



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
14 January 2021, 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 Gail McElroy, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies
Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies
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. Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary
Ms. Megan O' Connor, Education Officer Students' Union
Ms. Abhisweta Bhattacharjee, Vice-President Graduate Students' Union

In attendance

Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office, *Secretary*

Apologies

Ms. Marie Gore, Interim Director, Project Management Officer
Ms. Vickey Butler, Secretary's Office
Ms. Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

In attendance:

Professor Ruth Barton, Head of School of Creative Arts, for item *A.6 Report of the School of Creative Arts review Implementation Taskforce*.
Professor Michael Gill, Head of the School of Medicine, and Ms. Shannon Keegan, Quality, Accreditation and Rankings Manager, School of Medicine, for item *A.7 Implementation Plan for the School of Medicine review*.

QC/20-21/026 Draft minutes of the meeting of the 12 November 2020

The draft minutes of the meeting of the 12 November 2020 were approved.

QC/20-21/027 Matters arising

1. *QC/20-21/021 Implementation Plan for the Irish Medical Council (IMC) accreditation of the School of Medicine:*
The interim Implementation Plan was approved by Council via the Quality Committee minutes on the 25 November 2020.
2. *QC/20-21/022 Implementation Plan for the Financial Services Division (FSD):*
The Implementation Plan was approved by Board via the Quality Committee minutes on the 16 December 2020.
3. *QC/20-21/023 Revised Procedure for Virtual Reviews:*
The Procedure for Virtual Reviews was approved by Council via the Quality Committee minutes on the 25 November 2020.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that the review of the Trinity Business School, which had been considered by the Quality Committee at its meeting on the 1st October 2020, had not been approved by Council at its meeting in November 2020. Council felt that the desktop review of the School's triple accreditation processes, while adhering to Trinity's policies and procedures, was not fully equivalent to a School review, accreditation reviews having a different objective and focus to quality reviews. The Council discussion had also highlighted the fact that the Faculty Dean did not have input to the desktop review process and noted that the report had contained some factual inaccuracies regarding the School's reporting lines and role titles. The VP/CAO concluded by stating that Council had recommended that an amended version of the report be submitted to Council in February to properly represent (i) the governance structure of the TBS within the university and (ii) the description of TBS' internal governance and staffing, and that Council would then make its final decision on the report. The VP/CAO undertook to circulate the final Council minute of the discussion to the Committee for information.

QC/20-21/028 Update on the Institutional Review

The Quality Officer reported that the Annual Quality Report (AQR) to QQI, one of the key documents to be submitted to the Institutional Review Team, was on the agenda for discussion along with a portfolio of Case Studies in Quality. She also advised that a report on the 'We Value Your Opinion of Quality in Trinity' survey would be included on the agenda for the February meeting. With regard to the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER), she reported that feedback has been provided to the function leads on their draft chapters. A thematic analysis of CINNTE Review Reports to date will be launched by QQI on the 29th January 2021 and the report will be included on the agenda for the next Quality Committee meeting. The key challenges outlined in the draft report include the efficiency of governance structures, maintaining policies and an overall quality assurance system, and ensuring that policies are consistently implemented across the institution.

QC/20-21/029 Annual Quality Report (AQR) 2019/20 to QQI

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the draft Annual Quality Report (AQR) 2019/20 to QQI, noting that the format of the report had changed since last year and that it would form part of the documentation for the institutional review. The Quality Officer advised that the document had been discussed at a meeting of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Team (ISET) on the 13th January 2021 and that feedback from ISET members would be included in the

final version to Council and Board. She reported that broad engagement had already occurred on the draft report and she invited feedback from Quality Committee members on inaccuracies or information gaps in the report by the 22nd January 2021. She concluded by thanking Dr Liz Donnellan, Quality Office, for her work on the report.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and asked her to outline the key differences in the report compared to last year. The Quality Officer stated that the revised report template facilitated a better narrative around enhancement and impact, and better alignment between the sections of the AQR, the QQI Core Statutory QA guidelines and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). She noted that the HEIs had been consulted by QQI in the development of the revised AQR template.

The Vice-President of the Graduate Students Union joined the meeting at this point.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and invited comments from the Committee. The Dean of STEM asked whether the Annual Faculty Quality Report (AFQR) had been mentioned in the report and the Quality Officer confirmed that it had. The VP/CAO pointed out that the Action Plans were highlighted as an enhancement to the AFQR and suggested that the AFQR should be included in the list of Annual Reports on page 13. The Dean of STEM, speaking to the list of Strategic Appointments on page 13, queried why Chair appointments had not also been included and the Quality Officer explained that the list included strategic appointments at an institutional level or those related to Quality. The Dean of Health Sciences reported that a revised process for the appointment of strategic Chairs had been developed by Human Resources and the Quality Officer undertook to liaise with HR regarding the details. The Deputy Librarian said that she would circulate the report to the Library Senior Management Team and feedback any comments by the required date. The VP/CAO thanked Committee members for their contributions and, in closing the discussion, suggested that passages in the document relating to Covid-19 should be highlighted for ease of reading and that key statements should be bolded.

