



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 30 November 2022 at 11.15am in the Trinity Board Room, Trinity Business School.**

*Present* Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Vice-President for Global Engagement, Senior Tutor, 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 D. Romelli, Professor G. Watson, Professor B. Fitzgerald, Professor J. Wyse, Professor L. O'Driscoll, Professor B. Daly, Professor K. Neenan, Dr. O. Gobbo, Mr. M. McAndrew, Ms Z. Cummins, Mr E. Gilroy, Mr S. Lysaght.

*Apologies* Registrar, Dean of Students, Professor A. Bray, Professor J. Coleman, Professor AM. Malone, Ms. D. Alexander, Ms. E. Sweeney.

*In attendance* Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Assistant Academic Secretary, Governance Manager.

*Observers* Mr. O. Horgan.

**SECTION A.1: Policy Matters**

The Provost welcomed everyone to Council and requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. The Secretary to the College noted that Professor P. O'Grady had declared a conflict of interest for item A.8 'Postgraduate Course Proposal for M.Sc. in Applied Social Data Science' as he is the Head of School of Social Science and Philosophy, the School proposing the programme. It was agreed that Professor O'Grady would leave the meeting for discussion of the item.

**CL/22-23/063 Declarations by new Members and Observers**

The new member of Council made the required statutory declaration.

**CL/22-23/064 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 2 November 2022 were approved and signed.

**CL/22-23/065 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided an update to Council on minute CL/22-23/035 'Quality Review of the LIR Academy Programmes'. She advised Council that it is necessary to establish an approach to the development of an implementation plan that considers corporate governance, academic matters, and student learning. A meeting with the

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Director of LIR is being scheduled to agree the approach and it is envisaged that a working group will be established to support the process.

Referring to minute CL/22-23/033 (iv) 'Trinity Governance', the Secretary to the College informed Council that a new Supplemental Charter has formally become part of Trinity's Charters and was recognised by the Government on 15 November 2022. He explained that the composition of Trinity's Board will be changed to ensure it is in line with the new Supplemental Charter. In line with the provisions of the Higher Education Authority Act, 2022, Trinity will make the necessary arrangements over the next 12 months to ensure compliance with the legislation.

**CL/22-23/066 Admissions Strategy – 'What should our student body look like and how do we make it happen?'**

The Provost advised that the item is being brought to Council for a high-level discussion prior to the development of a position paper on an admissions strategy, and that the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer is leading out on this work. The Provost stressed that this is the beginning of the journey in the development of an admissions strategy for the University and emphasised that nothing has been predetermined. She encouraged an open discussion that allowed for all ideas to be aired, considered, and, where feasible, advanced.

Speaking to the item the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reiterated the Provost's sentiments explaining that the purpose of the presentation is to generate discussion, and that decisions had not been made on the direction College will be taking in relation to an admissions strategy. Referring to the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025 targets, she highlighted that these included, an increase in student numbers to 21,500, with 30% of the student population coming from outside of Ireland, and postgraduate students comprising 32% of the total student body. An admissions strategy will present a clear articulation of the student body, be responsive to student needs, take cognisance of College's capacity on the availability of space, and be underpinned by budgeting models. Existing budgeting models, she explained, are predicated on a growth in student numbers, and as College is close to reaching maximum capacity it cannot continue to grow in this way. She drew Council's attention to the differences in the student profile of comparator research-intensive universities and that of Trinity, noting that the Trinity student body is predominantly an undergraduate one, while other research-intensive universities of similar size, such as Oxford and Cambridge, have a more even spread of undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer outlined the steps to be taken in Trinity's journey in developing an admissions strategy, commencing with the articulation of a vision, undertaking College-wide consultation, identifying and addressing logistical issues that may arise, implementation of the Strategy, and achieving success. She highlighted the need for consideration of 'what is a student', noting that to-date College has had a binary vision, with a focus on undergraduate and postgraduate, and part-time and full-time. 'What is a student?', the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer remarked, will involve consideration of several questions regarding the student body including:

- 'How did they get here?'
- 'Why are they here?'
- 'Where have they come from?'
- 'How will they learn?'
- 'What is the desired rate of study?'
- 'What is the quantum of study they want to complete?'

