



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

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 15 May 2018 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.

Present: Professor Gillian Martin, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
 Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
 Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
 Professor Kevin Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
 Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business
 Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry
 Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
 Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 Professor Stephen Minton, School of Education
 Professor Alan O'Connor, School of Engineering
 Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
 Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
 Professor Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities
 Professor Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law
 Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
 Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
 Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics
 Professor Naomi Elliott, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
 Professor Cathriona Russell, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
 Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM
 Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
 Professor Philip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
 Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative
 Ms Sally Anne McCarthy, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
 Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts
 Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
 Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Ms Alice Mac Pherson, Education Officer, Students' Union
 Ms Leona Coady, Director of Academic Registry

In attendance: Ms Marie McPeak, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Susan Power, Admissions Officer, Academic Registry

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies opened the meeting and noted apologies from members.

USC/17-18/081 Minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2018

One correction was noted with regard to USC/17-18/073 - Mathematics had returned the TEP Compliance Form by the deadline and ahead of the meeting.

USC/17-18/082 Matters arising

USC/17-18/069 The proposal to validate the new course Irish-Medium Bachelor in Education to be delivered by the Marino Institute of Education (MIE) from 2019-20 received a very positive report from the reviewer, Dr Melanie Ni Dhuinn, School of Education. There was one clear stipulation made by the reviewer which recommended that a separate Irish-language interview be included in the recruitment of new staff/faculty for appointment to the course. This recommendation was accepted and incorporated into the proposal. The proposal for validation of the Irish-medium B.Ed. delivered at MIE was approved by Council at its meeting of 9 May 2018. The course will commence in 2019-20.

USC/17-18/070 The request for cessation of World Religions and Theology as a stand-alone Single Honors and TSM subject from 2019-20 was approved by Council at its meeting of 9 May 2018.

USC/17-18/071 At its meeting of 9 May 2018, Council approved the name change of the programme in Classics. From 2019-20, the common entry programme will be named Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology.

USC/17-18/072 The minor adjustment to the Progression and Awards regulations for 2018-19 was approved by Council on 9 May 2018. The regulation which will be incorporated in the Calendar for 2018-19 will state that "Students who are required to repeat the year will be required to repeat the year in full (i.e., all modules and all assessment components)."

USC/17-18/074 The change of date of the College Open Day to 10 November 2018 was noted by Council on 9 May 2018.

USC/17-18/076 The Trinity Employability and Employment Guide will not be discussed at this meeting, but it is expected that the revised statement will be available for noting at the next USC.

USC/17-18/083 Programme Handbook Policy**XX**

A memorandum from Ms Marie McPeak, Education Support Officer, Trinity Teaching and Learning, dated 1 May 2018, had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Ms Marie McPeak to speak to this item.

Ms McPeak reiterated that implementing a formal handbook policy and supporting Calendar entry recognises the importance of handbooks as a communication tool for schools and as a primary resource for students and prospective students.

Feedback from the previous meeting has been incorporated into the revised policy; for example, the wording in section 7.2 has been adjusted to allow programmes the flexibility to provide links to items listed in the Appendix. This allows programmes to place emphasis on items that are more appropriate to students in their cohort.

Issues relating to the publication of the Calendar have been clarified and Section 7.3 has been revised to reflect this. It has been confirmed that Calendar web links are static from year to year, so it is possible to link to this information. It was noted that a majority of policies and changes to the Calendar will be known at the end of the Academic Year and will be incorporated into the Appendix. In cases where a programme publishes its handbook ahead of the availability of the Calendar, this may be resolved by an addendum as per Section 7.8.

Section 7.8, which generated a great deal of discussion at the previous meeting, has been adjusted: however, consultation with students or their representatives will take place where there are changes to assessments, the award of the degree and/or the programme learning outcomes. This supports the principles of the Student Partnership Policy to ensure more transparency in relation to assignments and changes to assessment structures in both the long term and short term. It also acts as a mechanism for protection for both students and programmes when it comes to appeal processes and complaints.

