Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

XX = Council relevance

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 23 February 2016 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin (*Chair*)
              Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
              Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
              Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet
              Professor Philip Coleman, School of English
              Professor David Wilkins, School of Mathematics
              Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
              Professor Elaine Moriarty, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
              Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
              Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
              Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
              Professor Sarah Smyth, Director of TSM
              Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
              Professor Michael Bridge, School of Chemistry
              Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
              Professor Fáinche Ryan, Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
              Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
              Professor James Hanrahan, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
              Professor Eric Weitz, School of Drama, Film and Music
              Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
              Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
              Professor Robbie Gilligan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
              Professor Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities
              Professor Howard Smith, School of Psychology
              Professor Kevin Conlon, School of Medicine
              Professor Charles Patterson, School of Physics
              Mr David Mockler, Library Representative
              Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes

Apologies: Professor Imelda Coyne, School of Nursing and Midwifery
              Professor Kevin Devine, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
              Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education
              Professor Des Ryan, School of Law
              Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer
              Ms Molly Kenny, Education Officer, Students' Union
              Ms Sinéad Baker, Student Representative

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Professor Juliette Hussey, Vice President for Global Relations for item
              USC/15-16/122; Mr Declan Treanor, Service Director, Disability Services, for items
              USC/15-16/124i and USC/15-16/124ii; Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Trinity Teaching and
              Learning, for item USC/15-16/126

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed the new Library Representative, Mr David Mockler, to the meeting.

USC/15-16/120 Minutes
                The minutes of the meeting of 26 January 2016 were approved.

USC/15-16/121   Matters arising

USC/15-16/089   The Student Complaints Procedure was approved by Council at its meeting of 10 February 2016.

USC/15-16/092   The full backlog of student cases had been cleared by the end of January 2016. The Director of the Academic Registry would shortly send communication to tutors outlining the details of the new student cases and records team.

USC/15-16/107   Communication regarding appeals would shortly be sent to all stakeholders, including DUTLs, tutors, School Administrators, Deans, Faculty Administrators, and students. Documents relating to the appeals process had been uploaded to the Undergraduate Studies web pages (http://www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/academic-progress/appeals.php). A link to the documents would shortly be placed on the Senior Tutor's web pages.

USC/15-16/114   The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked members who had sent feedback in relation to Entrance Exhibitions. Members who had not yet provided feedback were invited to do so.

USC/15-16/122   Report on Student Mobility
A report on Student Mobility, dated February 2016, had been circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed the Vice-President for Global Relations to the meeting to present this item.

The report provided a summary of undergraduate student mobility from 2011/12 and outlined the opportunities that existed for undergraduate students to spend part of their studies overseas. The Vice-President noted the difficulties in obtaining some of the information and requested that details of any omissions or corrections should be sent to her office.

The Vice-President then highlighted the main themes covered by the report. The report referenced four categories of student mobility opportunities at Trinity: College-level, school-based, consortia, and Erasmus. Since 2011/12, the number of students who had taken part in the College-wide non-EU exchange programme had increased by 200% including an increase of 47% in 2014/15 alone. In 2015/16, eight new high-ranking exchange partner universities were added to the programme.

There were consistently less Trinity students taking up outbound Erasmus places than there were incoming students: this had led to imbalanced exchanges. However, the difference between incoming and outgoing student numbers was reducing.

It was estimated that approximately 23% of Trinity undergraduates eligible to take part in a mobility programme had done so. The Global Relations Office was working on benchmarking this with other universities.

Some of the partner universities in Asia had established summer programmes, which had increased the opportunities for Trinity students to participate in an exchange. The Vice-President welcomed the establishment of the Provost's Asian Bursary and noted the positive feedback from students who had received it.

She spoke about a number of schools, particularly Business, Law and Medicine, that had their own mobility programmes and noted that the majority of the mobility activity in the School of Medicine was in the form of clinical placement opportunities.

An International Welcome Programme had been initiated by the Global Relations Office in 2013 and was coordinated in conjunction with the Trinity Alumni and Development Office. Its aim was to connect outgoing exchange students with Trinity alumni living in the area to which the student would travel.

She outlined plans to continue to create further mobility opportunities for students. These would include offering a broad spectrum of options through which students could undertake an international experience, expanding the College-wide student exchange programme, deepening College's relationship with existing partners abroad and creating new connections, and joining consortia – including a consortium of Ivy League US institutions.

She acknowledged that a number of challenges and impediments existed for some Trinity students undertaking exchanges. These were identified as: high costs, inflexible curricula, the structure of certain programmes, the examination timetable, and insufficient support from certain schools. Difficulties for incoming students were also discussed and these included the lack of a fixed timetable, the timing of assessments and return of marks.

Members raised a concern with regard to the lack of administrative support available to schools with incoming exchange students and also sought clarification on which members of the Global Relations Office to liaise with on these matters. The Vice-President outlined that she would follow up with USC in this regard. She also advised that the Global Relations Office was working with schools to encourage shared knowledge of mobility issues and to help schools to support outgoing students. She emphasised that exchange opportunities should be discussed with students at an early opportunity to allow adequate time to prepare, e.g. acquisition of language skills or to achieve the required grades.

Members discussed both the positive experiences to be gained from study or placements abroad and the concerns of some students in relation to outgoing exchanges. These included the concern that their grade profile would drop, that they would not achieve the correct level of preparation for fourth year, and that employers may look less favourably on grades from an outside institution. The financial burden was also discussed, one example being the cost of completing a clinical placement in North America. The Senior Tutor also commented that summer schools might only be financially accessible to a limited cohort of students.

Members also discussed the reasons why international students choose to come to Trinity. It was noted that university rankings were a significant factor in determining the choice of potential applicants to Medicine and Dental Science.

The Vice-President concluded by highlighting that funding was available from the HEA to support all aspects of Erasmus. It was agreed by members that the area of exchanges had great potential to attract philanthropic funding.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer emphasised the requirement for clear communication with Trinity students taking part in an exchange. She noted that, with the increase in outward mobility, it was imperative that students understood exactly what was expected of them during their time abroad in terms of courses and credits. A member agreed and stated that it should be carefully determined in advance of the exchange that the partner institution would meet the expectations of the student and the school. It was suggested that student learning agreements, which were a requirement for outgoing Erasmus students, might be useful in other types of exchange.

USC/15-16/123   Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's Report

Northern Ireland Engagement Programme

A report on the Northern Ireland Engagement Programme, together with a memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 2 February 2016, was circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer had presented the report to Council at its meeting of 10 February 2016.

She highlighted a number of items in the report. Preliminary application figures from the Admissions Officer for 2016-17 entry indicated that the number of Northern Irish applicants had risen from 754 in 2015 to 873 in 2016. Sixty-four applications had come through the A-Level Feasibility Study, with more expected prior to the closing date of 1 May 2016.

It was noted that the conversion rate of offers to acceptances and on to registrations was low for Northern Irish students. The Student Recruitment Officer would carry out some work to determine the reasons for this and investigate how the conversion rate might be improved. In response to a member's request as whether this investigative work could be expanded to include College courses with a low conversion rate amongst Leaving Certificate students, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer highlighted that acceptance rates in certain courses fluctuated from year to year. She brought members' attention to the acceptance data in the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's Annual Report.

It was noted that UK universities were more proactive in following up with students who had received a conditional offer and that Trinity might explore further how it interacts with applicants prior to the CAO change of mind deadline. A member suggested that guaranteeing accommodation would help to convert offers to registrations, but the risk of disadvantaging other students was considered to be too high to consider this as an option.

A member reported that recent recruitment work in their school had shown that the reasons behind a student coming to Trinity were multi-factorial and included: Trinity's ranking, a family history of attendance at Trinity, and Trinity's international reputation in specific disciplines.

