

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, 5 November 2024

Online via Zoom

MINUTES

In attendance

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair)
Professor Brian Broderick (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Padraic Fallon (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Catherine Welch, Director of Research, Trinity Business School
Professor Joseph Roche, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Pádraic Whyte, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor James Hanrahan, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Sonia Bishop, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Sharyn O'Halloran, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Paula Mayock, 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 Marco Ruffini, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Michael Monaghan, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Frank Wellmer, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
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 Suzanne Cloonan, on behalf of Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Eilish Burke, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
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 Stefano Sanvito, Director of CRANN
Professor Eve Patten, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub
Professor Rhodri Cusack, Director of TCIN
Dr Michelle Olmstead, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer
Emma Connolly, on behalf of Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association

In attendance:

Dr Fiona Smyth, Interim Head of Research Development, Research Development Office
Ms Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director - European Engagement, Trinity Research
Dr Gordon Elliott, Senior Patents & Licensing Manager, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise
Mr Michael Reilly, Procurement, Financial Services Division
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Trinity Research

Apologies

Dr Sally Smith; Prof. Immo Warntjes; Prof. Martine Smith; Prof. Mathias Senge; Dr Rory Connolly; Prof. Sarah Doyle.

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Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	<p>Minutes Following a minor amendment from Prof. Yvonne Buckley to item A.3 on ethics approvals, the minutes of the October meeting were approved.</p>
A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes No matters arising.</p>
A.3	<p>Spotlight: Research Opportunities for Ageing Demographics/TILDA Prof. Rose Anne Kenny</p> <p><i>Prof. Kenny joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>The committee was presented with an overview of the activities of TILDA and current research opportunities for ageing demographics. During the presentation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland had the fastest ageing population of the EU27 and was in the middle of a demographic shift. Health services and social services could not keep pace with the current shift. • The TILDA study had been running since 2006 and the study sample had recently been refreshed; now included 1 in 156 people in Ireland over the age of 45. • Funding for the study has come from the Dept of Health with further funding from NIH, HRB, European Union. • There are now 26 studies internationally that are based on the same methodology as TILDA. • TILDA researchers had contributed to 222 govt policy docs; 97 NGOs have cited the data. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain scans were conducted on a small sub-sample of the larger study. It was also noted that the study involved detailed cognitive assessments and mental health assessments. • Data was available related to how a person’s access to green/blue spaces impacted on ageing, but it had not yet been explored. • The IDS-TILDA study which focused on people with an intellectual disability had a huge impact on policy change for this cohort. Prof. Kenny noted that the success of the IDS-TILDA study meant that opportunities to focus on other cohorts were also being explored. • The study did not seek to influence outcomes for participants so interventions were not part of the study.
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
B.1	<p>For approval: College Statement on Gen AI Prof. Vincent Wade, Senior Lecturer</p> <p><i>Prof. Wade joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>The Senior Lecturer provided the committee with an update on the development of the College Statement on AI/Gen AI. The committee was advised of the following:</p>

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- The statement was intended to be a living document to reflect the fact that AI was the fastest developing technology in the world. It was noted that the academic AI research community was acutely aware of the speed of development and the unknown outcomes of those developments.
- The statement was in line with similar statements made by Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and LERU colleagues. The intent was to provide some overarching principles and make expertise and shared resources available.
- An AI Hub would be developed which would link to national and international guidance, as well as other resources.

In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:

- The statement had to find a balance between not being overly proscriptive but also not redundant.
- Some feedback from the committee had queried GDPR, specifically in relation to Turnitin. Senior Lecturer noted that Trinity had an enterprise licence for this third-party platform which was in line with GDPR requirements.
- Draft statement had also been presented to USC, GSC, and the Students' Union had been consulted.
- There would be no obligation on academics to use AI in their work. The statement would recognise the potential benefits but also the limitations. The statement would articulate the principles that Trinity would expect to be upheld by anyone choosing to use it.
- Members of the committee noted concern at varying approaches across schools, particularly in dual degrees which could see students dealing with widely different applications of AI across their subjects. It was noted that academics could include a statement on the use of AI in course outlines, course handbooks etc.
- Members of the committee noted that there would be some merit to clearly delineating the issues relating to student use as compared to researcher use. It was noted that some academics were very focused on the issue for teaching and students, but were perhaps not so aware of the implications for their own research.
- Current costs for obtaining an enterprise licence for a third-party provider were prohibitive.
- Members of the committee suggested that the FAQs could explain what the use of AI means for researchers.
- Members of the committee noted that there was no mention of sustainability, or acknowledgement of the massive resource implications for running AI models. It was noted that using these models would directly contradict the university's sustainability policies and strategy. It was noted that the major companies that had developed the larger models were essentially using them as a barrier to entry for smaller models. It was noted that the academic community was pushing for a distillation of these larger models to smaller models. The committee suggested that the FAQs should point to the College's sustainability policies and be more explicit about the negative implications for sustainability.
- Members of the committee also noted ethical concerns regarding the exploitation of people who had to view traumatic content as part of the training of these models. Some members of the committee noted concern with an over-reliance on the FAQs rather than having some of these issues acknowledged in the main statement.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the AI Hub could provide guidance for students and staff about which tools to select, what should be considered when selecting tools etc. • There was some discussion of the protection of IP, and it was suggested that the Senior Lecturer, Dean of Research and CIEO should discuss this further. • In response to a question about approval routes for the statement, it was noted that it was not a policy. The statement would ultimately go to Council for approval and could then be updated as needed without having to go through a full approval for each individual update. It was noted that the statement would come back to relevant committees if there were very significant policy developments. • Members of the committee noted that once the statement was agreed they would welcome the provision of workshops specifically aimed at researchers. It was noted that this would have to be developed with Academic Practice but it was agreed that there was a need to hold some events to inform researchers. • Members of the committee noted that various College policies such as those on Intellectual Property and Good Research Practice would need to be updated with new sections on AI. <p>DOR noted that she would continue to bring updates on the statement to the committee as needed.</p>
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Update from the Dean of Research Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOR noted the new name for the main Library – The Eavan Boland Library: DOR noted that this decision was made by the University Board after a period of research, analysis and public consultation overseen by the Trinity Legacies Review Working Group (TLRWG). <p>DOR noted congratulations to the following for recent awards/recognition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Samson Shatashvili was awarded the Dannie Heineman Prize for Mathematical Physics Prof. Samson Shatashvili, University Chair of Natural Philosophy (1847) in Trinity’s School of Mathematics, and Director of the Hamilton Mathematics Institute, was recognised for outstanding publications in the field, in which he has made several significant contributions over the past four decades. The Dannie Heineman Prize for Mathematical Physics is jointly awarded by the American Institute of Physics (AIP) and American Physical Society (APS). • 13 Trinity researchers secured Frontiers for the Future funding The research projects will vary in length between two and four years, and hold values ranging from approximately €580,000 to €825,000. The funded researchers are: Michael Monaghan (Professor, School of Engineering) David Igoe (Assistant Professor, School of Engineering) Binh-Son Hua (Assistant Professor, School of Computer Science and Statistics) Silvia Caldararu (Assistant Professor, School of Natural Sciences) Margaret Jackson (Assistant Professor, School of Natural Sciences) Larisa Florea (Associate Professor, School of Chemistry) Aisling Dunne (Associate Professor, School of Biochemistry and Immunology, and School of Medicine) Graeme Watson (Professor, School of Chemistry)

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	<p>Andrei Parnachev (Associate Professor, School of Mathematics) Pete Akers (Assistant Professor, School of Natural Sciences) Cormac McGuinness (Associate Professor, School of Physics) Joanna McGouran (Assistant Professor, School of Chemistry) Mary Canavan (Professor, School of Biochemistry and Immunology, and School of Medicine)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Jennifer Edmond was appointed the National Coordinator for Ireland’s participation in DARIAH ERIC <p>Professor Edmond, in her role as National Coordinator for DARIAH, will facilitate engagement between Ireland-based researchers and DARIAH, and work to enhance DARIAH’s footprint in Ireland in collaboration with the coordinators from across Europe and other key stakeholders. DARIAH is the pan-European Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities, a network of scholars working with computational methods. DARIAH is a designated ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) since 2014 and the network has a membership of 22 countries. It develops, maintains and operates infrastructure in support of ICT-based research practices related to the humanities and supports researchers in using them to build, analyse and interpret digital resources. The mission of the DARIAH ERIC is to enhance and support digitally- enabled research across the humanities and arts, as well as the teaching of digital research methods.</p> <p>University Rankings: DOR noted that the submission window to update contacts for the QS surveys would open at the end of November and close end of January 2025. An email would be sent to all Directors with information about what was needed, templates etc. Survey links would be sent to contacts in February 2025.</p>
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	<p>Items for Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee noted the appointment of Prof. Aoife McLysaght as the new independent Government Science Advisor. DOR noted congratulations on behalf of committee.
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOR noted that more volunteers were needed for spotlight presentations. • DOR reminded members of the committee that they could suggest items for discussion before meetings and if appropriate it would be accommodated on the agenda.
C.3	<p>AOB</p> <p>No AOB.</p> <p>Meeting concluded.</p>