



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 8 May 2024 at 11.15am in the Trinity Board Room, Trinity Business School.

- Present* Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Students, Dean of Health Sciences, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Professor L. O’Driscoll, Professor B. Fitzgerald, Ms. D. Alexander, Mr. R. Saulnier, Professor L. Carson, Professor G. Watson, Professor J. Wyse, Ms. R. Emakpor, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Registrar, Mr C. Reddy, Mr M. McAndrew, Mr S. Sardina, Dean of Research, Professor A. Gibson, Professor J. Coleman, Professor P. O’Grady, Professor B. Daly, Professor K. Neenan, Senior Tutor, Mr. A. Burgess.
- Apologies* Professor D. Romelli, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, VP for Global Engagement, Professor A.M. Malone, Mr. E. Gilroy, Librarian and College Archivist.
- In attendance* Secretary to the College/Director of Governance, Academic Secretary, Assistant Academic Secretary (Academic Affairs), Chief Operating Officer, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer, Professor Gregory O’ Hare, Academic Affairs Education Policy Developer.

SECTION A.1: Policy Matters

The Provost welcomed Ms. Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary (Academic Affairs) and Dr. Michelle Olmstead, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer (CIEO) to their first meeting of Council. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance reported that a statement of conflict had been received from Professor Jason Wyse and Professor Lorna Carson regarding item D31(i) Junior Academic Promotions Committee Membership 2024, as they are proposed members. Professors Wyse and Carson agreed to step out of the meeting for the item.

CL/23-24/183 Minutes 10 April 2024

The minutes of the Council meeting of the 10 April 2024 were approved.

CL/23-24/184 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

CL/23-24/185 Academic Year Structure 2024/25

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer presented the Academic Year Structure for 2024/25. She outlined that Council was being asked to approve a staggered start for the 2024/25 academic year, as was the case in 2023/24, as it is anticipated that the publication of the Leaving Certificate (LC) results will be delayed again this year. Results are expected to be issued to candidates on the 23 August and round one offers made by the CAO on the 28 August, with a closing date of the 3 September. The staggered start was approved by COLSAG on the 29 April and noted by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Committee. If this

approach is approved by Council, teaching for Junior Fresh students will commence on the 23 September, with teaching for continuing UG and PG students commencing on the 9 September. Orientation for postgraduate, visiting and Erasmus cohorts would begin on the 2 September 2024 and for Junior Fresh students on the 16 September 2024. The VP/CAO concluded by advising that it is planned to proactively address the likely delay in the publication of LC results in 2025 by initiating a discussion with the Senior Lecturer on the Academic Year Structure over the summer and early in semester 1 of 2024/25, which will include consideration of the recent discussion on the re-assessment timeframe. Proposals will initially be considered at USC but will also involve a wider discussion with stakeholders across College.

The Provost thanked the VP/CAO and commended the interventions that she has made to-date at a sectoral and individual level to try to bring the publication date for LC results back to its pre-Covid timeframe. She also welcomed the wider discussion of the AYS, noting that the duties of academics have expanded and that this is encroaching on research time, which has an impact on research-informed teaching and capstone projects.

A member from STEM reported that the timing of examinations has a particular impact in that Faculty and suggested that consideration be given to Faculty-specific timing for examinations. The VP/CAO responded that there is precedent for this in Health Sciences, where assessments are held into June. The member made the further point that the concept of a summer research period did not apply in STEM, as research is conducted all year round. For this reason, he felt that the compression of the assessment and marking period into such a short timeframe in order to protect research time was unnecessary. He reported that informal discussions with Heads of School in the Faculty, driven by the timing of examinations, favoured a reform of the AYS. The VP/CAO while open to the concept, noted that this would present difficulties for cross-faculty programmes.

The Dean of Research suggested that it would be useful to include this as an agenda item for the Research Committee as it would allow canvassing amongst the research community on the issue and its implications. The Provost agreed, and recommended that consideration be given generally to flagging in advance what topics or issues are coming to particular committees in order to help members prepare for discussions and to allow them time to consult with colleagues at school or discipline level in advance.

In terms of the broader academic year structure, the Provost flagged an issue relating to students who study abroad in their third year. She provided an example of how the year of study abroad could be reimagined encouraging discussion on potential other solutions that could enhance the student experience. The Provost stressed the importance of considering different approaches to problem solving and encouraging a shift of thinking, citing the introduction of online module enrolment as an example.

