



**A meeting of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee was held on 06 February 2024 at 14:00 in the Arts Building Conference Room.**

**Present:** Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)  
Dr Michael Cleary-Gaffney, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning  
Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning  
Mr Shane Coultry, Academic Registry  
Professor Stephen Maher, Health Sciences Representative  
Professor Rachel Mc Donnell, STEM Representative  
Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice  
Professor Mark Sweetman, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)

**Apologies:** Ms Catherine Arnold, Education Officer, Students' Union; Professor Rachel Hoare, AHSS Representative

**In attendance:** Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer (for item TESC/23-24/011); Ms Leticia Peralta, Quality Projects Officer (for item TESC/23-24/011); Prof Sarah-Jane Cullinane, ESD Fellow (for item TESC/23-24/012).

---

**TESC/23-24/009 Minutes of the meeting of 22 November 2023**

The minutes of the meeting of 22 November 2023 were approved.

**TESC/23-24/010 Matters Arising**

**TESC/22-23/004.1** The actions related to Trinity Elective Proposals from the November 2023 meeting will be considered under item TESC/23-24/012 below.

**TESC/22-23/005.1** The ADUSE confirmed that the Trinity Elective Annual Report had been approved by USC and Council.

**TESC/22-23/006.2** The ADUSE emailed all TE module coordinators to reiterate the importance of encouraging students to complete the centralised survey and informing students that their feedback is considered and can enact enhancements in future delivery of a module.

**TESC/22-23/008.01** The ADUSE contacted the SU President to voice TESC's concerns about the moderation of the ratemyelective website and highlighted that negative comments could have implications on staff wellbeing. The ADUSE stated that while the website was a commitment within the SU President's manifesto it was not a Student Union initiative. The ADUSE advised that Trinity College Dublin cannot force the website to be shut down. The ADUSE stated that he had visited the website and found no offensive comments. He said that he will review the website periodically and if comments or defamatory or offensive he will flag this with the website owner.

**TESC/23-24/011 Trinity Electives Semester 1 Student Survey Results**

A PowerPoint presentation provided by the Quality Office outlining summary findings of the semester 1 Trinity Elective Student Survey results was circulated. The Quality Officer, Ms Roisin Smith and the Quality Projects Officer Ms Leticia Perata were welcomed to the meeting to discuss the Trinity Elective Student Survey results and address any questions that TESC members had.

Ms Leticia Perata provided an overview of the main findings from the Semester 1 Trinity Elective. She outlined that the overall response rate was 13.3% (n=235). There was variance in response rate across all Trinity Electives ranging from 5-27%. The main summary findings were that:

1. Just under 33% of students reported that they spend between 20-30 hours to complete all learning activities outside the teacher-led hours.
2. Over 55% agreed that the information provided on the Website was an accurate description of the Trinity Elective Module.
3. Under 40% agreed the feedback provided helped to improve their learning of the module.
4. 53% completely agreed the teaching strategies used supported the learning on the module.
5. 54% of the respondents agreed that the module taken was a valuable experience.
6. On average, respondents indicated that they were somewhat likely to recommend the module in which they enrolled.
7. The Quality Officer highlighted that while one module surveyed had the lowest response rate, it was the most likely to be recommended while the opposite pattern was seen other electives surveyed.

The Quality Officer informed TESC members that personalised aggregated reports for each Trinity Elective was sent to each respective module coordinator. The Quality Officer outlined that if any significant student issues were raised, these comments were shared with the Trinity Elective Sub-Committee Chair. These comments were then discussed with the module coordinator by the TESC Chair.

Members queried the summarised findings which found that 32.34% of respondents reported that they only spend 20-30 hours completing all learning activities outside the teacher-led hours. Members felt that the amount of independent learning hours was considerably less than what would be expected of a 5 ECTS module. The Quality Officer reported that respondents may be potentially underreporting their independent learning hours. Some TESC members queried whether the wording of the question enabled respondents to accurately report on their independent learning hours. Some TESC members queried whether the total workload of 100 hours for a 5 ECTS module was the maximum workload hours a student should have to do or the average amount of hours students put in. Other TESC members suggested that depending on a student's home discipline whether particular Trinity Electives may result in a student having to put in more independent learning hours. For example, a student whose degree is in the humanities may have to engage in more learning independent learning hours in Health Science related Trinity Electives compared to students whose degree is in the Health Science. Members suggested that the wording of the question to assess independent learning workload could be amended. The Quality Officer indicated that the survey questions could be changed and asked the TESC members to develop and approve on any new questions and forward them to the Quality Office. Members asked would it be possible to receive a copy of the current survey questions for review. The Quality officer agreed to share the current survey questions.

