduce greater stability and to inform the new annual budgeting cycle. This was used to inform the 2011/12 budgets for Schools and Administrative Areas.

The 2004 EUA Review Team observed that the evaluation of courses was not mandatory in Trinity College and strongly recommended that systematic evaluations of all courses be introduced immediately. Although the College has begun the process of systematising student evaluations, some eight years later a mandatory system is still not universal (postgraduate modules are only being piloted in 2010/11 for introduction in 2012/13), processes are variable and neither the College nor students appear to be getting consistent data on the outcomes. This issue is discussed more fully in section 3 on QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION below.

The EUA Review Team also strongly recommended that the *Guidelines for External Reviewers Undertaking Administrative Departmental Reviews* should emphasise that recommendations should be sensitive to resource constraints and that the 18-month report should be submitted for review both to the University Council and the academic officers. In addition, the periodicity of Quality Reviews should be extended to seven years, with the provision for a shorter term in some instances. These changes were accommodated in the revisions to procedures for Quality Reviews.

Overall, the Team considered that an appropriate response had been made to the previous external review and that the College has made progress on implementing the recommendations. Nevertheless, the Team also concluded that the period of time devoted to the restructurings and to the development and implementation of student evaluations was indicative of an institution which is slow to engage in fundamental change and was challenged by implementing College-wide decisions.

RESEARCH

Trinity College is committed to research excellence and to maintaining this by building on the excellence of individual researchers. The Strategic Plan 2009-14 lays out Trinity's Research Strategy for which there are two dimensions. Firstly, research is performed through Faculties, Schools and Research Centres which maintain a broad disciplinary base of research activity and acknowledges the fact that the vast majority of the College's research output comes through the scholar-teacher working to an individual research agenda. Secondly, the Strategy prioritises five research themes (European and International Integration, Culture and Creative Arts, Materials and Intelligent Systems, Biosciences and Translational Research, and Transport, Energy and Environment) and there are eight major research programmes linked to these:

- Globalisation
- Digital arts and humanities
- Telecommunications
- Nanoscience
- Neuroscience
- Ageing and independent living
- Immunology
- Molecular medicine/Cancer

In the past, research fields and/or centres of excellence were 'self-proclaimed' or their categorisation was based on 'general conviction'. In recent years, this has given way to a rational assessment of performance based on valid indicators and metrics applied consistently. This has led to better acceptance of areas designated as research centres and to strategic prioritisation. Trinity College has targeted support in order to strengthen designated areas of research excellence by assigning academic positions specifically to these areas where the opportunity to distribute funds has arisen. Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs) and Trinity Research Centres are the vehicles for delivering inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research. The four Trinity Research Institutes constitute the highest level of research structure in the College, each of which operates on a cross-faculty basis and is expected to deliver international impact for research investments. In addition, there are over 30 Research Centres.

In 2009, the policy on research centres and groupings was reviewed and a revised policy was approved by the Research Committee in 2010 (and subsequently the Board), defining a Trinity Research Centre as a research grouping which emerges from the research strengths of one or more Schools and which is 'active, visible and viable'. An individual School has to take administrative and financial responsibility for a Trinity Research Centre and an annual report on its activity against the three criteria is submitted to the Dean of Research. There is a scheme in place which tracks and puts on record the effectiveness of research activities within the institution including the Research Institutes and Research Centres.

The Research Strategy includes seven action lines:
- Attract and develop world-class principal investigators
- Diversify research funding sources
- Strengthen Trinity Research Institutes and Centres
- Further promote research quality

- Foster multi-disciplinary research consortia
- Develop a new model for intellectual property management
- Provide new research infrastructure

There is an associated Implementation Plan, although the Team did not have an opportunity to explore how this was monitored and managed. The Team applauded the College's efforts thus far to focus its research effort and identify research priorities. However, it suggested that in order to retain its international competitiveness, the College might need to be more forward-looking and explore more systematically what may be future promising research fields hitherto not represented in TCD. This, inter alia, may require closer co-operation with external stakeholders in exploring future opportunities (and risks) in research profiling; and it may mean a more targeted, long-term investment policy. The Treasurer's Office, working with the Dean of Research, has introduced a 'research projections' process to address the need for greater financial planning in the context of declining public finances and to enable Schools to plan their strategic approach to maximise future research funding and to mitigate against known risks. The Research Committee reviews updated projections twice a year and also conducts a 'high-level' review and an 'in-depth' review each year.

The Research Committee is responsible for formulating policy on all research-related matters, for monitoring the efficacy of established policy and for overseeing quality assurance and improvement measures in research activity. Trinity uses both qualitative and quantitative data (relating to publications, citations, impact, collaborations, subject rankings and research income) from internal and external sources to monitor its research standing and to benchmark itself against peer institutions. However, the Research Committee appears to devote more of its time to positioning Trinity to maximise its research income rather than to ensuring research quality. Research metrics were discussed in 2011 but had last been debated in 2009/10.

A reading of Research Committee papers indicated that the draft data on research metrics revealed an uneven pattern of research activity across the College, with only approximately half of the core academic staff being 'research-productive'. Similarly, the Team considered that if research income was used as a measure of activity, there appeared to be areas of the College which were research inactive. The Team was told that 20% of the active PIs at Trinity are responsible for bringing in 78% of the research income. While a research-led education is a defining feature of the College, an insufficient proportion of research-active staff (or even Schools) could threaten this position. It was unclear whether the College had plans to address these disparities in terms of recruitment and staff development.

Trinity College is committed to promoting innovation and technology transfer through its innovation strategy (incorporated in the Strategic Plan). A professional team of specialists, Trinity Research and Innovation (TR&I), supports this endeavour and manages Trinity's intellectual property and its commercialisation and entrepreneurship activities.

The Review Team commends:
- Trinity's portfolio of high quality research activity which permeates and informs its approach to teaching and learning
- Its strategic approach in prioritising five themes and associated research programmes.

18

- The success of Trinity Research and Innovation (TRI) in its commercialisation and entrepreneurial activities.

HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

Trinity College has detailed regulations for higher degrees by research, including the Enterprise PhD, which are set out in the University Calendar. These are supported by:
- guidelines on the eligibility of academics to act as principal supervisors, co-supervisors, assistant supervisors or adjunct supervisors of research students
- *Guidelines for Examiners of Candidates for the PhD*
- *Best Practice Guidelines on Research Supervision for Academic Staff and Students*
- *Research Supervisor's Checklist*
- a document *Good Research Practice*
- *Thesis submission guidelines for students*

The regulations and guidelines were known to staff and students. Students were clear as to what they could expect in terms of supervision, progression, transfer, confirmation and examination. The *Best Practice Guidelines on Research Supervision for Academic Staff and Students* took account of external practice and, for example, of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) recommendations that PhD viva voce examinations should have an independent chair.

The Team was told that central guidance was supplemented by local handbooks which set out expectations for supervision. However, it was not apparent that there was any monitoring of the extent to which individual Schools or Research Institutes/Centres aligned themselves with, or followed, the College guidelines. Students who met the Team suggested that there were variations in practice and anecdotal evidence of some poor supervision.

The ISAR reports an improvement in completion rates from 2004/5 where average completion rates for PhD students in Science was 5 years and five years and one month for students in Arts. In April 2011, 11.6% of submissions fell outside the recommended timescale for completion of 4 years. However, the Annual Report from the Graduate Studies Committee does not appear to explicitly monitor postgraduate completion rates or to benchmark data for Trinity against national or international peers.

In 2009, the 4-year Structured PhD was introduced to enable students to take up to 30 credits of generic skills and discipline-specific training modules within the first 18 months of registration. Students who had participated in the scheme spoke positively about their experience.

The Innovation Academy commenced in 2010/11 and is the educational centrepiece of the Innovation Alliance between Trinity College and University College Dublin. It is a collaborative venture in PhD education that builds on the existing resources and synergies of the two universities. Its mission is to develop a new breed of creative graduate, expert in their discipline, with a thorough understanding of how innovation can rapidly convert knowledge and ideas into products, services and policies for economic and social benefit. A collaborative Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship is provided, via the Innovation

Academy, for PhD students registered in either University. This may provide work experience through an unpaid short internship or other elements outside the students' typical comfort zone. Courses are jointly developed and run by academics from the two Universities. The Team commends the introduction of the Structured PhD and the establishment of the TCD/UCD Innovation Academy as examples of enhancement of the research degree experience.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

It was evident to the Review Team that Trinity College has a commitment to excellence in learning and teaching and, as a research-intensive university of international repute, holds research-led teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as a core value. In particular, the Team was impressed by its aspirations in the Strategic Plan to:

- ensure that independent research was an integral part of every undergraduate programme
- increase the use of teaching methods that promote critical thinking, creativity and innovation
- promote the policy that all professors deliver undergraduate courses, with particular emphasis placed on teaching in the Freshman years.

However, it was not clear to the Team what mechanisms the College had in place to translate these aspirations into a reality that could be a guaranteed part of the Trinity student experience.

Similarly, the Team remained unclear as to how far the new core and elective curriculum structure (approved in 2007/08) cited in the ISAR and Strategic Plan had been implemented and where responsibility for monitoring its implementation lay. It was understood that the initiative to modularise taught postgraduate courses was due to be completed by 2012. Although processes and procedures had been agreed, no evidence was provided as to progress to date.

There appeared to be no college-wide systems to oversee the development and implementation of these actions and the Team was struck by the absence of a learning and teaching strategy to provide a framework for development and monitoring against targets. Over the last decade and more, successful research-intensive universities have developed learning and teaching strategies as counterparts to research strategies in order to drive systematic improvements in learning across the institution. These have been perceived as important tools in an increasingly competitive environment and in the context of declining units of resource. The Team learned from students that they felt there was a need to re-prioritise learning within the College. As noted in Section 1 above, the senior management team has also recognised the need to establish a better balance between teaching and research which the Team endorsed. A learning and teaching strategy is a demonstrable indication of a commitment to the value of learning and teaching both to students and staff.

The Team was of the view that a clear, common and non-negotiable vision for the learning experience at TCD needed to be established. The Team recommends the establishment, as a matter of urgency, of a College-wide learning and teaching strategy with measurable goals, a framework for timely implementation and clear accountabilities and responsibilities. The Team also recommends that the College should identify

a clear locus of responsibility, at senior level, for leading and championing the development of learning and teaching.

ASSESSMENT

The ISAR was largely silent on how it currently secures academic standards, the operation of examination boards and how the College oversees assessment of taught programmes leading to the University's awards (with the exception of the reference to the proposal to Council for the harmonization of academic assessment and progression regulations). There is currently no College-wide approach to marking schemes and award algorithms. Assessment regulations vary according to course and School but are approved by Undergraduate or Graduate Studies Committee and the Council for incorporation in the Calendar. The result is that there are 37 different grade and award schemes at undergraduate level and 13 different rules for the award of distinction at postgraduate diploma and Master's degree level. Individual Courts of Examiners are responsible for overseeing assessment and confirming awards. Results and awards are transmitted to the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Graduate Studies for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students respectively and these officers are accountable for the process.

In the opinion of students who met the Team, the variation in marking schemes and award algorithms were arbitrary (although they were clear as to the rules and criteria which applied to the programmes which they followed). Students also observed that the benefits of modularisation and semesterisation had not been fully realised and that there was still an over-reliance on end-of-year assessment.

At the Planning Visit, the Team requested sight of the 'Proposal for the Harmonisation of Assessment Regulations in Trinity' and was subsequently able to discuss the proposals with the working group responsible. The Team learned that the impetus to streamline and harmonise the considerable diversity of assessment regulations derived from a number of sources. One was the technological driver of the GeneSIS project where the SITS administration system was premised on a credit-based approach and a manageable level of variation in grade schemes and regulations. Another was the need to focus scarce resources on the core teaching activities rather than the administration of overly complex rules where the diversity was not driven by academic need. Also, the proposal recognised the need for the College to treat its students equitably and consistently in assessment matters and to demonstrate its standards and quality rather than making assertions in this regard. It acknowledged that the diversity which has characterised regulations, custom and practice across the College was being questioned increasingly, both internally and externally, and that the College had an obligation to provide clear and transparent information about its processes to all its stakeholders. In preparing the proposals, the working group had drawn on national and international best practice and had also modelled schemes proposed to ascertain any potential impact on academic standards and awards' profiles.

The resultant proposal presents a series of alternative 'schemes' that are intended to suit the needs of the range of course types in the College. These alternative schemes cover regulations relating to:
- Marks and their associated grades
- Re-assessment of failed modules/assessment elements
- Regulation of progression to next stage of study

- Regulation of failure to progress (repetition/exclusion)
- Award classifications.

Principles which underpin the proposals include the requirement for all teaching to be delivered in modules and assessed, for all students taking the same module to be assessed in the same way and for the calculation of overall marks and grades for a given year to reflect the credit-weighting of the modules. Within each of these schemes, a number of options are presented from which the Schools are required to choose. Exceptions will be permitted only where there are sound academic reasons and on presentation of a case to the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer for consideration. The working group saw resistance from Schools and the pleading of special disciplinary circumstances as the most significant challenge to full implementation of the proposal.

The Review Team commends the operation of the working group and the project to harmonise assessment regulations in recognition of the need to ensure consistency of approach to academic standards, equitable treatment of students and greater transparency and clarity. In recent years, the transition to standardised assessment regulations, moving away from a fragmented and variable discipline basis to an overarching institutional approach, has become commonplace amongst universities internationally.

The Team advises that if the College is to succeed in establishing a College-wide approach, it needs to minimise exceptions and promote consistency and simplicity. The Team understood that the group responsible for the proposals was an ad-hoc task and finish group. It therefore suggests that the College needs to establish a body to oversee the rigorous implementation of the agreed changes, monitor impact, and approve subsequent developments and necessary changes to the College-wide schemes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

The Bologna Desk has responsibility for ensuring the College's consistency with the provisions of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and following Council's approval of named new awards, an application is made to the NQAI for placement of the award on the NFQ. Trinity College has made an excellent start in introducing an outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching. Intended learning outcomes for modules and courses were first published on the College's website in 2010/11 and have been published for approximately 90% of courses and 85% of modules. The ISAR included a candid section on the cultural shift required (from a teacher-focused, input model to a student-focused, outcomes-based approach to curriculum design, delivery and assessment) which was not universally welcomed.

The ISAR acknowledges that the development of learning outcomes is an iterative process and the College may wish in due course to consider whether outcomes related to transferable skills are sufficiently broad. The College will need to undertake further work to map outcomes to assessment, to integrate outcomes into learning and to align assessment methods with learning outcomes. These represent ongoing challenges for universities across Europe. External examiners were asked in 2010/11 to comment on learning outcomes and the ISAR states that the External Examiner report form will be amended for 2011/12 to specifically invite comment on the achievement of outcomes by students. There is a reference to consideration of learning outcomes in the curriculum review guidelines but it would be advisable for the Quality Review Process to be

amended to include an explicit evaluation of the appropriateness of learning outcomes and confirmation of whether they are achieved.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION

PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Trinity has detailed processes for programme (and module) approval which include templates for proposals (with standardised information requirements) and the stipulation that proposed programmes must be scrutinised by an external assessor. Proposed programmes must be accompanied by a business case and require approval by the relevant School, Faculty, Undergraduate Studies/Graduate Studies Committee and Council.

The 2011 Quality Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost pointed to some weaknesses in the process related to length of time, multiplicity of administrative offices involved, confusion as to the input required of academic officers (Directors of Teaching and Learning), lack of marketing expertise at the development stage, and a degree of duplication. The report makes proposals for streamlining the process and simplifying the administrative support from the user perspective which the Team endorses.

The Team was of the view that Trinity might reflect on broadening the qualitative criteria for new programmes to encapsulate relevance to society, education for democratic citizenship and the acquisition of more transferable skills in addition to the core values of academic validity and research synergies. The College could validate this aspect by securing greater input from external stakeholders and alumni (see also the paragraphs on STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SELF-EVALUATION AND EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS below).

In addition, it was not clear to the Team what the mechanisms were for assessing the impact of strategic objectives on the processes of curriculum development, design and approval. For instance, the globalisation policy and the goal to increase the proportion of non-traditional learners both carry consequences for learning and teaching provision and student support which ought to be addressed at the point of approval (and in subsequent monitoring). This is an example of where a learning and teaching strategy could be effective in systematically identifying the implications of strategic objectives and policies for the provision of learning and teaching. See also LEARNING AND TEACHING above and STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT SERVICES below.

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Trinity publishes clear statements on the expectations of external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes which include procedures for nomination and appointment, their role and duties, and the requirements for provision of annual and summative (upon completion of their term of office) reports. These documents include statements on how the reports are to be considered and responded to within the College. However, the recommendations of the Working Group on Implementing a Graduate Education Strategy point to a lack of systems for tracking and monitoring whether reports are received in a timely way, acknowledged by the relevant School and whether responses are made to the external

examiners on action proposed. Issues identified in external examiners' reports are collated on an annual basis for submission to the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Graduate Studies respectively, who are responsible for ensuring that appropriate action is taken. Issues of significance may also be reported to, and discussed at, the Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies Committee.

EVALUATIONS BY STUDENTS

As noted above, Trinity College has made a start on implementing comprehensive student evaluations. It has adopted an endogenous approach, with the result that progress has been extremely slow and there is a great deal of local variation in methodology. Despite the 2004 EUA recommendation that systematic student evaluation of all courses should be implemented immediately, a policy of mandatory evaluations was not agreed by the Council until April 2009 and the report of the Quality Committee and its Working Group as to how this should be implemented was not agreed until a year later and promulgated in May 2010. The policy was, therefore, only in its second year of operation and the process is still in its infancy.

Although it is compulsory for all undergraduate taught modules to be evaluated at least once every three years, Schools have the discretion to use the central on-line survey facility, an on-line survey of their own design or to adopt another method of evaluation. The Team had great difficulty in establishing whether module evaluations were currently compulsory at postgraduate as well as undergraduate level and there seemed to be uncertainty amongst those whom the Team met (indicating some lack of clarity about policy implementation). It was clear that a central on-line survey of postgraduate taught modules was trialled in 2010/11. The Team was told that Council had agreed that evaluation of postgraduate courses (as opposed to modules) would be compulsory as from 2012/13.

Implementation is monitored by the Council which receives digests of evaluation outcomes from Schools and a report from the Quality Office on the outcomes of the central on-line survey. There is, however, no reporting of themes or issues emerging from free-form comments which students are invited to make (and which typically can be both instructive and illuminating). Students had mixed experiences of receiving feedback on outcomes of evaluations and any action taken by Schools in response to these; no systematic policy for closing the feedback loop has been established. There are no surveys of the holistic student experience for taught programmes nor is there a framework for research degree students to supply anonymous feedback independently of the annual review of their progress.

On the basis of its discussions with staff and students, and a review of sample evaluations, the Team concluded that the College had no effective means of eliciting systematic evaluations by students in a manner which provided high quality information at a number of levels and which would facilitate cross- School and programme level comparison to inform its oversight of quality and its institutional decision-making.

The Team concluded that the College's approach to student evaluations required a major overhaul in the light of national and international best practice. It recommends that efforts should be focused on the development of a College-wide survey at programme (as opposed to module) level and with the capacity to survey some student services. Response rates of surveys could be increased by engaging students to encourage completion of online questions and by looking at good practice in other research-intensive universities in

Europe (including the UK and Ireland). Module evaluations should be addressed at a subsequent stage of development and by separate surveys derived from the programme-level questions.

A policy on publication of results and proposed actions is required, together with clear mechanisms for the evidence obtained being used at School, Faculty and College levels to inform the enhancement of education and strategic planning. Results of student surveys should be used in internal quality reviews and integrated with management information to form part of performance indicators regularly supplied to Council, Schools and Service areas. Benchmarks should be established with other research-intensive universities nationally and internationally.

A wealth of national and international theory and practice is available to inform this work but, in view of the need to act with urgency, the College might be advised to devise the system in conjunction with an external consultancy to ensure that it meets best practice, achieves value for money, and draws on international know-how (as with the START Taskforce).

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURES

As noted above, elected student representatives of undergraduates and postgraduates are included on deliberative structures at all levels (College, Faculty, School and programme). Students have also been included on ad hoc working groups, such as the student retention taskforce, and are interviewed by Quality Review teams. Students indicated that they would welcome support from the College in training student representatives, particularly at School and programme level. Trinity could consider engaging students more actively in quality assurance processes. Provision of joint training, alongside using knowledge of mechanisms used elsewhere to improve student participation, could increase feedback from students on their experience and how to improve it.

INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW PROCESSES

Academic Quality Reviews are conducted on a seven-year cycle. The effectiveness of the reviews was examined by a Working Group in 2009/10 and the process was subsequently revised to include consideration of external examiner reports, student evaluations, accreditation reports, an analysis of research conducted, and research quality metrics data. The Review Report is considered in the first instance by the University Council together with the Provost's report which includes responses from the School and the Faculty Dean. Any decisions on the recommendations are remitted to the relevant committee, working group or College Officer for action and/or further discussion. An Implementation Plan addressing each recommendation is drawn up by the School in conjunction with the Faculty Dean and outlines a proposed timeline. One year after Council's approval of the report, a Progress Report on fulfilment of the Implementation Plan is submitted to Council.

Scrutiny of samples of Academic Quality Review reports led the Team to conclude that the reports were often cursory, with a heavy emphasis on research. The Team recommends that Academic Quality Reviews should have a more explicit teaching and learning focus, with an emphasis on the evaluation of teaching quality, the student experience and the teaching-research nexus.

Although the Team concluded that the College's processes were followed and there was evidence of action being implemented, the Team had some concerns as to whether the Council was the most appropriate body to deal effectively with the detail of review recommendations and their subsequent resolution (see section 1, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT, above). Furthermore, in one instance sampled by the Team, there was evidence of failure to close the loop, with no subsequent report on the outcomes of a large number of recommendations commuted to a subsidiary committee for action. As indicated in Section 1 above, the Team recommends that the College might review the role of the Quality Committee in this respect, in terms of its authority to systematically monitor the implementation of Quality Review recommendations.

Administrative and Support Services Quality Reviews operated on a five-year cycle until 2005 (see also Section 5 below) but followed a different process. The Team learned that the formal process was subsequently paused because of the academic restructuring taking place during that period and anticipated administrative reform. The Team did not regard this as a sufficient justification, and considered that Quality Reviews of these services would have been a useful tool in contributing to the diagnosis of administrative reforms required.

Prior to recommencing the Quality Reviews of Administrative and Support services, a working group of the Quality Committee revised the guidelines for their conduct to include surveys and questionnaires to key stakeholders, one-to-one meetings with the reviewers and, where appropriate, inclusion of industry or business representation on the review panel. The new procedures were approved by Council in June 2011 together with a new seven-year cycle of Reviews for 2011-2018. The new guidelines were piloted for the review of the Office of the Vice-Provost in May 2011 which the Team considers to be a positive development.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SELF-EVALUATION AND EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS

As noted in Section 2 above, the Team found little evidence of a culture of self-evaluation, with the exception of Trinity's approach to research. In the context of teaching, learning and quality assurance, the Team saw very few documents which evidenced critical self-reflection on the effectiveness of its procedures and processes or which identified strengths and weaknesses in its provision. The College needs to work towards establishing an environment where engagement of this sort becomes routine and is perceived as a standard tool for enhancing the activities and profile of the College.

Similarly, the Team found that there was no systematic use of external reference points. Analysis of research activity made regular use of external benchmarks but evidence of using national and international best practice to inform policy development or procedural practice in teaching, learning and quality assurance was uneven. The Team did not see any evidence of consistent national and international benchmarking of performance (except for reference to international rankings) against internal KPIs or against peer institutions. The Team recommends that the College should engage more fully with national and international best practice.

As observed in Section 1 above, the Team believes that Trinity College would benefit from greater use of external perspectives on its operation (including those from other Irish Universities). The Team observed that

the hallmarks of the reports of both the START Taskforce and the Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost were a perspicacity and incisiveness derived from external input to the reviews and the benefits of wider experience.

Discussions with external stakeholders revealed that there were no systematic opportunities for external stakeholders and employers to engage with Trinity. There was close engagement with employers where programmes involved professional accreditation by PSRBs and/or where work placements were a part of the curriculum. Elsewhere, there are examples of good practice but the degree of engagement depends (understandably) on the discipline, but also on the leadership of individuals in Schools. More formal structures for external stakeholders to interact with the College (about the curricula and the preparedness and attributes of Trinity graduates) were thought to be desirable but the College was perceived to be complacent in this respect.

A systematic approach, which guaranteed a minimum level of engagement across all Schools, was thought to be more appropriate than mechanisms at College level. These would also provide a good counterpart to the small external representation on the Board. The Team recommends that Advisory Boards be established in all Schools (at School or programme level) comprising a range of external stakeholders and providing the opportunity to engage with issues relevant to the discipline. These might include representative employers, Trinity alumni, potential philanthropists, and potential placement or internship providers.

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TO INFORM THE OPERATION OF ITS QUALITY MONITORING AND REVIEW ACTIVITIES

The Team considers that Trinity needs to make far greater use of both qualitative and quantitative data, on a regular basis, to inform its quality monitoring and review activities and to support its strategic planning. As identified above, the College could establish internal KPIs to measure performance in teaching, learning and student support across its Faculties and Schools. A start on this has been made with targets for retention following the taskforce Report on Retention. As far as the Team could ascertain, although annual statistical data was presented to the College in the Senior Lecturer's and Dean of Graduate Studies' reports, there was no regular provision to Schools of data on admissions, retention, awards, completion rates and employment destinations at a level of granularity which would allow them to interrogate performance on individual programmes.

The ISAR acknowledges that its current bespoke student administration systems give rise to duplication of effort, disproportionate and costly manual interventions to manage routine processes, and result in inadequate provision of management and academic information. The GeneSIS project was commissioned in recognition of the necessity of a modern, integrated student administration system to support the effective management of the College's Schools and Service units and to support delivery of the College's strategic objectives. The SITS system should be capable of providing appropriate levels of monitoring data with sufficient granularity. It should be able to support the Quality Review process more effectively (staff reported that the current, largely manual, collection and analysis of student data was a considerable burden). Benefits should flow from the project to harmonise marks and grades and SITS should provide additional benefits such as the

provision of systematic statistical data for marks assurance purposes and moderation of modules (such as standard deviation and mean on individual modules).

It will require strong leadership to keep the project on track and the project to harmonise marking and award schemes will require determination to keep exemptions to the absolute minimum in order not to jeopardise delivery. As noted in 1 above, the Team recommends that the GeneSIS project be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

ASSOCIATED COLLEGES AND PARTNERSHIPS

As noted in Section 1 above, Trinity College has a partnership with three Associate Colleges of Education (Marino Institute of Education, Froebel College of Education, and the Church of Ireland College of Education) with which it has collaborated on teacher education for many years. In 2010/11, and as a result of the College's Quality Review of the School of Education, the College entered into a new partnership arrangement with the Associated Colleges of Education. A Working Group of the University Council made recommendations on the revised arrangements for the partnership which were approved in April 2010.

All teaching, assessment and administration for the Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) and the Higher Diploma in Education (H.Dip Primary) has now been delegated to the Associated Colleges and new programmes of study may be proposed by them for validation by Trinity College. A new committee, The Associated Colleges Degree Committee (ACDC) has been established to oversee, in a comprehensive way, the academic standards and quality assurance of the programmes delivered in this manner. The composition of the Committee, as stipulated in the Working Group's report, includes the Registrar as chair and the Senior Lecturer, the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Academic Secretary in order to ensure comparability with College policies and standards for undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision. Proposals for new curricula have to be approved by the ACDC (akin to a School) prior to submission to the relevant College committees for approval in the usual way. The ACDC receives external examiners' reports, student evaluations, student admission, progression and retention data and an annual report on operation of the programmes. A representative of Trinity College chairs the local Court of Examiners. Staff members from the Associated Colleges were pleased with the transition and felt that it provided simplified reporting structures and opportunities for mutual growth and collaboration.

Trinity College also collaborates with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama and the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in the delivery of a number of programmes of study. Trinity collaborates with these partners in the provision of programmes. A new Master in Theology programme was validated by Trinity in 2009/10, to be offered by the Church of Ireland Theological Institute but jointly delivered with Trinity staff. Again, there is a Co-ordinating Committee, chaired by the Registrar, which oversees the process and which reports to Council. Trinity is involved, through the Registrar, in the appointment of staff to teach on the programme and chairs the Court of Examiners. All assessed work is double-marked. The Team confirmed that the College had comprehensive and effective mechanisms to assure the quality and standards of the University's awards delivered in partnership with Associated Colleges.

The College collaborates with other universities in Ireland and in Europe on placements or jointly delivered programmes and has double diploma arrangements in place, mainly in the field of economics and business studies, where a total of 5 years study on approved programmes leads to both the award of a Trinity BA and the EMIM/Diplome de Grande Ecole. Trinity has also developed two joint- degree awards:

- B.Sc. in Human Nutrition and Dietetics (Dublin Institute of Technology) first award 2013
- M.Sc. in Development Practice (NUI/University College Dublin in collaboration with the University of Rwanda) – first award 2012

Their development has followed careful consideration of the range of issues affecting joint awards addressed by the Registrar's Working Party on Joint Degrees in 2005 and a Council Working Party on the same in 2008. This latter led to the formulation of a College Policy and Protocols for the award of Joint Degrees approved by Council in 2009. This addresses the issue of the legal authority to make joint awards under the University Statutes, due diligence considerations, reputational risk and the need for a formal Memorandum of Understanding, together with a comprehensive assessment of operational matters requiring resolution and agreement in establishing joint degrees. The Registrar has oversight of new joint programmes and joint degree arrangements on the College's behalf which secures accountability and responsibility at an appropriate level.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT SERVICES

STUDENT SERVICES

Trinity College provides a comprehensive range of student services to support the student experience, embracing health, welfare and student support. Student societies, clubs and the Civic Engagement initiative provide opportunities for students to develop leadership and other personal and transferable skills. These extra-curricular activities can assist in preparing students for employment and employers who met the Team indicated that they looked for evidence of this sort of participation in their selection processes.

Support Services provided annual reports to the Student Services Committee where policy is discussed. However, there appeared to be no effective links from Student Services Committee into committees which deal with the curriculum or quality assurance matters; nor was there evidence of transversal reporting of issues which might be expected to impact on the academic curriculum. For example, statistical data on employment destinations of graduates is collected by Schools and included in an annual report to the Student Services Committee and the Board. Although destination data might be scrutinised during Academic Quality Reviews, there appeared to be no annual reporting of destination data to the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees or Council. As noted in Section 1, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT, above, there is a need for governance and management structures to achieve better integration of teaching and learning issues in a systematic and co-ordinated approach and for there to be further reflection on the role of the Quality Committee in this context.

A Careers Advisory Service survey of graduate attributes required by employers *(Fit for the Future?: employer expectations and perceptions of the skills of Trinity graduates)* had been discussed at the Student

Services Committee but the perception was that it had had little impact. In the Team's view, it would be desirable to make stronger connections between the extra-curricular, co-curricular and academic aspects of undergraduate student life, with particular reference to developing generic and employment-related skills as an integral part of the student experience.

Staff who met the Team reported that academic administrative services and support services were not well aligned and the current separate reporting structures (via the Vice-Provost and the Chief Operating Officer) did not facilitate an integrated or strategic approach. It was anticipated that the proposals included in the START report would address these difficulties.

Students who met the Team indicated that there were many examples of high quality support and services available but students had to track them down. There needed to be better communication about what was available and how to access it and an improved customer focus.

TUTORIAL SERVICE

The College offers a tutorial service, under the direction of the Senior Tutor, providing undergraduates with the opportunity for one-to-one discussion with a member of academic staff on personal or academic matters. An external Quality Review of the service was undertaken in 2007 and the panel's recommendation to extend the tutorial service to postgraduates in the form of a Postgraduate Advisory Service was implemented in 2008. The College is committed to supporting the Tutorial Service because of its belief that good one-to-one interaction with a tutor is crucial in orientating students to College life and expectations. In particular, the role of the tutor is regarded as vital in signposting students to information, opportunities and services relevant to their specific needs. Staff and students alike shared the view that it offered significant benefits to students. There was a view that the College should promote the service more effectively as part of its recruitment and publicity material.

GLOBALISATION POLICY

The ISAR and the Strategic Plan both herald the development of a Globalisation Policy and a significant increase in the recruitment of international students. The ISAR recognises the need to further develop and enhance the international student experience. Support Services was currently calculating the budgetary implications of additional international student numbers. Students who met the Team were of the view that the specific needs of international students were not currently adequately assessed and that very significant improvements were required. Students identified poor communications, lack of early offer letters and absence of an integrated approach as hurdles. Staff indicated that the International Office did not currently deal with international taught postgraduate students and responsibility was left to the Schools, which resulted in a fragmented approach. In the context of mobility for Trinity students, the Team also heard that there were some problems with credit recognition (particularly where courses did not form part of the Learning Agreements) and alignment of imported marks (although a College-wide marks conversion table existed for marks imported from Europe). The Team did not observe any references in the ISAR or the Strategic Plan to the internationalisation of the curriculum; the Globalisation Policy seemed to be narrowly

restricted to *recruitment* of international students. If Trinity is to realise its strategic aspirations, the Team recommends that it addresses the implications of the Globalisation Policy for student support services, curricula and recognition practices.

BROADENING ACCESS

Applications from mature students, those with disabilities and those from backgrounds of social disadvantage, are actively encouraged by Trinity College under its Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) and a commitment to increasing the number is signalled in the Strategic Plan. Its intake from these broad categories has increased from 5% to 17% of new entrants to undergraduate degree programmes since 2001 and the College aims to achieve an annual target of 22% by 2013. Trinity is involved in both the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) and there are a number of Partnership Foundation Courses for non-traditional students. TAP provides a range of post-entry supports for students falling within these groups. There is a Mature Students' Officer who advises the College on support needs of mature students returning to education and a Mature Students' Society. The progression of students who come through the TAP is regularly monitored and in 2008/9, the retention rate for TAP undergraduate stood at 89%.The Team commends the College's demonstrable commitment to widening access, to the success of the TAP in increasing the intake and to the quality of support provided to students to enable them to progress.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

As noted in the report of the Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost, there is no formal complaints procedure for students. The Team strongly endorses the recommendation that one should be established as a matter of priority.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The Student Charter sets out expectations about the categories of information which all students should receive. The Team heard from students that experiences of the timeliness of provision were variable and that the quality of locally-produced handbooks and guidance was likewise variable. There appeared not even to be College-wide expectation or stipulation that programme handbooks and learning outcomes should be published at the beginning of the year. Discussions with senior staff indicated awareness that more consistency in provision was desirable and that identification of internal good practice and production of advice and guidelines would merit attention.

Staff indicated that the establishment of a single Academic Registry was intended to deliver a 'one-stop shop' approach for students' engagement with College-level processes (such as registration and examinations etc.) and a single student portal would improve the accessibility of centrally-provided information to students. Currently, it was acknowledged that it was difficult for both students and staff to access relevant information compounded by the separate silos and reporting structures of the academic administrative services and student support services.

The College also recognised that its promotional material could be enhanced and was in the process of commissioning a range of alternative media to assist in determining the most appropriate levels of information and the most effective modes of delivery for prospective students.

COMMENDATIONS

The Review Team commends:

3.1   The portfolio of high quality research activity which permeates and informs its approach to teaching and learning

3.2   Its strategic approach in prioritising five themes and associated research programmes.

3.3   The success of Trinity Research and Innovation (TRI) in its commercialisation and entrepreneurial activities.

3.4   The project to harmonise assessment regulations in recognition of the need to ensure consistency of approach to academic standards, equitable treatment of students and greater transparency and clarity.

3.5   The introduction of the Structured PhD and the establishment of the TCD/UCD Innovation Academy.

3.6   The College's demonstrable commitment to widening access, to the success of the TAP in increasing the intake and to the quality of support provided to students to enable them to progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends that:

3.7   A College–wide learning and teaching strategy should be established and a clear locus of responsibility identified at senior level.

3.8   The student evaluation system should be completely overhauled, as a matter of urgency, in the light of national and international best practice. Priority should be assigned to:
- the establishment of a College-wide survey at programme level
- the development of a policy on publication of results and intended actions
- the development of mechanisms for the evidence obtained being used at School, Faculty and College levels to inform the enhancement of education and strategic planning.

3.9   Academic Quality Reviews should have a more explicit teaching and learning focus.

3.10 The College should engage more fully with national and international best practice in policy development and procedural practice in teaching, learning and quality assurance.

3.11 Advisory Boards should be established in all Schools (at School or programme level) comprising a range of external stakeholders and providing the opportunity to engage with issues relevant to the discipline.

3.12 The College should address the implications of the Globalisation Policy for student support services, curricula and recognition practices.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

**DEVELOPING, ENCOURAGING AND REWARDING STAFF
INVOVED IN SUPPORTING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

As part of its approach to the professionalisation of the teaching function, Trinity established its Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL) in 2003. Its key objectives include the enhancement of teaching and learning, developing reflective practice in teachers, developing the scholarship of learning and teaching, and supporting e-Learning. Currently, the staffing comprises 1 Academic Development Officer, 1 Executive Officer and 2 part-time e-learning advisors (its Director having left in 2011). The Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies both have academic oversight of CAPSL and ensure that its work is supported through the College's academic committees. The view amongst Trinity staff was that CAPSL was under-resourced and therefore limited in what it could deliver.