A member responded noted that any proposal to have third year as a pass:fail year would pose a difficulty for accredited courses which, in some cases, have had 15-20% of the course content reduced already. The Provost acknowledged that this model would not suit all situations. On the topic of streamlining and reducing complexity, the Provost reported that she had met with Heads of School in STEM to discuss possibilities for streamlining the quality review and accreditation processes, particularly for courses with a professional accreditation component. She concluded by stressing that whatever changes are introduced should be academically, pedagogically and organisationally beneficial. The Senior Lecturer reported that he had asked the Global team to benchmark Trinity against other universities to see what other models are in place and that this work would be conducted over the summer.

Decision:

CL/23-24/185.1: Council approved the Academic Year Structure 2024/25, including a staggered start for Junior Fresh students.

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CL/23-24/185.2: Council approved the commencement of an institutional discussion on the Academic Year Structure for 2025/26.

The Chief Operating Officer joined the meeting at this point.

CL/23-24/186 The Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report 2022/23

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented her Annual Report for 2022/23. Speaking to a PowerPoint presentation summarising the key points she noted that although the report was historical, it outlined the extensive amount of work that had been undertaken in 2022/23 in the Graduate Studies space. The Dean drew Council's attention to the College divisions and services that the Graduate Studies Office engages with to deliver its activities, and she took the opportunity to thank all those involved. Reporting on the postgraduate student data for 2022/23, the Dean reported that as a proportion of the total student body, postgraduate students made up almost 30% in 2022/23, which is broadly in line with previous years. PGT students made up more than half (53%) of the postgraduate student body and of these, 56% were in AHSS. While applications to taught postgraduate programmes increased by 44% in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22, the Dean noted that the rise in admissions had not been as significant (3% overall), with a small increase in non-EU admissions recorded. The ratio of EU to Non-EU PGT students in AHSS and STEM was 60:40 in 2022/23, with the Health Sciences Faculty recording a ratio of 88:12.

The number of registered Postgraduate Research (PGR) students remained stable in 2022/23 and the Dean reported that planned future disaggregation of the data will allow trends to be mapped over time. The pattern of application to offer was similar to previous years. In AHSS, three out of four applications resulted in no offer being made or an offer not being accepted. In STEM, conversion from application to acceptance was 81%, reflecting the difference in research models and funding opportunities compared with AHSS. The majority of PGR students (91%) registered for a PhD and of these, 76% were EU students. As in previous years, the outcome of the *viva voce* examination for the vast majority of candidates was a recommendation for the award of PhD with minor corrections. This represents a continuing slow increase in the number of candidates whose thesis is recommended for the award of PhD with no corrections.

Referencing the work undertaken by the Academic Registry, the Dean reported that there were over 1800 student cases processed by AR across the PGT and PGR student body in 2022/23. Over a quarter of PGT students submitted a case in 2022/23, with a slight majority of these being EU students. The PGR student caseload was higher with 715 cases submitted, representing 39% of the PGR student cohort. Of these, 199 were non-EU. The Dean suggested that for the PGT cohort, course directors may play a role in supporting students to navigate the regulations. For PGR students, requests for extensions or periods off-books must be processed as student cases and this may account for the higher numbers. The Dean stressed the resource implications of this and suggested that it requires consideration.

Speaking to the work of the Graduate Studies Committee, the Dean reported that three new academic policies, seven new PGT courses and several new micro-credentials proposals were approved in 2022/23, in addition to processes and supports relating to the PG renewal project - Horizon 1. The Committee also reviewed three award schemes – the Award for Excellence in Research Supervision, the Trinity Teaching award for Postgraduate Research Students and the Trinity Excellence in Teaching Awards.

The Dean reported that €25,000 was allocated to PGR students from the Trinity Trust Travel Grant in 2023 and that the process was reviewed and streamlined in 2023, resulting in a higher number of applications.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies and invited comments from Council members. The Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer praised the student cases team in AR and queried whether an analysis of recurrent themes in postgraduate student cases would facilitate a streamlining of the process. The Dean reported that most cases are dealt with efficiently but

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that the off-books process is very manual and that it can take time for issues to emerge, which can be related to the personal circumstances of the student, and that consequently it can be difficult to speed up the process. A member praised the travel grant scheme and the Dean commended the Schools in this regard. The Registrar thanked the Dean for her report and stressed that the work of everyone in the graduate studies space was much appreciated.

The Provost queried how Trinity compares internationally in terms of postgraduate applications and conversions to admissions, and whether there is anything that we should be focussing on to improve rates. The Dean of Graduate Studies suggested that the higher application to admission rates in HS and STEM were related to the greater availability of funding in these areas, whereas the AHSS model is largely driven by applicants with a passion in a particular subject area looking for supervisors in that area. For these students, the challenge is to identify funding opportunities, develop a proposal and navigate the complex webpages providing the relevant information. This is an area where we could do better.