Members noted that while the survey provides valuable information about Trinity Electives, the findings may not be generalisable given the low response rate. To improve the generalisability of the findings, one TESC member queried whether it would be possible to aggregate the individual responses for each respective Trinity Elective since their inception. The Quality Officer responded that this ask could be facilitated however, it would take a significant amount of time to do and that if this ask were facilitated, module coordinators would need to meaningfully engage with student feedback. The Quality Officer did highlight that low response rates could also be due to survey fatigue amongst students as students are asked to complete other surveys outside of Trinity Electives.

The Quality Officer highlighted that the semester 2 Trinity Elective survey would open to students at the end of March and would remain open for a two-week period.

The ADUSE thanked the Quality Officers for attending the TESC meeting and addressing TESC members questions.

#### **TESC/23-24/012 Future proposal to pilot an Education Sustainable Development (ESD) common module through Trinity Electives**

A memorandum from the ESD Fellow Lead Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane dated 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 was circulated. Introducing the item, the ADUSE informed TESC members that a new ESD module was being proposed to be piloted in the portfolio of Trinity Elective modules. The ADUSE stated that the proposal had not yet been fully developed and at this time could not be considered by TESC members. As the current meeting was the last TESC meeting of the 2023/24 academic year, the ADUSE asked members to agree to convening a remote TESC meeting before April 2024 to consider the proposal for an ESD module to be piloted within Trinity Electives. The ADUSE invited the ESD Fellow Lead Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane to speak to the item.

Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane informed TESC members that in October 2023, Trinity had approved a Sustainability Strategy (2023-20230) and an action plan. Within this action plan the following actions were outlined:

**Action 1.3 Develop common interdisciplinary module(s) which address ESD Themes and develop key competencies for sustainability** which can be adapted for integration within all UG / PG curricula, and within staff development programmes.

**Action 1.5 Enable all undergraduate students, regardless of degree programme, to complete interdisciplinary modules** that address ESD themes and develop key competencies for sustainability, as part of their degree curriculum.

In addition to the Sustainability Strategy and action plan, Trinity committed through the HEA Performance Agreement, to the delivery of an interdisciplinary module(s) which addresses ESD themes and develop key competencies for sustainability. These strategic actions and commitments have prompted the development of a common interdisciplinary module by the ESD Fellows. Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane stated that the development of an ESD common module had commenced in September 2023 by an interdisciplinary team of ESD Fellows and ESD student interns from across all three Trinity faculties. A 5 ECTS mandatory module entitled “*Enacting Sustainable Development*” will be piloted across all undergraduate Business-related programmes delivered by the Trinity Business School to over 500 junior fresh students in Michaelmas Term in 2024/25. In addition to this ESD module, it is proposed that an ESD module be offered within the Trinity Electives structure on a pilot basis from 2025/26. Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane stated that an ESD Trinity Elective proposal was nearly fully developed however, some aspects of the proposal need to be confirmed. The draft proposal has been submitted to Academic Affairs for review and initial feedback was provided. The ESD Leads will incorporate the Academic Affairs feedback. The ESD Fellow Lead stated that it was important that the proposal be considered for approval by TESC in the 2023/24 academic year. The ADUSE reaffirmed that this was an exceptional ask and asked TESC members to consider agreeing to meeting remotely outside of the scheduled TESC meeting for 2023/24 to review and consider the proposal when received by the ESD fellows.

Members of the TESC queried that given the action plan was to enable all undergraduate students, regardless of their home programme complete a common ESD interdisciplinary module whether Trinity Electives was a suitable avenue given that students have choice in the selection of Trinity Electives. Trinity Electives are not available to all programmes and no Trinity Elective is mandatory. Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane confirmed that if the proposed module

was approved within the Trinity Elective structure, the proposed module would not be mandatory.

TESC members queried who would be teaching on the module. Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane confirmed that the ESD Fellows would teach on the first year of the pilot. It is envisioned that during this time, 2 academic staff from across all schools will take the Common Module Leader Development Programme which will train them to deliver the module. Additionally, it is envisioned that Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) will be trained to support the delivery of the ESD module with 1 GTA to every 30 students. The training provided to academic staff and GTAs will enable them to teach the module and thereby increase capacity on the module. One TESC member advised that some schools do not allow GTAs teach on modules and that only those with a PhD were permitted to teach modules. Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane confirmed that GTAs would support delivery of the module only. Members queried whether the proposed module would be owned by a School. Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane confirmed that the proposed module would not be owned by any school. TESC members advised that if the proposed module were to be approved as a Trinity Elective it would require a school owner and that staff participating in its delivery be named and that the maximum student capacity of the module be outlined. The Academic Registry representative stated that if after the pilot, the proposed module were to become a mandatory module for all students, this would need time to be implemented from a systems perspective.

The ADUSE thanked the ESD Lead Fellow Dr Sarah Jane-Cullinane for attending the TESC meeting and addressing TESC members questions.

#### **Action/Decision**

**012.01** TESC members agreed that once a Trinity Elective proposal is received from the ESD Fellows, a remote TESC meeting will be convened to review and consider the proposal as a Trinity Elective.

#### **TESC/23-24/013 Trinity Elective Proposals**

- i. Post-beginners Chinese Language and Culture**
- ii. Post-beginners Japanese Language and Culture**

As the format and structure of the above-named proposed modules were similar both proposals were discussed together and TESC members comments were applicable to both proposals. At the November 2023 TESC meeting, the above-named proposals were considered (TESC/23-25/004). TESC members did not approve the proposed electives due to some concerns which included the weighting of formative and summative assessment and the validity of the mode of assessment to assess one of the learning outcomes. The ADUSE emailed the module proposer with TESC member's feedback. The module proposer provided a rebuttal to each of these concerns and provided supplemental information documentation (assessment strategy which students receive and the Handbook for Trinity Language and Culture Electives. The rebuttal and documentation were provided to TESC members.

The module proposer outlined there are currently 11 approved "Language and Culture" modules which the School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Science offer. Each of these modules follow the same format, which is a standard one for institution-wide programmes of this kind for non-specialist language learning. The module proposer stated that the target student enrolling on the proposed module would be at the early stage of language learning. The proposer outlined that the proposed modules focus on cultural and social aspects as well as language. The proposer did not make any amendments to the proposal.

TESC members acknowledged the proposer's rebuttal to their concerns and that the format of the proposal follows the same format of the 11 approved "Language and Culture" Trinity

Elective modules. TESC members highlighted concerns relating to the proposal remained which included.

- Learning outcome 1 *“Communicate appropriately in the target language with other learners as well as native or competent speakers of the language, to a level approximately equivalent to CEFR level A1+”* could not be adequately assessed with the use language quizzes. Members felt that the use of the quizzes could not measure the student’s ability to “communicate” in the target language.
- Members commented that there were 4 assessment components proposed and that 3 of those assessment components were assessed through the medium of English while language skills were only assessed once using quizzes.
- Members highlighted a learning outcome should not be tied to only one assessment type as if the student fails this assessment, they have not achieved the learning outcome. Members suggested that the proposer assesses learning outcomes across more than one assessment component.
- Members highlighted that 70% of assessment was formative while 30% was summative. Members felt that if any assessment is weighted it should typically be referred to as summative. TESC members suggested that the proposer reconsider the weighting of summative and formative assessment.
- Members also queried whether vetting of students would happen to ensure that students who have more than post-beginners knowledge/experience of the target languages are not allowed to enrol on the proposed electives.

#### **Action/Decision**

**013.01:** Members did not recommend for approval the proposals entitled *“Post-beginners Chinese Language and Culture”* and *“Post-beginners Japanese Language and Culture”*

**013.02:** The ADUSE to meet with the proposal writer to convey the feedback from the committee.

**013.03:** The ADUSE suggested that if the proposer considered TESC’s feedback and resubmitted the proposals prior to April 2023 that the TESC could meet remotely to consider and recommend for approval the proposals thereby allowing the proposed modules to run in the 2024/25 academic year.

#### **iii. Polish Language and Culture**

A TE proposal developed by Dr Krzysztof Rowiński from the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies was circulated to members for consideration. During the discussion the following points were made:

- Members commended the proposed TE and felt that adding more languages modules to the portfolio of approved TEs was welcome.
- Members felt that the title of the proposed module should clearly indicate the language level. For example, *“Beginners Polish Language and Culture.”* Members felt that providing the level would inform prospective students about the language level.
- Teaching staff involved in the delivery of the module must be identified.
- 70% of the proposed assessment was formative with 30% of assessment being summative. Members felt that anything that is weighted in terms of assessment is summative.
- Members felt that learning outcome 4 *“Formulate their thoughts about a larger topic in Polish culture in a synthesised manner in the class and for a larger audience.”* should be rephrased to *“Present and communicate thoughts about a larger topic in Polish culture in a synthesised manner in the class and for a larger audience.”*
- Learning outcome 1 *“Use Polish at the CEFR A1 level across all four skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) in a variety of contexts.”* is solely assessed using quizzes. Members felt that this mode of assessment is not appropriate to assess listening and speaking of the target language.

- Assessment of the target language only happens using quizzes while the remaining assessments are assessed through English. Members queried whether assessment in the target language could be increased in the other proposed assessment components.
- Members highlighted that a learning outcome should not be mapped to only one assessment component as if the student fails this assessment, they have not achieved the learning outcome. Members suggested that the proposer assesses learning outcomes across more than one assessment component.
- The module content states that “students will consult with the instructor and select three texts (one of which may be a film) which they will read and reflect on in their Blackboard journal entries by posted deadlines throughout the term.” Members felt the proposal should clearly specify what language these texts will be in.
- The minimum student capacity states 5 students. TESC members felt this number should be increased.
- The module co-ordinator should clearly indicate that this is a beginner level module and students with pre-existing Polish should not take this module. The proposal should clearly outline what vetting processes are in place to prevent students who are able to speak Polish from enrolling on the module.

#### **Action/Decision**

**013.01:** Members did not recommend for approval the proposal entitled “*Polish Language and Culture*”

**013.02:** The ADUSE to meet with the proposal writer to convey the feedback from the committee.

**013.03:** The ADUSE suggested that if the proposer considered TESC’s feedback and resubmitted the proposal prior to April 2023 that the TESC could meet remotely to consider and recommend for approval the proposals thereby allowing the proposed modules to run in the 2024/25 academic year.

#### **TESC/23-24/014 Proposal to make moderate changes to the Trinity Elective entitled “Psychology of the Climate Crisis”**

A memorandum from the module co-ordinator Prof Clare Kelly for the above-named Trinity Elective dated the 30<sup>th</sup> of January was circulated to members which proposed making moderate changes to the approved TE and outlined a rationale for the proposed changes. A module descriptor outlining the proposed moderate changes was circulated to members for consideration. The proposed changes included:

- Increasing face to face contact hours and eliminating the flipped classroom.
- Making slight amendments to the wording of the learning outcomes.
- Increasing the maximum capacity on the module from 200 to 300.

#### **Action/Decision**

**014.01** TESC approval the proposed moderate changes to the Trinity Elective entitled “*Psychology of the Climate Crisis*”. These changes will take effect in the 2024/25 academic year.

#### **TESC/23-24/015 Proposal to suspend the Trinity Elective entitled “Cancer: The Patient Journey”**

A completed suspension form submitted by the module co-ordinator Professor Stephen Maher outlining the intention and rationale to suspend the above-named Trinity Elective for 2024/24 was circulated to members.

The Suspension Form outlined that the above-named module had been running twice per year since 2019/2020. One member of the teaching team no longer worked at Trinity and another member has other work commitments. The module co-ordinator also stated that the module

needs to be restructured and refreshed and amendments need to be made to the teaching strategy. The module co-ordinator outlined that these amendments would take time.

**Action/Decision**

**015.01** TESC approval the suspension of the Trinity Elective "*Cancer: The Patient Journey*" for a period of one year. This suspension will take effect from the 2024/25 academic year.

**TESC/23-24/016 XX Proposal to allow students from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences take Trinity Electives**

A memorandum from the Head of School and Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning for Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January was circulated to members. This memo requested that TESC consider and recommend for approval that students in their Senior Freshman year enrolled on the M. Pharm (Integrated) programme be able to take 1 Trinity Elective in semester 1. Taking a Trinity Elective would be compulsory. Approximately 70-80 students will be taking a Trinity Elective from this programme.

TESC members noted that there is sufficient capacity in Trinity Electives to enable the addition of 80 extra students.

**Action/Decision**

**016.01** TESC approved the proposal to allow students enrolled on the M. Pharm (Integrated) programme take Trinity Electives commencing from the 2024/25 academic year.

**TESC/23-24/017 Trinity Electives 2024/2025**

A memorandum outlining Trinity Elective module information for 2024/25 was circulated. The ADUSE highlighted that nine Trinity Electives would not run in 2024/25 for a variety of reasons and that three Trinity Electives which were suspended in 2023/24 would come back ("*Displacement: Exploring the human experience of forced migration on stream*" delivered twice per year and "*Social Innovation: Tools for Social Change*". The ADUSE reported that currently there is predicted to be 4548 student places for 2024/25, with a good balance across semesters. Capacity may increase if other proposals are approved for delivery next year. The ADUSE confirmed that apart from the addition of students from the M. Pharm (Integrated) programme taking Trinity Electives that all other programme rules would roll forward from 2023/24.

**Action/Decision**

**017.01** TESC approved the module capacities on Trinity Electives for 2024/25.

**TESC/23-24/018 Membership of Trinity Electives Sub-Committee 2024/25**

The ADUSE noted that the Health Science Representative Prof Stephen Maher and the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Representative Prof Rachel Hoare had acted as representatives to their respective faculties for over 4 years. The Terms of Reference of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee states that representative can only remain in place for a 3-year period. The ADUSE thanked both Prof Maher and Prof Hoare for their contributions to the TESC. The ADUSE confirmed that he will speak with the Faculty Dean to identify and nominate a representative from the faculty of Health Sciences and the faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Action/Decision**

**017.01** ADUSE to nominate a representative to the Faculty Dean of Health Sciences and Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. These nominations to be approved by USC and Council.

**TESC/23-24/019 Any Other Business**

None

DRAFT