



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

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The University of Dublin**

**Quality Committee**

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the  
10 May 2018, 3.00 – 5.00pm, Boardroom House 1

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**Present:**

Professor Chris Morash, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Chair)  
Professor Darryl Jones, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Professor Mary McCarron, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences  
Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science  
Professor Gillian Martin, Senior Lecturer  
Ms Geraldine Ruane, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary  
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer  
Professor David Lewis, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science  
Professor Aonghus McNabola, 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  
Professor Catherine Darker, Faculty of Health Sciences  
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian  
Vice-President, Graduate Students' Union  
Education Officer, Students' Union

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office (Secretary)

**Apologies:**

Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Ms. Laura Conway-McAuley, IT Services  
Ms. Victoria Butler, Secretary's Office

**In attendance:**

Mr Paul Mangan, Director of Estates and Facilities for *QC/17-18/052 – Review of Estates and Facilities*

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### **QC/17-18/049 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 19 April 2018**

The draft minutes of the meeting of the 19 April 2018 were approved with one correction.

### **QC/17-18/050 Matters arising**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (VP/CAO) reported that the following were approved by Council on the 9 May – the Implementation Plan for the Joint Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (QC/17-18/044), the Implementation Plan for the Trinity Long Room Hub (TLRH) (QC/17-18/045), the 2016/17 consolidated Annual Faculty Quality Report (AFQR) (QC/17-18/037), and the implementation of the review of the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology (QC/16-17/048). With regard to the review of the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology, the VP/CAO informed the Committee that the Implementation Plan will go to both Council and Board for approval, as the restructuring elements require Board approval. An update on progress will come to the Quality Committee in March or April 2019.

The Quality Officer reported that the revised Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedure (QC/17-18/047) was discussed at the Marino Institute of Education (MIE) Associated Colleges Degrees Committee (ACDC) on the 9 May and would be considered by the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) ACDC on the 30 May before consideration by Board on the 27 June. Referencing the requirement for more structured training for teaching assistants, which has arisen as an issue in quality reviews and in AFQRs, she reported that the Graduate Studies Committee had approved a new online stand-alone training module for TAs at its April meeting. Directors of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate (DTLP) will be set up with immediate online access to the module and emailed seeking their views on how the module can be effectively promoted in Schools.

### **QC/17-18/051 Quality Committee call-over log**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that all items on the call-over log were being addressed.

- (i) **Interfaith requirements of the student population:** In relation to item *QC/17-18/013 - Quality review of the Chaplaincy*, the Secretary has been invited to provide an update to the June meeting on plans to address the interfaith requirements of a more diverse student population.
- (ii) **Mechanism for adding TAs to Blackboard:** Regarding the recommendation that a communication exercise be undertaken to inform Schools that TAs can be assigned a visiting VLE code allowing them to be manually enrolled on Blackboard, the Academic Secretary highlighted the need to assign ownership to the action. The VP/CAO said that ownership lay with IT Services and the Quality Officer undertook to notify the IT Services representative, who was not present at the meeting.

### **QC/17-18/052 Review of Estates and Facilities**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Director of Estates and Facilities, Mr Paul Mangan, to the meeting to speak to the review report. The Director welcomed the Reviewers' findings and in particular their support for the restructuring of the Directorate. He acknowledged the many positive comments contained in the report and noted that some of the recommendations are already being addressed including the need for better internal and external communication, for which help had been sought from the College's Public Affairs and Communications Office. Following the 2017 external review of the College Safety Office, an implementation plan has been developed and approved by the College's Safety Committee. The Reviewers made suggestions regarding the collection of statistics and KPIs to identify items such as property efficiency, space allocation and energy use, and Estates and Facilities has commenced work on this integrating these into function areas.

Mr Mangan reported that some of the review recommendations are outside the control of the area and require policy change and resource input to fully implement them. These include investment in infrastructure and space management both of which require increased budgetary allocation. It was noted that a university of Trinity's size and complexity would expect to have three full-time equivalent positions dedicated to space management, whereas Trinity currently has one. The recommendation that the Director of Estates and Facilities be involved in the detailed preparation of the Estates Strategy also requires a change approval.

The VP/CAO invited comment from the Chief Operating Officer (COO). Ms Ruane reported that all of the functional areas under her remit have undergone recent restructuring and that work has been undertaken to drive more efficiencies through the use of shared administrative service areas. She highlighted the difficulty experienced by Estates and Facilities in maintaining services and addressing backlog maintenance with reduced resources.

The VP/CAO thanked Mr Mangan and invited comments from the Committee. The Deputy Librarian expressed concern regarding the issue of funding for backlog maintenance. The Director of Estates and Facilities reported that government funding for maintenance had been provided by the HEA for a number of years but that it had ceased in 2006/07 with the onset of the economic crisis. He clarified that the College's Strategic Plan had identified a goal to invest 1% of its turnover in existing infrastructure, equating to €3m/year, but that currently only €1.5 – 2m is available. He noted that property management groups recommend at least 2% (of estimated current construction cost of modern equivalent asset) on routine maintenance. He advised that a multi-annual plan will be submitted to the Capital Review Group (CRG) in this regard, which will prioritise tasks to be undertaken in years 1, 2 and 3.

In relation to the recommendation to commission a conservation plan, the Deputy Librarian queried whether this would be undertaken by Turnberry Consulting as part of the Estates Strategy. Mr Mangan clarified that this is not included in the work being undertaken by Turnberry but that a conservation plan will be required and expected by the city council, and it will be developed as part of the Estates Infrastructure & Development Plan.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that some of the review observations (5.3.7 - dispersed location of academic departments and 5.3.9 – high proportion of category C buildings) would be addressed as part of the Estates Strategy and resulting campus masterplan. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer suggested that these recommendations/observations should be denoted in the Implementation Plan as being addressed through the Estates Strategy. The COO noted that the Bursar had been involved in the review and had met with the Reviewers during the on-site visit.

A Committee member expressed disappointment that the Review team had not visited the Trinity campuses at St. James' and Tallaght hospital during the site visit as this would have highlighted the complexity of providing off-campus services to sites such as the new Institute of Population Health in Tallaght and demonstrated that the remit of Estates and Facilities extends beyond TBSI in Pearse St. The VP/CAO queried whether the remit of Estates and Facilities extended to these locations and Mr Mangan confirmed that Estates and Facilities has full responsibility for the Trinity campus in St. James' and has oversight of the servicing of the Trinity campus in Tallaght hospital, which is subcontracted out. The VP/CAO recommended that this issue be addressed in the implementation plan. The Quality Officer stated that the four sites considered for a review team visit included Dartry and TTEC, which had been visited, and Santry and Islandbridge which had not. She gave a commitment to include the clinical sites in future reviews of Estates and Facilities.

In response to a query, Mr Mangan clarified that improved communication to both internal and external audiences was required – internally to address a perceived lack of consultation regarding the restructuring of the area and externally to better promote what Estates and Facilities does to the College community and beyond. With regard to improved Teaching and Learning spaces, Mr Mangan highlighted the importance of working with the Trinity Education Project to establish exactly what is required in order to adapt teaching spaces for the TEP. He noted that most learning spaces are contained in the Arts Building and reported that he had inputted to the Arts Building refresh project.

The Quality Officer asked whether there was any update on the implementation of the Quadra Report, which reviewed the role and remit of the College Safety Office in advance of the appointment of a new College Safety Officer. Mr Mangan reported that a delay in the appointment of the new Safety Officer had resulted in a longer timescale for implementation of the Quadra recommendations. The Dean of Health Sciences stressed the importance of addressing any disconnect between Estates and Facilities and the Estates Strategy. The Deputy Librarian welcomed the recommendation to streamline the management process in relation to small to medium size projects, and to improve transparency around the charging system operated by Estates and Facilities.

The VP/CAO thanked Mr Mangan and reported that the review would proceed to Board for approval and that an Implementation Plan would be brought to the Committee in the next academic year.

**QC/17-18/053 Progress Report for the School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences \*\* (Appendix 1)**

The Dean of Health Sciences spoke to the Progress Report for the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences which was circulated with papers for the meeting.

The Dean reported that many of the review recommendations had been addressed. The School is working with Global Relations regarding a communications and marketing strategy and the contract for the School's instructional designer has been extended to 2020 to support the development of online courses. A succession plan is in motion to support the development of potential Heads of School and a re-structuring of the administrative team and associated reporting lines was completed in December 2017. A review of the terms of reference of School Committees has also been completed. The planned 20% reduction in contact hours on the new Pharmacy Integrated Programme and postgraduate taught programmes is on track to be achieved for the beginning of the academic year 2018/19. The Dean commended the School for its work on the integrated Pharmacy programme, reporting that the first cohort is moving to its final year in 2018/19 and undertaking clinical placements.

With regard to incentivising research activity, the Dean reported progress in assisting staff applications for funding. Sabbaticals and an academic leave of absence policy have been in place since December 2017 and events for staff upskilling are ongoing. The new School overheads policy cannot be implemented, however, without FSD being able to provide a breakdown of overheads by PI. When this becomes possible the School will begin implementing the policy.

The VP/CAO thanked the Dean and opened the discussion to the floor. The provision by FSD of overhead breakdown by PI was discussed, and the Dean of FEMS clarified that while FSD is providing overhead budgets there is no information regarding the source of the budgets. Until this issue is resolved the School cannot implement its new overhead policy. With regard to the approval of funding for an additional administrative post, the Dean reported that the new Baseline Budgetary Model (BBM) provides Schools with control over their own budgets and the flexibility to prioritise how they spend their money. The maintenance of research/laboratory equipment is an on-going issue for the School as the cost cannot be covered by the School's BBM budgets or reserves. The

importance of having high quality research equipment was emphasised by the Dean, who noted that many masters students are coming from industry and have an expectation that the research equipment available to them in the School will be comparable to that available in the industry environment. The issue of reducing contact hours on the Pharmacy programme and taught postgraduate programmes to release time for research was raised and it was noted that the inclusion of on-line teaching did not always facilitate a reduction in workload, as on-line can be resource intensive. The Dean of Health Sciences agreed, noting that the effort required to deliver on-line courses is usually front-loaded and on-going. She concluded by commending the School on the development of the MPharm.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Dean and reported that the progress report would go to Council for approval with the minutes of the meeting.

#### **QC/17-18/054 Procedure for Focus Groups**

The VP/CAO invited the Quality Officer to speak to the draft Procedure for Focus Groups which was circulated with the papers. The Quality Officer reminded the Committee that the Dean of Health Sciences had requested that a procedure be developed to provide guidance to Schools on the conduct of focus groups for the purpose of module and programme evaluation (QC/16-17/035). She acknowledged those committee members and other colleagues who had provided feedback on the draft procedure. She invited the Committee to consider the procedure which, if endorsed, will be communicated to Schools in time for the 2018/19 academic year.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- Clarify within the document that the procedure can be used as both a standalone assessment/feedback mechanism or in conjunction with other forms of evaluation (sections 3.1, 4.2 and 6.1);
- The document should outline that students should always receive feedback on the focus group, regardless of whether any changes will arise from it (section 5.4 and 6.14);
- After discussion, it was agreed to delete reference to recording/taping the focus group (section 6.4) and the management of retention and disposal of recordings in 6.13;
- The document should clarify that the procedure does not apply to focus groups conducted for any other purpose, e.g. qualitative research, for which individual consent and ethics committee approval may be required;
- The timing of the focus groups should be considered so as to facilitate the broadest student participation (i.e. not close to exams etc.);
- A template for the information sheet to participants should be included as an Appendix to the document.

The Academic Secretary reported that she had conversations with CAPSL regarding the provision of workshops on Facilitation Skills for staff and students. The VP/CAO suggested that a resource bank of appropriately trained staff and students could be established, providing Schools with access to trained personnel to facilitate focus groups. He also suggested that students could be trained as note-takers.

The Quality Officer thanked Committee members for their input and undertook to revise the document to reflect the points raised. The CAPSL facilitation skills training module was welcomed by the Student Union representatives, who suggested that student reps could undertake this training. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that this approach was in the spirit of Student Partnership Agreement. He thanked the Quality Officer, noting that the procedure was approved subject to the changes outlined above and that a revised document would be brought back to the Committee for noting at a future meeting.

*Action/decision: The Quality Officer to revise the procedure to reflect the Committee suggestions.*

### **QC/17-18/055 Annual Dialogue meeting with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided a verbal report to the Committee on the annual dialogue meeting with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) which took place on the 9 May 2018. He reported that the meeting had been attended by the Provost, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Students, the Registrar, Chief Operating Officer, the Academic Secretary and the Quality Officer.

The Vice-Provost reported that QQI operates under legislation and that the quality processes in place in the universities provide assurance for government that money invested in third level education is being well spent. He stressed the need to find a better way of 'telling our story' and reporting on the work being done to assure the quality of our education provision, as if we don't there is a danger that we will need to account for things in a more formal way e.g. the Research Evaluation Framework (REF) in the UK. The Academic Secretary agreed that there is a need to demonstrate what we do in a more visible way, both at an institutional and a sectoral level. The VP/CAO reported that QQI queried whether Trinity could provide a public report on research performance, noting that both UCC and NUIG had conducted research evaluations which were made public.

*The Dean of Health Sciences left the meeting.*

The Dean of EMS spoke to the quality of space, increasing workload, and the staff:student ratios as being important messages to relay to government too. He suggested that through the QQI we have a direct channel to the minister which we needed to use.

The VP/CAO suggested that a sectoral-level conversation would produce metrics around what the universities do well but that different metrics will suit different universities. For example a metric showing increased EU funding demonstrates that there is less Irish funding available. He stressed the need to demonstrate the threats to the education sector, as well as our successes.

A Committee member highlighted the need to develop a narrative that addresses the levers of change in the sector, which includes the public, and that highlights the value of scholarship as well as research output. The VP/CAO agreed that a communication strategy is required. The Dean of EMS stressed the importance of appealing to constituencies that can put pressure on government to increase third-level funding. He noted that the universities already have the support of industry but that students should also be appealed to as they have a strong voice.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and the Committee for their input, and closed the discussion.

### **QC/17-18/056 Any other business**

There was no other business and the meeting closed.