Trinity College Dublin
Quality Committee

Minutes
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Minutes of the meeting of the Quality Committee held on 10th October 2013 in the
Boardroom, House 1

Present:	Senior Lecturer (Acting Chair), Chief Operating Officer, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science, Dean of Graduate Studies, Academic Secretary, Professor John Walsh, Professor Ciaran Brady, Professor Simon McGinnes, Professor Catherine Coxon, Professor Sheila Ryder, Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, Mrs. Jessie Shearer Kurtz, Education Officer of the Students' Union, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union.
In attendance:	Professor Gavin Davey (Head of School, Biochemistry & Immunology), Mr. John Coman (Secretary to the College), Professor Brian Foley (Head of School, Engineering), Dr. Joseph Richardson (Faculty Administrator, Health Sciences), Dr. Liz Donnellan (Secretary to the Committee).
Apologies:	Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences

The Senior Lecturer opened the meeting by welcoming the new members to the Quality
Committee – the Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, the Dean of Engineering,
Mathematics & Science, the Dean of Health Sciences, the Chief Operating Officer, and
representing the administrative/service area staff, Mrs. Jessie Shearer Kurtz (Acting Librarian),
and Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley (Information System Services).

QC/13-14/001   Minutes of meeting of the 30th May 2013
The minutes of the meeting of the 30th May 2013 were approved.

QC/13-14/002   Matters arising
The Senior Lecturer drew the Committee's attention to the revised Terms of Reference for the Quality
Committee which had been circulated for information as item B1. He noted that the membership had
been expanded to include the Faculty Deans and the Chief Operating Officer, and that the remit of the
Committee now includes consideration of quality assurance and improvement reports arising from the
quality review process and making recommendations to Board and/or Council. These terms of
reference would be revisited during the course of the year.

QC/13-14/003   Quality Reviews

(i)   School of Biochemistry & Immunology – Progress report
The Chair welcomed Professor Gavin Davey, Head of the School of Biochemistry & Immunology to the
meeting and invited him to speak to the progress report, which addressed the recommendations
arising from the School review.

Professor Davey reported that while the recommendations in relation to infrastructure, staffing and teaching highlighted in the Reviewers' report had already been addressed by the School, the lack of sufficient space in the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute (TBSI) was still a major issue in spite of several requests to the Space Allocation Committee over the last two years for additional facilities. He expressed concern that the quality of teaching and research in the School as well as the School's ability to recruit world class staff is being adversely affected by the lack of sufficient laboratory and teaching space and that the School's ability to upscale in terms of courses and research students is consequently being limited.

In the ensuing discussion the Faculty Dean congratulated the School on the very positive report from the Reviewers and acknowledged that while a number of smaller bids for space by the School have been considered by the Space Allocation Committee, the scale of the issue has yet to been properly addressed. The Dean gave a commitment to bring a full proposal in respect of the School's space needs to the Space Allocation Committee in Michaelmas Term, and the Quality Committee agreed to review progress in Hilary Term. The Chair thanked Professor Davey for his report, and the latter retired from the meeting.

(ii) Secretary's Office – Progress report

The Chair welcomed the Secretary to the College to the meeting and invited him to speak to the progress report on implementation of the recommendations arising from the review of the Secretary's Office in May 2012. The Secretary to the College reported that in relation to the recommendation to appoint an Assistant Secretary, Ms. V. Butler had been appointed to the role. She will assume line-management responsibility for the Enquiries Office, oversee the restructuring of the College Calendar and relocation of the Enquiries office as part of START. She will also be responsible for implementing new College strategies as they apply to the Secretary's Office. As a result of the appointment the in-house solicitor, Ms. S. MacBride, is now released from non-legal duties and will be able to devote the majority of her time to the College's legal brief. This will effect a saving by not having to outsource this work. The Senior Lecturer thanked the Secretary to the College who retired from the meeting, and closed the discussion.

(iii) School of Engineering – Review report

In welcoming the Head of School of Engineering to the meeting, the Senior Lecturer reported that this is the first external review report to be considered by the Quality Committee under the new process for approval of quality reviews. He informed the meeting that a sub-committee of the Quality Committee was convened on the 4th October 2013 (Appendix 1) to consider the report as some senior members of the Committee could not be present at this meeting.

Professor Foley briefed the Committee on developments since the review, and reported two key developments, which have enabled the School to successfully address the majority of the Reviewers' recommendations. The development of the E3 strategy has progressed substantially with the support of the Provost and the Dean of Research. The successful implementation of the strategy is being linked to other key initiatives in College, such as that for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in order to increase the likely-hood of securing funding for infrastructural development. These strategies will align with the College's new Strategic Plan: Phase II of the E3 strategy is to map to space specifications.

In parallel to these developments, the Head of School has initiated an organisational change, which has seen the establishment of four new School Committees; namely, a research committee, undergraduate committee, postgraduate committee and resources committee. These new committees will be in a position to address the Reviewers' recommendations in relation to

communication around finances, policies to support newly appointed research staff, the development of a research strategy, and support for PhD students.

The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics & Science welcomed the new School structures and committed to working with the School Executive to ensure that they are embedded. In relation to the E3 strategy and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship initiative, he reported that the Provost has asked for a design brief within six months. The Bursar is chairing a buildings sub-project which will consider the requirements for new buildings to support the initiative as well as the impact on existing buildings.

In the course of the discussion, the following points were raised:
- The new School committees will address issues raised by the Reviewers in relation to student feedback and will input to on-going discussions at Undergraduate Studies Committee;
- There will be student representation on all committees with the exception of the resources committee;
- The overall School Committee has been disbanded but the four new Committees have the authority to bring issues to a School-wide meeting if necessary;
- The Reviewers' positive comments on staff commitment and student satisfaction should be publicised on the School's website.

The Senior Lecturer thanked Professor Foley for attending, and the latter retired from the meeting. The report will now travel to the University Council for consideration.

QC/13-14/004   Report from Central Survey Facility on on-line module evaluations for 2012/13

The Academic Secretary spoke to a report from the Central Survey Facility on on-line module evaluations conducted in 2012/13. She reported that the number of modules surveyed was quite low (approx. 16% of all modules taught each year) and suggested that this supports anecdotal evidence that there is greater engagement with module evaluation when it is managed locally. This was supported by a pilot survey of JS Nursing students conducted to ascertain students' attitudes to and opinions of on-line module evaluation. The pilot confirmed that students are more likely to engage with the process and provide feedback if the surveys are administered locally, if they are seen to be relevant and useful to the students and if timely feedback is provided. A survey of academics using the facility backed-up these findings.

The following issues were raised in the ensuing discussion:
- Students will not engage with surveys if they feel that nothing happens as a result;
- There should be mechanisms in place at School level to ensure that issues identified in surveys are addressed;
- Schools must report on actions taken in relation to student feedback;
- While the surveys are designed primarily to evaluate modules and not teaching staff, the Faculty Deans have responsibility for addressing staffing issues that arise from surveys.

The Chair thanked the Academic Secretary for the report.

QC/13-14/005   Update on Implementation of IRIU recommendations

Student Evaluation
The Academic Secretary spoke to a document circulated with papers for the meeting which aims to provide guidelines for Schools on module evaluation. She reported that while Council had

approved mandatory local evaluation of undergraduate modules (CL/12-13/148), there is still confusion at School level as to what is required. Following the Council decision, Schools have discretion on the most appropriate method of evaluation, but all evaluations must include a core question about overall satisfaction and Schools must ensure that mechanisms are in place to close the feedback loop. The Faculties should work with the Schools to decide how the evaluations are conducted and report annually to the Quality Committee. Supporting documents are available on the Quality Office website to help Schools to design the most appropriate evaluation method. The Chair thanked the Academic Secretary and invited comment from the Committee.

A detailed discussion followed during which the benefits and limitations of different methods of module evaluation were debated. Issues discussed included:
- The appropriateness of focus groups as the sole evaluation method;
- The resources and support required at School and Faculty level to implement the Council decision;
- The importance of only using methods with a quality component in order to produce robust data;
- The need to identify who gets the results and what they are required to do with them;
- The need to consider the issue of survey fatigue.

The Committee agreed that in order to address the issues of concern raised during the discussion, the wording of the guidelines document should be amended slightly to stipulate that local evaluation methods must include a component that is completed by the students individually and anonymously. Schools will be notified of the process as soon as possible by the Faculties. The Faculty Deans will work with the Schools to determine the most appropriate evaluation methods and consider the resulting administrative workload and capability. It was also agreed that course coordinators in addition to Directors of Teaching & Learning and module coordinators should receive the results of module evaluations.
The Academic Secretary thanked the Committee members for their input to the discussion and undertook to amend the document to reflect what had been agreed before circulating it to the Faculty Deans for implementation.

Trinity Education
The Senior Lecturer reported that the Trinity Education initiative is progressing well. In Michaelmas Term feedback will be sought from graduates at the Trinity Global Graduate Forum event and through smaller discussions with departments rather than through large Town Hall meetings. He also advised that the initiative will be covered by a number of College publications.

Quality Committee structure
The Academic Secretary noted the expanded membership and extended function of the Quality Committee. She stressed the important role of the Quality Committee in supporting the Faculty Deans to address the quality brief and referred to the Faculty of Health Sciences draft operational plan, which will be addressed in Item A6. The Senior Lecturer concurred and commented on the importance of having the Faculty Deans on the Committee and the value in having the reports discussed in detail before consideration by Council or Board.

The Academic Secretary undertook to keep the Committee informed of progress in addressing the IRIU recommendations.

QC/13-14/006   Faculty management of revised quality processes

The Chair invited Dr. Joseph Richardson, Faculty Administrator for Health Sciences, to speak to the 'Draft Operational Plan to Address Quality Issues' that had been circulated with the papers.

Dr. Richardson reported that the draft plan had been discussed twice at the Faculty Executive. The four main quality processes outlined in the document namely the external examiner process, the evaluation of postgraduate taught modules, the evaluation of undergraduate modules and student retention, had been discussed with the School Administrators in Health Sciences to ensure that the processes reflect what actually happens at School level. The outputs and issues arising from these processes will be recorded in the annual consolidated reports to the Faculty Office, which will be discussed at the annual Faculty Executive on quality. The resulting special Faculty Executive Reports on quality will be discussed by the Quality Committee and should highlight strengths/positive outcomes as well as weakness/issues of concern.

The Committee considered the document and the following issues were raised:
- the importance of using data that already exists to reduce the workload on School and Faculty Administrators;
- the Quality Committee's role is to ensure that quality processes are in place and that issues arising are being addressed;
- the process may highlight issues for consideration by the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees;
- while a process for following up on external examiners' recommendations exists, it is not documented and it was agreed that the processes should documented.

The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences reported that the Faculty is working on a version of this template and initially will focus on establishing what basic processes are in place. The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science reported that the issue will be discussed by the Faculty Executive once the new Faculty Administrator is in place but that the intention is to have a similar process to that proposed by Health Sciences. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting.

QC/13-14/007   Programmatic reviews

The Academic Secretary reported that following Council approval of programme reviews in April 2013 (CL/12-13/148), pilot reviews of TR071 and BESS will be undertaken in 2013/14. There is currently no process in place for external review of courses/programmes in Trinity College Dublin and only those courses with a link to professional bodies are reviewed as part of the accreditation process. These pilot reviews will be used to develop a process for programme or course review that can be rolled out across College. The Academic Secretary is currently working with the TR071 Course Director in the design of the process. She noted that there is no sector position on this, and that the other Irish universities are only now beginning to put in place programme reviews.

The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences welcomed the opportunity for a thorough review of the TR071 course, which is highly valued and produces well qualified graduates. He reported that this course cannot deal with current demand for places, which unlike some other science courses has retained a substantial research or field-based project in final year. This element while important to retain is financially very resource intensive. The review will not only consider the curriculum but also course governance and management. The Acting Librarian suggested that Library & IT facilities should be considered as elements of the programme review

and it was agreed that any cycle of programmatic review should be aligned with that for programme accreditation where possible.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the two relevant Faculty Deans and the Academic Secretary for leading on this initiative and reported that the Committee will be updated on progress over the coming months.

QC/13-14/008   Any other business
There was no other business and the meeting closed. The next meeting will take place on the 12th December 2013.

