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

A meeting of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee was held on 07 February 2023 at 2.00 pm in the Arts Building Conference Room.

Present: Professor Graeme Murdock, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Clair Gardiner
Professor Stephen Maher
Ms Kelly Byrne, Academic Registry
Ms Zöe Cummins, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary: Academic Affairs
Dr Pauline Rooney, Director of Academic Practice
Mr Shane Coultry, Academic Registry
Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs

Apologies: Professor Rachel Hoare

TESC/22-23/010   Minutes of the meeting of 09 November 2022
The minutes of the meeting of 09 November 2022 were approved.

TESC/22-23/011   Matters Arising
TESC/22-23/003.1 Ms Kelly Byrne confirmed that Academic Registry (AR) are exploring the best method of providing alerts to module co-ordinators on late student enrolments. She stated that wider discussions are ongoing regarding a deadline for change of mind for the next academic year. The ADUCA reiterated that Trinity Electives require a deadline no later than the end of the first week of teaching, at the very latest.

TESC/22-23/003.2 The ADUCA confirmed that the inter-institutional agreement developed by the School of Education and RIAM was approved by Board in November 2022. He stated that a co-ordinating committee met in January 2023 to discuss operational issues, such as enrolment of RIAM students in Trinity Electives for 2023/23. Ms Kelly Byrne confirmed that she will follow up with the School of Education on this.

TESC/22-23/004 The ADUCA confirmed that the TE proposal 'Defence from the Dark Arts: Science and other tools for critical thinking' was approved by USC and Council and will be on offer to students in Semester 1, 2023-24.

TESC/22-23/005 The ADUCA confirmed that the Annual Report was noted by USC and stated that a query was raised on the reported student workload, which was quite low in some instances. A member pointed out that perception may not reflect the reality, and that there is variation within modules. It was noted that the TESC will continue to closely consider the student workload hours when reviewing course proposals and will continue to review student perception of workload through the Quality office survey.

The ADUCA noted that the new allocation process may impact on the interdisciplinary mix of students and that the Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that this needs to be monitored to ensure students continue to be exposed to an interdisciplinary context for learning, and that students can continue to access their preferred choices of modules.

TESC/22-23/008 The ADUCA stated that most module co-ordinators have confirmed that a re-assessment component is available for their TE, and that there will be follow up with those who have yet to respond.

TESC/22-23/012   Trinity Electives Proposals

    i.   Ages of Empire
A TE proposal developed by Dr Robert Armstrong and Dr Graeme Murdock, School of History and Humanities was circulated for consideration. During the discussion the following points were made:
- It is a well written proposal and has the potential to attract students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds.
- Clearly communicate to students that the formative assessments are building towards the summative assessments that are assigned a mark, as this may motivate students to complete the task.
- The peer review exercise is an excellent idea, but perhaps it would be useful to consider allocating a grade.
- Ensure clear criteria on what constitutes a contribution to the group presentation is clearly communicated.

    ii.   Inequality in the 21st Century
A proposal developed by Dr Yekaterina Chzhen and Professor Richard Layte, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy was circulated for consideration. During the discussion the following feedback was provided:
- More information on the reassessment of the group assessment component to be added, and the task should be proportional to an individual student workload.
- The LO5 could be altered to state 'using visual or other methods' as this would ensure it is assessable through the research essay assessment component.

    iii.   Identities and Ecologies of Latin America and the Caribbean: Past, Present and Future
An amended proposal developed by Dr Yairen Jerez Columbié, School of School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, was re-submitted. During the discussion the following feedback was offered:

- The module content is clearer and well presented.
- The mapping of learning outcomes to assessments to be re-examined to ensure all learning outcomes are examined in the appropriate assessment.
- Caution is needed to ensure that students are only re-assessed in assessment components that they have failed.
- The number of student workload hours assigned to the groupwork is low, and to consider increasing this.

Members also pointed to the development of sophisticated AI tools and the challenges they pose in ensuring academic integrity. The Head of Academic Practice drew attention to a resource developed that outlines suggestions on responding to emerging challenges. It was suggested that all module co-coordinators are reminded to follow good practice in combatting plagiarism.

Action/Decision
012.1 The TE module proposal 'Ages of Empire' was recommended to USC, subject to minor amendments.
012.2 The TE module proposal 'Inequality in the 21st Century' was recommended to USC, subject to minor amendments.
012.4 The TE module proposal 'Identities and Ecologies of Latin America and the Caribbean: Past, Present and Future' was recommended to USC, subject to minor amendments.

012.5 The Secretary to circulate the resource on AI Text Generators and Academic Integrity developed by Academic Practice to all module co-ordinators.

TESC/22-23/013   Programme Rule Amendments 2023/24

A memorandum outlining the amendments for programme requirements for 2023/24 was circulated. The ADUCA spoke to this, noting that all other programme rules will roll forward from 2022/23. He reported that the School of Pharmacy have indicated they are intending to make Trinity Electives available to Pharmacy students and may submit a request to the TESC in the next academic year. He stated that there are approximately 80 students enrolled on the programme each academic year and that it would result in a marginal increase in the demand for Trinity Electives.

TESC/22-23/014   Trinity Electives 2023/24

A memorandum outlining TE module information for 2023/24 was circulated. The ADUCA highlighted that eight TEs will not run in 2023/24 for a variety of reasons. He reported that currently there is predicted to be 4438 student places for 2023/24, with a good balance across semesters, however that number is expected to increase due to new TEs being approved for delivery next year.

TESC/22-23/015   Membership of Trinity Electives Sub-Committee 2023/24

A memorandum from the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture was circulated, with the Council approved membership of the committee that was approved in February 2020.

The ADUCA spoke to this item, highlighting the decision taken in 2021/22 by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies to rotate the role of Chair between the ADUCA and ADUSE. He pointed out that a term has not been defined for the Faculty representatives, and asked the meeting to consider if one should be implemented. Members decided to implement a three-year term for Faculty representatives, that would be replaced on a rotating basis to ensure continuity of knowledge. It was also suggested to add 'or nominee' to the Academic Secretary or Academic Assistant Secretary. The ADUCA thanked members their contributions, and stated that he will follow up with Faculty representatives individually to discuss their committee membership.

Action/Decision

015.1 Membership of TESC to be amended to add a membership term of a three year period for the Faculty representatives and to add 'or nominee' to the Academic Secretary or Academic Assistant Secretary member.

TESC/22-23/016 Survey Results of Semester 1

The Trinity Elective Modules Summary Report for Semester 1, 2022/23, compiled by the Quality Office, was circulated.

The ADUCA stated that module co-coordinators are each given an individual report, with a summary report supplied to the TESC. He pointed to the new question that asked students if they were able to access a module in their top two preferences, stating that this can be used to measure if there are any changes to preference data after the new allocation system is implemented.

The ADUCA highlighted student perception of the accuracy of information on TE modules on the Trinity website and noted that module co-ordinators have a responsibility for the information displayed. He asked the TESC to consider if the summary report should be made available to all co-ordinators to provide them with a comparison tool and the committee agreed to this proposal.

The discussion turned to student feedback, with members stressing the importance of expanding the student understanding on what feedback entails. This is particularly pertinent to TEs as innovative and non-traditional assessment components are often utilized. Members agreed to highlight to module co-ordinators the importance of communicating to students regarding when and how feedback will be made available to students.

Action/Decision
016.01: The Summary Report is to be supplied to all module co-ordinators.
016.02: The Chair and the Secretary to issue a communication to module co-ordinators on the importance of clear communication on how feedback is delivered in the TE.

TESC/22-23/017   Trinity Electives Activities
A document which sets out the tasks, and the responsible area/unit, related to Trinity Electives was circulated. The ADUCA reported to the meeting that AR and Academic Affairs recently reviewed the document and that additional tasks were added. He stated that this document provides a comprehensive overview of all tasks, and the area designated responsibility, to be carried out to ensure the successful delivery of TEs. He further stated that this is a working document to be reviewed periodically.

Action/Decision
017.01: The TESC approved the Trinity Electives Annual Activities.

TESC/22-23/018   Change of Mind Process 2023/24
The ADUCA referred to the decision in the last TESC meeting to allow students change of mind and confirmed that Academic Registry are currently reviewing how this can be implemented, in consultation with Schools. The agreed process will then be communicated to students by Academic Registry. He emphasised the importance of accurate information to be displayed on the website so that students can make informed decisions when choosing their Trinity Elective.

TESC/22-23/019   Suspension and Cessation of Trinity Electives
A memorandum from the ADUCA, dated 30 January 2023, was circulated. The ADUCA explained that principles for a cessation policy for Trinity Electives were developed by the former Chair of the TESC, and that this stated that the Programme Suspension and Cessation Policy is to be amended to include reference to Trinity Electives, however this policy has not yet been reviewed. He proposed that, in the interim, module co-ordinators are to submit a written request to the TESC by way of a designated form. It is hoped this process will safeguard the TE offerings. He stated that module co-ordinators will be informed of this change and that the forms will be made available on the Academic Affairs website.

Action/Decision
019.01: The TESC approved the proposed interim measure in regard to the suspension and cessation of Trinity Electives.
019.2 The Secretary will inform module co-ordinators of the introduction of the forms and will make them available on the website.

TESC/22-23/020   Any Other Business
None