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through continued engagement with the ISB and other surveys. Focus groups may be engaged in order to gain qualitative feedback on the usefulness of handbooks and how they influence course choices.

The proposed Calendar Entry states that handbooks must exist and align with the policy.

The Senior Tutor welcomed the revised policy, but noted that there should be an entry on the Tutorial Service in handbooks within the Appendix.

Members queried if there is capability to publish the handbook within the VLE, which is structured around modular information. Members noted that publishing information in multiple places, such as module descriptors and in the case of some modules, multiple programme handbooks increased the opportunity for misinformation. It was agreed that assessment details should be held within the module descriptor and there is discretion at programme-level on the level of module details contained within the handbook.

A member noted that section 7.8 may require further revision to incorporate wording that is reflective of assessments other than examinations.

Members queried how the policy will apply with the implementation of new programme architectures. It was noted that the policy applies to all taught programmes of study, including postgraduate programmes, and that separate advice would be provided on the communication of new programme architectures. In response to a member's query it was noted that, ideally, each student would have one handbook for their programme, but with multiple schools involved in the delivery of some programmes and the availability of multiple exit awards this would be very difficult to achieve.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that, currently, there are multiple local practices employed in the creation of handbooks, and that the policy provides a structure for achieving consistency across College in terms of the information provided to students.

This policy has been circulated for consideration at GSC on 17 May 2018, feedback from the USC and GSC will then be incorporated and the policy will return to USC for noting before submission to University Council.

USC/17-18/084 Admissions Issues

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a. A-level Scoring Review

A memorandum from the Admissions Officer, dated 15 May 2018 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the Admissions Officer to speak to this item.

In introducing the item, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reminded members that a revised grading and points scheme for the Leaving Certificate had been introduced in 2017. The proposed adjustment to A-Level admissions seeks to bring A-Level scoring into line with the revised Leaving Certificate points. There have also been several reforms of the A-Level system, particularly in England, where the AS level is now a stand-alone qualification and no longer part of the A-Level qualification.

The Admissions Officer explained that statistics from the full Leaving Certificate cohort of 2017 had been compared with A-level statistics in order to inform the recalibration, noting that the A-level statistics do not include failures. The proportion of the age cohort completing Leaving Certificate is also relatively high when compared to most EU countries and, in particular, the UK. Recalibration options were created with these factors in mind and in

conjunction with Admissions colleagues in other HEIs in Ireland. There are three options, A, B, and C, presented in the memorandum.

The Admissions Officer noted that it is not possible to match scores exactly for each grade combination. However, using all three proposed options, the current score for A*A*A* and AAA would appear to be low relative to the Leaving Certificate distribution.

It was proposed that Option A offers the best model for recalibration. No candidate is disadvantaged by the change and the move from multiples of five, in line with the shift within Leaving Certificate scoring to a non-linear scale, will provide a better distribution of A-Level candidates. Points at the top level remain relatively unchanged, but there are increases in the mid-400 to mid-500 range where the majority of Trinity entry points fall. While there are significant increases at the lower end with this model, it will not have any impact for Trinity as very few of the entry points for programmes go below 400 points and these areas tend not to be in demand by A-Level applicants.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that this model is currently being reviewed and discussed by all Universities and Institutes of Technology and must be agreed across all institutions before implementation. If approved, the new scoring model would be implemented for 2019 entry.

The Admissions Officer also noted that it is no longer possible to take an A-Level in a subject already taken at AS Level in England. As a result, AS levels are no longer available to many English students, although they will continue to be available in Northern Ireland and Wales. Previously, candidates would have taken 4 subjects at AS Level and then opted to progress with 3 or 4 subjects to A-Level. This change to AS Levels means that many students will only present three A-Level subjects making it difficult for them to gain admission to some of the high demand courses.

In this context, the Admissions Officer provided details on the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), a stand-alone qualification offered by several Examination Boards in England. It is a single piece of work (usually 5,000 words) of a student's choosing that requires evidence of planning, preparation, research and independent learning. Around 30,000 students take this qualification every year. It is well regarded by English universities as it provides students with the skills required to pursue independent study and research. On the UCAS tariff it is given the same points as an AS level subject. In the Irish system the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) is comparable, though the LCVP is not awarded the same points value as a paper or subject.

The memorandum proposes that the EPQ be deemed acceptable as equivalent to an AS level and be awarded the same points value as an AS level. It should not be deemed acceptable as one of the six subjects required for matriculation, which is the case for LCVP. If accepted, it should be implemented for the 2018 admissions season. The Admissions Officer noted that the EPQ has been approved by the NUI Senate as eligible to contribute towards entry into undergraduate programmes from 2018.

In response to a member's query it was noted that the EPQ is taken as an extra subject and follows a supervised process that requires student engagement through a number of steps. It would be difficult for a student completing the EPQ to present work that is not their own due to this process.

Another member observed that access to Trinity from the UK would still be limited due to the point differential. In response, the Admissions Officer noted that many students from the UK who wish to attend Trinity are aware of what is expected and as such take A-Levels in maths so as to benefit from the bonus points.

USC recommends Proposal A for the purposes of calibrating A-Levels to Leaving Certificate points for Admission. This proposal is under consideration at other HEIs and an update will be provided at a later date.

USC recommends that the EPQ be deemed equivalent to an AS level and awarded points accordingly; however, it is not deemed to be acceptable for matriculation purposes. The EPQ should be accepted for admission from 2018-19.

These recommendations will be brought to Council for consideration and approval.

b. New Leaving Certificate Subjects

A memorandum from the Admissions Officer, dated 11 May 2018 had been circulated.

The Admissions Officer spoke to this item, indicating that three new subjects, Politics and Society, Computer Science, and Physical Education, have been introduced to the Leaving Certificate examination suite of subjects.

Politics and Society will be examined for the first time at the 2018 Leaving Certificate examinations. This new subject was introduced in 2016 in 41 schools participating in an initial pilot and will be rolled out nationally in September 2018. It is recommended that this subject be deemed acceptable as one of the subjects satisfying minimum entry requirements in 2018.

Computer Science as a subject will be introduced into second-level schools in September 2018 with the first examinations taking place in 2020. An email had been circulated to all Directors of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, requesting that Schools and programmes consider whether Computer Science could be accepted as a science subject and/or as a laboratory science subject.

The following programmes have indicated that they will accept Computer Science as a general science subject to satisfy their specific course requirements: TR060 Biological and Biomedical Sciences; TR061 Chemical Sciences; TR062 Geography and Geoscience; and TR063 Physical Sciences.

The revised entry requirement from 2020 onwards would read: H4 in two of: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Physics/Chemistry, Geology, Geography, Applied Mathematics, Agricultural Science or Computer Science.

Physical Education will also be introduced into second-level schools in September 2018 with the first examinations in 2020. As with Computer Science, an email had been circulated to all Directors of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, requesting that Schools and programmes consider whether Physical Education could be accepted as a science subject and/or as a laboratory science subject.

The general consensus from School responses was that Physical Education should not be accepted as a science or laboratory science subject.

The Admissions Officer confirmed that Computer Science and Physical Education will fall under the general science subject classification and will not be considered laboratory science subjects in matriculation requirements.

In response to a member's query, it was clarified that Physical Education does have some scientific content, but that the majority of the subject is athletic work.

The DUTL, School of Pharmacy indicated that they will also accept Computer Science as a general science subject to satisfy their specific course requirements.

A member queried the process for establishing course requirements for entry to a programme. They were advised that when reviewing their requirements, it would be useful to take similar courses in other HEIs as a reference point. More generally, programmes wishing to review their entry requirements should contact the Admissions Officer.

Another member noted that some programmes are required to consult accrediting bodies before accepting any new subjects for entry requirements.

