



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 14 February 2024 at 11.15am in the Trinity Board Room, Trinity Business School.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, 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, Professor A. Gibson, Professor D. Romelli, Professor L. O'Driscoll, Professor J. Coleman, Professor B. Fitzgerald, Ms. D. Alexander, Ms. C. Arnold, Mr. R. Saulnier, Professor L. Carson, Professor G. Watson, Mr. E. Gilroy, Dean of Research, Professor P. O'Grady, Professor K. Neenan, Professor A.M. Malone, Professor J. Wyse, Ms. R. Emakpor, Mr. A. Burgess.
<i>Apologies</i>	VP for Global Engagement, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Registrar, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer, Mr C. Reddy, Mr M. McAndrew, Mr S. Sardina, Professor B. Daly.
<i>In attendance</i>	Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College/Director of Governance, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Professor Gregory O' Hare, Academic Affairs Education Policy Developer.

SECTION A.1: Policy Matters

The Provost welcomed everyone to Council. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance reported that there were no conflicts of interest relating to the agenda.

CL/23-24/096 Membership of the University Council

The Provost reminded members that in June 2023, Council had approved the proposal that a member of the Heads of School Committee would attend meetings of University Council for 2023/24 (CL/22-23/227.1). She reported that Professor Gregory O' Hare (School of Computer Science and Statistics) had been nominated as the Head of School representative to Council and would be in attendance at meetings. Council members approved the appointment and Professor O' Hare joined the meeting.

CL/23-24/097 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting of the 17 January 2024 were approved.

CL/23-24/098 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Librarian and College Archivist provided an update on the cyber-attack on the British Library (CL/23-24/077). She reported that a three-phased approach to address the fallout from the attack was put in place since October 2023, and that the 'respond' phase, which was the emergency phase, is now complete. The second 'adapt' phase will run until June, by which time it is hoped to have work-arounds in place for access to the UK e-legal deposit material. The final 'review' phase will entail a fully funded rebuild of the digital infrastructure function. Noting that Trinity is currently developing a new Library Systems Platform (LSP), Ms. Shenton reported that Trinity will work to ensure that this takes into account the new British Library system, and has already flagged that Trinity will probably require an UK e-legal deposit hub. She

advised that she had reported on the cyber-attack at yesterday's Research Committee and that the Dean of Graduate Studies had recommended to the Directors of Research that any postgraduate research student who had been particularly affected by the restricted access resulting from the cyber-attack should have this taken into account. She stressed that the Trinity Library was continuing to implement workarounds such as the purchase of trial subscriptions to large e-Book packages and Inter-library loans. She concluded by reporting that impact for Trinity students was in the use of e-books on reading lists.

Reporting on the proposed implementation of revised A-level Points Equivalences for 2024/25 discussed at the January Council meeting (CL/23-24/083), the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reminded Council that it had agreed, in principle, to the implementation of the proposal if consensus amongst the other universities was agreed at the IUA meeting on the 13th January. She reported, however, that consensus had not been achieved at that meeting as advice had been received that it was not prudent to implement this change midway through the academic year. Therefore, the revised Points Equivalence will not be implemented across the sector until 2025/26. The University of Galway, however, have decided to implement the change from 2024/25.

CL/23-24/099 Institutional Review Implementation Plan – Progress Report for 2022/23
XX

Introducing the item, the Provost reported that under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 universities are obliged to undertake an institutional review every seven to ten years, to produce an Implementation Plan addressing the recommendations arising from the review, and to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. Speaking to a slide presentation, the Academic Secretary reminded members that Trinity's Institutional Review took place online in March 2022. Its purpose was to assess the effectiveness of Trinity's internal Quality Assurance procedures for education, training, research and services to ensure that agreed quality standards are being met. The review found that Trinity was compliant and an Implementation Plan addressing the recommendations arising from the review was submitted to QQI in April 2023. This Progress Report on the Implementation Plan addresses the period between April 2023 and August 2023 (the academic year 2022/23), after which progress will be monitored for the years 2023/24- 2026/27 via the Annual Quality Report to QQI.

The Academic Secretary provided updates to Council on the implementation of the recommendations under each of the eight headings in the report. Under '*Governance and Management of Quality Assurance*', she reported that while good progress has been made in the review of the Committees of Board, the recommendation to 'immediately progress plans for building leadership and management capability across the university' requires resources and funding to implement. The implementation of the recommendation to provide enhanced resources and staffing for the Academic Registry (AR) under the heading of '*Access*' is pending the approval of the Digital strategy and the prioritisation of resources to implement it. In the meantime, discussions with Trinity Global are in train in relation to funding an additional post in AR admissions to support the recent significant increase in direct international applications. Recommendations 7 and 8 under the heading '*Performance Management, and Learning and Development*' are in progress but additional funding will be required to complete the recommendations concerning the Career Development Framework and Performance Management. In relation to '*Supports for International Students*' the Academic Secretary reported that Trinity Global has appointed a Policy and Research Manager and that the next Trinity Global Strategic plan is in development. The review of systems, projects and staffing requirements in IT and AR recommended under heading 6 – '*Learner Information Systems*' – is in progress, but delays are expected in 2024 due to resourcing issues. The Academic Secretary concluded by reporting on the recommendation to improve the student survey response rates and consistency of feedback. She advised Council that she is a member of the National Student Survey Advisory group that is reviewing Student Survey.ie. Trinity is also investigating whether there are any good practices in our LERU partner universities that could be tested and potentially adopted by Trinity.

The Provost thanked the Academic Secretary and invited comments from members. In relation to the career development framework, a member noted that at European level, there is an upcoming Higher Education package which is a key priority of the Commission for 2024. The package will consist of three parts, one of which is a proposal for a Council (of national ministers) recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education. Whilst the proposals have not yet been published, information presented at meetings that the member attended outlines (in respect of the attractive and sustainable careers in HE element) recommendations structured around three pillars concerning (i) the promotion, recognition and valorisation of mobility and transnational cooperation, (ii) the promotion, recognition and valorisation of the diversity of academic roles, and (iii) the promotion of attractive working conditions, academic freedom, diversity and gender equality. It was noted that professional services staff are presently indicated as being included in the proposal. The member suggested that cognisance could be taken of the proposals, once published, and that recommendations should be taken on board, where possible, within the career development framework in Trinity. She concluded by noting that this work is likely to be a reference point to which alignment would be beneficial and confirmed, in response to a query from the Provost, that there is no information on funding available.

In response to a request from a member for an update on the piloting in 2023 of a performance management and development system, the Academic Secretary reported she was unaware of progress beyond the period in question which was the initiation of a pilot, and agreed to update Council at its next meeting under matters arising.

Decision:

CL/23-24/099.1: Council approved the Progress Report on the Institutional Review Implementation Plan for 2022/23 and recommended it to Board for final approval and submission to QQI.

CL/23-24/100 Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Programme in Theatre Spaces

The Dean of Graduate Studies asked Council to consider, for approval in principle, a proposal for a new Joint Masters Programme in Theatre Spaces (Theatre in Social, Participatory Art, Community and Education Contexts) under the Erasmus Mundus scheme, as outlined in a memo circulated with the papers. The proposal is a co-operative project between Trinity (School of Education), Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (Høgskulen på Vestlandet – HVL, the lead), and Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The Zurich University of the Arts will join the consortium as a partner. In order to be eligible to apply for funding, all partners must have approval from their own institution to participate in the joint Masters and, therefore, approval is being sought from Council for Trinity to submit an application for this funding.

The Dean reported that, if approved, this would be the first-ever European Joint Masters programme in the field of applied theatre and drama. The programme would commence in September 2025, with Trinity's contribution to teaching commencing in 2026/27. Trinity would lead out on the dissertation piece. She advised that it is expected that there will be over 1000 applications for the funding call, with only a handful of those applications being successful. As this is still at the planning stage, Trinity has not had an opportunity to conduct the usual due diligence on the proposed partnership agreements and if the funding application is successful, this would need to be done before the project could advance any further. The Graduate Studies Committee approved the proposal in principle on the 25 January 2024 (GS/23-24/084) on the understanding that should funding be received, GSC will be positively disposed to reviewing a full course proposal, subject to the normal process. While currently there is no financial sign-off on the proposal and the financial inter-institutional framework to underpin the partnership has not been agreed, the Faculty Dean supports the content of the proposal.

The Provost thanked the Dean and queried whether the funding would be drawn down if the application was successful but the outstanding issues related to the partnerships could not be resolved by Trinity. The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that in that scenario, the University

of Zurich could step in as the third partner institution if either Trinity or the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary withdrew from the arrangement. If both withdraw, the Masters would not proceed.

Decision:

CL/23-24/100.1: Council approved the School of Education to proceed to apply for funding for a new Joint Masters Programme in Theatre Spaces (Theatre in Social, Participatory Art, Community and Education Contexts) under the Erasmus Mundus scheme on the understanding that if the application is successful but issues arise in the negotiation of the partnerships that cannot be resolved, Trinity will not be able to further engage in the Programme.