Action/Decision:

029.1: *The Quality Committee approved the draft AQR. A revised version incorporating feedback from ISET and Quality Committee members will be submitted to Council and Board for approval in February and circulated to the February QC meeting for noting.*

QC/20-21/030 Case Studies in Quality

The Quality Officer introduced the item by saying that the call for case studies that exemplify quality was initiated in March 2019 in preparation for the institutional review. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic had subsequently impacted engagement with the College community on the review and the process of developing the case studies had become an effective way of engaging with staff on quality initiatives in their area. She reported that the key benefits of the case studies are that they demonstrate quality in practice and the diversity of participation in quality initiatives across the University. She advised the Committee that individual case studies will be selected to accompany the submission of the AQR to QQI, noting that in this regard case studies related to Covid-19 have been identified by QQI as an area of interest. She invited members to submit suggestions for case studies until the 22nd January 2021, noting that the final 'Case Studies in Quality' document will be submitted to meetings of the ISET and QC in February before being forwarded to Council and Board for approval.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and noted that the case studies read well and were very informative. This sentiment was echoed by other members of the Committee. The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and closed the discussion.

Action/Decision:

030.1: *The final version of the 'Case Studies in Quality' document will be submitted to the next Quality Committee meeting, prior to submission to Council and Board.*

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

QC/20-21/031 Quality Risk Register

This agenda item was brought forward as the meeting was running ahead of time.

The VP/CAO invited the Quality Officer to speak to the Quality Risk Register which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. Ms. Smith spoke to a Powerpoint presentation, highlighting that there were two risks rated as 'high' (Risks 1, 4), four 'new' risks (Risks 2, 3, 6 and 10) and two 'changed' risks (Risks 14, 15) since the last iteration of the register in June 2020.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer and invited comment from the interim Chief Risk Officer. Mr. Wallace stated that the Register was well put together and that the rating for the individual risks was appropriate. He noted that the two 'high' risks were on the College Risk Register last year and would remain on that Register. With regard to Risk 3¹, Mr. Wallace queried whether this should have a 'high' risk rating. He also suggested that this risk should be aligned with Risk 4². Finally, he suggested that a detailed timeline for completion of actions should be included on the Register in order to demonstrate that there is a plan in place to address the risks.

The VP/CAO thanked the Quality Officer for her presentation. He suggested rephrasing some risks to reflect the fact that the Risk Register would be read by an external audience. The interim Chief Risk Officer agreed but stressed the importance of not losing the essence of the risks. The Dean of STEM queried whether the impact of Covid-19 on the ability to recruit quality staff should be included as a risk, noting that the financial strain of the pandemic may impact the University's ability to offer attractive posts. The interim Chief Risk Officer responded that the risk is already included on the Academic Risk Register and is a standing risk on the College Risk Register. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the risk to students attaining their professional accreditation (Risk 10) was growing in seriousness, particularly in the case of Nursing & Midwifery and Medicine students whose placements were being impacted by the pandemic.

The Quality Officer thanked the meeting and in response to a query, clarified that the final Risk Register would incorporate feedback from the Institutional Self-Assessment Team (ISET) and the Quality Committee before being submitted to the Chief Risk Officer. The final Risk Register will be brought to the next QC meeting for noting.

Action/Decision:

031.1: *The Quality Committee approved the draft Quality Risk Register. The final version will be submitted to the February Quality Committee meeting for noting prior to submission to the Chief Risk Officer.*

¹ *The risk that students will not meet the requirements for professional registration (key competencies or hours) at time of graduation due to incomplete/deferral of professional placements as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.*

² *The risk to the University's reputation and recruitment of students onto academic programmes due to institutional arrangements with partner hospitals/placement providers, the availability of clinical tutors/supervisors for students on professional placements; and the quality of the student experience on the professional/clinical placement.*

QC/20-21/032 Report on the School of Creative Arts review implementation

The VP/CAO welcomed the Head of the School of Creative Arts to the meeting for the discussion of the Quality Review of the School of Creative Arts Implementation Plan. He advised the Committee that this was a progress report from the taskforce that had been established to oversee the implementation of the review recommendations. Professor Barton thanked the VP/CAO and, taking the report as read, highlighted the key recommendations arising from the review: to co-locate the School's three Disciplines and to resolve issues regarding the quality of its physical resources, to make a number of key strategic appointments, to restructure the reporting lines for professional staff and to reform the School's curriculum.