USC recommends that Computer Science and Physical Education be deemed acceptable for the purposes of satisfying minimum entry requirements from 2020 onwards. It is also recommended that Computer Science be deemed acceptable as satisfying the course requirements for TR060, TR061, TR062, TR063 and TR072.

USC/17-18/085 Trinity Feasibility Study in Admissions

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A memorandum and discussion document from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (Project Sponsor), dated 11 May 2018, had been circulated.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted the Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study (TAFS) is currently in its fourth year, with the first cohort of entrants due to complete their undergraduate programme this academic year. It is, therefore, timely to consider how the Study has evolved over the past years and how the students on the three programmes, i.e., History, Law and Ancient and Medieval History and Culture have performed with a view to determining next steps.

An interim report had been provided to Council in 2015, drawing on documents related to application and selection processes, media coverage regarding the Study, and experiences shared by 18 of the first cohort of TAFS students. The report aimed to respond to questions regarding the Study's operations, resources, public perception, ability to match students to courses, assessment scales and any legal challenges. The interim report deemed it too early to respond to questions of whether the Study was scalable or whether it identified students best suited to the given courses. The main recommendation from the interim report was that the Study be extended for a period of time that would allow for a deeper examination of its efficacy and suitability for expansion. A further one-year extension of the Study was approved in June 2016 to allow for the completion of two cycles of the study - two years under the original system, and two years under the revised system where the personal statement acts as a qualifier but is not scored.

The discussion document provides data comparing the CAO points achieved by TAFS students to the CAO cut-off points for their programmes of study for standard entrants. Despite entering with lower average CAO points, there is no indication that TAFS students have achieved lower academic outcomes or progression rates than their peers. The document also provides data on school profile of selected students, which indicates the overall proportion of students from DEIS schools was slightly higher than the overall proportion of Trinity undergraduate enrolments from DEIS schools. The overall proportion of students from fee-paying schools was slightly lower than the overall proportion of Trinity undergraduate enrolments from fee-paying schools.

TAFS is currently approved to continue for new entrants in 2018/19. If the Study is to continue into 2019/20 or beyond, a decision needs to be made before the end of the current

academic year to ensure that the information is included in relevant Trinity and CAO communications for 2019/20.

The Senior Lecturer noted that the admissions route cannot continue indefinitely as a Feasibility Study. The discussion document sets out some of the options available.

Extending the study for a final year 2019/20 would mean that two cohorts of TAFS entrants would have completed their studies by the end of 2019/20, which would provide useful supplementary data to that which is currently available. The extra year would also allow time to compile a comprehensive report of findings and lessons learned from the study to inform related policy at institutional and national level. Potential applicants would be given adequate notice that the admissions route will not be available from 2020/21 onwards.

The extension of TAFS for 2019/20 would also allow time to explore the possibility of embedding the admissions route more broadly across Trinity. This would involve considerations in relation to which and how many programmes might embed the alternative admissions route, where the administration would be housed and how it would be resourced.

The discussion document set out a number of considerations, which might help to inform whether to wrap up the study or to explore embedding the new admissions route more widely across Trinity. One consideration relates to equity; whether it is equitable to admit 25 students who have lower average CAO points at the expense of 25 students who might otherwise have been offered places if those places were available.

Consideration should also be given to the small sample size, which makes it difficult to conduct useful statistical analyses or make generalisations to larger potential cohorts. Due to the commitment to anonymity given to applicants, it is not possible to directly track student performance or engagement or to contact TAFS students directly to invite them to participate in evaluation research. The value or otherwise of the study to Trinity is difficult to ascertain.

Several members voiced that the lack of clear goals or objectives of the Study made it difficult to measure the success of the study. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Graduate Studies noted that this issue had been raised previously at USC and that members had been provided with the objectives as set out in the original study documentation.

The Senior Tutor felt that the TAFS route should be embedded as an admissions route into College, noting that the Leaving Certificate is not equitable with a very large number of students utilising grinds in order to access higher education. The ability to cover the costs of grinds is not available to all prospective students.