Trinity Education Project (TEP) – graduate attributes

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer spoke to a presentation on the Trinity Education Project, which the Provost had delivered to Council at the meeting of 10 February 2016. The presentation gave details of the various iterations of the graduate attributes and had been received positively at Council. The Provost would meet with course committees in the coming weeks to discuss the attributes.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer brought the meeting briefly through the evolution of the graduate attributes as a result of discussion at various fora. She commented that comparator universities used similar terms to describe graduate attributes and that Trinity wanted to articulate its graduate attributes in a more distinctive way. She invited feedback from USC, which could be communicated to the project steering group.

The Dean of Students noted that the opportunities to develop these attributes would be provided not just through the curriculum, but also through the co-curricular experience. He emphasised how the principles underlying the attributes would be embedded in the building blocks of the curricula: disciplines would be invited to examine how their curricula could provide opportunities for students to achieve the attributes. It was noted that many of the skills and competencies linked to the development of these attributes were already being taught, but were not necessarily articulated.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted the importance of students integrating their learning from the co-curricular experience into their academic learning and vice-versa. A member raised a concern that academic curricula were already sufficiently full and this may not leave much time for students to engage in a high level of co-curricular activity.

Overall the feedback from members was positive. They felt the terms were ambitious, broad, and accurately captured the desired attributes. Members also gave

feedback on specific terms used to describe the attributes and on where they considered that there were gaps.

USC/15-16/124   Admissions Issues

i) Report on Widening Participation Strategy

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer introduced the item and pointed out that the College's Strategic Plan 2014-2019 set the target for admissions for under-represented groups at 25% by 2019. She contextualised this target with reference to a range of factors in the external environment, including the HEA's recently published National Access Plan 2015-2019, which identified five broad goals: these had been highlighted in the circulated paper.

USC was encouraged to consider the different proposals outlined in the discussion paper on how to achieve the College's target. Members were also asked to approve the establishment of a taskforce that would focus on the development of a widening participation strategy and make proposals on how this might be implemented.

Ms Cliona Hannon, Director of TAP, and Mr Declan Treanor, Service Director, Disability Services, spoke to the paper and the proposals contained therein.

The Director of TAP thanked the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer for working with the Director of the Disability Services, the Mature Student Officer, and herself in this regard. She noted that in addition to the College Strategic Plan 2014-19 and the HEA National Access Plan 2015-19, another key driver to increase the participation of under-represented groups was Trinity's Performance Based Compact 2014-16. The under-represented groups were comprised of students from low-income backgrounds, students with a disability, and first-time mature students. The proposal to increase participation included the suggestion to prioritise six particular student groups within the 3% additional target. Some of these groups were cited as priorities in the National Access Plan and the other groups were already targeted by Trinity.

The circulated paper underlined the significant existing outreach activity across College, with particular reference to six of the goals in the Strategic Plan relating to widening participation. This activity was currently based in TAP, in schools, or in a combination of both. The Director highlighted that TAP would be keen to work with schools across Trinity to review their outreach activity and to help make this more visible. She also noted the proposal in the discussion paper to incorporate objectives related to widening participation in School Strategic Plans and linking the success of these objectives to quality reviews.

One of the proposals in the paper related to the widening of QQI/further education training (FET) entry routes. National policy in this area set a 10% target by 2019. The Director highlighted the QQI/FET entry routes available and noted ways to increase the range of routes. She noted that TAP and Colaiste Dhulaigh CDETB had initiated a process with QQI to establish a working group to develop a Maths for Access to STEM award and that the award was now available as a Level 5 Specific Purpose module on the NFQ.

A further proposal in the paper suggested that consideration be given to reviewing the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum (TIC) to assess whether it could be embedded in the Trinity Education Project, in School Strategic Plans, quality reviews and other relevant quality systems. The Director also indicated that the National Access Plan proposed the nomination of 'Faculty Access Champions' with a view to mainstreaming widening participation issues.

The Service Director of the Disability Service informed the meeting of the potential impact to funding from the HEA for HEIs that did not meet the goals outlined in the Performance Based Compact. The meeting agreed that in order to supply accurate

data to the HEA for widening participation purposes, a data collection mechanism would have to be established in SITS.

The Senior Tutor highlighted the types of issues faced by these groups of students and emphasised that Trinity must offer them full support throughout their College careers. The resource implications this would have on services and academic units were noted. She urged College to consider, through the Trinity Education Project, ways to facilitate the greater need for flexibility required by these students.

The Director of TAP noted that extensive data on HEAR students and students from foundation courses was available in TAP and could be provided to schools upon request. The data showed that the attainment and progression achieved by these groups was in line with students who entered via the traditional routes. Students that came in through HEAR with reduced points had usually achieved points just slightly below the competitive points level. Research also showed that graduates who had entered Trinity via TAP routes for socio-economically disadvantaged students achieved the same level of salary as 'traditional' graduates.

XX   USC approved the establishment of the taskforce as proposed.

ii) Code of Practice Governing Institutional DARE and HEAR Admissions Policies

The Code of Practice governing institutional DARE and HEAR Admissions Policies was circulated together with a memorandum from the Admissions Officer, dated 18 February 2016. (The Code of Practice is appended to these minutes.) The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer provided some background to the rationale for the Code of Practice.

The criteria for eligibility for HEAR and DARE schemes had been clearly defined and were used by all HEIs participating in the schemes. Admissions details such as the number of places available, the allocation of places and the points involved were not, however, made available by all institutions. The purpose of the Code of Practice was to ensure that all HEIs publish information with regard to how admissions through the schemes were managed. Trinity was transparent in its admissions processes and already adhered to the admissions policies outlined in the Code of Practice.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer brought the meeting through each of the points in the Code of Practice and explained how these related to Trinity.

In response to a query, the Service Director of the Disability Service noted that Trinity had no discretion as to which students were eligible or ineligible for entry under the DARE scheme. To combat potential abuse of the scheme, a policy group had recently added the requirement for an 'educational impact statement': schools would have to confirm that the student's disability had a negative impact on their education. This impact statement was in addition to supporting medical documentation.

XX   USC approved the Code of Practice which would be submitted to Council for approval at its meeting of 9 March 2016.

USC/15-16/125 **Procedures for the approval of new undergraduate modules**
A discussion document, together with a memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 18 February 2016, had been circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that a discrepancy between the approval procedures for new modules at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels had been identified. New postgraduate modules were considered and approved at the Graduate Studies Committee, but it was thought that this would not be workable at the undergraduate level due to the substantially higher number of undergraduate modules.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer requested that Directors discuss

the procedures proposed in the document with their schools/disciplines and bring feedback to the next meeting of USC. She highlighted that shared modules would need to be discussed across the relevant disciplines.

USC/15-16/126 **Proposal on Publication of Result in Cases of Compensation or Aggregation**
A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer dated 18 February 2016 was circulated, together with feedback received from schools (appended to these minutes). The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Sorcha De Brunner to the meeting for this item.

Based on the feedback received from Schools, the circulated memorandum outlined a proposal that the end-of-year published result should make no mention of compensation or aggregation. The distinction would continue to be flagged at the module level. A small number of schools delivering professional courses had expressed a preference to be allowed to continue to differentiate between results in this regard. However, it was proposed that, in the interests of equity across the student body, the principle be applied, unless they could demonstrate that their statutory/regulatory bodies expressly required compensation to be indicated in the end-of-year result.

In response to a query, Ms De Brunner confirmed that the end-of-year mark available on the student portal would be the same as that on the transcript. A student would see that they had passed by compensation/aggregation by viewing their module mark. She confirmed that in order to enable the correct calculations, schools should use the short PIT code that indicated compensation/aggregation.