The Dean of Graduate Studies also recommended that Trinity alert the partners, in writing, to the fact that there may be issues that Trinity is unable to resolve. Noting that Trinity has experience from CHARM-EU that might usefully inform the negotiations, the Provost closed the discussion.

CL/23-24/101 Proposal to end University Matriculation Examinations

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer presented the item on behalf of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies. She reported that, at one time, matriculation exams permitted entry to Trinity in their own right. Only two remain, however – one in Geology and the other in Biblical Studies. Since the process for entry to higher education has been standardised by the CAO and this is now the main route to third level, the role of the matriculation exam is, to some degree, obsolete. In 1992, the NUI abolished all matriculation examinations and Trinity is an outlier amongst other Universities in continuing to offer them. The VP/CAO concluded by reporting that, if approved, the matriculation examinations in these two subjects would continue for 2024 and 2025 but that information would be disseminated to second level schools immediately to notify them that the subjects would not be available from 2026, so that students selecting subjects for the senior cycle are aware of the change. The Undergraduate Studies Committee approved the proposal on the 30/01/2024 (USC/23-24/048).

The Provost thanked the VP/CAO and stressed the importance of communicating this change directly to secondary schools. The VP/CAO advised that both of the Trinity Schools concerned (Natural Sciences and Religions) are supportive of this proposal.

Decision:

CL/23-24/101.1: Council approved the cessation of the two remaining University Matriculation Examinations in Geology and Biblical Studies.

CL/23-24/102 Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer's Report

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported on talks between the IUA, Fiona O' Brien from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Research (DFHERIS) and Celeste O'Callaghan from the Department of Education, regarding the timeline for publication of the Leaving Certificate (LC) results. Stating that both Departments are clear that, at a technical level, they are very keen to return to pre-Covid Leaving Certificate distribution grades and timelines, they are looking for suitable evidence which will enable this. She noted that the main obstacle to an earlier publication date is the application of the post-marking adjustment which has been in use since the pandemic, and which adds two weeks to the timeline in August. The second sitting of the leaving certificate exams has also contributed to the delayed timeline.

Some progress on this has been made, and the State Examinations Commission (SEC) digitalisation process for the distribution and marking of LC scripts is almost complete. Through the IUA we are now working with the CAO to garner data that will help support either abolishing the post-marking adjustment for 2024, or alternatively a planned phase-out over a maximum of 2 years. Both Departments are working with SEC to ensure that they also

contribute relevant data where necessary. The VP/CAO concluded by stating that Trinity will continue to work through the IUA on this, and that there is a tight window of opportunity until Easter to find a resolution, after which we face yet another year of delayed LC results.

The Provost thanked the VP/CAO and queried whether the algorithm could be applied to the results without including the 'second sitting' students. The VP/CAO reported that it was planned to run the algorithm without these candidates to show that there is no overall difference in the spread of marks with and without the algorithm. The Dean of Health Sciences asked whether there are other groups and bodies that intend to make a submission on this issue to the Departments. The VP/CAO suggested that it would be helpful if the Students' Union could lobby the government on this issue, noting that the delayed publication date not only results in a staggered start for 1st years and a condensed 1st semester but also impacts the timely sourcing of accommodation for incoming first years. The Education Officer of the Students' Union reported that the SU is partnering with the Irish Second-level Students' Union (ISSU), who is also lobbying on this issue.

A member reported on a student case which highlighted an unexpected consequence of the delayed publication of results. An international student funded by a grant agency in their home country had 10% of their grant deducted as a result of the late start of their course and now has a fee debt. Another member queried whether a conversion rate for non-EU students would also be provided. The VP/CAO advised that this issue would not be addressed in the short term, as the primary concern is to address the delayed results for Irish Leaving Certificate students. The timing of state examination results in Ireland is a wider issue given it occurs far later than in other countries, even were we at the pre-Covid timeframe. On this issue, the Provost reported that the greatest barrier to entry for students from abroad is the timing of the offer of places. UK universities make their offers much earlier in the year and students will generally accept these offers rather than wait for a later offer from an Irish university. This is a problem if you want to have an international student body. The VP/CAO concluded the discussion by reporting that other countries have removed pandemic associated grade inflation, so students from these countries are currently disadvantaged compared to Irish students where the uplift remains. This may discourage them from applying to study in Ireland and even if we discontinue the current practices, it will take several years for the changes to be felt.

CL/23-24/103 Provost's Report

The Provost updated Council on her meeting with the new Secretary General of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), Mr Colm O' Reardan. She reported that during the meeting she had outlined Trinity's financial situation to Mr O' Reardan and while she felt that some progress had been made in terms of clarifying the financial constraints within which Trinity is operating, more needs to be done to ensure that government is fully aware of the issues. With regard to the status of the report on the National Review of State Supports for PhD Researchers, the report from the review is currently with the Department and will be published soon. Once available, the report will be considered by the Graduate Studies Committee and then by Council. Referring to the status of funding for extra capacity in the Dental Science undergraduate programme, the Provost reported that other universities had already received their letters of confirmation from DFHERIS and that as Trinity has not, this suggested that funding for extra capacity was not going to be made available to the Dental School. Remarking that that there appears to be a move to provide Health Science opportunities in third level institutions that don't already offer them, the Provost remarked on the cost to the state in having to set these up from scratch. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer also noted that placements for these additional students would need to be sourced, and suggested that availability of these additional placements could be a constraint to growth in some instances.

Highlighting that elections are taking place this year at local, national and European level, the Provost stressed the importance of ensuring that funding for third-level education is included on the manifestos of political parties. She reported that the IUA is continuing to lobby for an

increase in core funding and has improved with regard to articulating the ask, consulting with industry experts on how to get issues included in the relevant political manifestos. She advised Council that an email would be issued shortly from her to all Trinity staff and students encouraging them to register to vote and highlighting that that non-EU citizens, EU citizens living in Ireland, and British citizens who live in Ireland can vote in some elections. She concluded by reporting that her planned meeting with the Head of Science Foundation Ireland had not yet taken place.

A member suggested that a sectoral strategic wish list should be drawn up to ensure that Higher Education Institutions are on the same page when lobbying politicians. The Provost agreed, but noted that beyond the top two or three common issues there may be differences between Trinity's strategic priorities and those of the sector. An increase in core funding and the unlocking of the National Training Fund surplus are priorities across the sector. The IUA is working to agree on the next most important common issues. As Trinity's income and expenditure are matched, it's difficult for the institution to save even though last year was the best for commercial revenue and philanthropy, and as funding continues to shrink the shortfall needs to be raised.

A student representative drew Council's attention to a planned march by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) to the Department of Education to highlight the issue of core funding. Another member stressed the importance of candidates for the European elections amplifying the message around core funding and the need to prioritise the budget for research and innovation. They further noted that as Ireland is a net contributor to the EU, there is a defined pot of money available so we need to make sure that there is synergy with the national points. A member recommended that a common lobbying strategy be agreed across the sector to simplify the take-home message regarding funding. Referencing recent figures showing the alignment of salaries to core funding, the member suggested that senior promotions and the implementation of a career framework may become compromised by available finances. He also urged that cross-comparison with other jurisdictions be made in terms of salaries. Ireland is competing on the international stage and a government strategy needs to be agreed as the economy is reliant on 3rd level. The Provost agreed that there is a need for the sector to speak as one voice, and she stressed the importance of referencing the OECD and EU reports on third-level funding in any discussions. A member suggested that other interested parties should be lobbying on behalf of the third-level sector and the Provost reported that IBEC is aligned for the first time with the core funding piece.

Referencing recent confusion regarding the status of the Researcher Recruitment Policy, the Provost raised the issue of information flow from Committees to Schools and stressed the importance of Committee members being able to feel that they can provide updates to colleagues on particular issues. She emphasised the importance of the Committee structure as a communications structure. A member remarked that communication flow is a common problem in College and the Provost suggested that more needs to be done to ensure that committee members are supported to disseminate committee decisions locally and to challenge incorrect information or assumptions where they encounter them. A member cited information flow about the senior academic promotions as a case in point and the Provost reported that a communications update on the issue in the form of a short video was planned.

The Provost concluded her update by reporting that the Rubrics were being formally re-opened today following refurbishment and she commended the work of the Chief Operating Officer and her team on the project, which saw one of the oldest buildings on campus being fitted with sustainable technology and geothermal heating.

CL/23-24/104 Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other business.

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

**CL/23-24/105
XX Annual Quality Report 2022/23 to QQI**

Decision:

CL/23-24/105.1: Council approved the Annual Quality Report 2022/23 to QQI and referred it to Board for approval and submission to QQI.

CL/23-24/106 Quality Office Implementation Plan

Decision:

CL/23-24/106.1: Council approved the Quality Office Implementation Plan

CL/23-24/107 Quality Review Report on the Royal Irish Academy of Music's Master in Music Performance (M.Mus.Perf.) Programme

Decision:

CL/23-24/107.1: Council approved the Quality Review Report on the Royal Irish Academy of Music's Master in Music Performance (M.Mus.Perf.) Programme.

CL/23-24/108 Dental Council Accreditation Report

Decision:

CL/23-24/108.1: Council approved the Dental Council Accreditation Report.

CL/23-24/109 Postgraduate Course Proposals

(i) Course Proposal for M.Phil. in Digital Arts and Intermedia Practices

Decision:

CL/23-24/109.1: Council approved the course proposal for the M.Phil. in Digital Arts and Intermedia Practices.

(ii) M.Sc. in Midwifery Practice and Leadership taught programme: Admissions Framework Structure

Decision:

CL/23-24/109.2: Council approved the M.Sc. in Midwifery Practice and Leadership taught programme: Admissions Framework Structure

CL/23-24/110 Revised Policy and Procedure for University Sponsorship of Clinical Trials and Studies

Decision:

CL/23-24/110.1: Council approved the Revised Policy and Procedure for University Sponsorship of Clinical Trials and Studies

CL/23-24/111 Revised Policy on Good Research Practices

Decision:

CL/23-24/111.1: Council approved the Revised Policy on Good Research Practices

CL/23-24/112 Proposal for a new Trinity Joint Honours Subject in Early Irish

Decision:

CL/23-24/112.1: Council approved the Proposal for a new Trinity Joint Honours Subject in Early Irish

**SECTION B – Reports
from Committees****CL/23-24/113 Academic Appeals Committee**

Noting that a large number of standard appeals cases are being heard by the Academic Appeals Committee, the Senior Tutor informed Council that the Registrar and the Secretary's Office have been undertaking a piece of work to consider improvements to the appeals process. The compression of the academic year structure arising from the TEP and the tight turnaround time for marking and publication of results are some of the issues that are being considered as part of this work.

Decision:

CL/23-24/113.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meetings of the 4th and the 6th October 2023.

CL/23-24/114 Graduate Studies Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/114.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 25 January 2024.

CL/23-24/115 Quality Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/115.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of 25 January 2024.

CL/23-24/116 Research Committee

The Provost reported that the European Research Council (ERC) had recently issued a statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in developing grant proposals. Elaborating on this, the Dean of Research advised that the ERC did not prohibit the use of generative AI but emphasised that authors still bore full authorship responsibility for the content of proposals. She also reported that the Irish Research Council (IRC) was planning to update its policies and guidelines to prohibit reviewers from uploading proposals that they receive to review to AI engines, as in doing so they are making them public.

Decision:

CL/23-24/116.1: Council noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2023.

CL/23-24/117 Student Life Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/117.1: Council noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2023.

CL/23-24/118 Undergraduate Studies Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/118.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 12 December 2023.

SECTION C**CL/23-24/119 Council Attendee**

The Council noted that Professor Gregory O'Hare, School of Computer Science and Statistics, shall be in attendance at Council, as the Head of School representative, to the end of the 2023/24 academic year.

CL/23-24/120 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees (Higher Degrees List) dated 14 February 2024.

Ph.D. Ardak Ainabayev; Afnan Alshkeili; Madhav Bhargav; Paul Baptiste Blanchard; Melissa Bohnert; Rangariroyashe Hannah Chipika; Aislan Esmeraldo Paiva; Ningsong Fan; Luke Richard Gayer; Bobby Gillham; Conor Francis Grant; Charlotte Maryse Leane; Chi Tak Lee; Shixin Liu; Jessica Mannion; David Joseph McKenna; Tereza Mytakou; Susan Nic Réamoinn; Aidan O Donoghue; Isabel Lucy O'Grady; Audrey Mathilde Camille Plan; Hugo Alexandre Rossignol; William Mogens Strigel; Vincent Michel James Thorne; Niamh Christine Wylie; Alessia Zotta.

D.Ed Máiréad Nally.

M.Sc. Alice De Sampaio Kalkuhl; Elizabeth Ann Mason.

CL/23-24/121 Fitness to Practice

The Council noted and approved the circulated memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance and the Project Manager, Secretary's Office, dated 7 February 2024.

CL/23-24/122 School Directors

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

- (i) Professor James Hanrahan as Acting Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, from 22 January 2024 to 19 April 2024.
- (ii) Professor Nathan Hill as Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, for a second term from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2026.

CL/23-24/123 Head of Discipline

The Council noted and approved the nomination of Professor Aileen Patterson as Head of Discipline of Medical Education from 24 January 2024 to 23 January 2027.

SECTION D

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

Signed

Date