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education as Project Sponsor agreed that the study has shown that we can admit good students that perform as well as peers using other admission routes, but was concerned about the equity of using places from within quota to facilitate entry. The lack of qualitative data due to guaranteed anonymity of participants makes it difficult to ascertain if the students gaining entry through this study are different to the wider cohort.

The Associate Dean noted that the use of separate feasibility studies for entry is also seen as limiting the ability to envision an overall admissions strategy for the College and that an overall strategy including Global Relations and Access Programmes would be of great value.

Another member noted that the data indicate the majority of admitted students came from non-DEIS schools and that this study did not necessarily illustrate increased equity over other admission routes.

Some members supported continuing the study for another year in order to make more data available, particularly in relation to the progression of students in the Sophister years. Others felt the scale is too small and value would not be added by continuing the study for a further year.

The resources needed to scale this project up were of concern to many members, who noted that the review of personal statements is resource heavy. It was further noted that offers made to applicants through this mechanism must be completed manually and there is no indication if economies of scale might exist in relation to the cost of the RPR calculation undertaken by the CAO.

Another member noted that with the current number of non-Leaving Certificate entry mechanisms there is little appetite to offer entry through TAFS, particularly where the data suggests it is not bringing in students from a different background.

As the study is restricted to three courses from FAHSS, it is also unclear if this cohort of students would perform as their peers in Science or Health Science programmes.

Based on the data to date, members were hesitant to endorse embedding the TAFS entry route into Trinity admissions processes.

Members supported that the study be extended 2019/20; however, it was recommended that a decision on whether to cease or explore embedding the admissions route should be taken by that point. A report to DES should also be prepared based on the information available at that time.

The discussion document will be brought to the next meeting of University Council.

USC/17-18/086 Northern Ireland Feasibility Study Report 2017-18

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A memorandum and draft report from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 14th May 2018, had been circulated.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies opened by noting that the Trinity Northern Ireland Engagement Programme (NIEP) was launched in September 2013 with the aim of re-engaging with schools across Northern Ireland in order to increase the number of Northern Irish students registered for undergraduate programmes in Trinity to approximately 8% of the undergraduate intake.

Alongside reengaging with schools, a central pillar of NIEP has been the Feasibility Study in A-Level Admissions, which was launched in July 2014. The draft Northern Ireland Report for 2017-18 provides information on number of applicants, offers and registrations relating to the academic year 2017-18 in the context of NIEP. It also provides an update on recruitment activities since the last report to USC and University Council in 2017.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that there had been a 22% increase in the number of applicants from Northern Ireland to both the CAO and Feasibility Study since its first intake in 2015-16. Whilst the number of NI students registered for undergraduate programmes in Trinity continues to remain well below the 8% target, it increased marginally to 3.30% in 2017-18 - this is the highest registration percentage since 2009/10.

Overall, NIEP and the Feasibility Study have contributed to promising growth in the number of applicants over the last two years and to a very modest increase in the overall number of registrations in two out of the last three years.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies indicated that continued outreach by Trinity staff, students and alumni to NI Schools, students and their parents has taken place throughout the current academic year. This included attendance at Schools and NI recruitment events, and holding a bespoke session for NI students at the Trinity Open Day.

In April 2018, school principals and careers teachers from across NI were invited to an information session at the Lagan Valley Island Conference Centre, at which presentations on studying in Trinity, admissions, and specific courses, including Medicine, Law, History, English, and European Studies were delivered. This event received good media coverage and showed the commitment of Trinity to increasing the number of NI students.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies has also been invited to attend the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference meeting on 8th June 2018 to provide an update on NI activities. This is an important group in terms of influencing students in their schools to apply to Trinity.

As in 2017, NI students who did not accept their offer from Trinity for 2017-18 were surveyed in February and March of this year. The main points emerging from the survey indicate there is greater awareness of and interest in Trinity as a study destination; however, there are challenges to recruitment which remain difficult or impossible to overcome.

Trinity is competing for NI students primarily against the UK market. UCAS has an earlier admissions cycle than the CAO, meaning that students who submit their application to UCAS by mid-January will have a conditional offer in early May. From the issuance of a conditional offer, there is sustained engagement on the part of the university with the potential student, including the offer of accommodation. As a result, many students are already committed to and have accepted places in the UK well in advance of the CAO results in August 2018.

Secondly, entry to some programmes in high ranking universities can seem more accessible for some students than the CAO points required for a similar programme in Trinity.

Additionally, the increasing cost and limited availability of accommodation in Dublin has been mentioned specifically by students in both the 2016-17 and 2017-18 surveys of students who were offered a place at Trinity but did not accept.

Finally, the impact of Brexit constitutes the most immediate challenge to recruitment. For the past two years, clarification of the fee status of A-Level entrants has come very late from the government (via the IUA). For 2018-19 the clarification was available only three weeks before the initial CAO deadline and came after significant recruitment activity had already been undertaken. Prior to this decision, prospective students could not be advised definitively on what their fee rate was likely to be.

The preliminary CAO figures for entry in 2018-19 indicate that the number of applicants has fallen back to 2015-16 levels. To date, there are 757 applicants, of whom 140 have applied to the Feasibility Study. If clarity on the fee status comes as late in this critical year of negotiations as in the previous two years, it can be expected that there will be a further drop in applicants for 2019-20.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies suggested that consideration should be given to extending the Feasibility Study into 2019-20 in light of the ongoing Brexit negotiations and lack of clarity on the long-term fee status of NI applicants. One member felt that Trinity should use its voice to address the negative impact, which Dublin accommodation prices and availability are having in general. It was noted that setting some places aside in halls for NI students had been discussed at Council the previous year, but that this had not been supported.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that an initial high level review of progression rates for students entering via the NI Feasibility Study compared with the general student population suggest that they generally progress as well as standard entrants in spite of entering in many cases with lower points.

It was further noted that if the proposal to recalibrate A-Level scores for 2019/20 is accepted, it should to have a positive impact on recruitment.

A member agreed that extending the study to continue to 2019-20 shows a sense of commitment to Northern Ireland.

USC supports that the Northern Ireland Feasibility Study be continued into academic year 2019/20. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies will provide a finalised version of the report to University Council at its next meeting.

USC/17-18/087 Trinity Education Project

a) Courts of Examiners for Undergraduate Programmes

A memorandum and note from the Chair of TEP Sub-group 6, dated 10 April 2018, had been circulated.

The Chair of TEP Sub-group 6 noted that currently there is no policy or document on the conduct of Courts of Examiners. Part of the work of Sub-Group 6 of the Trinity Education Project 2017/18 has involved looking at the role of Courts of Examiners for undergraduate programmes and how this may need to be adjusted within the new programme architecture, where students may be taking approved modules, Trinity Electives or moving across programme pathways.

The circulated document had been prepared following discussions at sub-group 6 meetings and in consultation with the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Registrar. Its purpose is to provide guidance on the role and composition of Courts of Examiners for undergraduate programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the recently revised External Examiner Policy.

The document puts forward that a Court of Examiners is the final decision-making body to determine the overall end-year result. In some programmes, there is first a consideration of module results at the discipline or subject level. In this document, these are referred to as 'examiners' meetings'. In single discipline programmes there may be only one meeting – the Court of Examiners. In joint honors programmes or multidisciplinary programmes there should be a discipline/subject examiners' meeting, which considers marks before they are then forwarded to the programme level Court of Examiners.

The Chair of Sub-group 6, reiterated that the purpose of the Court of Examiners is to ratify the results from semesters 1 and 2 of a programme and that they must have sight of all module results in order to do this. Courts of Examiners should not take into account any appeal information or ad misericordium grounds when ratifying marks.

A member noted that Courts of Examiners are usually convened by the Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in a School and that clarity on who is in charge of programmes or particular students in the context of new architectures is needed.

