



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

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 11 September 2018 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.

- Present:**
- Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
 - Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
 - Professor Kevin O’Kelly, Dean of Students
 - Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
 - Professor Aine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
 - Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 - Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business
 - Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry
 - Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
 - Professor Christine Poulter, School of Creative Arts
 - Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 - Professor Stephen Minton, School of Education
 - Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
 - Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities
 - Professor Ailbhe O’Neill, School of Law
 - Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 - Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
 - Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics
 - Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 - Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion
 - 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 Breda Walls, Director of Student Services
 - Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative
 - Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer, Students’ Union
 - Ms Misha Fitzgibbon, Student Representative
- Apologies:**
- Professor Alan O’Connor, School of Engineering
 - Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
 - Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
 - Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
 - Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 - Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
- In attendance:** Ms Marie McPeak, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O’Farrell, Senior Academic Developer, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer, Trinity Teaching & Learning for USC/18-19/004; Ms Jennifer Pepper and Ms Kelly Byrne from Academic Registry for USC/18-19/005; Ms Dominique Luthringer from Global Relations for USC/18-19/006 & USC/18-19/007; Mr Kevin O’Connor, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching & Learning for USC/18-19/008; Ms Caroline Forsyth, Student Learning and Development for USC/18-19/009

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

Members were welcomed to the new academic year and advised that there would be a great deal to accomplish in the year. Ms Breda Walls, the recently appointed Director of Student Services, was introduced to members.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies expressed that the Undergraduate Studies Committee is the collective body for academic oversight of undergraduate programmes and that members, while responsible for representing their own constituency, also have a shared responsibility for all undergraduate offerings of the University. Members are a central conduit in ensuring that decisions reached at meetings are brought back to their colleagues at School-level.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that philosophical and logistical conversations around items that impact the undergraduate life-cycle are a fundamental task of USC.

USC/18-19/001 Minutes of the meeting of 29 May 2018

The minutes were approved.

USC/18-19/002 Matters arising

USC/17-18/083 The Programme Handbook Policy had been approved by Council at its meeting of 20 June 2018 and is available on the Trinity Teaching and Learning website.

USC/17-18/084a At its meeting of 20 June 2018, Council noted the recommendations made within the A-Level Scoring Review. The recommendation that Proposal A for the purposes of calibrating A-Levels to Leaving Certificate points and the recommendation that the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) be used for Admission were agreed by all HEIs in Ireland and will be implemented for the 2019 admission cycle.

USC/17-18/084b New Leaving Certificate Subjects were approved by Council at its meeting of 20 June 2018. Politics & Society has been deemed acceptable as one of the subjects satisfying minimum entry requirements from 2018/19. Computer Science will be accepted as meeting minimum entry requirements from 2020/21 and it will also be accepted as a General Science subject for TR060 Biological and Biomedical Sciences; TR061 Chemical Sciences; TR062 Geography and Geoscience; TR063 Physical Sciences and TR072 Pharmacy. Physical Education will be accepted as meeting minimum matriculation requirements from 2020/21.

USC/17-18/085 The 2017/18 Report on Trinity Feasibility Study in Admissions and the extension of the study to include the academic year 2018/19 had been approved by Council at its meeting of 20 June 2018. The option of discontinuing or embedding the study is to be considered further and brought to a future meeting of Council.

USC/17-18/086 The Northern Ireland Report for 2017/18 and an extension of the Northern Ireland Feasibility Study to include 2019/20 entrants had also been approved by Council on 20 June 2018.

USC/17-18/087 The document on Courts of Examiners for Undergraduate Programmes will return to USC for discussion in 2018/19.

USC/17-18/093 Part II of the Calendar 2018-19 had been published online. The Administrative Officer in charge of the College Calendar wished to highlight to members that the Calendar is made available to members online no later than 31 August of each year.

USC/17-18/095 Changes to Quota in TSM subjects for 2018/19 were noted at Council on 20 June 2018.

USC/17-18/096 Council, at its meeting of 20 June 2018, approved changes to admissions requirements for Modern Languages from 2019/20. This will facilitate the combining of quotas for language courses and the revisions to Joint Honors programmes, formerly TSM, in 2019/20.

USC/17-18/098 The proposed Trinity Electives were noted on 20 June 2018 by Council. It is expected there will be further proposals coming to USC before the end of Semester 1. These are proposals that were previously submitted and have been revised, or new proposals relating to the University's research themes.

USC/17-18/099 The Senior Lecturer's Annual Report for 2016-17 had been approved by Council and is published on the Trinity Teaching and Learning website. The recommendation that an Admissions Strategy Committee be established will be discussed further.

USC/18-19/003 Trinity Education Project Overview for 2018/19

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided an update to members on the Trinity Education Project for 2018/19.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged that members will continue to be engaged in modifying their curriculum to facilitate student flexibility and breadth of knowledge, while maintaining a programme focus. The work plan for the Trinity Education Project this academic year is to provide the logistical support to enable the shift to the revised programme architectures.

In response to a member's query on when the fixed timetable would be available, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that work on the fixed timetable is ongoing and that it will be made available as soon as possible. Another member noted that not all teaching activities are available on CMIS and it may be helpful to ensure this information is obtained from schools. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies explained that in creating the fixed timetable, it is hoped that disruption to current schedules will be minimal, however there are key priorities to be realised first.

In response to a member's query it was confirmed to members that the Central Scholarship Committee will undertake an exploration of how Foundation Scholarship will work in the new programme architectures.

USC/18-19/004 Procedure for Electronic Transfer to External Examiners of Students' Exam Scripts and Coursework

A memorandum from the Quality Officer, dated 4th Sep 2018 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the Quality Officer to speak to this item.

The Quality Officer noted that the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had been introduced on the 25th May 2018 and that students' assessed work, including exam scripts and continuous assessment, should be treated as personal data. The External Examiner process presents a potential of breach of GDPR where student assessed work is transferred electronically to External Examiners prior to their attendance in College for subject or discipline Courts of Examiners. The circulated draft procedure makes recommendations for adoption by Schools to mitigate the potential of a breach to GDPR.

The Quality Officer advised members that in section 4.2 of the procedure, IT Services have recommended Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP), HEANet File Sender Service and Microsoft OneDrive as supported methods for secure file transfer to External Examiners. It was further advised that any service not supported by IT Services, where a service contract is not in place, where data is not stored in the EU and/or where data is not encrypted in transit are not recommended for use. Members were asked to note the security requirements of the External Examiner's systems as indicated in section 4.5 and to note procedures around the provision of passwords and the disposal of assessed work and related data.

The method of data transfer recommended within the GDPR would be to grant external examiners direct access to College systems. IT Services are exploring this as a possibility, however Blackboard is not a simple solution as only some modules and assessments are available within the platform.

One member noted that HEANet File Sender Service only allows the upload of one file at a time, this coupled with file size restrictions make it less than suitable for some assessment types, particularly videos which may have large file sizes.

In response to a member's comment that responsibility for the implementation of this procedure should not be placed with Schools, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies suggested that the recommendations on security could be included on the documents provided to External Examiners and that Schools could remind them of these responsibilities when assessment materials are provided to them.

Another member noted that scanning scripts may create delays in the assessment process and would be resource heavy, particularly in cases where examination booklets would be scanned for large cohorts of students.

Another member commented that colleagues would need to be mindful in the use of OneDrive and may wish to label key stakeholders in a specific manner so as not to share files with the wrong party.

It was further noted by another member that there would likely be an increase to the number of scripts examined at the re-assessment period with the allowance of supplemental examinations across all years and in all modules.

The Quality Officer noted that there are large penalties for any breach to GDPR and while the procedure is in the process of consideration, members and colleagues must be mindful of their practices where assessed work is transferred to external examiners.

A revised procedure will return to a future meeting of USC.

USC/18-19/005 New Academic Year Structure – Proposal for Scheduling of Semesterised Examinations 2018/19

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A memorandum from Ms Jennifer Pepper, Head of Operations, Academic Registry, dated 5 September 2018 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Ms Jennifer Pepper and Ms Kelly Byrne to speak to this item.

