

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

XX = Board relevance

**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

A meeting of the University Council was held on 22 September 2021 at 11.15am remotely and hosted from the Provost's Library.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Vice-President for Global Relations, Dean of Students, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor L. Carson, Professor P. O'Grady, Professor A. Bray, Professor D. Romelli, Professor A. O'Connor, Professor M. Lyons, Professor M. Monaghan, Professor M. Ruffini, Professor B. O'Connell, Professor L. O'Driscoll, Professor C. Donnellan, Professor. AM. Malone, Dr. O. Gobbo, Professor A. Long, Ms. B. Genockey, Ms J. Bochenek, Ms. S. Sutton, Ms. Z. Cummins, Ms. A. Bhattacharjee.
<i>Apologies</i>	Ms. D. Kelleher, Ms. J. Wall, Ms. C. Persello. Ms. N. Aluthge Dona
<i>In attendance</i>	Interim Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms. A. Crawford.

SECTION A

The Provost welcomed everyone to the first Council meeting of the 2021/22 academic year and her first meeting as Provost. She requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda. The Secretary noted that Professor B. O'Connell had declared a conflict of interest for item C.12 'Acting Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences'. The Secretary highlighted that it was agreed with Professor O'Connell that he leave the meeting for discussion of this item.

CL/21-22/001 Membership of the University Council

The Secretary requested approval of the Dean of Students (Professor Catherine McCabe) and Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor Emma Stokes) as co-opted members of University Council 2021/22.

Decision:

CL/21-22/001.1: Council approved the Dean of Students (Professor Catherine McCabe) and Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor Emma Stokes) as co-opted members of University Council for 2021/22.

CL/21-22/002 Declarations by new Members and Observers

The new members of Council made the required statutory declarations.

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CL/21-22/003 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 2 June 2021 were approved and signed.

CL/21-22/004 Matters Arising

The Dean of Graduate Studies referred Council to minute CL/20-21/235 (ii) 'MSC in Smart Medicines (HCI 3)' highlighting that a change in course title to 'Entrepreneurship of Smart Medicines' was agreed. She added that approval for the change in course title was sought from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as the course is funded under the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 and that this had been approved.

CL/21-22/005 Provost's Report

The Provost advised that her report would focus on two areas, College and Council.

a) College

The Provost expressed her delight with the return of students to campus and she thanked the College community for all the work that made this happen. College is taking a two-pronged approach to re-opening with no social distancing in place from 22 October 2021. She referred to recent feedback from parents and students concerning students' experiences of the return to campus and advised Council that a student protest is planned for 5pm that day. Several measures are being put in place to respond to the concerns, including the establishment of a Trinity Return to Campus Community Unit and the use of public theatres for in-person teaching.

A member emphasised the importance of dialogue in resolving the issues and highlighted the need for engagement across Schools on room allocation to resolve issues relating to teaching space. In response to a member's comment on a relaxation in social distancing requirements prior to 22 October, the Provost stated that this warrants further discussion, and a communication will be issued in due course. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer in responding to a comment from a member on the allocation of teaching rooms explained that she is working with Heads of Schools to resolve this, and from semester 2 the room allocation system will revert to pre-Covid timetabling arrangements. The Provost noted the diverse set of constraints that Trinity is working under and highlighted the need to address Trinity systems and processes. She advocated a solutions-oriented approach and emphasised the importance of open and clear communication in addressing the issues.

b) Council

The Provost highlighted that there is a need for Council to change how it operates so that more time is devoted to high-level discussion on matters relating to Trinity's educational philosophy and values, and exploring diverse perspectives on pedagogical approaches, teaching and assessment. She proposed that 50% of the Council agenda is devoted to addressing College business and 50% to high-level discussion. The Trinity governance structure results in papers and documentation progressing through several committees prior to Council and at times decisions can be held up at Council. The governance structure is an area that requires attention and the Provost highlighted that she will discuss this further with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Academic Secretary. She invited questions and comments.

Responding to a comment from the Dean of Students on the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) playing a greater role in reviewing course proposals, the Provost expressed her view that the role of Council is to focus on the pedagogical principles underpinning course proposals rather than the finer details of a proposal, which is the remit of USC and GSC. A dashboard could be presented to Council annually presenting the number of new proposed courses, student numbers, programme

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suspensions and cessations enabling Council to have a wider discussion of the issues presented. The proposal was welcomed by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies who noted that this would greatly endorse the work of USC and GSC. It was agreed that preparatory work would be needed before the approach could be implemented. Responding to a question from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer on whether Schools would propose new courses to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies for consideration by Council prior to the presentation of a proposal to USC/GSC, the Provost stated that there is a need for further discussion before the process is reformed.

The Registrar endorsed the proposals emphasising the importance of a robust governance structure, which will streamline the work of Council and empower Schools.

The Provost thanked members for their comments.

CL/21-22/006 Consolidated Annual Quality Report

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that she would take the reports as read. The Annual Faculty Quality Reports (AFQR) 2019/20 are submitted to the Quality Committee each year for consideration and recommendations arising from the Quality Committee for the 2019/20 reports are as follows:

- A better balance between descriptive and analytical elements and a clearer articulation of what is within the remit of Schools and College to be considered in the approach to the 2020/21 reports.
- The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the AFQRs (2016) to be updated accordingly and provided to Schools with next year's School information request for the AFQR.
- Quality to be included as a standing item on agendas for Faculty Executive meetings with each Faculty to facilitate a dedicated Annual Faculty Quality Executive.
- Academic Registry (AR) to be invited annually to present its annual report to the Heads of School committee.

Referring to Faculty performance against key quality metrics, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that over 90% of undergraduate modules and 95% of postgraduate taught courses were evaluated, and that over 90% of undergraduate external examiner reports were received with lower return rates for postgraduate taught programmes (80%). She noted that progression and retention rates remain high across the Faculties with progression rates varying from 93% [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)] to 97% (Health Sciences) and retention rates at 96% [Arts, Humanities and Social Science (AHSS) and STEM] and 97% (Health Sciences). Referring to Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC), the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that there is variability across Faculties with SSLCs existing in all Schools under the Faculty of Health Sciences, 63% of STEM Schools and 58% of AHSS Schools. She acknowledged that there is more work to be done on this. Referring to School Action Plans she highlighted that all Schools had submitted a School Action Plan responding to key quality inputs.

Referring to key topics arising from the Reports, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that for the 'response to Covid-19' there was significant praise for the staff response to the pandemic with positive engagement with training and positive feedback from students on support relating to online teaching and learning. External Examiners expressed support for alternative assessment formats and virtual courts of examiners and postgraduate research Vivas worked well. Risks to quality included deferral/disruption to placements particularly on accredited programmes and an absence of a College-wide standard for online courses and assessments. Turning to the second key topic 'mainstreaming TEP', the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted that the implementation of TEP had resulted in many positive

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features, including the provision of successful Trinity Electives and open modules. Risks to quality included, compressed time between examinations, marking and Courts of Examiners; the lack of availability of subject results for Joint Honours' students at Courts of Examiners, reducing oversight of the whole student cohort; and issues with module selection and online module enrolment in September 2020 which impacted the student experience.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that quality-related issues and resource-related issues were escalated by the Faculties to College. She added that the Quality Committee recommended that an owner be identified for issues to be escalated to. Quality-related issues included access to high-quality placements and impact on programmes subject to professional accreditation (designated to Faculty Deans in consultation with the HSE and Professional Placement Partners), and the absence of guidelines on College-wide standards for online courses and assessments (designated to the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Academic Secretary, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the Dean of Graduate Studies). Referring to resource-related issues, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that these related to the quality of existing teaching space and a requirement for additional space (designated to the Bursar and Chief Operating Officer), and a decline in PhD student numbers (STEM) impacting on availability of demonstrators and teaching assistants to support undergraduate lab-based modules (designated to the Planning Group).

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and invited questions and comments.

Responding to a question raised from the Librarian and College Archivist on how aggregate data emerging from the AQR is addressed and used to inform College planning, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that steps are now being taken to escalate key areas of concern to a designated unit/Academic Officer.

A member thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer for her presentation. She noted that equipment and infrastructure is not a feature of the AQR and recommended that these areas be included. Referring to the escalation of the decline in PhD student numbers (STEM) to the Planning Group she queried if this should also be escalated to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer agreed that the Dean of Graduate Studies should be involved at a later stage - after the Planning Group had considered the financial implications in the first instance.

Decision:

CL/21-22/006.1: Council approved the Consolidated Annual Quality Report 2019/20 and the inclusion of equipment and infrastructure as an area for exploration in subsequent reports.

CL/21-22/007 Quality Review of Academic Practice

(i) Overview of Academic Practice

The Academic Secretary presented an overview of Academic Practice to provide Council with a context for the Quality Review of Academic Practice. She outlined the structure of Trinity Teaching and Learning (TT&L), which comprises five divisions, including Academic Practice established in 2003 as a Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL) and provided an overview of its inception in 2011.

Drawing attention to Academic Practice staff numbers from 2006/2007 to 2019/20, the Academic Secretary explained that there has been a shift in staffing over this time with most staff on contracts. She noted that the staffing is dependent on project funding and seconded fellows from the academic community. Currently staffing consists of the Head of Academic Practice (0.70 FTE), Academic Developers (3.3 FTE), Education Support Officers (1.5 FTE) and 4-6

Academic Practice Fellows (6-8 hours weekly and project based) and 2-4 student ambassadors (4-6 hours weekly and project based).

The Academic Secretary outlined the key areas of focus for Academic Practice as follows:

- Accredited professional development consisting of the Special Purpose Cert. in Academic Practice, stand-alone modules for credit on teaching and learning, supporting teaching and learning for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA), and the Thapar (TIET) Teaching Fellow Development Programme.
- Non-accredited professional development consisting of workshops, bespoke consultancies and workshops, and lunchtime seminars and webinars.
- Provost Teaching Awards.
- Teaching and learning funded projects such as the 'Gateway to Assessment 2020/21' and 'Digital by Design 2021/22' funded by the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement in Higher Education (SATLE) fund administered by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

Academic Practice workshop and programme attendance increased significantly from 2019/20 to 2019/20, and the Academic Secretary attributed this to the Covid pandemic and the pivot to online teaching and assessment. She provided a breakdown of staff enrolled on the Special Purpose Certificate from the Hilary Term 2015 to the end of the Michaelmas Term 2020 and highlighted that 115 Post-Doctoral Research Fellows had participated to-date, with the School of Medicine accounting for the highest number of staff enrolled on the Special Purpose Cert.

The Academic Secretary concluded by outlining the number of participants enrolled on programmes provided for staff from March 2020-January 2021.

Professor L. O'Driscoll left the meeting.

Dr. O. Gobo joined the meeting.

(ii) Review Report and Recommendations

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed Council that the Quality Committee had approved the review report and recommendations in May 2021. She thanked the Internal Facilitator, Associate Professor Sheila Ryder for her work on the review and the three reviewers, Professor Manon Kluijtmans, Utrecht University, Professor Klara Bolander Laksov, Stockholm University and Dr Jon Turner, University of Edinburgh.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) and findings of the review were presented as follows:

The extent to which:

1. The Special Purpose Certificate remains fit for purpose as a professional qualification in teaching and learning.
2. Academic Practice can contribute to the strategic educational development needs of the University.
3. Other professional development activities meet the development needs of staff working in a leading research-led University.
4. Resources (human, physical and financial) and governance achieve the strategic objectives of Academic Practice.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that the Report commended Academic Practice for its work in several areas, including, the Special Purpose Certificate, the contribution it makes to strategy such as its work on TEP, the Graduate Teaching Assistants programme, and its work on the Thapar programme. It recommended that Academic Practice continue to build

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on the Covid-forced online offering of some programme elements to move towards a blended set-up for the whole programme; its current openness to take on requests to provide input from Faculties and Schools; work with networks, community building, and collaboration with students; and its international work with Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology.

The Report, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer explained, makes several recommendations under each ToR as follows:

ToR 1: Special Purpose Certificate

- Keep the flexibility but consider a shorter time period to finish.
- Strengthen participant interaction during the programme to enhance peer-to-peer learning and build a community of educators within academic Schools and across the College.
- Foster community of educators after the programme by involving alumni in Academic Practice activities.
- Aim to increase participation from the currently underrepresented Faculties.
- Consider making participation obligatory particularly for new faculty.
- Consider how the programme could become a vehicle for interaction in departments around teaching and learning through assignments that engage participants in dialogue with local communities of practice.

ToR 2: Strategic educational development

- Develop role of Academic Practice as catalyst and facilitator of innovation and enhancement.
- Extend Academic Practice capacity to provide highly valued pedagogical expertise in support of the realisation of Trinity strategic priorities.
- Consider how students can play a strategic role in cultural change work.
- Consider how opportunities for research can become included in the work of academic developers at Academic Practice.

ToR 3: Reflections and recommendations on other potential professional development activities

- Extend and diversify offer, especially advanced and specialised programming.
- Develop and offer an educational leadership programme.
- Draw from the structure of the work with Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology and consider models to bring expertise and capacity locally.
- Create funding opportunities as well as capacity in Academic Practice to administer and provide expert advice/mentoring to support projects initiated by Schools or individual academics, either aimed at innovation or educational scholarship.
- Scaffold an institution-wide teaching community.

ToR 4: Reflections and recommendations around resources and governance

- Academic Practice/University needs a strategy to build engagement with the broader College academic community.
- To support long-term culture change Academic Practice needs stability in funding.
- Consider new funding models.
- Formalise roles and responsibilities for educational development at different levels in the organisation to increase visibility of educational development.
- Consider the signal value of working both bottom-up and top-down.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commended Academic Practice for its work and extended her thanks to the Academic Secretary and her team.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and invited questions and comments.

The Dean of Health Sciences commented that the response of students has been very positive in cases where teaching staff have undertaken the Special Purpose Certificate and he noted that this was not evident from the report. The Dean of STEM extended her thanks to Academic Practice for its work and asked if the unit had links with the inclusive curriculum programme, Athena Swan, and gendered aspects to teaching and learning. Adding to this, the Provost asked if there were links with Access and noted that the area of climate change and sustainability should be developed. Responding to the Dean of STEM and the Provost, the Academic Secretary reported that Academic Practice has strong links to the inclusive curriculum programme and Access, however, she noted that there were no links to Athena Swan or to climate change and sustainability. She undertook to convey this to Academic Practice as areas to develop.

Speaking to the item, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commended Academic Practice for its work and stated that he was heartened by the recommendation relating to the Special Purpose Certificate to enhance peer-to-peer learning, as his experience of this has been very positive. He commended Academic Practice for its work.

There was a discussion on how more sustainable funding could be secured for Academic Practice and it was suggested that EU funding programmes be explored. The Academic Secretary stated that Academic Practice has submitted proposals to national funding bodies and Horizon 2020, however, responding to funding calls requires significant effort and resources and this can take time away from the delivery of the Academic Practice remit. It was acknowledged that Academic Practice needs more support for its work and to grow capacity within the unit to apply for external funding such as Horizon.

Decision:

CL/21-22/007.1: Council approved the Quality Review of Academic Practice.

Action:

CL/21-22/007.2: The Academic Secretary to raise with Academic Practice the establishment of links with Athena Swan and consideration of how sustainability could be explored in the development of curricula.

CL/21-22/008 Any Other Urgent Business

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he had worked with DUTLs on semester 1 assessment contingency days to mitigate the risk of not having enough days to schedule all approved in-person and online examinations in the December assessment session. The contingency days will only be used where necessary to ensure the best spread of modules across an examination timetable with Saturday being used as a last resort. The three days are as follows:

- Thursday 9 December 2021 (in-person academic presence required)
- Friday 10 December 2021 (in-person academic presence required)
- Saturday 11 December 2021 (in-person academic presence required).

Responding to a query raised by a member relating to the resumption of in-person examinations, and considerations relating to the pedagogical needs of students, climate action, and the cost of in-person examinations, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that there is a need to learn from the experience of conducting examinations during Covid, and for consultation with Schools and DUTLs on this. The Provost emphasised the need to reflect on the experience of online assessment before returning to in-person examinations in the RDS.

Decision:

CL/21-22/008.1: Council approved the three semester 1 assessment contingency days, 9 December, 10 December and 11 December 2021.

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Action:

CL/21-22/008.2: The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to bring proposals on assessment to a future meeting of Council for discussion.

SECTION B**CL/21-22/009 Global Relations Committee**

The minutes of 21 June 2021 and 7 September 2021 were noted and approved.

CL/21-22/010 Human Resources Committee

The minutes of 3 June 2021 were noted and approved.

SECTION C**CL/21-22/011 Administrative Procedures in the Summer Session**

The Council noted the memorandum from the Secretary to the College dated 14 September 2021 including:

- (i) Gold Medal Criteria
- (ii) Micro-Credentials
- (iii) School Directors
- (iv) Course Directors
- (v) Heads of Discipline
- (vi) Temporary Head of Discipline
- (vii) Council Membership – Graduate Students' Union
- (viii) Confirmation of Academic Staff in Post following Probation
- (ix) Senior Academic Promotions Committee (SAPC) Recommendations
- (x) Nominations for Appointment
- (xi) Summary of Staff Appointments
- (xii) Policy on Covid-19 Vaccination for Students in Clinical Placements or Placements in Allied Settings
- (xiii) CHARM-EU Parchment
- (xiv) Alternative Recruitment Cycles for Tangent Courses
- (xv) Junior Academic Progression Committee (JAPC) Recommendations – Final Tenure Review
- (xvi) Self-Evaluation of the Council
- (xvii) Title of Personal Chair
- (xviii) Professor of Paediatrics (2021) and Chief Clinical Academic Officer, Children's Hospital Ireland
- (xix) Professor of Strategic Management (2021)

CL/21-22/012 Membership of the University Council

The Council noted and approved that the Dean of Students (Professor Catherine McCabe) and Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor Emma Stokes) would be co-opted members of the University Council for 2021/22.

CL/21-22/013 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 2 June 2021 and noted by Board on 16 June 2021.

(i) Higher Degrees by Research Alone

PhD Mohammad Hassan Al Bayyari; Michaela Blott; Niamh Bernadette Brennan; Michael Broderick; Kabir Chattopadhyay; Meins G. S. Coetsier; Simon Corbett; Conor Delaney; Alan Arnaldo Diaz Montiel; Ciaran Michael Devlin; Ebru Eren; Cian Gabbett; Aisling Heeran; Grainne Holleran; Bryan Kennedy; Eleonora Miriam La Spada; James Leduc; Evgenia Likhovtseva; Sebastian Lutz; Matthew McGovern; Joshua Timothy McLean; Róisín McMackin; Vanessa Moore; Julia O'Connell; Éamon Ó Murchú; Eamonn O'Raghallaigh; James Orr; Matthew Roddy; Oskar Ronan; Sara Elizabeth Singleton; Pedro Nicolas Tamaroff; Neil Taylor; Paula Tierney; Dora Tuda; Daire Tyndall; Matej Uličný; Killian Walshe; Pisut Wisessing.

D.CH.DENT Shkre Abdalla Ali Agkhre; Advan Moorthy.

MSc James Eoin Devane; Fergal James Hamrock; Roisin Hyland; Sylwia Natalia Konieczna; Leona O'Connor; Eileen Louise O'Flaherty.

CL/21-22/014 Acting Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences

Professor B. O'Connell left the meeting for this item.

The Council noted that the Board had approved the nomination of Professor Brian O'Connell to be Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences until a Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences is appointed, following the appointment of Professor Orla Sheils as Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer.

CL/21-22/015 Membership of Academic Committees of Council

The Council noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 15 September 2021.

CL/21-22/016 Head of Discipline

The Council noted and approved the following nomination:

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- (i) Professor John Reynolds as Head of Discipline of Surgery, School of Medicine, from 1 August 2021 to 30 July 2024

CL/21-22/017 School Directors

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

- (i) Professor Paula Quigley as Acting Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Creative Arts, from 6 September 2021 to 3 December 2021,
- (ii) Professor Russell McLaughlin as Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Genetics and Microbiology, from 27 August 2021 to 30 June 2024
- (iii) Professor Joseph Harbison as Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Medicine, from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023
- (iv) Professor Stephen Smith as Director of the M.Sc. in Healthcare Infection Management, School of Medicine

SECTION D

In compliance with the Data Protection Acts, this information is restricted.

Signed

Date