Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

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Quality Committee

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the
18 January 2018, 3.00 – 5.00pm, Boardroom House 1

Present:
Professor Chris Morash, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)
Professor Gillian Martin, Senior Lecturer
Professor Darryl Jones, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer
Professor David Lewis, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Professor John Walsh, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Peter Crooks, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Sheila Ryder, Faculty of Health Sciences
Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian
Vice-President, Graduate Students' Union
Education Officer, Students' Union

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office (Secretary)

Apologies:
Professor Mary McCarron, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences
Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science
Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies
Professor Aonghus McNabola, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Professor Catherine Darker, Faculty of Health Sciences
Ms. Victoria Butler, Secretary's Office

In attendance:

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of the Long Room Hub for item *QC/17-18/27 Long Room Hub Review*;
Dr Andrew Pierce, Head of Discipline, Irish School of Ecumenics for item *QC/17-18/28 QAA Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) of the Irish School of Ecumenics (Belfast)*;
Ms Geraldine Ruane, Chief Operating Officer for item *QC/17-18/29 Update on the status of On-line Education.*

Section A

QC/17-18/24   Draft minutes of the meeting of the 14 December 2017
The draft minutes of the meeting of the 14 December 2017 were approved.

QC/17-18/25   Matters arising
The Academic Secretary reported that the Progress Report for the B.Sc. Human Nutrition and Dietetics (QC/17-18/21) and the Review Report for the Joint Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (QC/17-18/22) had been approved by Council at its meeting on the 17 January 2018.

With regard to the issue of double counting of credits raised in the report to Council on the Joint Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that Council had not supported the recommendation that students be allowed both to obtain the certificate *and* allow the 30 credits obtained to count in completion of their structured PhD taught requirements.

QC/17-18/26   Quality Committee call-over log

(i)   **E-legal Deposit**: The Academic Secretary drew the Committee's attention to the first item on the log, *QC/16-17/026 - AHSS Annual Faculty Quality Report 2015/16*. She reported that a briefing paper from the Librarian on E-Legal Deposit UK had been considered at the January Council meeting. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer said that the Council discussion had included a history of copyright in the Library and an explanation of the rationale for the current situation whereby access to electronic resources held on E-legal deposit is restricted to certain terminals in the Library. He reminded the Committee that the impact of restricted access to E-legal deposit resources on students and staff had arisen in a number of recent quality reviews, and suggested that the briefing paper should be included with the background information sent to reviewers in order to provide context to the current situation.

(ii)   **Status of On-Line Education**: The Academic Secretary reported that in relation to item *QC/17-18/043 - Update on review of Trinity's On-line Education provision*, the Chief Operating Officer would attend the meeting to provide an update on the status of the review.

(iii)   **Approval of Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures**: The Quality Officer reminded the Committee that with regard to item *QC/17-18/004 - Approval of Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures*, legal advice had been sought regarding the extent of Trinity's responsibility and liability, and that this would be considered by Board on the 31 January, having been deferred from the December meeting. A revised procedure would be brought to the ACDC and to the Quality Committee over the coming months.

(iv)   **Review of the Long Room Hub**: With regard to the report on the review of the Long Room Hub - item *QC/17-18/016,* which had been deferred from the December meeting pending the appointment of the Dean of Research, the Academic Secretary reported that the report was on the agenda.

(v)   **B.Sc. Human Nutrition and Dietetics:** The Academic Secretary reported that the progress report for the B.Sc. Human Nutrition and Dietetics, item *QC/17-18/21* had been approved by Council.

QC/17-18/27 Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH) Review Report
The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH) to the meeting to speak to the review of the Trinity Long Room Hub. Professor Ohlmeyer began by thanking all those involved in the review, including the review team, and reported that the review process had been an extremely beneficial one for the Hub.

Professor Ohlmeyer reported that a key recommendation of the review concerned the financial sustainability of the Hub. She reported that in this regard, discussions had begun with the Dean of Research concerning a new financial model for the Hub. Responding to a query from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer about the recommendation to develop a compact of understanding with partnering Schools, Professor Ohlmeyer stressed the importance of the relationship with Schools to the Hub and advised that meetings had occurred to discuss a compact. She acknowledged the financial contributions from Schools and emphasised the importance of demonstrating to them the value from their investment in the Hub.