In relation to items 12 and 13 within the document, members noted that in the cases of Trinity Electives or Approved Modules it would be very difficult for relevant academic staff to attend each Court of Examiners as, depending on the mix of students enrolled in the module, it could mean having to attend multiple Courts of Examiners.

Members noted that examiners for core disciplines within a programme should be present at the Court of Examiners, but that including academics from Approved Modules, Trinity Electives and Capstones could prove problematic as it would increase the size of the Court of Examiners. Another member pointed out that Capstone project leaders may be external to the College. It was suggested that the module co-ordinator for the Capstone module should be present as opposed to all examiners involved in marking the Capstone.

One member noted that the wording in 12 and 13, should be adjusted to reflect that Approved Modules will first be considered at discipline or subject examiners' meetings. The marks will then be considered at the relevant Courts of Examiners based on the students enrolled in the module.

Another member noted that the module code should determine, at which Court of Examiners the module will be considered.

Another member queried if there was an intention to have a separate Court of Examiners for Trinity Electives, similar to the structure in place for the Broad Curriculum. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the marks for Trinity Electives would need to be considered within the appropriate examiners' meeting and Court of Examiners and that there would not be a separate Court for Trinity Electives.

It was noted that the consideration of marks at examiners' meetings and Courts of Examiners is a stepped-process, with the former feeding into the latter. Another member noted that the shortened examination and marking periods, particularly for Supplementals, will make it difficult to have the necessary conversations between Schools and module co-ordinators about marks.

Some members queried the need for section 9 and for discretion, whilst others noted the importance of retaining discretion where a student is on a borderline or an anomaly appears across a student's module mark profile. Another member noted that it is difficult to state that all marks awarded are 100% accurate and an ability to utilise qualitative judgement is necessary. A member also queried whether the wording in section 9 on discretion allows for the Court of Examiners to comment or amend the marks of Approved Modules and/or Trinity Electives as would be practice for marks within the programme.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that this document will apply to Courts of Examiners from 2018-19.

TEP Sub-group 6 will review items 12 and 13 in the document and further consideration will be given to the issue of the discretion of the Court of Examiners to make decisions in respect of individual student's marks. An updated document will return in due course to USC.

b) Teaching and Learning Resources

This item was not discussed due to time constraints.

USC/17-18/088 Guidelines for Offbooks for the Purposes of Assessment (OBA)

A memorandum and guidelines from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 11 May 2018, had been circulated.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies outlined that the purpose of the circulated guidelines is to articulate and clarify the existing procedures and practices relating to Off Books with Assessment (OBA). The guidelines were compiled by the Senior Tutor, the Registrar, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Director of Academic Registry, and the Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning from the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy.

The guidelines set out how an application for OBA can be made and to whom; the grounds for seeking OBA; the number, type of modules, and/or credit ceiling for OBA; the status of a student who is OBA; what a student repeats; and the status of OBA.

It is proposed that the guidelines be included on the Undergraduate Studies website and it is hoped that they will be helpful for tutors, undergraduate students, chairs and members of Courts of First Appeal, and other academic and administrative staff who are involved in advising students or in the appeals process. Providing clear guidelines for other appeals related issues, e.g., evidence requirements, has been received very positively and it is hoped that these guidelines for OBA will be equally useful.

In response to a member's query, it was noted that assessment for students on OBA does not have to take the same form as those in the previous year; however the assessment should assess the same learning outcomes.

It was noted that OBA had been removed as part of the new Progression and Awards regulations, but, subsequently, reinstated in light of the Board decision on modular billing. The status will be available until there is clarity on this issue.

It was confirmed that an appeal has to be taken in order to request the status of OBA, either via the Court of First Appeal or to the Senior Lecturer. Requests should not go directly to Academic Appeals.

USC welcomed these guidelines and details of the location on the website will be circulated as soon as possible.

USC/17-18/089 Calendar – Validated Courses

The revised entry for Validated Courses in the Calendar for 2018/19 was approved.

USC/17-18/090 Any other business

There were no items for discussion under this section.