Ms Pepper presented the recent analysis undertaken to assess potential models for the scheduling of semesterised examinations from 2018/19. The absolute requirement for the scheduling of examinations in Semester 1 and Semester 2 will not be confirmed until early October. Data modelling in the analysis had been based on the modules and student enrolments for the 2016/17 Annual Examination session. The approach stress tested the ability to schedule the 2016/17 annual examinations across the assessment periods of five days for Semester 1 examinations and seven days for Semester 2 examinations in 2018/19.

Ms Pepper confirmed that a number of assumptions had been used in the creation of the model, including the ability to have three examination sessions per day starting at 09:30, 14:00 and 17:00. Assumptions that students would not have more than two examinations per day and would not be required to travel between TCD and RDS sites on the same day had also been included. It was noted that the RDS would be the primary venue for examinations with overflow and disability examinations accommodated on campus.

The outcome of the modelling indicated that the 2016/17 annual examination requirement could be accommodated using the agreed 2018/19 assessment periods. The module data returned by Schools for 2018/19 suggests only 903 modules will require examination scheduling - in 2016/17 1,389 modules were scheduled. Ms Pepper indicated that based on this information and the outcome of the modelling, it is expected that the 2018/19 examinations can be successfully scheduled into Semester 1 and 2.

A member queried if it would be necessary to complete the module enrolment process for both Semester 1 and 2 in October, particularly as some students may adjust their module choices for Semester 2. Ms Pepper confirmed that having the data available for both semesters in October would support scheduling in a timely manner and that it is understood there may be some fluctuation to module enrolments for Semester 2.

The Dean of Students noted that the data indicates a 30/70 split between end-of-semester examinations and that this would suggest programmes have not achieved a balanced credit load across the two semesters. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that there would be some pedagogical reasons for this in later years of study where it was likely that there would be more year-long modules undertaken and that the move towards a 50/50 split is part of a gradual process of change. The Dean of Students commented that it would be important to monitor the split of examinations over the coming academic years.

In response to a member's query, it was confirmed that the examinations held outside of the formal examination period in 2016/17 were not included in the modelling, however the module data returned by Schools were to include details of all examinations.

Another member queried the requirement for examiners to physically attend each venue, particularly where students from the same module may be spread over multiple venues and locations. The member further noted that the mobile numbers of examiners are provided to the Assessment Team and invigilators and examiners may be contacted via phone. Another member noted that where there are queries over an examination paper the need to travel to the venue to make these clarifications can create significant delays. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the regulations require examiners to attend examination venues, but that examiners should be provided contact information of staff in examination venues to mediate any issues that may arise.

In response to a query raised by a member, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised members that requests for examination deferrals due to stress would be monitored.

Members were asked to recommend the proposed Models 1 and 2 for 2018/19 Semester 1 and 2 examinations. A further recommendation for the provision of contingency days was also requested. The requested contingency date in Semester 1 is Saturday, December 8. The requested contingency dates for Semester 2 are the morning of Wednesday, 1st May and the entire day of Friday, 3rd May. It was noted that the need for additional examination requirements would be established upon completion of the module enrolment process in October.

USC approved Models 1 and 2 for 2018/19 Semester 1 and 2 examinations. USC also approved the use of Saturday, December 8 2018, the morning of Wednesday, 1st May 2019 and the entire day of Friday, 3rd May 2019 in the examination periods on a contingency basis for 2018/19.

USC/18-19/006 Additional Undergraduate Degree Destinations for the International Foundation Programme

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A memorandum from Mr Declan Coogan, International Recruitment Manager, TCD Global, dated 2 September 2018 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Ms Dominique Luthringer, Global Relations to speak to this item.

Ms Luthringer provided an overview to the Trinity International Foundation Programme and its objective to increase access to Trinity and promote diversity by attracting students from a wide range of cultural and academic backgrounds. The programme is aimed at students who

have the ability and ambition to attend Trinity, but whose national secondary school qualifications do not facilitate immediate access to an undergraduate degree. The curriculum was developed in conjunction with Trinity's Schools and is hosted by Trinity's associated college, Marino Institute of Education.

It is a one-year full time programme and students can choose between two distinct pathways leading to a range of degree destinations. Following agreement with individual Schools and programme leaders, Global Relations proposed to add 18 potential degree destinations for entry in 2019/20 via the International Foundation programme pathways with the minimum progression requirements indicated in the memorandum.

In response to a member's query on the availability of post-admission progression data on entrants via the International Foundation Programme it was noted that a request would be made to Academic Registry for this information as it is important to ensure these students are performing well and will graduate from their programme.

USC approved the proposed degree destinations and their entry requirements for students entering Trinity via the International Foundation Programme in 2019/20.

USC/18-19/007 Termination of the Contract between Trinity College Dublin, and the International Foundation Course delivered in Bangor, Wales

A memorandum from the Vice-President Global Relations dated 3 September 2018 had been circulated.

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The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies informed members of an agreement in place since 2005 with the International Exchange Educational Foundation (UK). Under the agreement, Japanese students, upon successful completion of the foundation programme in Bangor, Wales, are made conditional offers for entry to certain designated programmes in Trinity. The admissions process is overseen by the Admissions Officer and students are admitted each year. Using the data from 2011/12 to 2018/19, a total of 22 students have gained admission to Trinity under this agreement.

Following the appointment of the Director of Internationalisation, a review took place in conjunction with the previous Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Quality Officer. As part of this review, representatives from the International Exchange Educational Foundation (UK) were invited to a meeting in College in June 2018 hosted by the previous Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and attended by the Director of Internationalisation and International Student Recruitment Manager. Attending from the International Exchange Educational Foundation (UK) were the Director of the Foundation Programme and the Course Director.

The drivers for the review include the establishment of the Trinity International Foundation Programme with Marino Institute of Education and the low completion rate of 41% for students entering via the course from academic year 2011/12 to 2014/15.

It is for these reasons that the VP Global Relations, on behalf of Trinity in consultation with the Registrar and College Solicitor have activated the Notice to Terminate under the Agreement. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised the Director and Course Director of the intention to terminate the contract and cited a number of reasons including lower than expected completion rates and the fact that the College now validates a separate international foundation programme.

As per the agreement, Trinity will accept the students already recruited and for whom entrance exams have been arranged for November 2018. If these students successfully complete the Bangor Foundation Programme, they will enter Trinity College in September

2020. This will be the final cohort of students to be admitted to Trinity College Dublin via the Bangor Foundation programme.

USC noted the termination of the Contract between Trinity College Dublin, and the International Foundation Course delivered in Bangor, Wales.

USC/18-19/008 eLearning Resources

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Mr Kevin O'Connor, CAPSL, Trinity Teaching and Learning to present this item.

Mr Kevin O'Connor delivered a short presentation to members highlighting the resources that have been developed to support academic staff in the provision of technology-enhanced learning (TEL). Blackboard is now linked to a number of other services such as Panopto, Turnitin and MyDay and is able to act as a toolbox for lecturers while they expand their use of TEL. The CAPSL website contains a number of guides and videos to support staff in using these technologies, as well as details on Professional Development workshops.

Members were advised that a number of resources to support the implementation of Trinity Education Project assessment principles are also available on the CAPSL website.

Members were invited to ask Mr O'Connor questions about the presentation and resources available in CAPSL.

In response to a query on how to ensure new building designs include provision for appropriate technologies, it was noted that the Bursar and Estates and Facilities were the first points of contact in this regard.

Another member queried the availability of a central repository of hardware for recording videos and podcasts, noting that students often comment on the quality of recorded teaching materials. It was noted that there is not a central repository and that some schools have purchased hardware. It was confirmed that IT Services provide some Audio/Visual production support. A member suggested that a well-supported media resources centre may enhance academic ability to engage in TEL.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Mr O'Connor for presenting to members.

USC/18-19/009 Student Writing Supports

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited Ms Caroline Forsyth, Learning Support and Development Officer, Student Learning and Development to present this item.

Ms Caroline Forsyth spoke to the services offered by Student Learning and Development (SLD) via a presentation, promoting the service's redesigned website and advising that their work is informed by research undertaken at London Southbank University. It was highlighted that SLD are able to collaborate with academic staff to deliver academic skills workshops to students tailored to programme needs. Ms Forsyth also advised members that a number of resources are available directly to students, including a Blackboard module and written guides on the new assessments types arising from the implementation of the Trinity Education Project.

One member noted that a number of students seem to be unaware of the services available from SLD and that an email circular or similar would increase awareness.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the student representatives to comment on student awareness of SLD. The Education Officer noted that some students are aware of the service, but do not necessarily access the supports on offer. The Student

Representative advised that previously all students were automatically registered to the Blackboard module and that a return to this practice may increase awareness of SLD amongst undergraduate students. Ms Forsyth responded that unfortunately the automatic registration proved problematic due to the number of students registered to it at one time, however the introduction of the 'Trinity in Twelve Weeks' programme in 2017/18 and the continuance of the programme in 2018/19 provides a structured opportunity to promote SLD services over two 1-week periods in the first semester via Student2Student Mentors, activities and communications.

The Director of Student Services noted that SLD is currently part of the Student Counselling Service (SCS) and is in the same location, which may affect student perception of the service. The Director also noted that work is ongoing to allow student access to Lynda.com, an online training service currently available to staff. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that moving SLD out of the SCS umbrella be explored, and that where possible workshops should be delivered on-campus instead of in their offices at South Leinster Street.

The Senior Tutor noted that the service was featured to incoming students at Orientation presentations and noted that information about the service should be made available in programme handbooks under the Programme Handbook Policy. A number of members highlighted that they have embedded the study skills module into their curriculum and have received positive feedback.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Ms Forsyth for her presentation.

USC/18-19/010 Self-Evaluation Survey 2017/18

a. Results of the Survey

The raw survey results together with a memorandum had been circulated from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 6 September 2018.

b. Response to the Survey, Guidelines for Submission of Agenda Items to Undergraduate Studies Committee

The guidelines together with a memorandum from the Secretary, dated 5 September 2018 had been circulated.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies spoke to these items. Members had been invited to respond to a Self-Evaluation Survey for 2017/18 over a two week period in mid-June 2018. The questions were modelled on those posed in 2016/17 with an additional question on BoardPad included for 2017/18.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that feedback had been positive overall, however an increased number of members felt that the agenda and papers were not received early enough to allow for sufficient review ahead of meetings. 'Guidelines for Submission of Agenda Items to Undergraduate Studies Committee' had been developed and submission deadlines for agenda items and related materials had been included to improve timely circulation. It was noted that there is a need for flexibility where an item may require late circulation in order to meet a fixed deadline.

In response to a member's comment that there should be less summary information provided on agenda items and more time on discussion of items at meetings, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that more items will be taken 'as read'.

Another member commented that it would be more helpful to receive papers earlier in the day as opposed to the evening. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that a two-stage circulation may be a potential solution to managing delayed agenda items.

Members provided a few comments and minor amendments with regards to guidelines and the format of circulations. The Secretary agreed to incorporate these amendments and will circulate to members, School Administrative Managers and relevant offices.

USC/18-19/011 Any other business

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies wished to remind members that academic staff are requested to attend the Higher Options Fair in the RDS on 12th, 13th 14th September from 9-3pm daily. Over 3 days, nearly 25,000 students will attend Higher Options, which is the biggest undergraduate student recruitment event in Ireland. An email request for attendees has been sent to all School Managers and Heads of School.

Members were also reminded that the Open Day will take place earlier this year on Saturday, 10 November 2018.

USC/18-19/012 Items for Noting

USC noted the following items:

1. Annual Report of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies 2016/17
2. Northern Ireland Report 2017/18
3. Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study, Report for University Council, 2017/18
4. Nursing & Midwifery Study Abroad Modules