XX USC approved the proposal. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer advised that testing in SITS would have to be carried out and that it was unlikely that the principle would be implemented in the current academic year. She would keep colleagues briefed on progress.

USC/15-16/127 **Any other business**
It was agreed that USC would consider the issue of literacies at a future meeting.

USC/15-16/128 **Items for noting**
There were no items for noting.
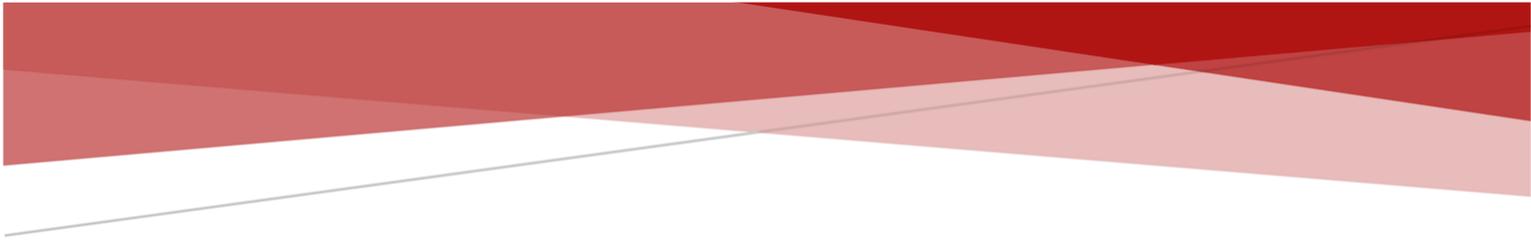
A Code of Practice Governing Institutional

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

&

Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

Admissions Policies

Introduction

A Code of Practice Governing Institutional DARE and HEAR Admissions Policies was developed by the DARE & HEAR Admissions Working Group on foot of a recommendation from the DARE & HEAR National Policy Group in January 2015. Membership of the Admissions Working Group is as follows:

- Susan Power (Admissions Officer, TCD)
- Frank Costello (Admissions Officer, DIT)
- Jill O' Mahony (Admissions Officer, UCD)
- Celeste Golden (Admissions Officer, RCSI)
- Olive Byrne (Access Officer, UCC)
- Cathy McLoughlin (Access Officer, DCU)
- Fiona Sweeney (Disability Officer, UCD)
- Bob O Murchu (Disability Officer, DIT)
- Grace Edge (DARE HEAR Shared Services Unit)
- Sinead Quinn (DARE HEAR Shared Services Unit)

University Registrars were also consulted as part of this process.

The *Code of Practice* was drawn up to assist HEIs provide more extensive and consistent information to the public with regard to the number of reduced points places available for DARE and / or HEAR eligible candidates, and how these reduced points places are allocated. In the medium term, the *Code of Practice* will also help facilitate the move towards the alignment of HEI's DARE and HEAR admissions policies where practicable, and to further integrate these into the Central Application Office processes. The *Code of Practice* is detailed on pages 2 and 3.

Request to DARE and HEAR Participating HEIs

(i) That **by 15th March** each HEI formally indicates whether or not the *Code of Practice* will be adopted.

(ii) That **by 18th April** each HEI adopting the *Code of Practice* publishes on their admissions website clear information regarding the number of reduced places available for eligible candidates and their process for selecting eligible candidates.

(iii) That **by 18th April** each HEI adopting the *Code of Practice* ensures that all DARE and/or HEAR admissions policies, practices and internal processes align with the *Code of Practice.*

A Code of Practice Governing Institutional DARE and HEAR Admissions Policies

1. Participating HEIs define DARE and HEAR as alternative admissions schemes which offer reduced points entry to eligible candidates.

