

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee meeting, 15 May 2018  
Large Conference Room, O'Reilly Institute

**Present:**

Professor Linda Doyle, Dean of Research (DoR)  
Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research  
Professor Andrew Bowie, Associate Dean of Research

**Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

Professor Ruth Barton, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts  
Professor Ann Devitt, Director of Research, School of Education  
Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English  
Professor Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities  
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law  
Professor Irene Walsh, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology  
Professor Agustín Bénétrix, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy

**Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science**

Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
Professor Caitriona Lally, Director of Research, School of Engineering  
Professor Adrian Bracken, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences

**Faculty of Health Sciences**

Professor Jeff O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science  
Professor Helen Sheridan, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Orla Sheils, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute  
Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director of TCIN

Mr Shane Collins, President, Graduate Students Union

**In attendance:**

Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation  
Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division  
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library  
Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director, Trinity Research & Innovation  
Dr Lorraine Byrne, Executive Director, CRANN  
Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Development, Office of the Dean of Research  
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research, Secretary to the Research Committee

**Apologies:**

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Directory, Trinity Long Room Hub  
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director, CRANN

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Professor Gabrielle McKee, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Professor Brian Brewer, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Professor Sinead Ryan, Director of Research, School of Mathematics  
Professor Jacob Erickson, Director of Research, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology

**Not present:**

Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business  
Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry  
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services

**AGENDA**

**Section A - Items for Discussion and Approval**

	<b>Timing</b>
<b>A.1 Minutes</b> Meeting of 17 April 2018 ( <i>encl</i> )	11.00

Some amendments were noted for the attendance, and Geoff Bradley sent some further detail on the Unified Communications Project.

<b>A.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>	11.05
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No matters arising.

<b>A.3 Update from the Dean of Research</b>	11.10
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The Dean of Research noted that as the agenda was very full for the meeting, there would not be a full update from the DOR but she would provide updates as the meeting progressed where relevant.

**Section B - Items for Discussion Only**

<b>B.1 FP9/Horizon Europe</b> Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager	11.30
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DA updated the committee on recent developments relating to FP9/Horizon Europe, which is now known as Horizon Europe. Comparative data shows TCD has secured €72million, 14% of the national funding, is 33<sup>rd</sup> in Europe and 46<sup>th</sup> out of all organisations participating in FP9. Trinity is approaching what was secured in FP7, and expect to improve on that. Important factors include funding for the research diversification strategy. Performance in ERCs is also crucial. HEA determines core funding and ERC performance is a part of this. Given the mobile nature of the grants, it is essential to nurture researchers and ensure they stay at Trinity in order to guarantee core funding.

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DA advised the committee that although the proposed budget is an increase this is not guaranteed yet. Trinity will be working with LERU and other network partners. There are also serious questions surrounding the status of the UK and their participation post-Brexit. There could also be implications for the overall FP9/Horizon Europe budget once the UK leaves. It was noted that central and eastern European countries are not performing well within the framework and this will have to be addressed.

Sustainable development goals will be important drivers for FP9/Horizon Europe. IRC will also be launching a “grand challenges” call based on these global goals. Will be driven by excellence, openness, impact. Encouraging the EC to provide follow-on funding to look at how funded projects have produced impact after the project has concluded. The general approach is to have a mission-oriented strategy that means that while there will be inevitable spillovers and unexpected discoveries, there also has to be room for failure. A portfolio of projects working on a common goal will achieve this because the overall mission is still being delivered on. Current thinking is that there is already an idea of what these missions might be but there will be a consultation process with member states and citizens to refine them.

**B.2 CRANN Quality Review (encl)**  
Roisin Smith, Quality Officer

11.45

The Dean of Research reminded the committee that Trinity Research Institutes have to undergo quality reviews. TLRH was reviewed last year. CRANN is currently under review. Because of its nature, CRANN has been rigorously reviewed several times by a number of international committees. The DOR decided that it would be a waste of time and resources to repeat this process to get the same outcome as those reports. The Quality Office was tasked with processing all of the international reviews and matching them to Trinity’s internal review process to generate a report. DOR noted that this will not be the process for every TRI but it was appropriate for CRANN. DOR praised the Quality Office for their work on this review.