Trinity College Dublin
Quality Committee

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Minutes of a **sub-committee** meeting of the Quality Committee held on 4th October 2013 in the Office of the Vice-Provost, West Theatre.

Present:	Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair), Academic Secretary, Senior Lecturer, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences.
In attendance:	Dr Liz Donnellan (Secretary to the Committee), Professor Brian Foley (Head of School of Engineering)

QC/13-14/001 Quality Review of the School of Engineering

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer opened the meeting by summarising the key changes to the quality review process, namely that the Quality Committee would be the initial forum for discussion of the reports and recommendations arising from quality reviews and that the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer rather than the Provost would present the School reviews and make recommendations to Council. She explained that this initial consideration of the quality review of Engineering was to facilitate her input to the discussion as part of the revised process, as she would not be available to attend the scheduled Quality Committee meeting on the 10th October.

In opening the discussion, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Head of the School of Engineering, Professor Brian Foley and reported that the School had received a very positive report from the Reviewers. She invited the Head of School to outline the main points of the review report and update the meeting on how the School is addressing the recommendations.

Professor Foley reported that since the review there have been two key developments that have enabled the School to successfully address the majority of the Reviewers' recommendations. He reported that the development of the E3 strategy had progressed substantially with the support of the Provost and the Dean of Research, who has now taken on the role of E3 champion/sponsor. The successful implementation of the strategy is being linked to other key initiatives in College, such as the Innovation and Entrepreneurship policy. It is felt that the E3 strategy alone is not enough to secure state funding for infrastructural development but should be seen in the context of other developments such as the Innovation and Entrepreneurship strategy and the new Business Studies and Central Services building development. The links to these strategies will also provide an opportunity to upscale student numbers and the Dean of Research is developing an academic business plan in conjunction with the School of Natural Sciences and Engineering. These strategies will inform College's new Strategic Plan, and Phase II of the strategy is to map to space specifications.

In parallel to these developments, the Head of School has initiated a change in School organisation which has seen the establishment of four new School Committees -a research committee, undergraduate committee, postgraduate committee and resources committee. These new structures have addressed the Reviewers' recommendations in relation to communication around finances, policies to support newly appointed research staff, the development of a research strategy, and support for PhD students.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Head of School for his input and invited comments from the Committee. The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics & Science agreed that the reviewers' report had been very positive and that good progress had been made in the implementation of the E3 strategy.

In relation to the Reviewers' comments about undergraduate student feedback in terms of grades and returned work, the Head of School said that these will be addressed by the new School committee structure and will feed into discussions at Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGC). The Senior Lecturer confirmed that student feedback will be on the USC agenda this year. The Dean of Graduate Studies also agreed that it was useful to have a School level committee that could inform the Graduate Studies Committee.

In terms of the Reviewers' comments on the student information system, the Head of School confirmed that the School had transitioned to SITS for the 2013/14 academic year and that it was working well in-spite of problems with records for non-EU students.

In terms of informal mentoring, the Head of School confirmed that in addition to the formal College mentoring scheme there was a network of informal mentoring at work in the School. The Faculty Dean confirmed that there was a formal mentor appointed to each Engineering lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the use of panel supervision allows new supervisors to gain experience in a supported environment.

Addressing the Reviewers' comments regarding equal weighting for teaching & learning, the Committee agreed that this issue needs to be addressed at junior progression committee – it is noted that those not progressing generally do not have a broad enough teaching portfolio. The perception that research is given more weighting than teaching is out of date and it was agreed that this should be re-iterated in the Head of School's response. It was also agreed that it is easier to document research achievement than teaching achievement and that ways of assessing teaching quality need to be developed.

The recommendation regarding support for Heads of School is being addressed in the new Human Resources strategy and the Head of School reported that his workload is being reduced through the introduction of the new committees, which are cross-disciplinary thereby allowing more representation from the disciplines.

With regard to the lack of clarity regarding allocation of income, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that she is working with the Chief Financial Officer to improve communication regarding same.

In terms of induction sessions, it was agreed that work needs to be done to encourage staff to attend the introductory sessions and to make use of them.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer closed the meeting by thanking those present for their input. It was agreed that Head of School would add an update to the School's response so that the Council discussion can be informed by the most up-to-date information.