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

A meeting of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee was held on 09 November 2022 at 2.00 pm on Zoom.

Present:	Professor Graeme Murdock, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
	Professor Clair Gardiner
	Professor Rachel Hoare
	Professor Stephen Maher
	Ms Kelly Byrne, Academic Registry
	Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary
	Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs
Apologies:	Ms Zöe Cummins, Education Officer, Students' Union

TESC/22-23/001 **Minutes of the meeting of 08 February 2022**
The minutes of the meeting of 08 February 2022 were approved.

TESC/22-23/002 **Matters Arising**
TESC/21-22/012.01 The ADUCA confirmed that the TE proposal 'Creativity and Technology' was approved by USC and Council and will be on offer to students in Semester 2, 2022-23.

TESC/21-22/012.02 The ADUCA confirmed that the TE proposal from RIAM entitled 'Music making, the Arts and Society' was approved by USC and Council and will be on offer to students in Semester 2, 2022-23. He advised that an inter-institutional agreement was developed by the School of Education and RIAM, approved by the Executive Officers' Group on 25 October 2022 and by Council on 02 November 2022, and will be presented to Board for approval on the 16 November 2022. He stated that he intends to convene a co-ordinating committee this academic year and that representatives from NCAD will also be invited to attend.

TESC/21-22/012.05 The ADUCA confirmed that the TE proposal 'Life and Death in Data' was approved by USC and Council and will be on offer to students in Semester 2, 2022-23.

TESC/21-22/012.01 The ADUCA confirmed that the TE proposal 'Systems – the Science of Everything' was approved by USC and Council and will be on offer to students in Semester 2, 2022-23.

TESC/22-23/003 **Trinity Electives Enrolment 2022/23**
i. **Enrolment Data**
The ADUCA brought the meeting through data on TE enrolments for 2022/23, stating that TE modules are currently running at 76% (1772) capacity in Semester 1. Currently capacity is at 68% (1676) for Semester 2, however, visiting students are yet to enrol. The ADUCA stated that as Schools initially commit to running TEs for four years, the future viability of TE modules should be considered to ensure sufficient capacity is available. The committee will work on the assumption that modules will continue to be made available unless informed otherwise by module co-ordinators. In response to a query, the ADUCA agreed it would be useful if the Trinity Elective capacity report could include data on when TEs were first delivered so that viability can be monitored.

ii. **Late Enrolments**

The ADUCA spoke on the topic of late enrolments, stating that the second round of Online Module Enrolment closed on 18 September 2022, however 263 students registered for Trinity Electives between 18 September and 25 October 2022. It was highlighted that late enrolment presents difficulties for module co-ordinators and students alike and should be avoided where possible. Ms Byrne stated that several factors contributed to late enrolments, including a later than normal CAO deadline, complex student cases, and Schools' action on late course transfers. She stated that Academic Registry received a significant number of queries on this and queried if a deadline should be introduced. The ADUCA was concerned that due to complex student cases it would not be possible to implement a universal deadline.

A member asked if module co-ordinators could receive an alert to inform them when a student enrols late and if the student list could also include the student enrolment date. Ms Byrne stated that she will look into this.

iii. **OME for Trinity Electives**

The ADUCA advised the meeting that a discussion took place at the 8 November 2022 USC on implementing changes to the Online Module Enrolment (OME) processes. The proposed changes have implications for the allocation process for Trinity Electives, which currently takes place prior to round 1 and utilizes an algorithm to ensure a balance of students from different faculties in modules and gives preference to JS students, for whom taking a Trinity Elective is compulsory, over SF students. The ADUCA stated that this algorithm was designed to ensure TEs adhere to Council approved principles, namely the need to ensure meaningful engagement of students from multiple disciplines. He highlighted that the algorithm was successful with ensuring students were allocated with one of their top three stated preferences. However, the ADUCA pointed out that the new proposed online enrolment processes would reduce the number of late enrolments in TEs.

The ADUCA explained that TESC has been tasked with considering if they would agree to remove the algorithm, and instead students would partake in a 'first-come, first-served' process. Students returning from Study Abroad would also participate in this round. However, visiting students would choose from remaining available TEs in September.

In the discussion that followed, Ms Byrne confirmed that students who do not engage in OME in round 1 are then prompted to select in Round 2 in September, and this practice will continue. The ADUCA stated that it is important that round 1 of OME takes place as early as possible to ensure the process runs smoothly.

It was highlighted that improving communication with students is vital, so they have the utmost clarity on the enrolment process, particularly those from STEM programmes. Kelly Byrne confirmed that there has been a focus on this over the last four years, with continuous refining of targeted communication and a large communication campaign is planned if these changes are implemented.

A member pointed out that it is imperative that data on preference is monitored after one year to ensure Council principles are being adhered to. It was suggested that a question could be included on this in the evaluation survey administered by the Quality Office.

Action/Decision

003.1 The Secretary to collate information on when Trinity Electives modules were approved for delivery.

003.2 Ms Byrne to explore options on how module co-ordinators can be updated on late enrolments to TEs and if the Trinity Electives capacity report can include the year the TE was first delivered.

003.3 The committee agreed to the removal of the algorithm for allocating TE to students, subject to monitoring of data to ensure Council approved principles for TEs are adhered to in the new process.

