

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, 13 September 2022
Boardroom, Trinity Business School

MINUTES

In attendance

Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Dean of Research (Chair)
Professor Brian Broderick, Associate Dean of Research
Professor Immo Warntjes, Associate Dean of Research
Professor Nicholas Johnson, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts
Professor Joseph Roche, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Mary Cosgrove, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Deirdre Ahern, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Claire Gillan, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Sharyn O'Halloran, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Eburne Garcia Iriarte, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Etain Tannam, Director of Research, School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies
Professor Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Michael Monaghan, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Frank Wellmer, 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 Ursula Fearon, Director of Research, School of Medicine
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 Eve Patten, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub
Professor Rhodri Cusack, Director, Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience
Professor Eoin O'Sullivan, Senior Dean
Dr Darren Fayne, Trinity Research Staff Association
Dr Raquel Cabral Harper, Head of Research Development, Trinity Research & Innovation
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director for European Engagement
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

Apologies

Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Nathan Hill, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation
Professor Aideen Long, Director, Trinity Translational Medicine Institute
Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English
Siobhan O'Shea, Senior HR Specialist, Human Resources
Professor Mathias Senge, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	Minutes Minutes from last meeting on May 10 th were circulated in advance and approved.
A.2	Matters Arising from the Minutes RS/21-22/17 It was noted that the revised and updated IP policy had not yet gone to Board. Committee sought confirmation that its concerns re equity distribution and strengthening the position of institutes was included.

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	<p>RS/19-20/3 It was noted that a full update around the issue of postdocs and teaching would be provided later in the meeting.</p> <p>Other matters arising would be addressed in the Dean’s update.</p>
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
<p>B.1</p>	<p>Welcome and Introductions Dean of Research</p> <p>The Dean welcomed new members to the committee and noted that it was the first time the committee had met in person since February 2020.</p>
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Overview of the Research Committee Dean of Research</p> <p>The Dean presented an overview of the function of the Research Committee noting that its reporting line was directly to Council. The committee was also advised of the structure of the Office of the Dean of Research and the wide range of responsibilities that fall under the Dean of Research’s remit. The Dean reminded the committee of the importance of the Research Charter and Living Research Excellence Strategy (LRES) in guiding activities such as the Research Boost Programme, the Research Impact Unit pilot, and support for the new Research Ethics Application Management System among others.</p> <p>It was noted that the restructuring of Trinity Research & Innovation would see some existing units come under the Dean of Research’s remit as part of the new Trinity Research entity, and that the LRES and Research Charter would provide reference points as to how to organise and prioritise activities within the new unit.</p>
<p>B.3</p>	<p>Agenda for the year ahead Dean of Research</p> <p>DOR invited suggestions from the committee as to what areas the committee would like to focus on for the year ahead. It was noted that the TR&I restructuring provided an opportunity to align better with the College Strategic Plan and the LRES. Research and Innovation will be moved directly under the Provost, demonstrating the importance of those activities to College. It was noted that the Provost would attend the next meeting of the committee to discuss the restructuring in more detail.</p> <p>The DOR noted four areas of focus for the Office of the Dean of Research:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can some of our research support structures be more coherently organised? Structures are not currently clearly defined – need to make it easier to do research. 2. How can we foster academic talent and provide improved career development structures at Trinity? Actions include the establishment of a Postdoc Academy, Open Scholarship working groups, engaging with NORF, Research(er) assessments in alignment with LERU and European Commission. 3. What will future research infrastructures, institutes and research laboratories look like? Lobby for short- and longer-term government support for infrastructure as well as supporting strategic research initiatives internally. 4. How can we engage with policy makers, governmental agencies and funding agencies to provide a balanced funding landscape? Engage with policy makers, government agencies and funding agencies to provide a balanced research funding landscape.

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	<p>DOR also noted that College would have to consider what Impact 2030 and the proposed merger of SFI and IRC would mean for Trinity as a research community.</p> <p>Members of the committee noted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent need for a strategy around the recruitment and retention of postdocs. It was noted that infrastructure would no longer be an issue as College would reach a point where there would be no researchers to use it. • Issues like a liveable stipend for postgraduates needed to be addressed. However, taxation of postdoc salaries essentially put them on the same level as some postgraduates. • No research-focused positions exist in Ireland. Universities were becoming increasingly uncompetitive in comparison to roles in industry. • Greater engagement with IUA, DFHERIS etc. • Developments at a European level regarding researcher career development and researcher assessment would need to be monitored to identify actions at a local level. • The ongoing absence of a Trinity platform for online digital research projects poses a huge problem for planning research projects.
<p>B.3</p>	<p>Update from Dean of Research Dean of Research</p> <p>DOR advised the committee that he met with the funding agencies over the summer months. A new centre call was expected from SFI, possibly in areas around sustainability, health, and digital transformation. DOR asked schools to flag their interest if they would like to be involved in a proposal. There had been some mention by SFI of trying to free up more funding for investigator-led projects. Members of the committee noted that the quota on recent SFI/IRC pathways projects meant that Trinity lost people to RCSI as College could not put forward all eligible candidates. It was also noted that the split between male and female candidates did not provide space for those who don't identify as either.</p> <p>A survey of infrastructure had been conducted over the summer as part of an exercise initiated by the IUA. Possibility that funding might be available from DFHERIS to support some infrastructure renewal but unclear as to what that might amount to.</p> <p>RS/20-21/4 ODRES had recently appointed admin support for REAMS system.</p> <p>DOR advised the committee that he had been tasked with establishing a working group on research integrity as a subgroup of the Council Integrity Working Group.</p>
<p>B.4</p>	<p>RS/19-20/3 Postdocs and teaching update Immo Warntjes</p> <p>The guidance document was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. Associate Dean of Research Immo Warntjes provided the committee with an overview of how the document had been developed. He noted the establishment of good communication channels with HR and how this had facilitated the development of proper guidance. Some important points were noted to the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to teach was vital for career development for many postdocs. • Conversations should be had between PIs and potential postdocs regarding expectations around teaching before any contract is signed to avoid issues at a later stage. It was noted that the contract could be amended at a later date if circumstances changed, but the issue would ideally be discussed at the beginning.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR contact points had been briefed on the new guidance. • It was confirmed that adequate remuneration should be provided. <p>It was noted that the TRSA was generally happy with the new guidance. It was confirmed that there was no obligation on existing staff, but any problems could be flagged to the Office of the Dean of Research. Insofar as possible, existing staff who want to teach should be facilitated. It was also noted that a balance had to be found in the guidance between career development and potential exploitation of postdocs.</p> <p>In conversation with the committee the following pointes were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the initiative is a career development opportunity for researchers and it should not be used for delivery of the on-going teaching needs of a School. As a career development opportunity, a limitation on time is necessary. The limitation of two years helps avoid any potential abuse of the initiative. • Named examples in scenarios could possibly conflict with IRC guidance on teaching – it was agreed that these could be removed. <p>The importance of engaging with funding agencies about the kind of contracts they offer was noted by the committee. It was also noted that there was some concern that SFI rules would be imposed on AHSS disciplines in the proposed SFI/IRC merger. The difficulty of applying increments to postdoc salaries was also noted by the committee, with some wondering why increments could not be automatically applied.</p>
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	<p>Items for Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS/18-19/11 Appointment of Richard Carson as Chair of Research Ethics Policy Committee (REPC) <p>It was noted that Professor Gabrielle McKee had stepped down as Chair of the REPC. DOR noted sincere thanks to Prof. McKee for all her work on the REPC. The committee was advised that Professor Richard Carson had now been appointed Chair of the REPC. It was noted that the memo circulated to the committee with the meeting papers advised of a delay to the rollout of REAMs, moving to a phased rollout with the intention to go fully online from January.</p>
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Research Annual Report: reminders would be sent to the committee for contributions • Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment: DOR noted that he would be pleased to see Trinity sign up to this agreement, but committee would have to discuss it first • TR&I Restructuring: Provost to attend next meeting of the committee to share her vision for what the new structures will look like.
C.3	<p>AOB</p> <p>Meeting adjourned.</p>