

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College
RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**11:00, 16 November 2021
via Zoom**

MINUTES

In attendance

Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Dean of Research (Chair)
Professor Maria Brenner (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Brian Broderick (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Immo Warntjes (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Joseph Roche, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Deirdre Ahern, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor John Saeed, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Redmond O'Connell, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor John Divers, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Eburne Garcia Iriarte, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, Director of Research, School of Religion
Professor Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Gareth Bennett, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Marta Martins, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Sergey Mozgovoy, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Marcus Collier, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, School of Physics
Professor Hal Duncan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Sharon O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Lidia Tajber, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Kingston Mills, Director of TBSI
Professor Aideen Long, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of CRANN
Professor Rhodri Cusack, Director of TCIN
Mr. Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation
Dr Darren Fayne, Trinity Research Staff Association

In attendance:

Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Initiatives, Office of the Dean of Research
Dr Raquel Cabral Harper, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation
Ms Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director of European Engagement, TR&I and Trinity Global
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

Apologies

Prof. Eve Patten, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub

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Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	<p>Minutes Minutes of the meeting on October 19th were circulated in advance and approved as read.</p>
A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes DOR noted that any matters arising would be addressed in his update.</p>
A.3	<p>RS/20-21/4 Research Ethics Application Management System Prof. Gabrielle McKee</p> <p>A memo was circulated to the committee for consideration and approval of changes to the criteria for correct ethics committee for projects involving humans or human data. Prof. McKee, chair of the Research Ethics Policy Committee, joined the committee to present the rationale for these changes.</p> <p>In response to questions from the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was confirmed that research with animals would already have been considered by the animal ethics committee and should have HPRA approval so would not need to complete this process as well. • It was noted that some oral history projects might need approval at the new level 2. • It was confirmed that supervisors and those who would have to engage with the new system would be provided with support and training. Prof. McKee noted that the Standard Operating Procedures had not yet been defined so how to handle workloads was still to be decided. <p>Prof. Sharon O'Donnell welcomed the proposed streamlining of the ethics approval process but also noted that some RECs approve projects that others would not and more needs to be done to clarify this.</p> <p>Prof. Brian Lucey noted his support for a new system. However, he noted strong objections to what was currently considered to be within the bounds of relevance for the revised RECs. He noted as an example that case studies on publicly available information should not be required to seek ethical approval, and also disagreed that activities such as focus groups and oral interviews should have to seek approval. Prof. McKee disagreed and noted that College had an obligation to manage risk and damage to reputations. Prof. Lucey fundamentally disagreed with what is currently considered "risk" in the new system and noted his belief that it would act as a chilling mechanism on academic freedom and deter people from carrying out research. He also noted that having to seek approval for demonstrably zero risk projects was a waste of resources and unwarranted interference in academic autonomy.</p> <p>Prof. Zohar Hadromi-Allouche asked for clarification on what constituted "risk" noting that risk to College and risk to subjects of study were different things. Prof. McKee noted that historical/archival studies would not need ethical approval and noted that individuals and their reputations were to be at the forefront of the process.</p> <p>Prof. Deirdre Ahern welcomed the streamlining of processes but also noted concerns from the School of Law in relation to publicly available legal opinions and research that built work on critical discussion of readily available information. Prof. McKee agreed that appropriate procedures for common practices in disciplines needed to be found.</p>