The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences reported that the new financial model would commit a ring-fenced budget to the Hub. The Director welcomed this development and reported that it would provide space for the Hub to engage with philanthropy, the long term goal being to secure an endowment. With regard to the Hub's target of achieving 40% of its income from philanthropy, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggesting that it was ambitious and cautioned against relying on such funds for income. He reported that discussions were ongoing between FSD and the Dean of Research on a model for distributing research overheads for consideration by Planning Group. The Director clarified that local agreement had been reached for the distribution of ERC grant overheads and that any reduction in the proportion of overhead grant income received by the Hub would necessitate securing additional resources from philanthropy.

With regard to the Reviewers' recommendations concerning the composition of the TLRH Board, Professor Ohlmeyer reported that the Hub is in the process of recruiting new board members and replacing the outgoing Chair. She reported that succession planning for the new Director is in train, and strongly endorsed the recommendation to conduct a job evaluation for the Institute manager.

The Academic Secretary spoke to the response from the Dean of Research who was unable to attend the meeting. She reported that the Dean welcomed the review and its recommendations, and fully supported maintaining the status of the TLRH as a Trinity Research Institute (TRI). The Dean echoed the Reviewers' praise for the Director and the administrative team in the Hub. She welcomed the opportunity to work with the Hub to explore how further synergy with the College research themes can be achieved, and to explore ways of securing more grant funding. Finally, the Academic Secretary reported that the Dean stressed the importance of providing more training initiatives for postdoctoral researchers.

The VP/CAO thanked the Academic Secretary and the Director of the TLRH and, in the context of training and supports for postdoctoral researchers, he noted that they are a vulnerable group that have status as neither staff nor student. He also reported that there are gender issues to be considered as there are more women postdocs than men.

In the discussion that followed a Committee member agreed that there was a need to provide support and training for postdoctoral researchers at a College level, and to address the issues around provision of space for postdocs. The Director of the TLRH said that she would welcome any College-level help to address this issue.

A Committee member endorsed the recommendation to appoint a second research project officer to the Hub. The Deputy Librarian welcomed the recommendation for the Hub and the Library to

work more closely together to develop a shared research agenda, noting that the Director of the Hub and the Librarian had already engaged on identifying synergies in this regard. Professor Ohlmeyer responded that the current research project officer had secured a large amount of funding for the Hub and that the appointment of second research officer was under consideration. She stressed that the relationship with the Library was at the heart of the Hub.

In closing the discussion, the VP/CAO queried whether there were opportunities for the Hub to work more closely with Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I). Professor Ohlmeyer reported that she was in discussion with the Director of TR&I to identify ways in which they could work more closely with a view to the Hub developing its relationships beyond the Arts and Humanities.

The VP/CAO thanked Professor Ohlmeyer, and the Committee recommended the report on the review of The Long Room Hub to Council for consideration.

QC/17-18/28   QAA Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) of the Irish School of Ecumenics (Belfast)

The Chair welcomed Dr Andrew Pierce, Head of Discipline at the Irish School of Ecumenics, to the meeting to speak to the report on the QAA review of the Irish School of Ecumenics' provision of the M.Phil. in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in Belfast.

Dr Pierce informed the Committee that the Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE) is a department of the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology and that the M.Phil. in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Studies has been run by the ISE in Belfast since 2001. The quality assurance of the programme is governed by Trinity's QA procedures, as per the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, and is also subject to review by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) as a foreign provider of higher education in the UK. Under the QAA process, a full quality review and financial review is required every four years, with annual monitoring occurring in between. This report relates to a full QAA review which took place in May 2017. Dr Pierce reported that the estimated cost associated with the review process is £15,000, having increased substantially in recent years following a change in the Tier 4 visa requirement framework for foreign providers.

