

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 20th January 2005

Present Ian Robertson (Dean of Research), Doris Alexander (DA), John Fitzpatrick (JF), Dermot Kelleher (DK), Philip Lane (PL), Marina Lynch (ML), Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (AN), Jane Ohlmeyer (JO), Patrick Prendergast (PP), Deirdre Savage (DS)

Apologies John Murray, John O'Hagan, Ryan Sheridan

In attendance

(ex officio) Valerie Smith

RS/04-05/38 Minutes of meeting held on 16 December 2004

The Minutes were approved and signed.

SECTION A: Policy/Implementation

RS/04-05/39 Research Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) and sub-committees

It was agreed that the ToR document for the Research Committee is ready to go to Board.

John Fitzpatrick, as interim chair of the Research Institutes and Schools Research Liaison Committee, presented a draft ToR for that committee. He also explained that he had not convened a meeting of this committee, as he felt it prudent to get agreement on its composition first. The following was agreed in relation to the ToR for this sub-committee:

Composition: it was not deemed necessary for anyone from either the Research section of the Treasurer's Office, or the Research Office to sit on the committee at present. However, the Research Office may provide the secretariat for the Committee. The Committee was reminded of the existence of the Research Centres Forum, set up by the previous Dean of Research, and a meeting of this Forum was proposed and agreed. Three representatives from this Forum should be asked to join this Committee: one PRTL, one SFI and one other. Also, one Director of Research representing each of the new Faculties/ Groupings which will emerge from the College Restructuring should be invited to join. The ToR should also specify the requirement for a gender balance on the Committee.

Action: Dean of Research to call a meeting of the 29 Centres involved in this Forum, which John Fitzpatrick, Ailbhe NiChasaide and Ryan Sheridan should attend.

Remit: as well as the duties already outlined in the draft ToR, this Committee should also deal with issues relating to management and principles. In the context of this discussion, it was suggested that there should be an improved mechanism for Researchers to inform the Dean of Research when they enter into negotiations prior to the submission of proposals for large research Contracts.

Action: DoR to send a mail to the Research Focus list, asking researchers to inform the Research Office of any intention to submit a large research proposal.

Action: Research Committee members to forward suggestions to JF, who will finalise the draft ToR for the next meeting.

SECTION B

RS/04-05/40 Principles of Allocation of Research Committee Budget

Doris Alexander presented draft guidelines for both the Research Incentive and Start up Grant Schemes. A third scheme for interdisciplinary research was suggested, but it was felt that a forthcoming SFI scheme under the AOIP would cover this area.

Research Incentive Grant Scheme

It was agreed that this would be the new name for this scheme, to clarify that it is different to the previous Maintenance Scheme.

Eligibility: This scheme should be seen as a 'catch-up' scheme, to encourage researchers who do not usually apply for funding to do so. While successful, active Research PI's should not be excluded from applying, neither should they be actively targeted or encouraged to apply. In view of this, the following sentence was agreed upon:

"If you are already currently in receipt of other externally funded research grants or have recently had an external research contract as Principal Investigator, co-applicant or equivalent, you are not normally expected to apply". The committee recognised that some co-applicants are included in proposals without receiving any funding, and agreed that someone in this position may be eligible for this scheme.

Some changes were also suggested to the list of eligibility criteria. The first point should read "Applicants must be full-time academic members of staff, with either a contract or 'honorary' contract with TCD, who have been in post for at least 1 year and who have a contract/honorary contract for a further two years." It was agreed that part-time staff members from Health Sciences would be included. Researchers based in St James or Tallaght hospitals should be eligible, but should be reminded that all publications should refer to TCD as well as the relevant hospital. A footnote should be included here explaining that those who have had contracts for less than a year are eligible to apply to the Start-up Fund for New Lecturers.

In terms of the eligibility of Research Associates and Senior Experimental Officers, it was agreed that no mention would be made of these in the

guidelines. As a rule, these would not be eligible, but the Committee reserved the right to deal with these on a case-by-case basis.

Conditions: The Committee agreed with the condition that applicants must make an application to an external funding body (via the research office) within a year of receipt of this funding. It was also decided that anyone failing to fulfil this obligation would be exempted from applying for Research Committee Funding until such a time as they could show that they fulfilled it. The Committee recognised the fact that sometimes a person may, for various reasons, be listed as co-applicant rather than PI on a proposal, but carry out all the duties of a PI. These people will be deemed to have fulfilled the obligation mentioned above, on condition that the co-applicant can provide a letter from the Head of Department or PI confirming this.

Deadline and Assessment: It was agreed that the proposals would be assessed by a sub-committee of the Research Committee, with the power to co-opt if there is no-one suitably qualified to assess a particular proposal. The deadline for this scheme will be decided once the budget has been confirmed.

Application Form: It was agreed that the date 'from January 2001' would be removed. Question 2 will also be removed. As part of question three, a tick box asking whether or not the research is a new development for the researcher should be added. A word limit for the whole application form (approximately one page) should be included.

Start-up Fund for New Lecturers

Many of the comments and changes above will also apply to this scheme. In the past, applicants were asked to submit a five-year research plan. It was agreed that for this call, applicants would instead be asked to prove that they have an up-to-date profile on the Research Support System.

Action: DA to check with Niamh Brennan, Library Services, if this is feasible.

In terms of eligibility, as above, part-time staff from Health Sciences only should be eligible. SFI replacement staff should also be eligible. Point six should be removed.

Applicants should be allowed to submit in either MS Word or PDF format.

It was noted that the average amount awarded last year (€4,491) was in no way adequate, and the Dean will request that the Finance Committee increase the Research Committee Meeting budget this year.

Action: DoR to send memo to Finance Committee asking for increase in budget.

In terms of the Application Form, again a limit on the number of words should be applied.

Action: DA to update the guidelines and application forms, taking into account the above, for approval at the next meeting.

RS/04-05/41 Reorganisation regarding research activities, particularly Research Centres

The Dean of Research provided a summary of the discussion document he had prepared.

The DoR informed the committee that a working party on SFI centres had taken place in 2003. There is a certain amount of overlap between this document and his.

Action: DoR to prepare another draft for the next meeting, taking this document into account

The DoR then presented his document 'Discussion Notes on Place of Research Centres in TCD'. It was suggested that the requirement for one school in a Type 2 centre to take the lead should also be applied to a Type 1 centre.

Governance: It was agreed that centres should have a local management committee, which meets on a regular basis, and an executive Committee which meets at least once a year. This Executive Committee should preferably have an external chair. The centre director would report to the chair, who in turn should report to the DoR and the Research Committee.

Approval: The 'criteria for recognition as a Trinity Research Institute' were broadly approved. The requirement for the involvement of at least 10 research-active PIs was stressed, to ensure the sustainability of the centre. The eligibility of a centre should be reviewed on a five-year basis, and the Research Committee reserved the right to remove 'Research Institute' status from any centre deemed through the evaluation not to be fulfilling these criteria.

AOB

RS had circulated a document to the Research Committee, concerning the funding, within a Resource Allocation model, for Interdisciplinary studies. It was felt that this document required further explanation. However, the Research Committee has already approved the ARAM. A concern was raised that this document should be included in the ARAM.

Action: AN will send a memo to the Bursar regarding this, as the Bursar is finalising the document.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 11.30 a.m. on 24 February 2004.

Signed:

Date: