



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

XX = Item is of
significance to
Council

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 21 May 2019 at 2.15pm in the Boardroom.

Present: Professor Kevin Mitchell, Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
Professor Aine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts
Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM
Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Kristian Myrseth, School of Business Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion
Professor Alice Jorgensen, School of English
Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law
Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Paula Colavita, School of Chemistry
Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Vladimir Dotsenko, School of Mathematics
Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Ms Aimee Connolly, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Misha Fitzgibbon, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Alan O'Connor, School of Engineering
Professor Stephen Minton, School of Education
Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Philip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan, Academic Affairs Office, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Professor Monica Gale, Head of Department of Classics, for item USC/18-19/088ii; Ms Orla Bannon, Director of Careers Service, for item USC/18-19/089; Ms Jennifer Pepper, Head of Operations, Academic Registry, for item USC/18-19/090, Professor Ann Devitt, School of Education

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

USC/18-19/086 Minutes of the meetings of 3 and 16 April 2019

The minutes were approved subject to a correction in the attendance list of 3 April 2019 to note that Professor Derek Sullivan was present at the meeting.

USC/18-19/087 Matters arising

USC/18-19/069 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that Schools had responded to the request to create extra capacity in open modules and minors capacity had increased by 30%. This was insufficient to resolve the capacity issues and options to increase capacity on the demand side were now being looked at. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies will update Schools following the modelling exercise that was being carried out.

USC/18-19/070 i) Council approved a proposal for a single honors programme in Film at its meeting of 8 May 2019

ii) The course proposal in Social Policy was not sent forward for Council's consideration.

USC/18-19/072 It had been agreed at a previous meeting of USC that students who do not present for an exam or submit coursework for an acceptable reason should be treated differently to those students who do not have an acceptable reason. Under the current system, students who do not present or submit may be returned in SITS as either AR which automatically allows a student to be reassessed or AB which leads to students being excluded. The practice on whether to use AR or AB differs across different schools. When students are returned as AB and therefore excluded, a request is sent through the tutor to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies to remove the exclusion and allow the student to be reassessed. In almost all cases the exclusion is lifted and the student proceeds to reassessment. It can be seen therefore that the current mechanism does not work. In addition, the current regulations around non-satisfactory are not appropriate for the new academic year structure and Schools have been unsuccessful in using this mechanism this year.

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The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies proposed a new mechanism whereby a holding code is used for students who do not present or submit. If the student presents an acceptable reason within an agreed timeframe, the School may then enter a new code which will allow the student to be reassessed. If an acceptable reason is not received, the School enters a new code and the student will either be reassessed with capping up to a maximum of 10 ECTS or when it involves over 10 ECTS, the student must either repeat the year or withdraw from College.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies posed a number of questions for the committee to consider, including whether 10 ECTS was an appropriate threshold, if capping should happen at the pass mark, should the decision to allow reassessment or not be resolved prior to the Court of Examiners and what the appeal process would look like. He advised that discussions had been held with Academic Registry and it had been agreed that new codes would be created to support the new process.

A lengthy discussion took place with a number of different issues being considered. Members wondered about the process for students who do not engage or take part in experiential programme elements like field trips, practicals, etc.

Some members had concerns that students may 'game the system' and present for the first time at the reassessment session in order to get a better outcome. A member also raised the possibility of a student presenting for an exam but handing up an empty script and thereby being allowed present at reassessment without the penalty of capping. It was noted that these opportunities can also

be exploited within our current regulations and it will never be possible to completely eradicate the possibility of students playing the system for their advantage. It was also noted that students who are reassessed would have this recorded on their transcripts.

The Senior Tutor noted that most students will submit a medical cert within a few days but sometimes when students are very ill they are unable to engage with this process for a few weeks. He requested that up to three weeks be allowed for these to be submitted.

A member noted that some programmes do not have exams and we must ensure that the mechanism is also appropriate for them. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the proposed mechanism also covers continuous assessment and that module coordinators would be in charge of initiating the process. Modules would need to have clear definitions as to the level of engagement required.