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer underlined the need for a reconsideration of existing pedagogical approaches to address some of the changes that may be brought about by

College's vision on 'What should our student body look like?', such as, a move from an individual focus to a collaborative problem-solving approach, and a move away from one learning space to many across multiple sites.

Concluding, she highlighted additional information provided by FSD on student number modelling sample scenarios, and presented questions for Council discussion as follows:

- Student composition – what is our ambition and what does it look like?
- How much autonomy should Schools have?
- What is the mode of delivery?
- Where does teaching take place?
- What type of learners do we want to attract?
- What is a teaching day?
- Is a rethink required re types of programmes?

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noting that the composition of the student body is a sensitive one, and that there is a need for open discussion and dialogue on this. She noted constraints that had not been referred to in the presentation, including commitments College had made previously on initiatives such as E3. She invited Council to focus on the vision at this stage and the direction College would like to take, noting that logistical issues will need to be considered at a later stage. She invited questions and comments.

Members welcomed and acknowledged the importance of a conversation on the student body and related admissions strategy, noting the impact of the current cost of living and accommodation challenges on students with some having to work and, in some cases, miss out on lectures; and the loss of potential students due to financial hardship. Student representatives highlighted the need for College to consider existing policy and regulations relating to mandatory attendance and access to online lectures due to some students struggling to attend lectures. The Students' Union (SU) Education Officer highlighted the benefits that flexible learning models such as part-time and online modes of delivery would bring, and the need for consistent programme requirements and practices across Schools on referencing conventions and modes of assessment, which especially impact students on multi-faculty programmes. In response to a query from the Provost on the availability of data relating to students not attending lectures due to work and other commitments, the SU Education Officer advised that while data is not available at present the SU intends to gather data on this matter and share it with College. The SU AHSS student representative highlighted discussions that had taken place with students across the Faculty on the accessibility of Trinity to Leaving Certificate students, noting that while Trinity access routes are available these are limited in reach. He referred to a recent Fine Gael motion on the availability of blended learning across all universities and highlighted the need for Government to better fund third-level education to ensure greater equity of access.

The Academic Secretary noting that the percentage of postgraduate research students in the LERU universities was low in comparison to the number of taught postgraduate students and queried what defined research-intensive. The Provost responded that there was a need to define 'research-intensive' and that this should be done in the context of agreeing an admissions strategy.

The Dean of STEM, noting the value of the conversation, drew attention to the duration of undergraduate (primarily three years) and postgraduate research programmes (primarily three to three and a half years) across many UK Universities and suggested that the data presented on research-intensive universities take consideration of this and the date of first registrations.

Other members cited constraints that exist in some Schools especially in the health sciences that present challenges to increasing student numbers, such as, the availability of laboratory space, and regulatory requirements that may preclude online or remote learning provision.

Referring to remote and online provision, the Provost emphasised the importance of an on-campus presence for students. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer concurred, highlighting the necessity of ensuring that the campus experience is a rich one for students.

The Senior Tutor left the meeting.

The Academic Secretary highlighted the need for demographics to inform future numbers and learner relevant offerings, such as continuing professional development and micro-credential provision. Responding to a question from the Academic Secretary on the meaning of School autonomy in the context of admissions, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer explained that a one-size fits-all approach on programme design and delivery is not possible, due to some Schools and disciplines having to meet statutory and professional body requirements which impact on approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment.

The SU Education Officer noting that Trinity has almost reached full capacity, drew attention to the student services' caseload and the impact that greater student numbers have on the capacity of such services to support students. The Senate representative highlighted additional questions that require consideration, such as, 'where do students learn', as interactions with professional services and co-curriculum experiences that are part of the student's educational journey.

Responding to a comment from the SU STEM student representative on graduate programmes offered by industry, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted the importance of engaging with industry and employers in relation to educational offerings.

The Provost invited members to bring the conversation on 'what is a student' back to their Faculties and Schools, and to consider practices in other institutions that Trinity may wish to consider, such as, extending the length of the day, and partnering with other institutions in relation to online provision. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer emphasised the importance of considering all options, and she highlighted that the consultation process will seek input from Schools, staff, and students, and that a position paper will be brought to Council for consideration and discussion in due course.

**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/066.1:** Council noted the Admissions Strategy – 'What should our student body look like, and how do we make it happen?' and approved the proposed consultation with the College community.

**Action:**

**CL/22-23/066.2:** The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to make the PowerPoint slides available to members for sharing in their Schools.

Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer joined the meeting.

**CL/22-23/067 Institutional Quality Review Report**

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The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer in introducing the item explained that the International Review Team comprising six members, including industry and learner representatives, were selected by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). She highlighted that the Review Team had highly commended all Trinity staff and had made 16 commendations overall in its report. The top-five commendations she advised were as follows:

1. Trinity's emphasis on dialogue, consultation and engaged discussion in the institution's participatory systems of governance.
2. Trinity Education Project (TEP).

3. Successfully executing a pivot to fully online programme delivery in highly adverse circumstances.
4. Significant grant funding.
5. Trinity's innovative efforts in aligning the philanthropic campaign 'Inspiring Generations', to the advancement of research-related projects (TSJCI, E3RI, redevelopment of the Old Library).

Referring to the fifteen recommendations presented in the report, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew attention to five recommendations, namely:

1. Governance of Quality Assurance
  - Principal and Compliance Committees.
  - Refocus Board and Council Agendas.
2. Management of Quality Assurance
  - Formalise Communication, enhance monitoring of implementation of academic policies.
3. Develop and implement employment, tenure, and promotion criteria for academic staff at all levels.
  - Implement and Communicate career development framework and annual appraisals for all staff members at all levels.
4. Develop an overarching strategy for Learning and Development.
5. Provide all cohorts and subgroups of students with timely, clear, and consistent information about key policies.

Speaking to the institutional response to the report, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that this acknowledged the recommendations in the review report, many of which reflect themes and issues raised in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report. The response commits Trinity to engaging in a consultative process to respond to the recommendations in a comprehensive implementation plan. She identified two recurring themes across recommendations (i) Governance, and (ii) Consistent implementation of academic policies, and related to these, the communication of decisions and policies. She highlighted that the Review Team's perspective on Board does not take account of or fully reflect an understanding of the legal landscape at the time of the Institutional Review (*cf* HEA Act 2022).

Concluding with an overview of timelines, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that QQI had published the Review Report and a Trinity Quality Profile on the QQI website on 23 November 2022 and that a media release including a statement from the Provost had accompanied the publication of the Report. She indicated that Trinity is required to submit an Implementation Plan that responds to the review report recommendations within three months of publication, and that this will be published on the QQI website. Progress on the Implementation Plan will be reported through the Quality Committee to Board.

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

The Dean of AHSS offered her congratulations to all involved in the Institutional Review noting the very positive report. She drew attention to a tension in the recommendations and commendations relating to dialogue, consultation, and participatory systems of governance, and the recommendation for changes to representative governance. She noted that some of the commentary in the report on academic promotions does not reflect the fact that there is a process in place for academic staff. Commenting on the points raised, the Academic Secretary advised that Trinity had corresponded with QQI on the tensions and inaccuracies in the report, however, not all the corrections cited were accepted. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer added that while a comprehensive self-evaluation report and supplementary material were provided to the review panel, the review report appears to be more reflective of the information reported during panel discussions.

The Provost noting the tensions and inconsistencies that exist in the report advised that Trinity will be in a position to address some of the recommendations, such as, those relating to Board and Council and their principal committees, however, other recommendations will require considerable resources to implement. The Academic Secretary drew attention to the overall positive review and the finding that Trinity is compliant with the legislation and policy requirements.

Responding to a comment from a member on the proliferation of College policies and the need to make them more visible and accessible, the Provost informed Council that the Secretary's Office will be progressing work on developing an online policy hub. This will, she explained, make policies more accessible. The Secretary to the College stated that while the Secretary's Office can progress work on ensuring that policies are updated and made more visible and accessible, it is not in a position to oversee the implementation of policies.

Responding to a comment from the SU Education Officer on the accessibility and transparency of policies, the Provost acknowledged that the style utilised for the presentation of regulations in the College Calendar needs review to ensure greater accessibility. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that an undergraduate regulations working group, which will include representation from students, will be tasked with reviewing and recommending changes to Calendar Part II regulations. He undertook to engage with Students' Union representatives following the meeting.

The Provost extended her thanks to the Academic Secretary, the Quality Officer, the Quality Office staff, and all others involved in the Institutional Review.

**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/067.1:** Council noted the Institutional Quality Review Report 2022.

Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer left the meeting.

**CL/22-23/068 Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer's Report**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided a brief report to Council on three areas as follows:

- (i) Online Module Enrolment (OME) – a single round of OME will take place either in July or August which will suit the majority of students.
- (ii) HEA Performance Compact Report – Trinity is currently providing input on the types of questions to be addressed by a Performance Compact Report, and this work is progressing at present.
- (iii) Human Capital Initiative (HCI) – positive news has been received from the HEA on the establishment of an Enterprise Ecosystem. Trinity has been asked to re-write the original application for funding to accommodate its recent proposal on establishing an Enterprise Eco-system and this will be submitted to the HEA in mid-December 2022.

**CL/22-23/069 Provost's Report**

The Provost extended her congratulations to Trinity recipients of awards, including the Trinity researchers, Dr. Lara McManus, Dr. Mark Mitchison, and Dr. Matthew Walters, awarded the Royal Society University Research Fellowships; Dr. Peter Crooks and the Virtual Treasury (Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland) team who were awarded the prestigious Ellis Prize; SFI Award Recipients, Professor Orla Hardiman, SFI Researcher of the Year, Dr. Claire Gillian, SFI Early-Career Researcher of the Year, and Michael Morris, SFI Award for Best International Engagement; and the Royal Irish Academy Gold Medal recipients, Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, and Professor Jonathan Coleman.

**CL/22-23/070 Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no any other urgent business.

**SECTION A.2: Policy Matters which have already been considered by Committees**

**CL/22-23/071 Postgraduate Course Proposal for M.Sc. in Applied Social Data Science – direct entry full-time course and part-time Masters Top-up course**

**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/071.1:** Council approved the proposal for 1) direct entry to the one-year full-time Masters in Applied Social Data Science (90 ECTS), 2) a one-year part-time Masters Top-up in year 2 (30 ECTS) as a follow on from the existing one-year full-time Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Data Science (60 ECTS) (PDSP-ASDS-1F) at NFQ level 9 offered by the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, with a first intake in September 2023, and 3) the discontinuation of the 'HCI P1 Applied Social Data Science' title following the last intake of HCI funded students in 2022/23.

**CL/22-23/072 Revised Award for Excellence in Supervision of Research Students**

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**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/072.1:** Council approved the Revised Award for Excellence in Supervision of Research Students.

**CL/22-23/073 Workload Distribution for External Examiners (for tax purposes)**

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**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/073.1:** Council approved the Workload Distribution for External Examiners (for tax purposes).

**SECTION B – Reports from Committees**

**CL/22-23/074 Graduate Studies Committee**

The draft minutes of 10 November 2022 were noted and approved.

**CL/22-23/075 Research Committee**

The minutes of 11 October 2022 were noted and approved

**CL/22-23/076 Student Life Committee**

The draft minutes of 4 October were noted and approved.

**CL/22-23/077 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/077.1:** Council approved the draft minutes of 8 November 2022 and appendix, Change of Subject Title: English Studies (Trinity Joint Honours and New Minor Pathways).

**SECTION C**

**CL/22-23/078 Higher Degrees – Reports of Examiners**

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees (Higher Degrees List) dated 30 November 2022.

**(i) Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

**Ph.D.** Halila Bayramova; Mario De Lucia; Mark Doherty; Margaret Laniak Herdeck; Laura Katharine Finnegan; Erika Guimaraes Pereira Fonseca; Ailbhe Gill; Nicole Marie Hanley; Ajay Kumar Jha; Johan Robin Karlsson; Megan Kennedy; Cliona Mary Lorton; Megan Ní Bhroin; Antons Pribitoks; Jamie Rohu; Harry Charles Sample; Martin Sutton.

**M.Sc.** Molly Eve Boyne.

**(ii) Correction: An incorrect thesis title was included on the list approved by the Higher Degrees Sub-Committee, at its meeting in March 2010. The correct title was provided for the following graduate:**

Audrey Whitty

**CL/22-23/079 Revised Policy Review Sheet**

The Council noted the circulated memorandum from the Secretary to the College and the Project Officer, Secretary’s Office, dated 9 October 2022.

**SECTION D**

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

Signed .....

Date .....