Dr Pierce reported satisfaction with the review and informed the Committee that the key issues highlighted in the report are being addressed through the implementation of the recent review of the Confederal School. He reported that a school-wide risk assessment process is underway and that alignment of practices at ISE with those at Trinity is being well managed by the School's Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate. He reported that he was been kept abreast of progress on the Working Group on Risk and Insurance for Student Placements at College level as related issues were raised by the review team on the community placements undertaken by students on the M.Phil. programme.

The VP/CAO thanked Dr Pierce and noted that the format of the review is different to that of a QQI quality review, comprising assessment against a range of expectations and risks associated with not meeting these expectations.

The VP/CAO queried whether the programme could be brought under the remit of the QQI quality assurance structure, given the high cost of maintaining compliance with the QAA compared to the relatively small size of the programme (14 students). The Quality Officer reported that she had engaged with QQI to see if any mutual recognition of standards could be facilitated, but as the QAA acts as an agent for the UK Border Agency on compliance with visa application requirements, the ISE (and Trinity) needs to comply in order that the ISE can continue to recruit international students.

In response to a query from the VP/CAO as to whether an implementation plan would be required, the Quality Officer reported that the action plan circulated with the report served as the implementation plan.

The Academic Secretary confirmed that the requirement to engage with both the QQI and the QQA standards were unavoidable. She noted and was satisfied that staff in Belfast were following up on the review recommendations and reported that all staff in Belfast had commended the Quality Officer's input to and support for the review.

In response to a query from the Deputy Librarian as to whether the M.Phil. could be run jointly with Queens University Belfast, the VP/CAO suggested that the level of reorganisation already under way in the School would prevent this at the moment. The VP/CAO thanked Dr Pierce and closed the discussion, noting that the next monitoring review is due in May 2018.

QC/17-18/29   Update from the Chief Operating Officer on the status of On-Line Education

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to the meeting to provide an update on the status of Online Education in Trinity. He reported that the COO had been appointed as a director on the Board of Trinity Online Education Services Ltd. and was leading a review of on-line education, commissioned by the Provost.

The COO advised the Committee that the review had been completed in May 2017 and that it had included an assessment of the impact of the Trinity Education Project (TEP) on the provision of support for on-line modules. She informed the Committee that she had worked with IT Services to explore how support for on-line education is managed in other institutions, and that she had visited Cornell, Harvard and Utrecht Universities with a view to identifying good-practice models. She stated that while the blended learning model is compelling, a structure needs to be put in place that will ensure that the best of both on-line and face-to-face delivery is facilitated. A report is being drafted and it is hoped that this will be available in the coming months.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the COO, noting that support for on-line education had arisen in a number of recent quality reviews. He welcomed the development of infrastructural support for initiatives such as flipped and on-line modules, and cited the success of the Postgraduate Diploma and the M.Sc. in Applied Social Science, both of which are delivered fully on-line.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Education welcomed the review but stressed the importance of ensuring that any framework for on-line education supports the College community. The COO agreed, stating that it will take time to get the correct model and framework. The Academic Secretary highlighted the importance of collaboration with the e-Learning team in terms utilising all the skills/knowledge available.

The Quality Officer advised that Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning are due to be published by QQI in the coming months and that Trinity will be assessed against these guidelines at the next institutional review. She suggested that the current administrative structures are designed to support face-to -face rather than on-line students, and cited the fact that on-line students are still asked to collect their ID cards in person as an example of where change needs to occur. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer agreed that any new structure must consider the needs of students, noting that on-line students are required to pay the sports charge even though they are not on site to use the facilities.

In response to a query from a Committee member as to what the broader impact on the student experience will be for students who are fully on-line and do not engage with the campus, the Vice-

Provost/ Chief Academic Officer reported that most on-line students live within a 30km radius of the campus which allows for on-site workshops/meetings to be scheduled in the timetable.

The Chief Operating Officer thanked the Committee for the opportunity to provide an update on the status of on-line education and agreed to present the report to the Committee when it is finalised.

QC/17-18/30 Draft Revised Procedures for Quality Review of Schools

The Quality Officer spoke to the revised Procedures for Quality Review of Schools, which are the second set of Quality Review guidelines to have been revised in response to the publication of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and the revised European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). She reminded the Committee that revised Procedures for Quality Review of Administrative Units were approved by the Committee in October 2017.