The VP/CAO thanked Professor Barton, noting that the complexity of the review was similar to that of the review of the School of Religions. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Graduate Studies queried the status of the recommendation to make a number of strategic appointments and Professor Barton clarified that while the ambition was to fill these vacancies, there was currently no funding available through the Faculty to do so. The Senior Lecturer asked whether there was a plan to secure additional funding for these appointments. The Dean of AHSS clarified that the BBM doesn't cover the current staffing costs of the Faculty and that the impact of Covid-19 on College finances would further impact resources available to recruit additional staff.

The VP/CAO advised that Schools will be reviewing their strategic plans in 2020/21 to respond to the College's new Strategic Plan and that this will provide opportunities to incorporate staffing plans. The review of the Music curriculum will also prepare the ground for attracting new staff. The Dean of STEM queried whether opportunities exist to attract additional funding through partnerships with other Schools in research areas such as Neuroscience and Computer Science. Professor Barton reported that the School's successful bid as part of the College Human Capital Initiative (HCI) application would enable it to develop its proposed MPhil in Creative Technologies to promote interdisciplinary opportunities.

The VP/CAO asked whether there was a timeline for the physical relocation of the School. Professor Barton reported that Estates and Facilities (E&F) had committed to making €800,000 available to fund the redevelopment of 191-3 Pearse street so that it can accommodate both Music and Film in new bespoke teaching rooms and offices while also retaining Drama's practice-based spaces in those buildings. The phased move of Drama and Film into Pearse St. is planned to occur during 2021/22, and the relocation of Music from House 5 will be delayed until the Pearse St. facility is completed. House 5 will then be returned to student accommodation.

The VP/CAO thanked Professor Barton and recommended the interim report to Council, noting that a final report will come to Quality Committee when the work of the taskforce is complete.

Action/Decision:

032.1: *The Quality Committee recommended the School of Creative Arts Quality Review Implementation Plan to Council for approval.*

QC/20-21/033 Implementation Plan for the School of Medicine review

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the Head of the School of Medicine, Professor Michael Gill, and the School of Medicine Accreditation Manager, Ms. Shannon Keagan, to the meeting. Professor Gill spoke to a slide presentation outlining the way in which the School has addressed the recommendations arising from the School of Medicine Review.

Professor Gill reported that the School plans to appoint a Professor of Medical Education in association with the development of a Discipline of Education, noting that the School is the

only Medical School in the country without a discipline that focuses on medical education. A review and restructuring of Postgraduate Education is being undertaken by the Director of Postgraduate Education with a view to establishing a small number of pillars or pathways with cross teaching and shared modules. A review of clinical lecturing posts is underway and, as part of that review, the structure and the balance of each post between clinical service, teaching and research will be considered. The structure of post-doctoral research fellowships aimed at postgraduate trainees will be considered and students will continue to be encouraged to undertake PhD and MD programmes. A research strategy has been developed by the Director of Research as part of the School Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and will focus on the School's strengths as well as allowing for engagement with emerging areas. Professor Gill stressed, however, that support for new research talent should not detract from the teaching mission of the School. A Quality, Accreditation and Rankings manager has been appointed to address ranking issues and to engage with the accreditation bodies.

Plans to streamline the internal structures of the School require further discussion at the School Executive, with input from the Faculty Dean, before an agreed model is brought forward to Council for approval. Noting that the recommendation to strengthen the position of the Head of School through recognition with the title of 'Dean' was not approved by Council, Professor Gill welcomed the Council decision that the Faculty Dean conduct a comparative analysis of other leading Medical Schools and make a recommendation to Council whether a change of title, for external purposes only, should be considered. The recommendation that the Head of the Medical School represent College on the boards of key hospital partners was also not approved by Council and Professor Gill advised that this is outside the remit of the School. The School requests that the Provost consider the Head of School of Medicine for these roles as the vacancies arise.

With regard to supporting and recognising the key role of hospital staff in the delivery of the School's programmes, the School and the Faculty Dean are (i) working with the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group to appoint a Chief Clinical Academic Officer, (ii) reviewing the process for promotion for clinical partner staff with honorary appointments and (iii) working with clinical partners to encourage contracts and work programmes to recognize the value of teaching and research and to provide protected time. The Head of School concluded by advising that the timeframe for implementation of the recommendations may be delayed due to Covid-19 and by some funding-related issues. Professor Gill also thanked Ms. Shannon Keegan, the School's Quality, Accreditation and Rankings manager, for her work in the School.

The VP/CAO thanked the Head of School, and as there were no comments from the Committee, he closed the discussion and recommended the item to Council for approval.

Action/Decision:

033.1: *The Quality Committee recommended the Implementation Plan for the School of Medicine review to Council for approval.*

QC/20-21/034 Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting closed.