Training for those delivering teaching is currently encouraged but not mandatory. In 2010/11, a Postgraduate Diploma/M.Ed. in Higher Education was introduced, delivered jointly by CAPSL and the School of Education. It is designed for academics (including post-doctoral staff) who are either new to teaching and learning in higher education, or more experienced colleagues who wish to consolidate, develop and enrich their own practice and critical understanding of the theory and practice of pedagogy in higher education. Twelve staff members from Trinity enrolled in the first intake, and are now in the second year.

Supervisor training (again, voluntary) has been introduced and the Dean of Graduate Studies is a member of a Supervisor Support Working Group of the National Academy for the Integration of Teaching & Learning (NAIRTL) which has developed resources to enhance staff supervisory skills. Some staff mentioned that a mentoring process for new supervisors would be a useful tool in assuring quality and enhancing research degree supervision as too little structured support was available.

Postgraduate students who are involved in teaching or demonstrating can also avail themselves of training but, again, this is not mandatory. The Team also heard that the training for these students was run simultaneously with teaching delivery (rather than before) which participants found less useful and rather too focused on generic theory as opposed to practical guidance which they would have valued more at that juncture.

In order to support its commitment to the professionalisation of high quality teaching, the Team recommends that Trinity College follows the exemplars of good practice amongst research-intensive universities and introduces mandatory training for all those new to teaching and research supervision.

Promotion within the lecturing grades is determined by the Academic and Senior Administrative Staff Promotions Committee which has responsibility for maintaining consistency in application of procedures and may also make recommendations to University Council on matters of policy and procedures. There are formal review processes governing the completion of probationary periods for all Lecturers, the review of Lecturers at the Merit Bar, applications for accelerated advancement at the Lecturer grade, applications for

promotion to the grade of Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor and for accelerated advancement within the Senior Lecturer grade. Promotions to Personal Chairs are considered by a Sub-Committee consisting only of Professors before recommendation to Council is made. The Team was told that, given Trinity's profile, research was fundamental to promotion criteria and it was not possible to be promoted on the basis of teaching excellence alone. However, the process had been changed in 2003/4 such that equally, it was no longer possible to be promoted on the basis of research alone and a wider contribution to College activity was required.

The Team learned that CAPSL provided training and guidance on the preparation of teaching portfolios which are used both in promotion and for the Provost's teaching awards. Academic staff members were of the view that promotions were weighted towards research and that there were no real incentives to invest time in teaching and learning or to innovate in pedagogic methods. Rather, because new developments were time-consuming, they were perceived as a diversion from research activity. The Team was of the opinion that if the College intends to re-establish a balance between research and teaching, then clearer messages have to be delivered about how teaching is valued. More incentives need to be established for staff to enhance the professionalisation of their approach to teaching. The Team recommends that the criteria for academic promotion in relation to teaching performance should be reviewed against international best practice so that there are differentiated criteria for the recognition of teaching performance at each level.

The Provost's Teaching Awards promote teaching as a scholarly activity and reward those who have made an outstanding contribution in the pursuit of teaching excellence. The Team considers that the criteria for teaching awards and promotion should be closely aligned.

During discussions with the Team, it became evident that CAPSL provides a range of voluntary training and development activities. There is no mandatory training in leadership and management for those taking up formal officerships at College, Faculty or School levels. Staff who met the Team indicated that they would have found induction and briefing on their formal roles useful and that it performs a critical function when there is a regular turnover of Heads of School level. The Team noted that a change management programme, together with leadership and professional management training, was envisioned in the START report and that this was to be welcomed.

Staff who met the Team indicated that the appraisal or performance review process currently in place was relatively informal (more akin to mentoring) and was not routine. Again, the Team welcomed the indication in the START report that performance management would be introduced as part of a programme of change encompassed in a proposed overarching HR Strategy.

In tandem with the implementation of SITS, the College will be upgrading its virtual learning environment for 2012/13. The ISAR notes that the existing version of Blackboard/WebCT is out of date and is a barrier to development and the exploitation of the rapidly-expanding range of technologies available to support teaching and learning. Students observed that Trinity was 'very behind' other universities in this respect. Since the upgrade/replacement will have to be fully integrated with the new SITS system, the timing of its implementation will be co-ordinated with the roll-out of the SITS. The ISAR acknowledges that a new VLE will provide a versatile platform but that the development, implementation and support for new approaches

to teaching and student learning will require additional expertise and resources. Currently, there are two, part-time instructional designers in CAPSL to promote e-Learning and support the academic community in developing skills in the use of new technologies and course design. In the view of the Team, the College will need to address these issues rapidly if it is to make effective use of technology-enhanced learning.

USING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES TO DELIVER SYSTEMATIC ENHANCEMENT

Although Trinity College rigorously employs a variety of quality assurance mechanisms, the Team found it difficult to identify how the outcomes of these were used in a systematic fashion to drive enhancement on a College-wide basis. For instance, the ISAR cites just two examples of recommendations arising from Quality Reviews which led to institutional-level change or reflection. One was the establishment of a New Mentoring Initiatives for Academic Staff in 2010 and the other was the debate on grade inflation in 2009 and the working group to consider the introduction of the Grade Point Average as a means of countering grade inflation. When asked to supply examples of changes arising from Quality Reviews as part of additional documentation before the Review Visit, the Team was again referred to the same paragraph in the ISAR and during the visit, these seemed to be the only examples cited by staff.

There appeared to be no synoptic analysis of Quality Review reports to identify trends or common themes in terms of strengths and weaknesses and which could be used at College level to identify actions across the College or to identify good practice which could be systematically rolled out to all Schools. Similarly, although the student evaluation process was still in its infancy, there seemed to be no evidence of how it was intended to use qualitative and quantitative data at Faculty and College level to inform strategic decisions about improvements to teaching and learning and the student experience across the board.

The Team was advised that Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committee provided fora in which Directors of Teaching and Learning in Schools could exchange information and learn from practice in other Schools. Staff also observed that Faculties had been helpful in promoting this activity. However, there appeared to be no formal system in which this sort of learning and engagement was used regularly and routinely to feed into the development of College-wide initiatives for change and development. Students observed that there were plenty of examples of good practice in individual Schools or programmes but a failure to identify these systematically and incorporate them as standard practice across the College.

There also appeared to be a vacuum in terms of fora (apart from Council) in which to consider the links and synergies between undergraduate and taught postgraduate study and doctoral studies. Some Heads of Schools reported that education delivery operated in three separate silos and was not joined up, not helped by the separate academic officerships of Directors of Teaching and Learning for undergraduate studies and postgraduate studies and Directors of Research.

In the Team's view, the College was operating its quality assurance systems with an insufficient strategic approach to securing, across the College, a continuous cycle of improvement of the student experience. The Team recommends that Trinity College should exploit the benefits of the quality assurance processes more fully and use the resultant management information systematically to inform strategic planning and

holistic enhancement of teaching and learning at School and College levels. Outcomes identified through its quality assurance processes should be used to inform planning on an annual basis and a learning and teaching strategy could be used as a key mechanism for translating plans and goals into actions to deliver improvements in all Schools.

The Team was also of the opinion that there needed to be a greater shared perception of what every Trinity student should be entitled to as part of their student experience and that the College should be able to guarantee this irrespective of School. A view that Schools should both develop policy and solve problems locally seemed to prevail rather than that Schools should be expected to implement minimum standards of provision as determined by the College. The Team also endorsed the advice of the report of the Review of the Office of the Vice-Provost that College decisions should be enforced and that Schools should not be in a position to exercise discretion in the implementation of College policy decisions made through due process. The Team recommends that Trinity should ensure the unambiguous direction of strategic policies at College level with devolved responsibility for delivery by Faculties/Schools. Schools could be entitled to exceed minimum expectations defined in College-level policies, or to have scope to deliver policies in discipline-specific ways, but should be expected to meet the requirements stipulated by the College and University as the awarding body.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team recommends:

4.1   The introduction of mandatory training for those new to teaching and research supervision.

4.2   The review of the systems and criteria for recognising and rewarding teaching achievements in the light of international best practice, both for the Provost's Teaching Awards and the promotion criteria for academic staff at all levels.

4.3   That Trinity College should exploit the benefits of the quality assurance processes more fully and use the resultant management information systematically to inform strategic planning and holistic enhancement of teaching and learning at School and College levels.

4.4   That Trinity College should ensure the unambiguous direction of strategic policies at College level with devolved responsibility for delivery by Faculties/Schools.

AFTERWORD

Trinity College Dublin has a distinguished reputation for research and teaching. It faces challenging times in terms of the financial context in Ireland and increasing global competition. If it is to maintain its standing, both in terms of research and teaching, it needs to adopt a more proactive and outward-looking approach. It needs to learn from good practice adopted by its peer institutions nationally and internationally and also from a range of external stakeholders. If it is to remain competitive with those which it regards as its peers, it needs to reflect on and modernise its structures for governance and management. If it is to realise its aspirations, it needs to honour its commitment to establishing a better balance between research and teaching and to adopt a far more strategic approach to assuring academic standards and the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning in a transparent and systematic manner.

COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 35 OF THE UNIVERSITIES ACT, 1997 AND CONSISTENCY WITH THE PART 1 ESG

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The statutory requirements for quality assurance processes of Irish universities are presented in The Universities Act 1997 and they can be summarised as follows:

- Regular evaluation (not less than once every ten years) of each department and, where appropriate, Faculty and any service provided by the University by persons competent to make national and international comparisons
- Regular assessment – including students – of the teaching, research and other services provided by the University
- Publication of findings of reviews
- Implementation of findings arising from reviews, providing the resources are available, and the findings are reasonable and practical.