Ms Smith reported that the document incorporates feedback from the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Senior Academic Developer. The key changes relate to Appendix 2, which provides guidelines for the development of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). These changes are designed to encourage Schools to reflect on alignment of their procedures with new national requirements and quality assurance of internal school practices such as external examiner reports, marking, ISSE, ISB etc. She drew the Committee's attention to the professional placement checklist in Appendix 4, noting that the quality assurance of placements is a new standard in the QQI Core QA guidelines. The guidelines must also be fit for purpose with regard to implementation of the Trinity Education Project (TEP) in 2018/19.

In the discussion that followed, the Deputy Librarian reminded the Committee that there had been agreement for more involvement by the Library in quality reviews and reported that a list of information that can be provided by the Library was being prepared for quality reviews. The Quality Officer welcomed this and committed to working with the Library to ensure content can be incorporated into the revised procedures prior to publication.

A Committee member suggested that the SAR co-ordinating group should comprise the School Executive to ensure that the student voice is captured. The Quality Officer reported that the composition of the SAR co-ordinating group tends to differ by School to reflect the different School structures (e.g. single vs multi-discipline Schools) and advised against being too prescriptive in this regard. In response, the Academic Secretary noted that the School Executive must sign off on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The Quality Officer also referenced the engagement by students in surveys, focus groups and in meetings with the review team during the on-site review visit.

In discussion of the placement checklist, a Committee member commented that it appeared to be more relevant for programmes in the Health Sciences rather than the Arts, and that this should be considered in the final draft. The Quality Officer thanked the member for this observation and agreed to amend the checklist in this regard. In response to a query as to how different the review process for a thematic review would be, the Quality Officer advised that the Terms of Reference for a thematic review would have to be agreed at College level. In addition, the content of the SAR would be pitched at a different level as it would be required to address cross-unit issues and the review team would be selected to reflect the TOR. With regard to the requirement to outline research activity in terms of research grants secured, it was suggested that this reflects a scientific model where the primary activity is fund driven and that this would not reflect how research in the Arts is measured. The Quality Officer referenced the publication by The Royal Irish Academy and Irish Research Council of *Developing Key Performance Indicators for the Humanities*, which the committee member had previously highlighted to the Quality Office and was used to inform terms of reference for relevant reviews. She also reported that Schools in AHSS are directed to the Research Librarian to source data from RSS and TARA, which reflect how research outputs are measured in the Arts and Humanities.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and closed the discussion. The Quality Committee approved the revised Procedures for Quality Review of Schools subject to the inclusion of changes to the placement checklist, clarification regarding the information available from the Library and the inclusion of evidence of research activity in the Arts.

Actions:
(i)   *The Quality Officer to liaise with the Library regarding information available for inclusion in the procedure for School reviews.*
(ii) *The Quality Officer to revise the placement checklist to reflect the requirements of Schools in AHSS.*
(iii) *The Quality Officer to revise the School procedures to include evidence of research activity in the Arts.*
(iv) *The revised School procedures to be brought to a future meeting of the Quality Committee for noting.*

QC/17-18/31 Implementation Plan for the School of Histories and Humanities
The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences spoke to the Implementation Plan for the School of Histories and Humanities, stating that most of the recommendations are implemented or in train. With regard to the recommendation to retain year-long modules at sophister level under TEP, the Dean reported that discussions to address this are ongoing. The staffing issues highlighted in the report are being addressed through the Faculty and School staffing plans. The Chair in Byzantine Studies has been approved and advertised, for appointment from September 2018, and a subvention for the Regius Chair of Greek has been secured and the post has been advertised.

There are plans for an appointment in History of Art and the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies. With regard to the loss of ten professors highlighted in the report, the Dean clarified that most of these were personal chairs and would not have been replaced at senior level. He noted that the School has worked to address the gender imbalance in History in particular, but that the gender imbalance at junior and senior level has not been addressed.