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	<p>ADOR Prof. Maria Brenner noted that it was good to have a forum where different views could be aired, but also cautioned that the Standard Operating Procedures still had to be written so there was scope to address issues.</p> <p>The Dean of Research agreed with the concerns that were raised but also noted his own support for the proposed new REC levels. DOR noted that the REPC needed to do more work on what would need to be reviewed, and that the focus should be on making ethics approval more straightforward. Prof. Lucey noted his belief that College had internalised a biomedical approach to ethical approval that is not appropriate for all disciplines and noted that mild embarrassment or reputational poking was not a sufficient reason to have to seek ethical approval. He also noted that a Research Committee should be putting the primacy of research independence and autonomy first and other parts of College should work to support that, not that the other way around.</p> <p>Prof. McKee noted that the next phase would be to develop Standard Operating Procedures at a local level and that the REPC would work with schools to develop SOPs that were appropriate for them rather than imposing them from the REPC.</p> <p>The committee agreed to approve the establishment of new REC levels subject to the concerns raised at the meeting being fully addressed.</p>
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
<p>B.1</p>	<p>Dean of Research Annual Report 2020/21 Dr Jennifer Daly</p> <p>A draft of the Dean of Research Annual Report for 2020/21 was circulated to the committee in advance for feedback and suggestions. Prof. Eve Patten raised concerns via email regarding the section on publications and citations and noted the serious limitations in how Scopus captures outputs from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. JD advised the committee that additional information about the subject rankings would be added to the report along with extra clarification on the limitations of the databases. Leonard Hobbs questioned why the financial reporting was a year behind. JD noted that, as with all previous Dean of Research Annual Reports, it was prepared before the financial year was complete and so the report presents the last year for which full accounts were available at the time of preparation. This was also noted in the draft report. LH also questioned why E3RI was mentioned in the report suggesting that it was not research related. JD noted that the report captures information about all research activity across College which is why an update on the E3 Research Institute was included.</p> <p>The committee was advised that additional content and revisions could be sent to the Office of the Dean of Research for another week at which point the report would be closed off.</p>
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Update from Dean of Research Dean of Research</p> <p>RS/21-22/2 DOR advised the committee that the Research Boost Programme was now closed and almost all of the funds had been transferred to recipients.</p>

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The committee was advised that Trinity made 65 applications to the HEA's North-South funding scheme, 45 as lead and 20 as a partner. Trinity also submitted 73 applications to the IRC's Laureate programme.

RS/21-22/3 DOR advised the committee that a Tech Transfer Office had been asked to prepare a document in relation to the ongoing issues around state aid which would be circulated when ready.

RS/18-19/19 It was noted that there had been some delays to the publication of procedures for NORF. ADOR Prof. Immo Warntjes advised the committee that the national action plan was due to be discussed at a meeting in December but that there should be a clearer sense of the new timeline by the next meeting of the Research Committee in December.

RS/19-20/3 DOR advised the committee that Mary Leahy in HR was still working on a guidance document and had been invited to the next meeting of the committee. Dr Darren Fayne, TRSA rep, noted the TRSA's objection to any changes to contracts along with concerns about consent, the quantity of teaching that might be required, and a lack of consistency across schools. DOR noted that this was exactly what he was trying to resolve with HR. Prof. Declan O'Sullivan noted disappointment with the TRSA's position. He noted that a proper research career framework was needed but the committee had been trying to resolve this particular issue for over 18 months at this stage. The committee was advised that the TRSA had submitted a lengthy document to the new Provost and was not prepared to circulate that until a response had been received from the Provost. The committee noted that it could have been helpful to come through the Research Committee given it had been discussing this issue at length for a protracted length of time. Prof. O'Sullivan asked if the issue should come off the Research Committee's agenda if it was now with the Provost. DOR confirmed that clarity would be sought on this. It was also noted that no documentation had been received from HR yet and it was premature to object to something that had not yet been seen.

RS/21-22/4 DOR asked for the committee's views on the recent news that the Science Gallery was to close. DOR noted his belief that the committee should have some input into any future model. The committee noted unanimous support for the Science Gallery as an initiative and discussed suggestions for how it might be reimagined. The committee noted that the space should be preserved for the function of engaging the public with science and research.

Prof. Aideen Long noted that Trinity has huge history in terms of scientists and artefacts and more could be done to showcase that on the basis of a more permanent installation model rather than turning displays over so regularly. DOR noted that he felt the connection to the research community in Trinity had been lost and re-establishing that could help to make the gallery work again. Dr Raquel Harper noted that CRU was looking for a location to host the Library exhibition while the building works took place and this could be an alternative space. Helen Shenton noted that this had been explored and the space was not viable for the number of visitors that would be expected. Prof. Joseph Roche noted that he had worked in the Science Gallery for many years and was disappointed for the staff and at how the announcement was handled. He noted that Science Gallery had won a lot of research grants in its own right but when these finished there were no successor grants in place. He also noted that the Science Gallery's financial difficulties should not have been a surprise to anyone as it was reported every year.

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Section C – Items for Noting

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C.1	Items for Noting <ul style="list-style-type: none">Leonard Hobbs noted that the US-Ireland Research Innovation Awards 2022 were open for nominations.
C.2	Items for future discussion
C.3	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none">Members of the committee were reminded that all correspondence to the Dean of Research, including requests for meetings, must be directed to the official DOR email account or the DOR's PA.