Having examined the material provided and checked the information through interviews and other sources, the Review Team concluded that:

5.1 Trinity College is compliant with the above mentioned statutory requirements in the context of reviews of academic units where the second cycle of reviews is being conducted between 2006 and 2013. Quality Reviews are regularly conducted by panels which include external and international peers that are competent to make national and international comparisons. However, the Team recommended that reviewers from other Irish universities should regularly be included in the composition of teams in order to exploit national knowledge and experience and to better facilitate national comparisons. Review reports are submitted to Council and are published on the College website. Findings are normally implemented and followed up and Council maintains oversight of this process.

5.2 Trinity College is not fully compliant with the statutory requirements insofar as regular evaluations of service departments are concerned. The regular review of administrative and support services through the formal College Quality Review mechanism was halted for a period of five years between 2006 and 2011 (with the exception of the Tutorial Service in 2007) and at least one service has not been formally reviewed for over ten years. The Team was provided with evidence of a timetable of reviews for services between 2011/12 to 2015/6 and was assured that progress was underway for service reviews scheduled for 2011/12 although none had yet been published as the site visits for the reviews had not yet taken place (due in April & May 2012). The Team recommends that the College must ensure, as a matter of urgency, it fully complies with the requirements of the Universities Act 1997 in terms of undertaking regular Quality Reviews of administrative and support services.

Although reports of the last five reviews to have been conducted since 2005 are published, the reports are neither easily visible nor easily accessible on the website. The Team considers that the reports of service and administrative departments should be published alongside academic Quality Review reports on the Quality Office webpages.

5.3   The College seeks evaluations by students of their teaching and learning experiences and students are also able to provide feedback through committees and when meeting Quality Review teams.

CONSISTENCY WITH PART 1 ESG

The Review Team found that Trinity College's arrangements are aligned with Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). Evidence of consistency and engagement with the ESG includes:
- Policies and procedures for quality assurance which are publicly available
- Formal mechanisms for the approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- Published criteria, regulations and procedures for assessment
- The use of external examiners which ensures consistency in student assessment
- The recruitment and promotion processes for academic staff
- A range of learning resources and student support
- The collection of relevant information related to programmes, students and other activities which are used in the internal reviews and institutional decision-making. The Team noted that the provision of routine information at appropriate levels of granularity was likely to improve very substantially as a result of GeneSIS and would facilitate more effective use of the information for the purposes of institutional decision-making and enhancement of learning and teaching
- The results of internal reviews are available on the Trinity College website.

However, the Team encourages the College to continue to engage with the Part 1 of the ESG and to improve its quality assurance and enhancement processes. For instance, the College could consider engaging with more detailed annual monitoring processes for its programmes and the guidance published in the IUQB National Guidelines on *Good Practice for the approval, monitoring and review of programmes and awards in Irish Universities.*

ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICE

The Team found evidence that Trinity College is taking account of national, European and international good practice. At present, this is mainly achieved through the external examiner system, research collaborations and benchmarking, and national collaborations. The START Taskforce and the project to harmonise marking schemes and award regulations have both made a start on more systematically looking externally at good practice in teaching and learning and management of the student experience. As noted in Section 4 above, the Team recommends that the College should engage more fully with national and international best practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Review Team's evaluation of the Institutional Self-Assessment Report, supporting documentation and meetings conducted during the Main Review Visit, the Team found sufficient evidence to confirm:

CATEGORY:	KEY REVIEWER FINDINGS
Statutory Requirements	**The Review Team found that the University's activities comply with statutory requirements, with the exception of the conduct of quality reviews of service departments where the periodicity of the reviews is not fully compliant**
European Standards	**The Review Team found the University's quality assurance arrangements to be consistent with Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)**
National, European and International best practice	**The University is taking account of national, European and international best practice but the Team recommends that the College should engage more fully with practice elsewhere**

The Team found sufficient evidence to commend the following examples of good practice for further promotion internally, nationally and internationally:

6.1	The operation of the START Taskforce (in terms of its approach, methodology and focus) as a means of modernising management, support and service structures and delivering a focus on the student experience.
6.2	The portfolio of high quality research activity which permeates and informs its approach to teaching and learning
6.3	The strategic approach in prioritising five themes and associated research programmes
6.4	The success of Trinity Research and Innovation (TRI) in its commercialisation and entrepreneurial activities
6.5	The project to harmonise assessment regulations in recognition of the need to ensure consistency of approach to academic standards, equitable treatment of students and greater transparency and clarity
6.6	The introduction of the Structured PhD and the establishment of the TCD/UCD Innovation Academy
6.7	The College's demonstrable commitment to widening access, to the success of the TAP in increasing the intake and to the quality of support provided to students to enable them to progress

The Team found sufficient evidence to recommend the following activities to the University for attention and development:

6.8	The College should address ways of more fully engaging external stakeholders in the governance and management of the College
6.9	The College might usefully review the role of the Quality Committee not only in terms of how it relates to the business of the Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committees but also in terms of its authority to systematically monitor the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement processes and outcomes
6.10	Trinity College should consider enhancing the professionalisation of executive management in the light of international best practice
6.11	The key recommendations of the START Taskforce should be implemented as a matter of urgency
6.12	The GeneSIS project should be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible
6.13	In any future review, Trinity College should exploit the opportunity to undertake a more self-critical examination of the effectiveness of its quality assurance and enhancement processes
6.14	A College–wide learning and teaching strategy should be established and a clear locus of responsibility identified at senior level
6.15	The student evaluation system should be completely overhauled, as a matter of urgency, in the light of national and international best practice. Priority should be assigned to: » the establishment of a College-wide survey at programme level » the development of a policy on publication of results and intended actions » the development of mechanisms for the evidence obtained being used at School, Faculty and College levels to inform the enhancement of education and strategic planning
6.16	Academic Quality Reviews should have a more explicit teaching and learning focus
6.17	The College should engage more fully with national and international best practice in policy development and procedural practice in teaching, learning and quality assurance
6.18	Advisory Boards should be established in all Schools (at School or programme level) comprising a range of external stakeholders and providing the opportunity to engage with issues relevant to the discipline.
6.19	The College should address the implications of the Globalisation Policy for student support services, curricula and recognition practices
6.20	The introduction of mandatory training for those new to teaching and research supervision
6.21	The review of the systems and criteria for recognising and rewarding teaching achievements in the light of international best practice, both for the Provost's Teaching Awards and the promotion criteria for academic staff at all levels
6.22	Trinity College should exploit the benefits of the quality assurance processes more fully and use the resultant management information systematically to inform strategic planning and holistic enhancement of teaching and learning at School and College levels
6.23	Trinity College should ensure the unambiguous direction of strategic policies at College level with devolved responsibility for delivery by Faculties/Schools
6.24	Trinity College must ensure, as a matter of urgency, that it fully complies with the requirements of the Universities Act 1997 in terms of undertaking regular Quality Reviews of administrative and support services and that the reports are more visible on the Quality Office webpages

APPENDICES

MAIN REVIEW VISIT - TIMETABLE

NOTE: The Team believes that it met the following staff and students in the schedule given below. However, because of changes in the list of participants, and as a result of absences, late arrivals and early departures of participants as they came from and went to other College commitments, the Team is unable to confirm that it is absolutely accurate. It was a source of regret to the Team that College staff had not been advised to prioritise their meetings with the Team.

FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2012

TIME	MEETING	VENUE	ATTENDEES
15.00 – 15.30	Provost to meet Institutional Review Team	IUQB Offices, 10 Lower Mount St	Dr Patrick Prendergast (Provost), Review Team

SUNDAY 11 MARCH 2012

TIME	MEETING	VENUE	ATTENDEES
19.30 – 22.00	Dinner		Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof Linda Hogan), Registrar (Prof Shane Allwright), Academic Secretary (Ms Patricia Callaghan), Review Team

DAY 1, MONDAY 12 MARCH 2012

TIME	MEETING	VENUE	ATTENDEES
9.00 – 10.15	Meeting with Executive Officers' Group	Provost's Boardroom	Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof Linda Hogan); Chief Operating Officer (Ms Darina Kneafsey); Academic Secretary (Ms Patricia Callaghan); College Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation (Prof David Lloyd); Treasurer (Mr Ian Mathews); College Secretary (Ms Anne Fitzgerald); Director of Human Resources (Mr Tony McMahon), Review Team.
10.30 – 11:00	Private Time & Coffee	Provost's Boardroom	Review Team
11:00 – 12.00	Meeting with the Deans (and others)	Provost's Boardroom	Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (Prof Michael Marsh); Dean of Engineering, Mathematics & Science (Prof Clive Williams); Dean of Health Sciences (Prof Mary McCarron), Chief Operating Officer (Ms Darina Kneafsey), Director of Human Resources (Mr Tony McMahon), Review Team.
12.00 – 13.30	Quality Assurance & Enhancement	Provost's Boardroom	Academic Secretary (Ms Patricia Callaghan); OVP Management Group (Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Ms Alexandra Anderson, Ms Orla Sheehan); Senior Lecturer (Dr Patrick Geoghegan); Dean of Graduate Studies (Prof Veronica Campbell), Academic Developer (Dr Ciara O'Farrell), Institutional Co-ordinator (Dr Liz Donnellan), Review Team.

13.30 – 14.30	Reviewers' private meeting & lunch	Private Dining Room, Atrium, Common Room.	Review Team
14.30 – 15.30	Harmonisation of academic regulations	Provost's Boardroom	Assessment Regulations Team - Prof John Scattergood, Dr David Wilkins, Dr Rachel Hoare, Dr Niamh Harty, Ms Alexandra Anderson, Mr Dimitri Paraskevas, Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Review Team
15.30 – 16.00	Private Time & Coffee	Ante Room, Provost's Boardroom	Review Team
16.00 – 16.40	Meeting with Students Union Officers – UG & PG Sabbatical Officers	Provost's Boardroom	Undergraduate Students' Union: President (Mr Ryan Bartlett), Education Officer (Ms Rachel Barry), Welfare Officer (Ms Louisa Miller), AHSS Faculty Advisor (Ms Sinéad Leydon), HS Faculty Advisor (Lylas Aljohmani), EMS Faculty Advisor (Mr Daniel Ferrick), Vice-President (Mr Martin McAndrew), AHSS Faculty Convenor (Mr Andrew McEwan), EMS Convenor (Mr Ronan Smith), Review Team.
16.40 – 17.20	Meeting with Undergraduate Students	Provost's Boardroom	Student 1 (JF AHSS/TSM); Student 2 (SS AHSS); Laura Bové (International Officer Students' Union); Sean Power (Mature Officer Students' Union); Aimee Doyle (JF AHSS, ex-Disability Officer Students' Union); Student 3 (JS AHSS);Niall O'Mahoney (SF EMS, School Convenor for Engineering); Review Team
17.20	DEPART		Review Team

DAY 2, TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2012

TIME	MEETING	VENUE	ATTENDEES
08.30 – 09.00	Meeting between Review Team & Institutional Co-ordinator	Provost's Boardroom	Institutional Co-ordinator; Review Team
09:00 – 09.30	Enhancing the Student Experience	Provost's Boardroom	Dean of Students (Dr Amanda Piesse); Senior Tutor (Dr Claire Laudet); Director of Careers Service (Mr Sean Gannon); Director of College Health Services (Dr David McGrath); Junior Dean (Dr Tim Trimble), Review Team.
09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with Heads of School and Directors of T&L	Provost's Boardroom	Dr Sarah Smyth (Head of Languages, Literature & Cultural Studies), Dr Howard Smith (Head of Psychology), Dr Darryl Jones (Head of English), Dr Stefen Hutzler (DTLU Physics), Dr Jacinta McLoughlin (Dental School), Dr Catherine McCabe (DTLU Nursing), Prof Gail McElroy (DTLPG Social Sciences & Philosophy), Dr Derek Nolan (DTLPG Biochemistry & Immunology), Prof Simon Wilson (DTLPG Computer Science & Statistics), Review Team.
10.30 – 10.45	Private Time & Coffee	Ante Room, Provost's Boardroom	Review Team
10.45 – 11.30	Meeting with Academic Staff from the Schools and Faculties	Provost's Boardroom	Dr Jean Quigley (Psychology), Dr Mairead Brady (Business), Dr Gemma Donnelly-Cox (Business), Dr Eve Patten (English), Dr Breffni O'Rourke (CSLS), Dr Danny Zisterer (Biochemistry), Dr Clair Gardiner (Biochemistry), Dr Charles Patterson (Physics), Dr Colin Griffiths (Nursing & Midwifery), Dr Robin Edwards (Natural Sciences), Review Team.

44

11.30 – 12.15	Meeting with the College Board	Provost's Boardroom	Prof John McGilp, Prof Eunan O'Halpin, Ms Olive Braiden, Mr Jackie Gallagher, Mr Liam Dowling, Dr Jack McGinley, Review Team.
12.15 – 13.00	Meeting with the University Council & Quality Committee	Provost's Boardroom	Dr Michael O'Siochru, Prof James Wickham, Ms Sinead MacBride, Dr Deirdre Ahern, Dr Donal O'Donovan, Review Team.
13.15 – 14.15	Private Time & Lunch	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Review Team
14.15 – 15.00	Meeting with Postgraduate Students	Provost's Boardroom	Postgraduate Students: Mr Stephen Lucek, Ms Emma Dorris, Ms Carolin Heubner, Ms Yvonne Rossiter, Ms Erin Meehan, Ms Laura Kavanaugh, Ms Donna Canada-Smith, Ms Jeanne Spillane, Review Team.
15.00 – 15.45	Research Governance	Provost's Boardroom	Associate Dean of Research (Prof Derek Sullivan), Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (Prof James Callahan), Directors of Research (Dr Caoimhin MacMaolain, Dr Anthony Quinn), Prof John Boland (Director of CRANN), Prof Louis Brennan (Director of IIIS), Prof Ruth Byrne (Deputy Director of TCIN), Ms Doris Alexander (Trinity Research & Innovation), Review Team.
15.45 – 16.15	Private Time & Coffee	Ante Room, Provost's Boardroom	Review Team
16.15 – 17.00	Meeting with Research Staff	Provost's Boardroom	Prof Seamus Martin (PI) - Genetics & Microbiology; Dr Gaia Narciso (PI) & Dr Agustin Benetrix (Research Fellow) – IIIS; Dr David Kelly (Research Fellow) – Zoology; Dr Ciaran Wallace (Research Fellow) & Prof Eunan O' Halpin (PI) – Histories & Humanities, Review Team.
17.15	DEPART		

DAY 3, WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2012

TIME	MEETING	VENUE	ATTENDEES
9.45 – 10.15	Meeting between Review Team & IC	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Institutional Co-ordinator, Review Team
10.15 – 11.00	Meeting with Library Staff	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Mr Robin Adams (Librarian), Ms Jessie Shearer-Kurtz (Deputy Librarian), Dr Trevor Peare (Keeper – Readers' Services), Ms Arlene Healy (Sub-Librarian), Review Team.
11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with Employers, Professional Bodies & Research Funding Bodies representatives:	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Prof Frances Ruane (Director – ESRI), Mr Paul Vance (Resourcing, KPMG), Ms Carmel O'Connor, (HR Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers), Dr Teresa Maguire (Health Research Board), Mr Damien Owens (Director and Registrar, Engineers Ireland), Mr David Williamson (Senior Probation Officer, Mountjoy Prison, Dept of Justice), Mr Cormac Quinlan (Principal Social Worker, HSE), Dr Maire Kennedy (Special Collections, Dublin City Libraries), Review Team.

12.00 – 12.30	Meeting with staff involved with student exchanges, mobility, joint programmes & professional practice placements	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Ms Catherine Williams (TCD International Office), Ms Sinead Ashe (TCD International Office), Ms Gloria Kirwan (Director – TCD B.Sc. in Social Studies), Mr Padraig Dunne (Allocations Officer, Nursing), Dr James Hanrahan (TSM French).
12.30 – 12.45	Meeting with College Registrar	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Prof Shane Allwright (College Registrar), Review Team.
12.45 – 13.15	Meeting with Associated Colleges	Conference Room, Long Room Hub	Dr Anne O'Gara, (President, Marino Institute of Education); Dr Anne Lodge (Principal, Church of Ireland College of Education), Revd Dr Maurice Elliot (Director, Church of Ireland Theological Institute); Dr Katie Heffelfinger (Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics, Church of Ireland Theological Institute), Review Team.
13.15 – 14.15	Private Time & Lunch	Private Dining Room, Atrium, Common Room	Review Team
14.30 – 15.15	Service/Support Staff	Provost's Boardroom	Mr Declan Treanor (Director of College Disability Service), Ms Michelle Le Good (School Administrator Psychology), Ms Mary Foody (School Administrator, Natural Sciences), Dr Debra Birch (School Administrator, Histories & Humanities), Ms Orla Sheehan (Quality Office), Ms Mary McMahon (Head of Examinations), Review Team.
15.15 – 17.15	Coffee & extended Private Time for wrap-up preparation on Day 4	Provost's Boardroom	Review Team
17.15 – 17.30	Depart		Review Team

DAY 4, THURSDAY 15 MARCH 2012

TIME	MEETING	VENUE	ATTENDEES
08.30 – 09.30	Informal Feedback of Key Findings/ Clarify Issues - Private Meeting between the IC, Chair, Provost	Provost's Boardroom	Provost (Dr Patrick Prendergast), Review Team
09.30 – 11.00	Private time for preparation for Exit Presentation (oral report) & Coffee	Provost's Boardroom	Review Team
11.00 – 11.45	IUQB Reviews Manager (RM)	Provost's Boardroom	IUQB Reviews Manager (Ms. Karen Jones); Review Team

46

11.45 – 12.45	Oral Report/ Presentation	Provost's Boardroom	Provost (Dr Patrick Prendergast), Chief Operating Officer (Ms Darina Kneafsey), Academic Secretary (Ms Patricia Callaghan), Dean of Graduate Studies (Prof Veronica Campbell), Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (Prof Michael Marsh), Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences (Prof Mary McCarron), Secretary to the College (Ms Anne Fitzgerald), Treasurer (Mr Ian Mathews), Director of Human Resources (Mr Tony McMahon), Bursar (Prof David Lloyd), IUQB Reviews Manager (Ms Karen Jones) & Review Team.
12.45 – 14.00	Lunch (before Departure)	1592 Restaurant, TCD.	Provost (Dr Patrick Prendergast), Chief Operating Officer (Ms Darina Kneafsey), Academic Secretary (Ms Patricia Callaghan), Dean of Graduate Studies (Prof Veronica Campbell), Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (Prof Michael Marsh), Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences (Prof Mary McCarron), Secretary to the College (Ms Anne Fitzgerald), Bursar (Prof David Lloyd), The Registrar (Prof Shane Allwright), IUQB Reviews Manager (Ms Karen Jones), Institutional Co-ordinator (Dr Liz Donnellan) & Review Team.

OVERVIEW OF THE IRIU PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Universities have requirements under Section 35 of The Universities Act 1997 to establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and, more relevantly to the IRIU, to arrange for a review of the effectiveness of internal procedures "from time to time and in any case at least every 15 years". These reviews of effectiveness are designated in The Act as the responsibility of the individual governing authorities. In this way, the autonomy permitted in the organisation of internal reviews is complemented by accountability. In 2002, the governing authorities of all seven universities authorised the establishment of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and delegated to the IUQB the function of arranging regular reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, which are institutional in their scope.

In 2004-05, the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) jointly commissioned the European University Association (EUA) through its Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) to undertake the first cycle of external reviews of the seven Irish universities. The resulting sectoral report, published in April 2005, found *"the systematic organisation and promotion of quality assurance at the initiative of the universities themselves"* as being *"unparalleled in any other country in Europe, or indeed in the United States or Canada".* The reviewers deemed the system *"to strike the right tone and combination of public interest, accountability, and University autonomy. It encourages a greater focus on quality and improvement than some systems worldwide, while at the same time being less intrusive than some other systems in Europe".* The report concluded that it was, however: *"time to move to a new phase"* that *"should build on the existing system, linking it more closely to strategic management and feeding its outputs into the ongoing development of the universities, individually and collectively".*

In October 2006, after consultation with the universities, it was agreed that a second cycle of institutional reviews would be initiated in 2009/10. The Institutional Review of Irish Universities (IRIU) process was approved for publication by the IUQB Board in March 2009. By the end of this rolling cycle of reviews, independent reviewers will have confirmed whether Irish universities are operating in line with the requirements of (i) Section 35 of the Universities Act, 1997, and are (ii) consistent with the Part 1 requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2005 (the ESG).

IRIU METHOD

The aims and objectives of the IRIU method are:

- to operate an external review process consistent with The Act, and the Part 1 Standards outlined in the ESG
- to support each University in meeting its responsibility for the operation of internal quality assurance procedures and reviews that are clear and transparent to all their stakeholders, and which provide for the continuing evaluation of all academic, research and service departments and their activities, as outlined in The Act, incorporating the Part 1 ESG Standards

- to provide evidence that each University continues to engage with national, European and international guidelines and standards, particularly in accordance with the Bologna process
- to support institutional strategic planning and ownership of quality assurance and enhancement to operate as part of the Framework for Quality in Irish Universities
- to support the availability of consistent, robust, and timely information on the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement processes operating within Irish universities
- to provide accountability to external stakeholders in relation to the overall quality of the system and thereby instil confidence in the robustness of the IRIU process

There are four elements to the IRIU method:
- Element 1: Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISAR)
- Element 2: The Review Visit(s) – Planning Visit and Main Review Visit
- Element 3: Review Report
- Element 4: Institutional and Sector Level Follow-up

Institutions can expect to undergo IRIU normally every six years. The schedule for the second cycle of institutional reviews (2009/10 – 12/13) is published on the IUQB website and was developed in consultation with each Irish University and approved by the IUQB Board in June 2009.

THE REVIEW TEAM

The recruitment of national and international experts to the IRIU Register of Reviewers is conducted bi-annually. Each Team of reviewers is selected by the IUQB Board from the Register of Reviewers based on the reviewer's ability to demonstrate current or recent experience in at least three of the seven criteria categories published in the IRIU Handbook. Reviewers are trained, deployed and paid on a per review basis. IRIU Reviewers are not IUQB employees. As part of the nomination and selection process, reviewers sign to confirm any conflicts of interest. Additionally, universities have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their Review Team in advance of deployment, to ensure there are no conflicts of interest in the proposed Review Team, and thus the IUQB Board will ensure that an appropriate and entirely independent Team of reviewers is selected for the institution being reviewed. The IUQB Board has final approval over the composition of each IRIU Review Team.

The IRIU Review Teams will normally consist of:
- two international reviewers (one of which will also act as Review Chair)
- an Irish reviewer
- a student representative
- a representative of external stakeholders
- a co-ordinating reviewer

REVIEWER TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT

- Each Review Team will receive institutionally-specific training in advance of deployment. The purpose of reviewer training/briefing is to ensure that all reviewers:
- understand the social, cultural, economic and legal environment within which Irish universities are operating
- become familiar with the Framework for Quality in Irish Universities
- understand the aims and objectives of the IRIU process as well as the key elements of the method
- understand the statutory requirements placed on Irish universities in relation to quality, as outlined in The Act and the ESG
- understand their own roles and tasks and the importance of Team coherence and delivering a robust, evidence-based report in a timely manner.

REPORTING

In the interests of equity and reliability, the Review Team's findings and recommendations presented in the review reports will be based on recorded evidence. In line with ESG guidelines, the Team will be asked by the IUQB Reviews Manager on the final day of the Main Review Visit to confirm that the review procedures used have provided adequate evidence to support the Team's findings and recommendations on the University's procedures and practices in relation to:

- its fulfilment of its statutory requirements, which includes the:
- regular evaluation of each department, and, where appropriate, faculty and any service provided by the University by persons competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at University level
- assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the University
- publication of findings arising out of the application of those procedures
- implementation of any findings arising out of the evaluation, having regard to the resources available to the University
- its consistency with the Part 1 Standards of the ESG
- operating in line with national, European and international best practice
- identifying and enhancing good practice in the management of quality assurance and enhancement
- identifying issues for further development in relation to the management of quality assurance and enhancement.

Two review reports arise from the IRIU - a brief non-technical summary report and a full review report for specialist audiences. Both reports are prepared by the Co-ordinating Reviewer and are signed off by the Chair following consultation with all Review Team members. The University will be given an opportunity to comment on factual accuracy and if they so wish, to provide a 1-2 page institutional response to the report that will be published as an appendix to the review report. Each IRIU report will be formally signed off and approved by the IUQB Board once satisfied that the review process was completed in accordance with published criteria. Reports will be published by the IUQB thereafter. In accordance with Section 41 of the Universities Act, 1997, the IUQB will submit review reports to the Minister.

FOLLOW-UP

One year after the Main Review Visit, the University will be asked to produce a follow-up report (incorporating the institutional action plan), normally submitted alongside the Annual Institutional Report (AIR) and discussed as part of the Annual Dialogue (AD) meeting with the IUQB. Within the report, the University should provide a commentary on how the review findings and recommendations have been discussed and disseminated throughout the University's committee structure and academic units, and comment on how effectively the University is addressing the review outcomes. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the institution since the review reports' publication. Institutions will continue to have flexibility in the length and style of the follow-up report but should address each of the key findings and recommendations that the reviewers presented. The follow-up report will be published by the IUQB.

If an IRIU Review Team identifies in its review report what it considers to be significant causes of concern, particularly in relation to the institution's fulfilment of its statutory requirements, (in accordance with the IUQB's Memorandum of Association, 2006), the IUQB will consult with the University in question to agree an immediate action plan to address the issue(s) of Review Team concern, including the time-frame in which the issue(s) will be addressed. The University will report to the IUQB every six months on progress against the action plan for the duration of the plan. Where the IUQB considers that progress in implementing the action plan is inadequate, the IUQB may, in consultation with the University and the HEA, intervene to secure a revision or acceleration of the plan, or to arrange a further review visit, ideally involving most or all of the original Review Team.

The IUQB will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the IRIU process, as part of an organisational commitment to actively contribute to the broader enhancement of a culture of quality across the Irish higher education sector and as required by Part 3 of the ESG.

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
Trinity College

UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO THE IRIU

Trinity College Dublin acknowledges the professionalism and rigour demonstrated by the external review team in conducting this review. The resulting report is comprehensive, and the review team's observations and recommendations are clear and purposeful. The period of preparation for the review, as well as the site visit itself, afforded a welcome opportunity for institutional self-reflection and for staff and students to engage with a set of informed critical external perspectives at what is a crucial juncture in the experience of the College and of the wider university sector in Ireland.

We welcome the review team's confirmation that the quality assurance processes at Trinity College Dublin fulfil statutory requirements, are consistent with the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education, and accord with best practice nationally and internationally. The historic exception cited by the review team regarding the periodicity of external quality reviews of service departments had already been addressed by the College prior to the review. The College is satisfied with the review team's finding that an appropriate response had been made to the previous external institutional review.

Trinity College welcomes the review team's headline commendations which cite in particular its portfolio of high quality research activity and strategic approach to research which permeates and informs its approach to teaching and learning; various actions undertaken and those in process to ensure greater clarity, transparency and consistency of approach to academic regulations; the modernisation of management, support and service structures; initiatives designed to enhance graduate education; and the success of its access programmes. These serve to illustrate aspects of the College's commitment to continuous improvement in its quality assurance processes. We also welcome the many other positive findings of the review team relating to quality assurances processes in the areas of research strategy and innovation, the implementation of policies on teaching and learning and graduate education, student services, and Associated Colleges and inter-institutional partnerships.

Trinity College notes the review team's helpful recommendations. They will be addressed in detail in the context of planning for and implementing improved procedures and processes, as resources allow in what is a difficult operating environment. The College recognises the importance of clearly articulated institutional processes and monitoring mechanisms in providing public assurance of the essential quality of core activities. Several key recommendations relate to developments which are already in train, and the strong support expressed by the external assessors for these initiatives is particularly welcomed by the College.

EMAIL info@iuqb.ie

IUQB
IRISH UNIVERSITIES
QUALITY BOARD