The Deputy Librarian reported that the Librarian has had valuable discussions with the Head of School regarding the Library-related recommendations arising from the review. In closing the discussion, the VP/CAO welcomed the approval of a second post in Gender and Women's Studies, one of the recommendations from the previous review of the School, and recommended that guidelines for quality reviews include module structures in TEP.

Action: Procedures for School reviews to include module structures in TEP.

QC/17-18/32 Progress Report for the M.Th.
The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences spoke to the progress report for the M.Th. He reported that while most of the recommendations are in train or have been implemented, some are outside the jurisdiction of the Faculty. The new modules proposed in the course restructuring plan have been approved by the Graduate Studies Committee and the implementation of the recommendations regarding assessment methods is ongoing, with the issue of inter-institutional marking to be formally tabled as an agenda item at the February meeting of the Course Management Committee. The reviewers recommended that a designated staff member be appointed in the Academic Registry as a contact point for the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI). While this has yet to be implemented, an administrator has been appointed in CITI with full access to SITS.

The Academic Secretary commended the successful outcome of the review and stressed the need to escalate the recommendation for a contact point in the Academic Registry to the Director of the

Registry. The Quality Officer undertook to raise this with the Director of the Registry on behalf of the VP/CAO, and to bring a response to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer closed the discussion.

Action: The Quality Officer to raise the recommendation for a contact point in the Academic Registry with the Director of the Registry.

QC/17-18/33 Progress Report for the School of English
The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies chaired the item as the VP/CAO is a member of the School of English. The Dean of AHSS reported that many of the review recommendations are in train – the undergraduate curriculum is being overhauled in the context of TEP and a new role to co-ordinate the M.Phil programmes has been created. With regard to the recommendation that all assessed work at undergraduate and masters' level should be submitted electronically, the Dean reported that the School has agreed to implement this on a phased basis from Hilary Term 2018. The vacant Chair of English was appointed before Christmas and it is planned to appoint a Professor in Literary Practice in 2018. The School will continue to seek the appointment of the 1977 Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Dean and invited comment from the Committee. A committee member noted that the recommendation to appoint a Faculty IT partner had not been implemented and was connected to the restructuring of IT Services. She queried whether this appointment could be facilitated by IT services. She also noted that the issues around Wifi availability and space would not be addressed by the Arts Building refurbishment and suggested that these issues needed to be highlighted.

With regard to the recommendation to provide training in research methods for postgrads in the School, the Quality Officer reported that the Dean of Graduate Studies is working with the Library to develop a generic module on data management and skills. The Deputy Librarian queried whether the module should be self-administered on-line but noted that there would be difficulties in confirming whether students had completed the course.

The Academic Secretary, referring to the practice outlined in the progress report of re-categorising Teaching Assistants (TAs) as Visiting Research Fellows in order to ensure that they can be set up on Blackboard, queried whether there had been any follow up on this as it has been raised on a number of occasions by external reviewers. The Quality Officer clarified that there are a number of issues related to Blackboard, including uploading of modules and access for student and adjunct staff. The Committee representative from IT Services queried whether these issues had been raised with IT Services or whether they were falling between the cracks, as they are not School-based recommendations. Another member clarified that programme co-ordinators should be able to add TAs to the list of people authorised to access Blackboard, and that this would resolve the problem rather than having to creating a new category for TAs.

With regard to the recommendation to introduce a workload allocation model, it was noted that there is a Faculty workload model and a College policy on same. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer recommended that in future external reviewers be directed to look at workloads as part of a School review.

Actions:
(i) Reviewers to be directed to consider workloads as part of a School review.
(ii) The Committee representative from IT Services to clarify with IT Services the mechanism for adding TAs to Blackboard.

Section B
B.1 ISSE Index Scores across Designated Awarding Bodies (DAB)
The Quality Officer advised that the ISSE Index Scores across all the Designated Awarding Bodies (DAB) are available on the ISSE website for first time. She advised that the highest scores for each index were highlighted in green in the circulated document and the impact of size and fee structure on these scores could be seen, with high scores being recorded for institutions with small student numbers and a high fee income.

There was no other business and the meeting closed.