In relation to the high number of non-EU PGR student cases, a student member queried whether these cases are visa related and what proportion are resolved. The Dean reported that the percentage of cases processed is 47% but that every case generates multiple queries, each of which is dealt with as a student case. The majority of these are processed in three working days but others can be more complex and take longer to resolve. The Provost clarified that non-EU students studying in Ireland need a visa to travel to most European countries for conferences etc as Ireland is not in the Schengen travel area, but that these travel visas are not always obtained. This can have implications for students' academic careers. The Dean of STEM queried whether analysis of the drop in PhD registrations was possible, and the Dean of Graduate Studies reported that disaggregation of the data will hopefully be possible next year using Power BI. In comparing overall trends in PhD registrations with other LERU institutions, she noted that most have recruitment issues, but noted that some such as the University of Helsinki have large funding programmes which improves their ability to recruit internationally. She concluded by remarking that it was good to see that the number of PGR applications to Trinity remained stable in 2022/23 and that it will be interesting to see the impact of the introduction of the Trinity Research Doctoral Awards (TRDA) in next year's report.

In response to a query from a Council member in relation to the legality of the Scholarship Exemption Declaration Form, the Dean of Graduate Studies clarified that this was not a matter for the Council and should be raised with Human Resources.

Decision:

CL/23-24/186.1: Council approved the Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report 2022/23

CL/23-24/187 Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer's Report

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided a short update on the Strategic Plan, reporting that consultation with the College community had begun with an email and questionnaire. This initial consultation has already identified a number of themes emerging. She reported that some scheduled in-person events had been cancelled as a result of the recent disruptions and that this has necessitated a rethink of how to garner input from the wider community. Several more targeted in-person events are due to be held in the coming weeks. A preliminary draft of the Strategic Plan is due next year.

A member queried whether the extension to the submission date for the Plan that had been sought from the HEA had been approved. The VP/CAO reported that in the absence of a formal response from the HEA to several communications from Trinity, it was assumed that the extension was approved.

CL/23-24/188 Provost's Report

The Provost addressed the student protests and informed the meeting that a deeper discussion would require designated agenda time, which would be facilitated at a future meeting. She acknowledged that both students and staff felt passionately about the war in Gaza and she

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reiterated her belief in the right to protest. Outlining the sequence of events that had occurred over the previous few days, she advised that the decision to close the campus had been taken in response to a duty of care to all staff and students. Noting that not all student exams were finished at that stage, the Provost was aware that the decision to restrict access had inconvenienced some people. Facilities were re-opened as quickly as possible on a phased basis and the Provost thanked the Librarian and College Archivist for her support in opening the 1937 Reading Room and the Kinsella Library. Speaking to the ongoing discussions, the Provost welcomed the open lines of communication between the student protesters and the College authorities and the low-key way in which the situation had been managed. She reported that the Senior Dean and the Dean of Students were progressing discussions with the student protesters and that it was hoped that a resolution would be reached shortly. She concluded by undertaking to include the issue as an item on the agenda for a future meeting. A member asked whether the statements that had been released to the press could be published somewhere on the College website and the Provost agreed that this would be actioned.

CL/23-24/189 Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other urgent business.

SECTION A.2:

Policy Matters which have already been considered by Committees

CL/23-24/190 Postgraduate Renewal Programme (Horizon 2):

(i) Proposed Standardised Template for Professional Development Planning for Postgraduate Research Students.

Decision:

CL/23-24/190.1: Council approved the Proposed Standardised Template for Professional Development Planning for Postgraduate Research Students as part of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme (Horizon 2).

(ii) Proposed Calendar Change – Eligibility to supervise research components of taught Masters’ programmes.

Decision:

CL/23-24/190.2: Council approved the Proposed Calendar Change – Eligibility to supervise research components of taught Masters’ programmes as part of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme (Horizon 2).

(iii) Proposed Calendar Change – Exit Awards for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

Decision:

CL/23-24/190.3: Council approved the Proposed Calendar Change – Exit Awards for Postgraduate Taught Programmes as part of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme (Horizon 2).

(iv) Proposed Calendar Change – General Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

Decision:

CL/23-24/190.4: Council approved the General Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes as part of the Postgraduate Renewal Programme (Horizon 2).

CL/23-24/191 Progress Report – Quality Review of the School of Genetics and Microbiology

Decision:

CL/23-24/191.1: Council approved the Progress Report for the Quality Review of the School of Genetics and Microbiology.

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CL/23-24/192 Teaching Council Accreditation

Decision:

CL/23-24/192.1: Council noted the memo from the Head of the School of Education dated the 25 April 2024 regarding the Teaching Council Accreditation.

CL/23-24/193 School of Education Quality Review Derogation

Decision:

CL/23-24/193.1: Council noted and approved the memo from the Head of the School of Education dated the 25 April 2024 regarding the School of Education Quality Review Derogation.

CL/23-24/194 Admissions criteria for India Standard XII Examinations

Decision:

CL/23-24/194.1: Council approved the Admissions criteria for India Standard XII Examinations.

CL/23-24/195 Admissions criteria for applicants from South Africa

Decision:

CL/23-24/195.1: Council approved the Admissions criteria for applicants from South Africa

CL/23-24/196 Facilitated Entry Grades for TAP Foundation Courses and TCD Partnership City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb) Courses

Decision:

CL/23-24/196.1: Council approved the Facilitated Entry Grades for TAP Foundation Courses and TCD Partnership City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb) Courses.

CL/23-24/197 Proposed new further Education and Training (FET) Admissions Route to Social Studies (TR084)

Decision:

CL/23-24/197.1: Council approved the Proposed new further Education and Training (FET) Admissions Route to Social Studies (TR084).

CL/23-24/198 Revised Policy on Donations of Collections and Contents to the Library

Decision:

CL/23-24/198.1: Council approved the Revised Policy on Donations of Collections and Contents to the Library.

**SECTION B – Reports
from Committees**

CL/23-24/199 Graduate Studies Committee

Decision:

CL/23-24/199.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 25 April 2024.

CL/23-24/200 Quality Committee

Decision:

CL/23-24/200.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 18 April 2024.

CL/23-24/201 Research Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/201.1: Council noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2024.

CL/23-24/202 Student Life Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/202.1: Council noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of the 12 March 2024.

CL/23-24/203 Undergraduate Studies Committee**Decision:**

CL/23-24/203.1: Council noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of the 23 April 2024.

SECTION C**CL/23-24/204 Council Business Approved by Written Procedure**

The Council noted the circulated memorandum, Scheduling of Reassessment Examination Session 2023/24 was approved by Council on 25 April 2024.

CL/23-24/205 Higher Degrees – Reports of Examiners

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees (Higher Degrees List) dated 8 May 2024.

M.D. Gregory Mellotte; James William O'Connell

Ph.D. Saroj Bista; Amanda Kay Brown; Susan Byrne; Gianluca Caccialupi; Mirela Conica; Aoife Curley; Alastair Daly; Gloria Emmanuel; Fidelma Flannery; John Gleeson; Nandini Gupta; Wahaj Habib; Joel William Herman; Angela Maria Hickey; Aideen Lynam; Tianqi Luo; Oana Sânziana Marian; Maggie Martin; Patrick McBean; Sean Martin McKenna; Reema Mohammad Munshi; Caitlin Louise Moon; Simone Nota; Catherine Mary O'Reilly; Ayushi Pandey; Mary Carmel Quirke; David Reilly; Judy Mary Lucy Ryan; Sulthana Shams; Youkun Shen; Meenakshi Suku; Fabio Toti; Arnie Cordero Trinidad; Neng Zhao

D.Mus.Perf. Deirbhile Brennan

D.Ed. Úna Murray

M.Sc. Yangtianyi Chen; Ruairí Floyd; Tianai Lou; Isolde Rose Mc Kiernan

CL/23-24/206 List of Newly Approved External Examiners (Undergraduate Courses) for 2024/25

The Council noted the circulated memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 26 April 2024.

CL/23-24/207 List of Newly Approved External Examiners (Postgraduate Taught Courses) for 2024/25

The Council noted the circulated memorandum from the Dean of Graduate Studies dated 24 April 2024.

CL/23-24/208 Heads of Discipline

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

- (i) Professor Ruth Barton as acting Head of Discipline of Film, School of Creative Arts, from 8 April 2024 to 1 June 2024
- (ii) Professor Nicholas Johnson as Head of Discipline of Drama, School of Creative Arts, from 3 June 2024 to the end of Trinity Term 2027.
- (iii) Professor Eoin Mac Carthaigh as Head of Discipline of Irish and Celtic Languages, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, for an extension to his current term, from 27 May 2024 to 31 May 2026
- (iv) Professor Murat Siviloglu as Head of Discipline or Near and Middle Eastern Studies, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, from 27 May 2024 to 31 May 2027

CL/23-24/209 School Directors

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

- (i) Professor Selim Gulesci as Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, from 1 June 2024 to the end of Trinity Term 2026
- (ii) Professor Lyndsey Earner-Byrne as Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026
- (iii) Professor Rachel Moss as Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Histories and Humanities, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026

SECTION D

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

Signed

Date