2. Eligible DARE and HEAR candidates admitted to participating HEIs receive post-entry supports as appropriate.

3. HEIs participating in the DARE and / or HEAR schemes reserve a quota of reduced points places on courses for eligible candidates.

4. HEIs participating in both DARE and HEAR will work toward having a single admissions policy for eligible DARE and HEAR candidates.

5. Course offers to eligible DARE and HEAR candidates are made through the Central Applications Office. As per the *CAO Code of Practice*, each DARE and HEAR HEI publishes its DARE and HEAR admissions policy on its admissions website in advance, and specifies clearly the means by which eligible candidates are selected. The published DARE and HEAR admissions policy should provide detail in respect of:

    i. Any DARE and HEAR specific entry requirements (in addition to the usual minimum entry and specific course requirements).
    ii. The minimum number of reduced points places available on courses for DARE and / or HEAR.

6. Reduced points places are distributed equally between DARE and HEAR eligible candidates unless otherwise clearly stated in the HEI's published DARE and HEAR admissions policy. Any unfilled DARE or HEAR places should be filled by eligible candidates from the other scheme, ahead of other non DARE and HEAR candidates.

7. Eligible candidates with physical and sensory disabilities who meet HEI admissions requirements are offered reduced points places from the DARE quota ahead of eligible candidates from the other disability categories.

8. Candidates jointly eligible for DARE and HEAR who meet HEI admissions requirements are offered reduced points places from the DARE or HEAR quota

ahead of other eligible candidates. Candidates eligible for both schemes receive access and disability supports as appropriate.

9. All other DARE and HEAR eligible candidates should be offered from the quota of reduced points places according to their position on the waiting list.

10. Participating DARE and HEAR HEIs must apply the agreed CAO ratings to DARE and HEAR offers and only to DARE and HEAR offers.

11. The position of a particular course in an applicant's order of preference should have no bearing on the assessment for DARE or HEAR admission to that course as per the *CAO Memorandum of Understanding.*

12. HEIs give permission to the DARE HEAR Shared Services Unit to collate and publish annually the aggregate number of each HEI's on and above points and reduced points offers and admissions data, once the CAO season has ended. The DARE HEAR Shared Services Unit will request final DARE and HEAR offers and acceptance numbers from CAO and will circulate to HEIs in advance of publishing, for verification.

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Undergraduate Studies Committee

From: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer

Re: Proposal Re. Publication of Result in Cases of Compensation/Aggregation

Date: 18th February 2016

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Following the discussion at the last meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee on the use of progression (PIT) codes indicating compensation or aggregation and the associated published result, members were provided with additional data showing the spread of the relevant PIT codes over course years. Members were asked to discuss the data within their schools and departments, particularly focussing on the question as to whether end-of-year published results should differentiate between those students who pass outright and those who pass by compensation/aggregation.

I would like to draw the attention of the meeting to the enclosed summary of the feedback received. Responses were received from 16 Schools and the TSM Office and a clear majority of these indicate that the end-of-year result should not distinguish between students in this regard. Consequently, it is proposed that the end-of-year published result should make no mention of compensation or aggregation. Some schools delivering professional courses have expressed a preference that they be allowed to continue to differentiate between students in this regard, however, it is proposed that this principle is applied to all undergraduate courses, unless it can be shown their statutory/regulatory bodies expressly require compensation to be indicated in the end-of-year result.

If adopted, a number of points have been clarified with staff in the Academic Registry:

1. Compensation/aggregation would still be indicated at the module level on transcripts.
2. This principle, if endorsed by USC, is likely to involve changing the longer PIT code names in SITS, whilst leaving the underlying short PIT code in place.
3. The short PIT code indicating compensation/aggregation would still have to be used to enable progression calculations in the system and compensation/aggregation automations to work.
4. This would have to be tested in SITS.

I seek USC's approval of this principle. If approved, further details concerning its implementation in SITS will follow in due course.

Gillian Martin
Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer