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Trinity College Dublin,
The University of Dublin

Quality Committee

Minutes of the Quality Committee meeting of the
22 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 Orla Sheils, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences
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. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer
Professor Breiffni Fitzgerald, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Professor Jan de Vries, Faculty of Health Sciences
Mrs. Jessie Kurtz, Deputy Librarian
Mr. Henry Wallace, Interim Chief Risk Officer
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
Ms. Marie Gore, Interim Director, Project Management Officer
Ms Vickey Butler, Secretary's Office

In attendance:
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services, Innovation and Digital Platforms for item A.5
*Report on the Emergency Response to Covid-19 and preparations for Teaching, Learning
and Assessment for 2020/21* and item A.6 *Approved changes to services supporting Teaching
& Learning in Trinity.*

QC/20-21/009   Draft minutes of the meeting of the 1 October 2020
The draft minutes of the meeting of the 1 October 2020 were approved.

QC/20-21/010   Matters arising

(i)   **QC/20-21/004 Report on the National Student Survey.ie (UG & PGT) 2018/19**.
        The report on the National Student Survey.ie (UG & PG) will be considered by Council on
        the 25 November 2020.

(ii)   **QC/20-21/005 Amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee**
        The revised Terms of Reference of the Quality Committee were approved by Board on
        the 14 October 2020. The nomination of an external member is under discussion with the
        Provost.

(iii)   **QC/20-21/007 Review of the Trinity Business School**
        The report on the review of the Trinity Business School was deferred from the meeting of
        the 20 October and will now be considered on the 25 November 2020.

QC/20-21/011   Update on the Institutional Review
The Quality Officer advised that draft chapters of the Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISER)
are due for submission to the Quality Office by the end of October. She reported good engagement
regarding the development of Case Studies to support the ISER, noting that 25 case studies had
been received to date. She acknowledged the contributions of two members of the Quality
Committee, Professor Jan de Vries and Professor Gizem Arikan, to the work of the ISER
Communication sub-group, particularly in the development of a College-wide survey to assess the
opinions of Quality in Trinity. The draft survey was trialed in three focus groups between August
and October 2020 comprising 19 academic and non-academic staff. Feedback from these focus
groups, as well as that from the ISER Communication sub-group, has informed the latest draft of
the survey instrument.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer queried whether members of the Communication sub-
group have experience in working with surveys, noting the importance of survey design in
successfully engaging with stakeholders and extracting useful data that will inform the
Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). Professor Arikan reported that she had extensive
experience of working with survey data and Professor de Vries stated that he was happy that the
process of designing the survey was robust.

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

QC/20-21/013   Procedures for Virtual Reviews
The Quality Officer introduced the draft Procedures for Virtual Reviews circulated with the
papers. She reported that the normal quality review process had been disrupted in March
2020 by the advent of Covid-19 leading to the cancellation of four reviews. A process for
conducting reviews virtually will be required while travel restrictions remained in place. She
reported that some universities had trialed virtual reviews at the end of the last academic
year, and that accreditation agencies had also conducted review visits online. Learnings from
these experiences have informed the development of the draft procedure. If approved by the
Committee, the procedure will be piloted in a planned review of Academic Practice in March
2021, before being applied to reviews of larger units such as Schools.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Quality Officer and invited comments
from the Committee. The Deputy Librarian suggested that selecting reviewers who have had
wide-ranging careers in institutions in Asia, America or Australia may help to incorporate
experience and diversity into the review team *in lieu* of appointing reviewers from those
continents. The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science suggested that section 6.1
should be amended to read '*located in countries within a two-hour GMT radius of the review*'
rather than '*from countries within a two-hour GMT radius of Dublin*', as it is proposed to
conduct a review in Singapore. With regard to the inclusion of 30-minute breaks between

meetings, the Dean suggested that the length of the break should be relative to the length of the meeting preceding it. She also suggested that having too many breaks may interrupt the flow of the meetings. Referring to the upper limit of eight on the number of attendees at a meeting, she sought clarification if this was inclusive or exclusive of the review team and the internal facilitator. The VP/CAO suggested that this section should be amended to read '*The maximum number of attendees at each meeting should not normally exceed eight.*' Noting the importance in the schedule of the meeting with the School Committee, he suggested that thought should be given as to how this and similar large meetings could be replaced in the virtual process. The Dean of FEMS suggested that section 6.4, second paragraph should read '*nominate a coordinator*' rather than '*allocate a coordinator*' and that the role of the coordinator should be more clearly defined, as the current wording attributes a level of seniority that is not intended for the role.

The Assistant Academic Secretary (Academic Affairs) suggested that Reviewers located on the east coast of the United States could be included on review teams if the five-hour time difference could be accommodated in the meeting schedule. With regard to the production of a video *in lieu* of a campus or School/Area tour, the Academic Secretary queried who would bear the cost of producing these videos and stressed that the production standards of the videos would need to be consistent across the reviews to ensure parity of experience between review teams. The Dean of Health Sciences suggested that Areas under review could do a 'walk-around' with an iPad as a means of giving review teams a sense of the physical environment and resources, and this suggestion was welcomed by the Committee. The VP/CAO concluded by suggesting that the Procedures be approved in principle, but that a revised version incorporating the Committee's suggestions be brought back to the next meeting for approval.

Action/Decision:
013.1: Revised Procedures for Virtual Reviews incorporating the Committee's suggestions to be brought to the next meeting of the Quality Committee for final approval.

QC/20-21/014   Report on the Emergency Response to Covid-19 and preparations for Teaching, Learning and Assessment for 2020/21
The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed Dr Geoffery Bradley, Head of Academic Services, Innovation and Digital Platforms to the meeting for the item. The Academic Secretary spoke to a presentation on her report which detailed the key findings of a survey of Directors of Teaching and Learning (UG & PG), conducted in May and June 2020, and outlined the structures and supports put in place to respond to the issues highlighted in the survey.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Academic Secretary and invited Dr Bradley to comment. Dr Bradley reported that IT Services had responded to the move to online teaching and assessment by increasing supports and training for technologies such as Blackboard Collaborate, Panopto, and Turnitin. He emphasised the importance of standardising the systems and products being used by teaching staff in order to ensure a consistent experience for students, and the importance of inclusivity and support for students with a disability through the use of, for example, captioning. He reported that IT Services had also provided support for online examinations and remote proctoring. Distributed responsibility for teaching and technology has resulted in IT Services only having responsibility for providing technical support in 20% of the 400 identified teaching spaces in Trinity, which is an issue of concern for staff using lecture theatres or rooms to set up for delivering and recording an online live class.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Dr Bradley and opened the discussion. A Committee member commended the report, stating that the validity of the results was relevant beyond the timeframe of the survey. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer agreed that while the survey captured the initial response to providing teaching and assessment, the

focus going forward would be on the impact on pedagogy, assessment and learning outcomes. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed that it was important to address the pedagogical shift brought about by the move to online delivery, and particularly its impact on the way teachers and students interact. In this regard, Dr Bradley reported that UK universities have been recording lectures and making them available to students for a number of years. The experience has resulted in some universities questioning the role of the lecture as the primary method of information transmission to students and Dr Bradley suggested that this may provide some learnings for Trinity.

The Dean of Health Sciences raised the issue of how training in online technologies could be provided for clinical teaching staff. She reported that some Health Sciences disciplines had included guest appearances by well-known alumni from around the world in their online lectures as a way to improve engagement with students, and suggested that there should be an opportunity to showcase such innovative approaches to colleagues across Trinity.

The Academic Secretary drew the Committee's attention to section 6 of the report, which detailed concerns raised by staff regarding the amount of time required to set-up lecture material for online delivery, and the impact of this on staff with caring responsibilities and on the ability of staff to continue to be research active. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that studies on the impact of the pandemic on researchers have shown that those with caring responsibilities, predominately women, are impacted to a greater extent in terms of their ability to continue their research than those without such responsibilities. The Education Officer of the Students' Union expressed concern regarding the resources available to IT Services to provide real-time technical support to lecturers during lectures. Dr Bradley stated that ideally IT Services would have visibility of the teaching technology in all 400 teaching spaces and be able to offer customised training to staff on the technologies available in whatever room they were going to be teaching in.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Ms Callaghan and Dr Bradley and stressed that addressing issues that affect the quality of teaching and learning must be a priority.

QC/20-21/015   Approved changes to services supporting teaching & learning in Trinity
The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited Dr Bradley to present his report on approved changes to services supporting teaching & learning in Trinity which was circulated with the papers. Dr Bradley highlighted the key issues on which Schools had sought advice and the recommendations to address these issues, which were approved at the Phased Resumption of Activities Group on the 9 September 2020. He advised that IT Services had worked with the Disability Services, the Secretary's Office and Academic Practice to address these issues.

The VP/CAO thanked Dr Bradley and remarked that there were ongoing issues with captioning as, among other issues, the Panopto software cannot accurately recognize foreign accents. The Quality Officer voiced a concern that the decision on the procurement of proctoring software would be left to individuals, resulting in students enrolled in cross-School programmes needing to engage with two different proctoring solutions under exam conditions. Proctoring of real-time exams is viewed as an assessment option that provides for high levels of academic integrity which could result in an increased demand for proctoring this academic year.
The Senior Lecturer agreed, stating that this is particularly important for Scholarship examinations. He also suggested that while some Schools are happy to continue with open book exams, others may wish to revert to real-time examinations where proctoring will be required, which could result in an increased demand for proctoring this year.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Dr Bradley and in closing the discussion, acknowledged the ongoing work to support Schools.

QC/20-21/016 Themes arising from Quality Reviews 2018 – 2020

The Quality Officer spoke to a report on the key themes in recommendations arising from quality reviews conducted between 2018 and 2020. Advising that the reviews had taken place before the pandemic, she suggested that the context for some of the recommendations had changed e.g. those relating to space. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer expressed surprise that issues regarding the curriculum, student experience or research had not been captured in the report and that the focus appeared to be on what College needed to address rather than School or Unit-level actions. The Quality Officer advised that the period in which reviews were conducted coincided with the Trinity Education Project and that all review team members had received a TEP briefing including the new curriculum architecture as part of the review process. The Dean of Health Sciences said that she would like to see more granularity in terms of the School-level recommendations and the Quality Officer advised that Programme reviews tended to provide more granularity regarding the curriculum than School reviews. The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science observed that there was nothing in the report about the culture of a School and the VP/CAO remarked that individual School reports provided a good indication of a School's culture. He suggested that a revised report to include themes relating to the curriculum, the student experience and research, should be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, and closed the discussion.

Action/Decision:
016.1: A revised report to include themes relating to the curriculum, the student experience and research to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

QC/20-21/017   Any other business
There was no other business and the meeting closed.