

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 16th December 2004

Present Ian Robertson (Dean of Research), Doris Alexander, Michael Coey, John Fitzpatrick, Dermot Kelleher, Philip Lane, Marina Lynch, Ailbhe Ni Chasaide, John O'Hagan, Jane Ohlmeyer, Patrick Prendergast, Deirdre Savage, Ryan Sheridan

Apologies Senior Lecturer

In attendance

(ex officio) Valerie Smith

RS/04-05/29 Minutes of meeting held on 18 November 2004

The Minutes were approved and signed.

SECTION A: Policy/Implementation

RS/04-05/30 Research Committee terms of reference (ToR) and sub-committees

The Dean of Research provided an overview of the draft ToR document prepared by Doris Alexander and himself. Some issues were raised:

Composition: It was clarified that the composition of the Committee is prescribed by Board. The wording used in the memo from Board should be replicated in the ToR, although position titles should be used in place of names. The 'one Dean' referred to in the draft ToR should specify 'Dean of Graduate Studies'. The 'additional needs' outlined in bullet points should be removed and replaced with a sentence stating the need for 'Disciplinary balance in representation'. Although College Committees are in the main limited to eleven members, special allowance was given for the Research Committee to have more members, to allow for this disciplinary spread. Members should be appointed for a two-year term, renewable for a further two years (this is to tie in with the four-year appointment of Board Members).

Remit of the Research Committee: Clarification was given that the Business and Industry Committee is now a sub-committee of the Research Committee, rather than the Finance Committee as before.

John Fitzpatrick, as interim chair of the Research Institutes and Schools Research Liaison Committee, agreed to devise a draft ToR for that committee, and will meet with the other two existing members early in the New Year. This ToR should come to the Research Committee for approval.

ACTION: JF - draft ToR, Research Institutes & Schools Research Liaison Cmtee.

SECTION B

RS/04-05/31 **Reorganisation regarding research activities, particularly Research Centres**

The Dean of Research provided a summary of the discussion document he had prepared and disseminated prior to the meeting.

Levels of Research Centre: The brackets referring to 'single school' and 'multi school' under Types 3 and 4 should be removed. A sentence should be added to Type 4 to state that these are 'normally multi-school'. The phrase 'and possibly its own cost Centre' should be removed from Type 3. It was suggested that Types 1 and 2 could be merged under one heading of 'Research Group'. The Chair of the Research Institutes and Schools Liaison Committee will prepare a typology to describe this merged type of centre. This will also help to clarify the transition from Type 1/2 to Type 3.

Governance: Firstly, it was made clear that the following should be viewed as procedural guidelines, rather than prescriptive rules. Also, it is hoped that while new Centres will be expected to consider these guidelines in setting up their structures, existing Centres may in the future consider following the guidelines. Many examples of how Centres are governed, the levels of boards/committees in place, the level of external versus internal members were put forward and in particular whether some of the management committees should have an external chair. Some Committee members asked that they be given time to reconsider this issue, in light of the discussion session. The Dean of Research is to look at the SFI Governance Guidelines, and it was agreed that this issue would be revisited at the next meeting.

ACTION: DoR - review SFI Guidelines, revise document for next meeting.

Approval: Applications to set up a type 1/2 or 3 research centre could be submitted to and approved by the school(s) hosting the centre. One school must have overall financial responsibility. The Research Committee should be informed by the relevant schools and centre research director if it has approved the formation of a type 3 centre. Applications to have a type 4 research centre approved should be submitted for consideration to the Research Committee directly. In the discussion document, the last sentence under this heading should be removed.

Benchmarking: There was almost unanimous agreement that benchmarking of Schools should evaluate Research and Teaching together. Research Centres and Schools should be evaluated separately. The issue of benchmarking schools would have to be looked at more carefully, and is probably outside the remit of this committee, although it may have an advisory role in the process. The Research Committee, it was suggested, could develop benchmarking for centres while advising College about the assessment of schools or individuals.

It was recognised that PhD students linked to a centre should have a home school and the school would get credit for those students. It was mentioned that some centres provide facilities and space for students and provide moneys to host students. The conclusion was that students should continue

to register through schools, but the schools can then negotiate with the centres as to the costs/credits accruing from these students. Similarly, there may be need for negotiation where a grant is totally housed in a Centre as to whether the benefit of the grant goes to the school or centre – or both.

RS/04-05/32 PRTLTI

The Dean of Research circulated an e-mail to Academic Staff, to get them thinking about potential PRTLTI bids in advance. He also spoke to the HEA who suggested that the new cycle would not be launched until the second quarter of 2005.

RS/04-05/33 Principles of Allocation of Research Committee Funding

The main suggestion here is that this Funding should be used as leverage to encourage researchers to apply for external funding. Furthermore, joint applications should be incentivised, perhaps with joint applications getting more funding.

Start-up: Applicants should be asked to specify where they intend to apply for external funding, and should receive half of their Research funding initially, and the second half only when they have actually submitted an application to an external sponsor. This is contingent on sufficient funding being available to make this a viable proposition.

Maintenance: A suggestion was that Maintenance funding should only be available to those who have not received external contract research funding recently, for example in the previous five years. As with the Start-up funding, successful applicants would receive half of their Research funding up front, and the second half only when they have actually submitted an application to an external sponsor.

ACTION: DoR - firm up new conditions for the next meeting.

RS/04-05/34 Possible integration of graduate studies and some aspects of Research Committee Funding

One suggestion was that supervisors could get some Research Funding to support their work with PhD students. The Dean of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies agreed to meet up to discuss possibilities.

SECTION C

RS/04-05/35 SFI Annual Overheads Investment Plan

The Dean of Research briefed the Committee on the AOIP, and noted that we are still awaiting the results of the 'infrastructure' section of the AOIP submission. This is likely to be available after the next SFI board meeting.

RS/04-05/36 Review of structure and function of Research and Innovations Office

The Dean informed the committee that a meeting is being arranged for a number of TCD representatives to visit the Research Office in Oxford University to see some examples of best practice there.

RS/04-05/37 Trinity Research News

The Dean informed the committee that a regular Research Newsletter is being produced and that the first issue will be disseminated in January.

AOB

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 11.30 a.m. on 20 January 2004.

Signed:

Date: