

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

**11:00, 13 February 2024
Online via Zoom**

MINUTES

In attendance

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair)
Professor Brian Broderick, Associate Dean of Research
Professor Immo Warntjes, Associate Dean of Research
Professor Catherine Welch, Director of Research, Trinity Business School
Professor Joseph Roche, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne, on behalf of Director of Research, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor James Hanrahan, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Nathan Hill, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Claire Gillan, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Sharyn O'Halloran, Director of Research, Social Sciences & Philosophy
Professor Eburne Garcia Iriarte, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Benjamin Wold, Director of Research, School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies
Professor Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Mathias Senge, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Ms Betul Hekimoglu Balkan on behalf of Director of Research, School of Computer Science & Statistics
Professor Andrei Parnachev, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Yvonne Buckley, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Ortwin Hess, Director of Research, School of Physics
Professor Hal Duncan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Sarah Doyle, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Anne-Marie Healy, 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 Eve Patten, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub
Professor Rhodri Cusack, Director of TCIN
Professor Eoin O'Sullivan, Senior Dean
Dr Michelle Olmstead, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies

In attendance:

Dr Sally Smith, Head of Research, Trinity Research
Ms Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Mr Mick Reilly, Laboratory & Research Category Manager, Financial Services Division
Ms Siobhán O'Shea, Senior HR Specialist, Human Resources
Ms Mary Tracey, Executive Director, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise
Dr Gordon Elliott, Senior Patents & Licensing Manager, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

Apologies:

Prof. Darryl Jones, Director of Research, School of English
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, Director of CRANN
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director - European Engagement, Trinity Research
Dr Raquel Harper, Head of Research Development, Research Development Office
Prof. Frank Wellmer, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Prof. Sharon O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Prof. Marco Ruffini, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Prof. Padraic Fallon, Associate Dean of Research

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Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	<p>Minutes Minutes from the meeting of January 16th were circulated in advance and approved.</p>
A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes No matters arising.</p>
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
B.1	<p>Knowledge Security Taskforce Julia Carmichael, Chief Risk Officer</p> <p><i>Julia Carmichael joined the meeting for this item</i></p> <p>The Chief Risk Officer presented an overview of the activities of the Knowledge Security Taskforce to the committee. The taskforce was established in January 2023. Membership of the group is not comprehensive, but is dynamic and is updated as new issues arise. The basis of the group to support, enable and develop research. Need to enable capacity and develop relationships. At the centre of the group’s engagement is academic freedom, spinning out to trusted partners, international collaborators, academic inclusivity, protecting research/commercial data in a realistic manner, enhancing understanding and awareness of risks.</p> <p>The committee was advised that topics the group has discussed so far include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with all external stakeholders • Working within EU framework and toolkit • Considering the development of a “one-stop-shop” for knowledge security, KW & FI, Export Control and dual use • Developing set of guidelines for researchers • Developing a trusted research partner concept for the university. <p>It was noted that the university was not currently exposed in this regard, but the goal was to ensure that it does not become exposed. The taskforce was preparing a paper for the Provost that was expected to be delivered by the end of the month.</p> <p>Discussions in the European Commission around knowledge security have acknowledged that the environment for higher education has changed, and the intent was to give member states a degree of proportionality to any actions they might take.</p> <p>It was noted that Trinity would need to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree of proportionality when the university has to engage • The choice of instruments in assessing research risk was at the discretion of the institution and the member state • Other HEIs were experiencing serious issues with the operational nature of how they do their research. So far, this has not been an issue for Trinity but it could arise in the future • Certain countries represent a high risk in relation to knowledge security. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dean of Research noted the central importance of academic freedom, and noted that Trinity’s policy on academic freedom was due to be reviewed and updated. It was noted that this issue was not so prevalent the last time that

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	<p>policy was reviewed. Engagement with DFHERIS and external stakeholders is important as they are at the beginning of considering how to do this. DOR noted that it was important for universities' autonomy to be preserved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the committee expressed concern about the concept of proportionality, the potential for politicisation of the evaluation processes, and the risk of driving research in particular directions. The Chief Risk Officer noted that this was very much the beginning of this process at a European level. The CRO noted discomfort with the concept of "risk rating" particular countries. It was noted that there was still an opportunity to lobby on this topic and the CRO would feed this back to the LERU group. <p>The DOR noted that there would be an institutional audit by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment of Trinity's arrangements on export controls on Feb 19th. DOR noted that some information was already available for colleagues, and an update would be provided on the audit.</p>
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Update from the Dean of Research Dean of Research</p> <p>The Dean of Research noted the following recent funding successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Sakis Mantalaris, a leading figure in cell therapy research, has been awarded €4.88 million as part of the prestigious Science Foundation Ireland Research Professorship Programme. The award will facilitate Professor Mantalaris and a team of researchers in spearheading a pioneering research programme to improve the biomanufacturing of cellular therapeutics that could potentially lead to improved clinical outcomes. Professor Mantalaris is a joint appointment between Trinity, where he holds the Don Panoz Chair of Pharmaceutical Biology at the School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, and the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT), where he is a Principal Investigator. The DOR attended the launch of the Prof. Jennifer McElwain's Variable Atmosphere and Light Laboratory. This was funded by SFI Infrastructure call and in part by Trinity in 2015, but was delayed due to manufacturing delays and COVID. DFHERIS has provided further funding of €391,300 for CHARM-EU as part of additional support for Irish universities involved in European University Alliance partnerships. Prof. Conor Buckley (AMBER, School of Engineering) secured an ERC Proof of Concept award for the iDISC project which uses next-generation injectable biomaterials for tissue repair. Researchers from TCIN secured €1.7million from SFI's infrastructure programme. The funding will be used to buy a next-gen powerful computer and associated equipment which will allow researchers across Ireland to apply enormous computational power to better characterise the brain's incredible complexity. <p>RS/23-24/14 Research & Innovation bill: it was noted that the bill had completed the Dáil second stage and would now move to committee stage where amendments could be suggested. An indicative timeline suggested that the legislation would be enacted around April or May with a provisional establishment date for the new agency after that.</p>

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	<p>The DOR noted that feedback was being collated across the sector, including by the IUA and the IRC. The committee was advised that the IRC's approach was to focus on a small number of specific issues it would like to see addressed in amendments. DOR noted that technical parts of the bill went into detail of peer review in such a manner as to potentially exclude certain funding schemes in areas of education and outreach. DOR also noted that some of the language in the bill demonstrated a lack of understanding of how funding works at an institutional level and confused the roles of applicants, PIs, and institutions at various points.</p> <p>Members of the committee noted the importance of 'parity of esteem' being included in the legislation. Members of the committee also noted the importance of a variety of different types of schemes that recognised that different types of research are very expensive to conduct.</p>
B.3	<p>Spotlight - IT Services Darach Golden, Manager, Research IT</p> <p><i>Darach Golden joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>The committee was presented with an overview of the activities of the Research IT (RIT) function and the kinds of activity it supports. During the presentation, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RIT hosts a number of apps, or research data registries, which are often used for clinical or other types of data collection. This was not suitable for very large data, but useful for storing data on people. The National Covid Biobank data is hosted on RedCap.• There is only one Research IT person for all of Trinity. This person is solely responsible for patching and maintaining research web applications.• Research IT is part of the Digital Repository of Ireland with DRI staff hosted at Trinity, Maynooth and the RIA.• It was noted that it was almost impossible to keep websites running after 7-10 years. The DRI was investigating web archiving for members. It was noted that this was not a general archiving project but was being offered on a case-by-case basis. It would not be suitable for websites with front end search/backend data.• Research Data Management: there are two HRB data stewards at Trinity but these roles had evolved and were no longer confined to just HRB projects. The data stewards meet with researchers at proposal stage to work on data management plans, particularly in relation to GDPR, or sensitive data. It was noted that RIT has been working with DPO and IT Security to identify appropriate university infrastructure, in particular for sensitive data.• RIT does offer some types of data storage, eg. compute cluster, data storage array. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In response to a question about when GPUs would be available to researchers, it was noted that this was at the very early stages, lead times were long, and it could be up to a year before anything was available.• It was noted that cluster management was not particularly user-friendly at the moment and that more resource was needed to properly develop and securely host.• In response to a question about whether it would be useful to write IT costs into funding proposals, it was noted that funding was not the main barrier, but rather the lack of personnel to carry out the work required.

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Section C – Items for Noting

C.1	<p>Items for Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A memo regarding the establishment of a Clinical Research Facility at Tallaght University Hospital was noted by the committee. The DOR noted that Prof. Padraic Fallon (Associate Dean of Research) could not join the meeting, but had confirmed that all relevant stakeholders had been consulted in the discussions relating to this. • A memo from Data Protection Office regarding the retention of personal data was noted by the committee.
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee noted that further discussion of research IT supports would be welcomed.
C.3	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberattack on the British Library <p>The Librarian, Helen Shenton, provided the committee with an update on the recent cyberattack on the British Library. It was noted that this was a serious ransomware attack which had knocked out the whole British Library. This was of relevance for Trinity given its status as one of the six UK copyright libraries which gives Trinity access to the BL's e-holdings. The Librarian noted that BL acted responsibly and immediately isolated themselves. The committee was advised that a cyber summit had been held with the 6 copyright libraries. There was now a 3-stage approach in place. Stage 1 was the immediate response phase, all PCs on BL sites were treated as a crime site and forensically examined. This was now concluded. Stage 2 was to identify work arounds. It was hoped that some sort of electronic access to the catalogues would be in place by June 2024. At the moment the only access is entirely analogue on site via paper slips. The committee was advised that the Trinity Library has been offering a series of workarounds including subscriptions to other EU license providers. The Librarian urged members of the committee and researchers to talk to subject librarians to identify alternative sources of information. Stage 3 was to build new infrastructure for the BL which the Librarian noted had been due for renewal anyway. Trinity was also looking to review digital infrastructure.</p> <p>In discussion with the committee, it was noted that the impact of the attack has affected the six copyright libraries in different ways. At Trinity the primary impact had been on PhD candidates who were relying on BL sources and authors who were completing monographs. Most of the BL material being accessed from Trinity was being used as e-books on reading lists. The Library was identifying alternative sources for these but this was expensive.</p> <p>The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that no issues had been raised with her office, but encouraged Directors of Research to communicate to their schools that any students affected by the issue could contact their office for support.</p> <p>Prof. Eve Patten noted thanks to the Librarian for the swift action that was taken to protect Trinity's systems. She also noted that there were now three NORF projects in Trinity related to open access and suggested these projects might intersect with the issues arising from this breach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS/23-24/6 Update on Researcher Recruitment Policy

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The DOR noted that there had been some discussion at Heads of School meetings, Fellows meetings etc and reminded the committee that the draft policy had been extensively discussed at this committee over the past year. DOR reminded the committee that it was still a draft document and no changes to existing processes had yet been made.

Siobhán O’Shea, HR, advised the committee that HR had been to Heads of School meetings and noted that the Fellows discussion of the proposal had “injected a little bit of heat” into the process. SOS assured the committee that HR was not trying to railroad through a policy that was not fit for purpose. She noted that the university had obligations on a number of fronts in relation to open, transparent, merit-based recruitment and the development of a policy was part of this process. The process to date had been focused on engaging with researchers to see what could work. SOS reiterated that everything would be done in consultation with the research community. The committee was advised that the key issue around mobility needed to be scenario tested. A balance needed to be found between the ease with which researchers have been moved around to date and the university’s obligations from a legal employment perspective. SOS acknowledged that that this was complex but advised that HR was working through scenarios and would bring further updates to the committee. The committee was advised that HR was working on the policy and the attendant process in tandem, and until the process could be articulated the policy would not be presented for approval. It was noted that Heads of Schools wanted clarity on how the process will work as they want to avoid long term liabilities.

DOR thanked SOS for all work to date and reiterated that any updates would come back to the committee for discussion and approval. DOR noted that this had been a valuable discussion to date, and that the consultation process had really informed the work that had gone into the policy. DOR fully supported the idea that a policy needs to have a process underlying it.

- DOR reminded the committee of an email from the Trinity Trust announcing a new award for work-related travel costs related to caring responsibilities.
- DOR informed the committee that the Disability Officer had been in contact to highlight the difficulties that students with disabilities face in engaging with research/academic employment. DOR noted to the committee that any ideas or examples they had of best practice for more inclusive processes would be welcome.
- In response to questions from the committee, the DOR noted Trinity had received €2.6million from the HEA for “research equipment”. DOR noted that there were a number of conditions attached which limited what the fund could be spent on. The committee was advised that a call to distribute the funding was in development and would be brought before the committee.