TESC/22-23/004   Trinity Elective Proposals

i.   Defence from the Dark Arts: Science and other tools for critical thinking
A TE proposal developed by Dr Carlos Rocha, School of Natural Sciences was circulated for consideration. During the discussion the following points were made:

- Members commended the proposal writer for an excellent and well thought out proposal, which has huge potential for teaching transferable skills to students.
- If feasible to do so, the module could run in both semesters to deliver to a wider group of students.
- It was pointed out that there are some potential overlaps between this proposal and the TE 'Vaccines: Friend or Foe' and that will be drawn to the attention of Dr Rocha.
- Some minor amendments to the wording of the Learning Outcomes were suggested.
- As the proposal was written to such a high standard, it was suggested that this proposal be used an exemplar for future proposal writers.

ii.   Identities and Ecologies of Latin America and the Caribbean
A TE proposal developed by Dr Yairen Jerez Columbié, School of School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies was circulated. This proposal had been presented to the committee last year and has been amended based on feedback and an accompanying memorandum outlining the amendments.

Members had the following feedback during the discussion:

- Members recognised the considerable work that has been done since the last submission and the proposal conveys the expertise of the proposers in this field.
- Trinity Electives should ensure meaningful engagement of students from multiple disciplines with the content at the appropriate intellectual level. Concerns were expressed as to how accessible the module will be to students, and it was suggested that concepts could be explained and supported by examples to ensure the module is attractive to students from a range of disciplines
- The minimum capacity number is quite low, it was suggested that this should be raised to at least 20.
- Students who have no experience of reflective writing may need guidance, and consideration should be given to how students can be supported with the reflection process. A member offered to provide the proposal writer with a resource they utilize in their module.

Action/Decision
004.1 The Assistant Academic Secretary to provide the secretary with minor amendments recommended to the learning outcomes for the proposal 'Defence from the Dark Arts: Science and other tools for critical thinking'.
004.2 The TE module proposal 'Defence from the Dark Arts: Science and other tools for critical thinking' was recommended to USC, subject to minor amendments.

004.3 Members were asked to provide further feedback on the TE proposal 'Identities and Ecologies of Latin America and the Caribbean' on the word version saved in the SharePoint folder

004.4 The ADUCA to meet with the proposal writers of the TE proposal 'Identities and Ecologies of Latin America and the Caribbean' to convey the feedback from the committee.

TESC/22-23/005   Trinity Elective Draft Annual Report 2021/22

A draft of the 2021/22 Annual Report was circulated, which outlined the list of TEs offered in 2021/22, overall capacities broken down by semester and enrolments in TEs, findings from the TE student survey and the results' report.

The ADUCA highlighted that there are some variations in average marks across TEs and stated that module co-ordinators should be made aware of the range of marks awarded. Members highlighted the importance of monitoring assessment outcomes, and it was suggested that grading that falls outside the standard deviation is flagged to the relevant module co-ordinators.

The ADUCA drew attention to the lack of an administrative home for Trinity Electives to co-ordinate operational activities which can lead to gaps in the administrative and operational oversight of Trinity Electives. The Assistant Academic Secretary reported that there are occasions in which operational activities, responsibility for which was not assigned to a particular area, has been carried out by Academic Affairs. The ADUCA highlighted the need for further discussion on this issue.

TESC/22-23/006   Student Evaluation

i.   Student Evaluations - Summary Reports 2021/22
The ADUCA stated that while he was generally encouraged by student evaluations, the participation rate was quite low. A member stated that module co-ordinators conduct their own surveys and queried if a centralised survey for TEs is necessary. The ADUCA confirmed that the Quality Office are required to conduct this.

The Assistant Academic Secretary drew attention to section 3.3 in the Semester 2 survey, as the results suggest that students have raised issues on timely communication on assessment submission deadlines and that this was raised at a recent meeting led by the Senior Lecturer to discuss undergraduate regulations.

ii.   Survey Template review
The ADUCA advised that the Quality Officer has requested feedback on the survey instrument and invited suggestions from members. He proposed to remove question 3 which deals with promotion of TEs, and to add a question asking if students were allocated a TE in their top two preferences.

Action/Decision
005.1 The ADUCA to relay the suggested changes to the student survey to the Quality Officer.

TESC/22-23/007   Trinity Elective policies: no change of mind & no ring-fencing of quota

The ADUCA advised that these policies are reviewed on an annual basis and invited committee members to consider if any changes are to be made. Members expressed support for removing the 'no change of mind' policy. It was pointed out that the number of requests to change TE modules are small and this policy can create confusion as students are able to amend other optional modules. Regarding no ring-fencing of quota, members agreed that this should remain in place to ensure Trinity students, particularly those for whom TEs are compulsory, are prioritised in selecting a TE. Visiting students can instead take optional modules on offer in their School if they do not get allocated a TE.

Action/Decision

007.01: Members agreed to continue to implement the policy on a no ring-fencing of quota.

007.02: Members agreed to remove the no change of mind policy, with a strict deadline applied beyond which changing modules will not be possible.

TESC/22-23/008   Assessment of Trinity Electives

i.   Re-assessment component
The ADUCA spoke to the item, stating the importance of ensuring that all module co-ordinators have prepared a suitable form of re-assessment for their TE. It was agreed module co-ordinators will be asked to confirm and describe the module re-assessment component when information on module requirements for 2023/24 is being collected in December/January.

ii.   Accommodation of OBA students
The ADUCA explained that student cases occur whereby students will request to take TEs while Off Books with Assessment (OBA) and suggested that module co-ordinators are alerted to the regulations on OBA students.

Action/Decision

008.01: The Secretary to amend the MS Form sent out to all module co-ordinators annually to include a question on re-assessment components and to highlight regulations around OBA students.

TESC/22-23/009   Any Other Business

i.   The ADUCA queried if an event for module co-ordinators should be held this year and it was suggested that module co-ordinators are asked to express an interest in attending. Alternatively, new module co-ordinators could be paired with existing module co-ordinators so that they can discuss any issues that arise.