



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

**Trinity College Dublin,
The University of Dublin**

Quality Committee

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the
1 October 2020, 2.00 – 4.00pm via ZOOM

Quality Committee

Present

Professor Jürgen Barkhoff, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, *Chair*
Professor Sylvia Draper, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics & Science
Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services
Ms. Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Ms. Marie Gore, Interim Director, Project Management Officer
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Professor Jan de Vries, Faculty of Health Sciences
Professor Gizem Arikan, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Ms. Abhisweta Bhattacharjee, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union
Ms Megan O' Connor, Education Officer Students' Union

In attendance

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office, *Secretary*
Ms. Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary

Apologies

Professor Gail McElroy, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Orla Sheils, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian
Mr Henry Wallace, Interim Chief Risk Officer
Ms Vickey Butler, Secretary's Office

In attendance:

Professor Catherine McCabe, Dean of Students, for *QC/20-21/001 Report on Studentsurvey.ie 2018/19*. Professor Andrew Burke, Dean, Trinity Business School, and Professor Paul Coughlan, Director of Accreditation & Quality Assurance, Trinity Business School for *QC/20-21/00 Review of the Trinity Business School*.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer opened the meeting by welcoming the new Quality Committee members – Prof Martine Smith (Dean of Graduate Studies), Prof Gizem Arikan (AHSS representative), Ms Abhisweta Bhattacharjee (Vice-President of the GSU) and Ms Megan O' Connor (Education Officer of the SU).

QC/20-21/001 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 9 June 2020

The draft minutes of the meeting of the 9 June 2020 were approved.

QC/20-21/002 Matters arising

(i) QC/19-20/042 Review of the Financial Services Division (FSD)

The review of the Financial Services Division (FSD) was approved by Board on the 16 September 2020. The Implementation Plan will come to Quality Committee in Michaelmas Term.

(ii) QC/19-20/043 Response to Audit Committee report

The Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership of the Quality Committee were revised to respond to the Audit Committee report and will be considered by Board on the 14 October. Revisions to the Statutes to allow for amendments to the Terms of Reference were approved by Board in September.

(iii) QC/19-20/044 Review of Marino Institute of Education (MIE) QA Procedures

The MIE QA Policies and Procedures were approved by Council on the 30th September 2020.

(iv) QC/19-20/045 Quality Risk Register

A new high risk has been added to the College Risk Register as follows: *Without a redesign of module/programme learning outcomes and pedagogy due to the need to reflect a hybrid mode of delivery there is a risk to the academic quality and standards in assessment and examination.*

(v) QC/19-20/046

The QC self-evaluation survey was administered in June 2020 and the report is included on the agenda for discussion.

QC/20-21/003 Update on the Institutional Review

The Quality Officer confirmed the new dates for the rescheduled institutional review as the 18th – 22nd October 2021 and outlined the revised timelines for the submission of key documents to QQI. She reported that at this stage it was uncertain whether the review would take place on-site or virtually. The University of Limerick underwent a virtual institutional review in June 2020, and it is anticipated that lessons learned from this review will be discussed at the IUA meetings on the 12th October 2020. Ms Smith also advised that the review team remains unchanged and, in response to a request from the Dean of FEMS, she provided some background information about the review team members. The Dean queried how the impact of COVID-19 would be addressed in review documentation. The Quality Officer clarified that the impact of COVID-19 will be addressed in the Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR), due to be submitted to QQI in February 2021, and will also be woven into the Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISER), due in August 2021.

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

QC/20-21/004 Report on the Studentsurvey.ie (UG & PGT) 2018/19

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Dean of Students, Professor Catherine McCabe, to the meeting. The Dean noted the high participation rate in the survey this year (34%) and thanked the Students' Unions for their support in encouraging students to complete the survey. She spoke to a presentation on the high-level points in the survey.

The Quality Officer reported that the question set next year will include questions on the move to on-line learning, which will make it possible to benchmark Trinity against other institutions. The proposed questions will be trialled in Trinity in Michaelmas Term.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Dean and welcomed the increase in response rate to the survey. He noted that the gap is beginning to close in areas where Trinity has trailed in the past but stressed that there was no room for complacency. He highlighted the need to analyse the low scores in Effective Teaching Practice and Faculty Interaction and to act on any recommendations arising from that analysis. The Senior Lecturer also welcomed the improved response rate to the survey, noting that in previous years the low response had prevented the data from being useful to Schools. He reported anecdotal evidence of more engagement by students with lecture material

through Zoom than in face-to-face lectures and suggested that the results of the survey should be considered when designing new online modules.

The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed the report as being very useful but expressed concern at the relatively low PGT response rate (28%). She stressed the need to interrogate the PGT responses to inform the PG renewal project. The Vice-President of the Graduate Students Union (VPGSU) advised that PGT students had raised reduced communication with supervisors during the lockdown, the need for improved feedback on assessed work and improved support from the Careers Service for the transition to employment as issues of concern.

The Students' Union Education Officer stressed the need to properly resource the Academic Registry and the Director of Student Services reported that targeted resources are being earmarked for this. Other points raised during the discussion included the need to investigate further how improvements in student/staff interactions can be achieved, the level and nature of the supports that academic staff are being asked to provide outside of the academic area. The VP/CAO thanked the Dean of Students and reported that the survey results would be discussed at Faculty Executives, Undergraduate Studies Committee, Graduate Studies Committee and then at Council.

Action/Decision:

004.1: The Quality Committee recommended the report on the Studentsurvey.ie (UG & PGT) 2018/19 to Council for consideration and approval.

QC/20-21/005 Amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee

The Quality Officer spoke to a document outlining proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee for consideration by Board. She reported that the Terms of Reference are updated regularly to reflect internal and external developments, and that the proposed changes required an amendment to the Statutes, which was approved by Board in September.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer. A member queried the wording of footnote 2(b) and the Quality Officer undertook to amend it. It was also recommended that the wording of point three should be amended to reflect the hierarchy of 'procedures' over 'processes.'

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer.

Action/Decision:

005.1: The Quality Committee noted the amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Quality Committee

QC/20-21/006 Quality Committee self-evaluation survey 2019/20

The Quality Officer spoke to a report on the Quality Committee self-evaluation survey 2019/20, which she took as read. She noted that the Audit Committee report had commented on previous low response rates to the survey, but that the response rate (81%) was the best that had been achieved in recent years. The appointment of an external member with expertise in quality methodologies, as per the revised Committee ToR, will address concerns raised by members regarding the Committee's skills and experience in advance of the Institutional Review. The impact of the move to online lectures on the quality of teaching and learning will be addressed in a report by the Academic Secretary, which will come to the next QC meeting. Issues regarding the move to online raised in External Examiner reports are being escalated to the Senior Lecturer and will be presented to Undergraduate Studies in November 2020 in conjunction with a presentation by the Academic Registry on Covid-19 impacts on examination and assessment in Semester 2, 2020.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and invited comments from the Committee. A member remarked that, in his experience, it took a full year for new members to get up to speed on quality issues and suggested that a more detailed initiation on quality issues for new members would be helpful. The Quality Officer undertook to address this in next years' induction for new members.

Regarding quality assurance of the award of Trinity degrees for credits taken abroad, the Vice-President of the GSU reported stress-related issues for some students arising from a lack of support in the overseas institution. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that a rigorous vetting process was conducted as part of the exchange set-up and that the module abroad co-ordinator would normally be very familiar with the host institution. He noted, however, that in some instances relationships with the host institution were below expectations.

Action/Decision:

006.1: The Quality Committee noted and approved the report on the 2019/20 self-evaluation survey.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies left the meeting at this point

QC/20-21/007 Review of the Trinity Business School

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed Prof Andrew Burke, Dean of the Trinity Business School, and Prof Paul Coughlan, Director of Accreditation & Quality Assurance, Trinity Business School to the meeting for the report on the review of the Trinity Business School. He noted that the purpose of the review was to determine whether the external accreditation processes that the School undergoes can substitute a formal review of the School under College Quality Procedures.

The Quality Officer outlined the process undertaken by the Quality Office and the TBS and reported that the outcome was that no material gap existed that would warrant an additional external quality review. The Quality Office is committed to streamlining quality review processes where possible, and she noted that a similar approach was taken to the review of CRANN (2017/18) and the Academic Registry (2016/17).

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and invited Professors Burke and Coughlan to comment. Professor Burke advised the Committee that the achievement of a triple accreditation, and in particular the attainment of a full 5-year EQUIS re-accreditation with no conditions, was a significant achievement for the School. He also noted that the School was seeking accreditation by AMBA and AACSB at the same time - AMBA accreditation took place virtually in September 2020, the first of its kind for Trinity, and the AACSB accreditation will take place in November 2020. Professor Coughlan reported that each of the accreditation bodies has its own set of standards and principles, and that the work required to meet these requirements is substantial. He noted that the accreditation processes provide an evidence-based and systematic framework with which to question, understand and improve the way in which the School operates. He also stressed that it is critical to engage stakeholders in the process as it raises awareness of quality and the link between quality, operation and strategy.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Professors Burke and Coughlan and opened the discussion to members. Committee members asked the following questions:

1. How does the School manage the implementation of recommendations with a financial implication?
2. Does the process meet the requirement of a quality review in terms of publication of the results?
3. How does having an Alumni and Corporate Relations Manager benefit the School?
4. Can we borrow more broadly from these processes in terms of our own quality processes?

The Dean of the Business School advised that the School consults with AACSB and EQUIS on the financial elements of its strategy, noting that this included the feasibility study on the Trinity Business School itself. Consequently, most of the recommendations that have a financial implication have already been considered by the School. With regard to publication of accreditation reports, the Dean reported that the accreditation standards are in the public domain and that he would be happy to share the accreditation reports in the Trinity public domain. He reported that the School has a corporate relations strategy which ensures that a whole-School approach is taken to corporate and alumni events. He concluded by offering to provide a Case Study on the TBS accreditation process for the Institutional Review.

The VP/CAO thanked Professors Burke and Coughlan and closed the discussion by wishing them well with the upcoming accreditation visit.

Action/Decision:

007.1: The Quality Committee recommended the review of the Trinity Business School to Council.

QC/20-21/008 Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting closed.