

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

11:00, Tuesday, 18 February 2025

Online via Zoom

MINUTES

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair); Prof. Brian Broderick; Prof. Padraic Fallon; Prof. Joseph Roche; Prof. Catherine Welch; Prof. Joanne Banks; Prof. Pádraic Whyte; Prof. Lindsey Earner-Byrne; Prof. Mohamed Ahmed; Prof. Caroline Jagoe; Prof. Sonia Bishop; Prof. Sharyn O'Halloran; Prof. Nicola Carr; Prof. Jacob Erickson; Prof. Ed Lavelle; Prof. Mathias Senge; Prof. Dave Lewis; Prof. Michael Monaghan; Prof. Andrei Parnachev; Prof. Yvonne Buckley; Prof. Ortwin Hess; Prof. Hal Duncan; Prof. Sarah Doyle; Prof. Eilish Burke; Prof. Anne-Marie Healy; Prof. Stefano Sanvito; Prof. Eve Patten; Prof. Rhodri Cusack; Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan; Dr Michelle Olmstead; Prof. Martine Smith; Dr Rory Connolly; Claudia Peroni.

In attendance:

Dr Sally Smith; Elaine Sharkey; Susan Maguire; Doris Alexander; Vincent Coole; Audrey Crosbie; Dr Geoff Bradley; Helen Shenton; Dr Jennifer Daly

Apologies

Frank Wellmer; Fiona Smyth; Michael Reilly; Marco Ruffini; Mark Bell.

Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	Minutes Minutes from the meeting of January 21 st were amended to reflect that Frank Wellmer was in attendance. Minutes were then approved.
A.2	Matters Arising from the Minutes RS/24-25/9 - DOR noted that following interest from many committee members, an extended session with TDA about fundraising for research would be organised. DOR noted that a poll for preferred dates had been circulated and responses would be appreciated by end of this week.
A.3	RS/24-25/11 Trinity Research Centre proposal – Water Centre <i>Prof. Muhammad Ali, School of Engineering; Ruth Clinton, E3; and Chris Keely, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise joined the meeting for this item.</i> Prof. Ali presented an overview of the proposal to establish the Trinity Water Centre. It was noted that the current group of affiliated PIs was well-networked and resourced and had raised more than €20million in research funding between them. It was also noted that once the centre was formally recognised invitations would be extended to other researchers to join. Prof. Ali noted thanks to Chris Keely and Anthony O'Callaghan from Trinity Innovation & Enterprise and Ruth Clinton, E3, for their expertise and support in developing the proposal. In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of the committee noted that the proposal was excellent. They noted that given the proposal's emphasis on multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary research that collaboration with AHSS researchers working in the environmental humanities should be explored as this is a particular strength for Trinity.• Opportunities for engagement with CHARM-EU were also noted. Complementarity between the proposed centre and E3 was also noted. The committee approved the proposal to establish the centre. <i>Prof. Ali, Ruth Clinton, Chris Keely left the meeting.</i>

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A.4	<p>RS/23-24/6 HR Researcher Recruitment Policy and Process – FOR DISCUSSION ONLY Susan Maguire, Human Resources <i>Yasmin Madigan, HR, joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>An updated version of the draft policy on researcher recruitment was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. Susan Maguire presented an overview of the consultation process to the committee as well as restating the commitments Trinity has made to Open Transparent Merit-Based Recruitment as part of the Silver Athena swan award. It was noted that the consultation process began in June 2023 with several rounds of consultations and workshops held over 2023/24. It was noted that the general consensus was that there was a need for a policy, but feedback emphasised that the process should be kept as simple as possible and that ownership of the process should remain with PIs. It was noted that there were examples of good practice around college and the aim was to regularise and expand this. It was also noted that any new policy and process would be supported with a communications and awareness raising/educational plan.</p> <p>The Dean of Research noted thanks to colleagues in HR for all of their work on this initiative to date. In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of the committee noted the extremely competitive market for hiring postdocs. It was noted that any new policy would need to be sufficiently flexible and efficient to enable offers to be made in a timely fashion.• There was some discussion as to the ideal length of time a derogation could be applied. It was suggested that the proposed six months was too short with some members of the committee favouring derogations of up to 18 months. It was noted that anything over 12 months could present challenges in relation to employment legislation. In response to concerns that were raised about possibly increasing precarity of employment by the requirement to re-interview, it was accepted that this would need to be addressed in the policy. It was also noted that HR was doing work around employment contracts and patterns.• Some members of the committee noted concerns that the new process would supplant international discipline-specific hiring processes, possibly placing Trinity at a disadvantage. It was noted that there was no intention to replace existing processes and that ownership of the process would remain with the PI. It was suggested that this should be explicitly clarified in the policy and supporting documents.• Members of the committee noted that Trinity’s recruitment cycles, for example for graduate students, were out of sync with international norms and made Trinity less competitive. It was noted that similar points had been raised with the IRC about its funding cycles. It was agreed that the Dean of Graduate Studies would assess internal PhD timelines. Committee noted that Trinity should not be putting obstacles in its own way.• The committee was advised that there was no reason that upcoming roles/recruitment could not be flagged to potential candidates in advance. It was also noted that moving the financing of a contract across grants was permitted; where complications would arise was if the nature of the work changed.• Members of the committee noted that a huge level of consultation had been conducted on this proposed policy and process and that discussion in this area had been ongoing since 2006.
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	<p>DOR requested that Directors of Research collate a final round of feedback from their schools to be sent to HR as soon as possible. It was noted that the policy would then be brought back to the committee for approval.</p> <p><i>Yasmin Madigan left the meeting.</i></p>
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
<p>B.1</p>	<p>RS/24-25/12 Policy on Open Licensing of the Library's Digitised Content Helen Shenton, College Librarian</p> <p>An overview of the new Policy on Open Licensing of the Library's Digitised Content was presented to the committee. It was noted that this policy would bring Trinity in line with peer institutions. In discussion with the committee it was suggested that the principles of the inclusive curriculum could be articulated in the policy. It was also noted that while the policy explicitly stated that content could not be swept for AI there were no guaranteed mechanisms by which this could be prevented.</p>
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Dean of Research update Dean of Research</p> <p>Congratulations were noted by the committee for the following achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trinity to headquarter new €31.6 million Research Ireland ARC Hub for Therapeutics. The overall goal of the Hub is to take world-leading research to commercialisation outcomes such as spinouts and licenses. Along with Trinity, University College Dublin (UCD) and RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences (RCSI) are consortium partners. Vincent Kelly, Professor in Trinity's School of Biochemistry and Immunology, will direct the ARC Hub for Therapeutics, which will be headquartered in the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute. • Profs. Valeria Nicolosi and Matthew Campbell secured ERC Proof of Concept awards. • IDS-TILDA has secured a further €1.75million from the HRB on behalf of the Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to support the next phase of the study. IDS-TILDA is a supplement to the main TILDA study and follows the ageing of people with intellectual disabilities. • Dr Conor Hayden, ADAPT and the School of Engineering, secured €600,000 from Enterprise Ireland's Commercialisation Fund for the "ribbon device" which is a non-invasive respiratory sensor. • Eleven researchers from Trinity have secured fellowships with industry partners via the Research Ireland Industry Research, Development, and Innovation Fellowship (IRDIF) Programme. The fellowships are supported by funding and vary in duration between 12 and 24 months, enabling recipients to work on projects across diverse fields from sustainable manufacturing to therapies for ulcerative colitis. Trinity winners and their projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alexa Ennis will work with Private Enterprise to seek innovative polymer coatings for catheter devices ○ Althaf Raja Mohammed will work with HT Materials Science Ltd. to develop graphene and metal oxide nanofluids for thermal cooling ○ Beyza Yaman will work with Huawei Technologies (Ireland) Co., Limited to improve autonomous telecommunications systems ○ Cansu Ilhan will work with Analog Devices Inc., (ADI) to develop advanced materials solutions for high voltage analogue-CMOS integration

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dipto Barman will work with Workday on adaptive and integrated AI safety mechanisms for large language models in enterprise applications ○ Irina Munina will work with iSentioLabs to make machines smarter, by enabling sustainable manufacturing via wireless technologies ○ Isabella Batten will work with Noa Therapeutics to investigate multi-modal drug compounds as possible therapeutic agents for ulcerative colitis ○ Julie Clarke will work with Climate Matters to develop climate risk intelligence tools for critical infrastructure assets ○ Lucy Prendeville will work with Analog Devices Inc., (ADI) to develop magnetic thin films for multiturn sensors ○ Sukhanazerin Abdulla will work with Versatile Packaging on multilayer barrier films for sustainable food packaging ○ Tandra Ghoshal will work with Alcon Laboratories Ireland Ltd to develop materials for use in intraocular lenses <p>Researchers from Trinity and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) are leading the Irish component of the Genome of Europe project, which aims to map the genomes of a representative sample of the residents of Europe. The project encompasses 49 partner institutions across 27 European countries and has a total budget of almost €45 million, out of which €20 million is funded under the Digital Europe Programme.</p> <p>Congratulations were noted to the Trinity Business School which recently celebrated its 100th birthday.</p> <p>RS/24-25/4 – It was noted that the College Statement on AI and Gen AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Research had been published. The statement noted that it is a ‘living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated as ... technologies evolve and as other related College policies are published.’ It was noted that the policy on Good Research Practice does not currently mention AI but this would be addressed as part of the next full review of the policy.</p> <p>The committee was advised that a memo was issued to St James’s Hospital and Tallaght regarding the processes, reporting obligations and recognition of the JREC. It was noted that JREC decisions were recognised as equivalent to any recognised TCD research ethics committee. The committee was advised that processes have now been put in place to facilitate the reporting of JREC decisions to TCD. It was noted that the Research Ethics Policy Committee had been tasked with developing a policy and process for recognising other external ethics committees to reduce the duplication of effort for researchers. The committee was advised that this would take some time but work is underway and a full update from the REPC would be forthcoming soon.</p>
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	<p>Items for Noting</p> <p>The request to change the name of the Trinity Centre for Psychological Health to the Trinity Centre for Lifespan Research was held over until the next meeting.</p>
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <p>No items noted.</p>
C.3	<p>AOB</p> <p>Committee was reminded that any relevant items could be raised under AOB and that members were welcome to flag items with the DOR or committee secretary in advance.</p>