Roisin Smith noted that there is precedent for conducting a quality review in this manner. QQI guidelines (p.4) note that bodies should build upon existing peer review mechanisms to develop their own review processes. College policy is that TRIs should undergo quality reviews 5 years after they are established. The reviews are about the unit, not the individual PIs. RS informed the committee that the Quality Office were satisfied that everything in their process was addressed in this review and that they had sufficient information to work with.

A number of issues were raised as part of the review:

1. Current policy on TRIs is from 2013 and needs to be reviewed.
2. Echoing the difficulties external reviewers had noted, there is a problem in differentiating between CRANN and AMBER. CRANN has been asked to provide a concise document to the Dean of Research to clarify their roles/facilities etc.
3. Risk registers. Finance Committee also raised the issue of the AML facility in TTEC. Microscopes will not respond well to construction work and alternative space will need to be found in order to address this critical risk, which will hit during the lifespan of AMBER 2 funding.

Other than those recommendations, the Quality Office is satisfied that everything is being addressed. On behalf of CRANN, Lorraine Byrne thanked RS and the QO for their work on the review, and asked about timeline for responses. DOR confirmed that the report would go to Quality Committee and Council in June so the implementation plan will not be triggered until then, so next academic year would be sufficient for responses.

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RS also asked DOR to clarify how often the Scientific Advisory Bodies should meet. At present these meetings should be annual but CRANN's SAB is international so very expensive to convene. RS suggested that variation needs to be allowed for in policy. DOR confirmed that number of issues are being looked at and updated.

**B.3 End of year report to Board** 12.00  
Dean of Research

DOR apologised to committee that report is not ready yet. All agreed to confirm final report via email. An outline of the structure was shown to committee. DOR had reviewed previous reports to Board and noted that there is no set format. Content of the report was discussed in detail. Discussion focussed on how to report relevant numbers and statistics without letting them dominate the narrative. DOR asked each school/centre to provide short research highlights for inclusion in the report in order to give a broad overview of the work happening in college and to diversify the research stories that are used to promote that work.

DOR also advised that a section would be included in the report addressing numerous misconceptions surrounding university rankings. A section will be included outlining the process behind creating the Strategic Plan. There will also be a section highlighting challenges that will need to be addressed. The committee discussed these issues at length. DOR noted that not everything can be included in the report but it is important to try to capture as much as possible.

**B.4 Research Strategy** 12.30  
Dean of Research

The Dean of Research thanked everyone for their input to the strategy so far. The Committee reviewed the principles that were circulated the previous week and discussed the development of the strategy in detail. DOR noted that the SWOT analysis was mapped on to the principles. For the sake of clarity, the strategy and the implementation plan will be separate documents. DOR noted that she is hopeful that everyone can be satisfied with the general approach and outline of the strategy, which is expected to be 10-12 pages.

DOR noted that the principles will be mapped to major and minor initiatives within Trinity. There is huge scope for alignment with other sections of college. Part of the strategy will be to emphasise using our own expertise and skills to address our issues. DOR also advised that she was still open to visiting schools to discuss the strategy. Also confirmed that the implementation plan will be brought to Research Committee for discussion.

**Section C - Items for Noting**

**C.1 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings/AOB** 12.50

Dan Geary raised the issue of the application of research metrics in the baseline budgeting model (BBM). This had been raised a recent AHSS faculty meeting. There is no issue with the metrics themselves, but there is concern with how they are being used, particularly in relation to BBM as they were never created with this in mind. The committee had a detailed discussion about the problems surrounding these metrics and their use as part of

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BBM. Concern is that within this framework the metrics do not measure what they are intended to, and when applied in this manner can act to disincentivise research activity. DOR noted that dealing with unintended consequences such as these will be a big part of the ensuring the success of the new research strategy. Following further discussion among the committee, the DOR noted that this is an issue that needs to be properly raised with the faculty Deans and Vice Provost.