



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 17 January 2024 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 Students, Senior Tutor, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Dean of Health Sciences, Vice-President for Global Engagement, Registrar, Professor A. Gibson, Professor D. Romelli, Professor L. O'Driscoll, Professor B. Daly, Professor J. Coleman, Professor B. Fitzgerald, Ms. D. Alexander, Mr. M. McAndrew, Ms. C. Arnold, Mr. R. Saulnier, Professor Lorna Carson, Professor Graeme Watson, Mr. Conor Reddy, Mr. E. Gilroy.

*Apologies* Dean of Research, Professor P. O'Grady, Mr S. Sardina, Professor K. Neenan, Professor A.M. Malone, Professor J. Wyse, Ms. R. Emakpor, Dr O. Gobo, Mr. A. Burgess.

*In attendance* Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College/Director of Governance, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer, Academic Affairs Education Policy Developer.

**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/Director of Governance noted that the Senior Tutor had declared an interest in item C19 as supervisor of a PhD candidate and that, following discussion with him, it had been agreed that he would remain in the meeting. The Provost welcomed the Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer, Dr. Michelle Olmstead, to her first meeting of Council, noting that Dr. Olmstead is 'in attendance'.

**CL/23-24/071 Declarations by new Members**

A new member of Council made the required statutory declaration.

**CL/23-24/072 Minutes**

In relation to CL/23-24/045, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that the wording of the minute should be corrected as follows: *The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies informed Council that he is jointly chairing a working group with the Dean of Graduate Studies to identify the academic requirements, the user needs and the technical requirements of any future VLE for Trinity.*

The minutes of the Council meeting of the 29 November 2023 were approved, subject to the amended wording.

**CL/23-24/073 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

In relation to CL/23-24/044, a member advised that the block on fee remissions for new staff referred to in the discussion was not School-specific but reflected the College's Fee Remission Policy, which states that staff with less than two years' continuous service are not eligible for fee remission.

Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director, Postgraduate Renewal Programme, joined the meeting.

#### **CL/23-24/074 Postgraduate Renewal Programme: Horizon 1 Final Report**

The Dean of Graduate Studies, Sponsor of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme, introduced the final report on Horizon 1 and invited the Programme Director, Ms Leona Coady, to speak to a short presentation.

Outlining the background to the item, Ms Coady reminded Council that an interim report on Horizon 1 and the proposed scope of Horizon 2 had been approved by Council in June 2023. Noting that Horizon 2 had been due to commence in September 2023, she reported that a time-lag between the approval by Council of the Horizon 1 workplan and the allocation of funding supporting that workplan necessitated an extension of the timeframe for completion of Horizon 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, resulting in an overlap with the initiation of the workplan for Horizon 2. Ms Coady outlined the five core themes of Horizon 1 – (i) Structured PhD & Doctoral Programmes, (ii) Curriculum & Triple I, (iii) Student/Staff Experience, (iv) Student Lifecycle and (v) Financial. Reporting that Horizon 1 had been supported by a team of five, she noted that funding for seven staff had been available to the project but that there had been significant challenges in recruiting two additional staff. Ms Coady summarised the key deliverables, governance structure and expenditure for Horizon 1, noting that 52% of the budget for Horizon 1 was unspent due to the failure to recruit the full complement of staff. She concluded by reporting that the unspent monies will be rolled forward to Horizon 2.

The Dean of Graduate Studies drew Council's attention to a number of Horizon 1 deliverables included on the agenda for Council approval under section A.2, namely (i) a proposal to recognise the Teaching and Learning Supports provided by PGR students, (ii) proposed guidelines to support Teaching and Learning activities provided by PGR students, (iii) a Proposed change to the timing of the completion of the confirmation process and (iv) Proposed 'Ways of Working' for the Postgraduate Renewal Programme.

In relation to Horizon 2 deliverables, the Dean reported that they have been grouped across the continuing themes of 'Structured PhD and Doctoral Programmes', 'Student and Staff Experience', 'Student Lifecycle' and 'Curriculum and Triple I', and the new theme of 'Structures and Spaces' reflecting the decision to explore bespoke structures and space for PGR and PGT students. She reported that in Horizon 1, work had been undertaken to create a stronger foundation for funding of research students and that Horizon 2 planned to build on this with the aim of ensuring equity of student stipends. Under the 'Student and Staff Experience' theme, it is planned to address conflict management and resolution in the supervision relationship and to include supervision as one of the topics covered in the academic staff induction programme. In relation to the theme of 'Curriculum and Triple I', the Dean remarked that while the EU Triple I concept had originally been intended to provide PGR students with International, Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral opportunities, it was hoped to extend these opportunities to PGT students under the planned Trinity Blueprint for Triple 1. A framework for a cyclical review of taught postgraduate programmes was also planned under this theme. Work to support business processes for the PGR student lifecycle will continue under the 'Student Lifecycle' theme and include the integration of PGR processes into SITS which until now has required manual intervention. The new theme of 'Structures and Spaces' will consider an organisational structure that is more inclusive of PGR students, who often do not feel part of the University. It will also address improved physical spaces for PGR students and the development of a Digital Information Hub as a single source of truth for PGR students.

Reflecting on the achievements of Horizon 1, the Dean commended the amount of work that had been completed in a very challenging timeframe. She noted that communication with the College community could have been more effective and that this would need to be addressed in Horizon 2. She thanked the immediate programme team and wider core group which had engaged with the College community through working groups. She also thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer for the funding support for Horizon 1 and concluded by inviting members to a celebration and exhibition in Regent House that afternoon of what had been achieved to date.

The Provost extended Council's thanks to the PG Renewal team for the work that had been achieved to date on the Programme. She remarked that the bottom-up approach to the project was working well and had resulted in more engagement and working-through of issues than might otherwise have been achieved. She drew members' attention to the ['You Said We Did'](#) page on the Graduate Studies website which she said was an excellent way of summarising what has been achieved in the various areas and recommended that the link to this page should be circulated to Council members. She concluded by saying that while a lot of work had been achieved, there was more to be done.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the PG Renewal team but also commended the work-package leaders and the many other members of the College community that worked on new processes and structures, the introduction of which had gone largely unnoticed by the College community due to the efficiency with which they had been developed and implemented.

The postgraduate student representative (Health Sciences) welcomed the report, noting that the key themes emerging from it align with key areas of concern amongst postgraduate students, for example the issue of student stipends. With regard to the new processes that had been introduced around supervision and conflict management, he requested further detail on the piloting of the student-supervisor agreement and queried the mechanism behind the pilot. The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that one volunteer from each School had been sought to implement the agreement and that focus group discussions are currently scheduled to ascertain how well the agreement is working and what changes are required. Resulting amendments to the agreement will be brought to GSC for approval and then to Council.

The PG student representative sought further updates on the issue of maternity leave pay for PGR students and on progress with the issue of fee differentials for non-EU students. He also queried whether it would be possible to have access to the ministerial guidance that had been issued by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) around payment of PGR students for the provision of Teaching and Learning supports. Responding to the queries, the Dean reported that the issue of maternity leave payment for PGR students was not delivered as part of Horizon 1 as this is a sectoral issue, not an institutional matter. With regard to writing down of the fee differential for PGR students, she reported that as of September 2023 this has been done for new entrants on a phased basis at School level. A report to Board on the financial outcome of this will be delivered in due course and the impact on student numbers will be assessed. She concluded by advising that the guidance on payment of PGR students for T&L supports had been issued to FSD and HR, and that therefore it was within their gift rather than hers to share that information.

The Provost remarked that the impact of the fee write-down on student recruitment will not be apparent in the first year due to natural fluctuations in student numbers. Referencing the National Review of State Supports for PhD Researchers, commissioned by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and published in May 2023, she suggested that this should be included on the agenda of a future meeting of Council for discussion. The discussion concluded with the Registrar commending the PG Renewal Team for the outstanding work completed as part of the programme.

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/074.1:** Council approved the Postgraduate Renewal Programme: Horizon 1 Final Report

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Ms Leona Coady, Programme Director, Postgraduate Renewal Programme, left the meeting.

#### **CL/23-24/075 Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer's Report**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted the continuing work of the PG renewal programme and preparations for the next Trinity Strategic Plan as priorities for the coming year. Referencing the implementation of new legislation arising from the HEA Act, the VP/CAO advised that alignment with the System Performance Framework 2023 – 2028 would need to be considered in tandem with the timeline for the development of Trinity's Strategic Plan. In relation to the National Access Plan, the VP/CAO reported that Trinity had submitted its annual report on access. Noting the wide variety of activity across Trinity in the access space, she stressed the need to consolidate efforts in relation to the numerous access initiatives underway, so that the true scope of activity might be curated and appreciated.

#### **CL/23-24/076 Provost's Report**

The Provost updated Council members on a number of important upcoming meetings. She reported that she would be meeting with the Head of the IUA in the coming weeks and that the funding of the third-level sector would be a topic of discussion. She noted that while the country as a whole could be described as being in a financially good position, there was no move to increase funding of the third level sector. She suggested that reports such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which show that Ireland has excellent literacy rates, can lead to the belief that the education sector as a whole is doing well. She stressed the need for universities to position themselves in the sector and to push for an approach to funding that goes beyond the one-size-fits-all model.

Other important upcoming meetings include that with the new Secretary General of the DFHERIS, Mr Colm O' Reardan, and with the Head of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). The Provost undertook to raise her concerns with the latter regarding the inordinate amount of time and resources that are dedicated to the call for funding under the SFI Research Centres programme and the relatively low levels of funding that result.

The Provost reported that Trinity had received a small amount of funding for research infrastructure (2-3million euros) from an allocation of 40 million to the sector. Noting that it is a relatively low amount, she stressed, however, the importance of pushing on all fronts to achieve small wins such as this. She advised that the funding would be managed by the Dean of Research. The VP/CAO noted that with the formation of the new Technological Universities, small allocations of funding such as this were now being dispersed amongst a larger number of institutions, and that the allocation was not proportionate to the level of research activity in these institutions.

The Provost congratulated the Chief Operating Officer and her team, and relevant members of the Library staff on the launch of the Book of Kells exhibition. She reminded Council that the income generated from commercial activities such as the Book of Kells was essential for the maintenance and running of the University.

With regard to the meeting with the Secretary General of DFHERIS, a Council member advised that the formation of the DFHERIS had been intended to cover the areas of further and higher education and research innovation but that, essentially, there appeared to be little connectivity across these areas. She also queried the level of interaction between DFHERIS and the Permanent Representation in Brussels, stressing the importance of good two-way communication. The Provost agreed that the member's points about DFHERIS were well made.

Referencing the allocation of funding for research equipment, a Council member suggested that an annual SFI call for research equipment would be useful. She reported that a previous

application for funding for research equipment had been deemed fundable by reviewers but moved to the reserve list and not funded, because it proposed that one of the items of equipment requested be reconditioned rather than buying new. The Dean of STEM queried whether the funding received was from an SFI equipment fund and the Provost clarified that it was a once-off generic sum from the HEA.

A member from Health Sciences suggested that the status of funding for extra capacity in the Dental Science undergraduate programme in the School of Dental Science announced by Minister Simon Harris (FHERIS) in 2023 should be raised with the Secretary General of DFHERIS, noting that the RCSI had begun recruiting staff to work on their extra capacity plans announced by the Minister at the same time.

#### **CL/23-24/077 Any Other Urgent Business**

The Librarian and College Archivist reported on a serious academic issue caused by a recent cyber-attack on the British Library. As a UK legal deposit library, Trinity is linked to the digital infrastructure that provides access to e-journal articles and e-books held under UK electronic legal deposit (eLD). She reported that the British Library had acted swiftly in the immediate aftermath of the attack to isolate itself, thereby preventing further damage to the five other copyright libraries by the ransomware used in the attack. A consequence of this, however, is that Trinity staff and students do not currently have access to e-journals and e-books held on UK eLD, which are normally available for use throughout Trinity's Library reading room PCs and borrowable Library laptops. The Librarian advised that the infrastructure is being reviewed and rebuilt to re-instate access, and this will take some time. In the interim, workarounds have been created by Trinity, such as trial subscription to large e-book packages and Inter-Library Loans. Students and researchers are also being directed to their Subject Librarian for assistance with sourcing specific books or articles. Ms Shenton concluded by reporting that as the ransom has not been paid, data has been put onto the dark web. The Provost thanked the Librarian and College Archivist and recommended that the Research Committee keep a watching brief on the situation.

### **SECTION A.2:**

#### **Policy Matters which have already been considered by Committees**

#### **CL/23-24/078 Postgraduate Renewal Programme**

- (i) **Horizon 1: Proposal to Recognise Teaching and Learning Supports Provided by Postgraduate Research Students.**

**Decision: CL/23-24/078.1:** Council approved the Proposal to Recognise Teaching and Learning Supports Provided by Postgraduate Research Students.

- (ii) **Horizon 1: Proposed Guidelines to Support Teaching and Learning Activities Provided by Postgraduate Research Students.**

**Decision: CL/23-24/078.2:** Council approved the Proposed Guidelines to Support Teaching and Learning Activities Provided by Postgraduate Research Students.

- (iii) **Horizon 1: Proposed Change to the timing of the Completion of the Confirmation Process.**

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that she was seeking Council approval for a proposed change to the timing of the completion of the confirmation process from 18 months to 22 months (30<sup>th</sup> June for September registrants). This would align with the timing of submission of annual progress reports, thereby reducing the level of

confusion that has previously resulted from having two different dates for these processes.

**Decision: CL/23-24/078.3:** Council approved the Proposed Change to the timing of the Completion of the Confirmation Process.

**(iv) Horizon 1: Proposed 'Ways of Working' for the Postgraduate Renewal Programme.**

**Decision: CL/23-24/078.4:** Council approved the Proposed 'Ways of Working' for the Postgraduate Renewal Programme.

**(v) Horizon 2: Trinity Research Doctorate Award 2024-25 to be Allocated to a Student of Sanctuary – proposed process and criteria for application and evaluation.**

The Dean of Graduate Studies requested Council approval for a proposed application process and evaluation criteria for a new Trinity Research Doctorate Award for a student of sanctuary for 2024-25. She reported that, if approved, a press release would be issued and a media and communication campaign to the College community initiated. She thanked the Global Engagement Office and the University of Sanctuary Team.

**Decision: CL/23-24/078.5:** Council approved the proposed process and criteria for application and evaluation of a Trinity Research Doctorate Award 2024-25, to be allocated to a Student of Sanctuary.

**(vi) Horizon 2: An Exit Award Framework for PG Taught Programmes.**

**Decision: CL/23-24/078.6:** Council approved the proposed Exit Award Framework for PG Taught Programmes.

**CL/23-24/079 Course Proposal for an MSc. in Clinical Exercise top-up (online)**

**Decisions:**

**CL/23-24/079.1:** Council approved the proposal for an MSc. in Clinical Exercise top-up (online).

**CL/23-24/080 National Student Survey Reports 2022/23**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/080.1:** Council noted the National Student Survey Reports 2022/23

**CL/23-24/081 Progress report on the Joint Award, Bachelor in Science in Physiotherapy (B.Sc. (Physio.)), Trinity College Dublin and Singapore Institute of Technology.**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/081.1:** Council noted the Progress report on the Joint Award, Bachelor in Science in Physiotherapy (B.Sc. (Physio.)), Trinity College Dublin and Singapore Institute of Technology.

**CL/23-24/082 QQI Revised Guidelines for Blended and Online Learning Programmes**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/082.1:** Council noted the QQI Revised Guidelines for Blended and Online Learning Programmes

**CL/23-24/083 Revised A-level Points Equivalences**

The VP/CAO reported that this was the culmination of work undertaken by a Working Group on Leaving Certificate and A-Level equivalencies, which had been established by Universities Ireland (UI) to consider a sectorial approach to addressing low student mobility between

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. She reported that if this approach was approved by Council, the next step was consideration by the IUA at a meeting on the 13 January with the aim of having it in place for the CAO deadline of the 1 February. The Provost remarked that in her experience, the main issue with student mobility between NI and the Republic is the timing of the Leaving Certificate and the offer of places through the CAO, and that this is also an issue for international students.

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/083.1:** Council approved the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 15 January 2024.

**SECTION B – Reports  
from Committees**

**CL/23-24/084 Graduate Studies Committee**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/084.1:** Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 7 December 2023.

**CL/23-24/085 Quality Committee**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/085.1:** Council noted and approved the minutes of 23 November 2023.

**CL/23-24/086 Research Committee**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/086.1:** Council noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 14 November 2023.

**CL/23-24/087 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

**Decision:**

**CL/23-24/087.1:** Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 12 December 2023.

**SECTION C**

**CL/23-24/088 Membership of Committees of Council – Research Committee**

The Council noted and approved the circulated memorandum from the Registrar dated 9 January 2024.

**CL/23-24/089 Exit Award for Students on the Joint Degree of Bachelor in Science in Physiotherapy (B.Sc. (Physio.))**

The Council noted the circulated memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 9 January 2024.

**CL/23-24/090 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners**

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees (Higher Degrees List) dated 17 January 2024.

- M.D.** Karen Rebecca Ryan
- Ph.D.** Mona Shujaa Saud Alharbi; Ashjan Alsulaimani; Thelma Begley; Agnieszka Helena Ciochon; Beren Demirölmez; Siyi Du; Brian Conal Donovan; Clara Faulí Molas; Michael Antonio Kirwan Ferreira; Rebecca FitzGerald; Laura Gambini; Philip Gavin; Luke Patrick Joseph Gilligan; Elizabeth Megan Greeley; Ahmed Abdelmoneim Hassan Ali; Susan Elizabeth Hannon; Zexiang Hu; Tochukwu Arinze Ikwunne; Tenaya Jorgensen; Anna Kravchenko; Louise Lynch; Deirdre McAdams; Naoise McGarry; Emmet Anthony Oliver; Liam Martin O'Rourke; Georgios Prekas; Frances Eileen Quigley; Jivesh Ramduny; Jacqueline Rossovski; Jack Sheehan; Conor Smith; Sara Toselli; Zachary Jonathan Twamley; Danish Us-Salam; Bowen Wang; Hongfei Wang.
- D.Ch.Dent.** Cianna Marie O'Brien; Jo Morgan Saele.
- D.Ed** Michele Catherine Maria Kehoe.
- M.Sc.** Joyce Costelloe Barry; Hugh Conlon.

**CL/23-24/091 School Directors**

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

- (i) Professor Jennifer O’Meara as Acting Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Creative Arts, from 22 January 2024 to 12 April 2024
- (ii) Professor Evangelia Rigaki as Acting Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Creative Arts, from 22 January 2024 to 12 April 2024
- (iii) Professor Susan Flynn as Course Director of the Master in Social Work, School of Social Work and Social Policy, from 2 January 2024 to 2 January 2027

**SECTION D**

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

Signed .....

Date .....