Following the discussion, members were asked to approve specific aspects of the proposal. Members approved: imposing a penalty for non-engagement, reassessment to be capped up to a maximum of 15 ECTS for students who have not presented an acceptable reason, repetition of year or withdrawal from College for students who have not presented an acceptable reason for 20 ECTS or more, the need to include regulations for experiential elements that are not suitable for reassessment.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that work on revised NS regulations would continue over the summer and if it were possible to finalise this work and address the necessary system requirements on time, it may be possible to prepare the new regulations on time for the 2019/20 academic year.

- USC/18-19/077** i) Council approved a proposal for a dual B.A. programme with Columbia University in Film at its meeting of 8 May 2019.
 iii) Council approved a proposal for Modern Irish as a language option in European Studies at its meeting of 8 May 2019.
 iv) Cessation of B.A. in Sociology and Social Policy was not sent forward for Council's consideration.

- USC/18-19/079** At its meeting on 8 May 2019, Council approved
 i) the proposed process for the Trinity Elective Court of Examiners and
 ii) Process for no change of mind in Trinity Electives in 2019/20.

- USC/18-19/080** At its meeting of 8 May 2019, Council approved continuation of the Northern Ireland Feasibility Study for a further year.

- USC/18-19/081** Council approved the proposal to allow applicants who hold a Singapore Polytechnic Diploma and have a GPA of 3.0 to be considered for direct entry to year one programmes (outside of those covered by the School of Medicine/SIT partnership).

- USC/18-19/082** At its meeting of 8 May, Council approved the internal transfer application deadline for JF students at the end of week 3 of teaching term.

USC/18-19/088 Course developments

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i) Proposal for a dual degree programme in Middle Eastern and European Languages and Culture, additional major in Columbia University

A memorandum from Head of Department, Near and Middle Eastern Studies, dated 15 May 2019, was circulated. The Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in the School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies spoke to this proposal to introduce political science as an additional exit major in Columbia in the dual degree in Middle Eastern and European Languages and Culture.

She noted that the dual degree programme had ran successfully for two years and highlighted that a political science major would be an ideal addition to this multidisciplinary programme. In response to a query she advised that the capstone is flexible and can involve dual supervision where appropriate.

USC approved the proposal.

Decision USC/18-19/088i USC approved the addition of political science as a Columbia major in the dual degree programme in Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures in conjunction with Columbia University.

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ii) Proposal for a dual degree programme in Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, in conjunction with Columbia University

A proposal for a dual degree programme in Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, in conjunction with Columbia University, from the Department of Classics had been circulated. Professor Monica Gale, Head of Department of Classics, was welcomed to the meeting to present the proposal. She advised that the structure of the proposal was similar to other dual degree programmes with Columbia. She noted that the programme maps onto the new common entry programme in Classics.

She expects the programme to attract a lot of interest and noted that some enquiries have already been made. She noted that the extra modules required are mostly existing modules. She highlighted the positive feedback that had been received from the external reviewer.

In response to a query, she advised that it will be possible for students to complete the required Science modules in Columbia if necessary and a memo had been circulated to this effect. The Trinity Classics programme already encompasses the language elements required for the Columbia dual degrees.

The programme provides a number of opportunities for achieving the additional 60 credits required including an archaeological dig which students would source themselves and seek staff approval.

Professor Gale confirmed there are no staffing or resource concerns and that the supervision of the dissertation will be carried out remotely.

USC recommended the proposal for Council approval.

Decision USC/18-19/088ii USC recommended the dual degree programme in Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, in conjunction with Columbia University for Council approval

USC/18-19/089 Graduate Outcomes Survey Results

The Director of the Careers Service, Ms Orla Bannon, was welcomed to the meeting to speak to this item. She advised that the annual HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey is carried out nine months after student graduation. The survey was previously called the First Destinations Report. The survey had been updated and expanded for the class of 2017. The Trinity response rate to the survey was 62%.

The survey results indicated that 78% of 2017 Trinity graduates were in employment which was above the national average. The number of Trinity graduates undertaking further study or training was 22% which represented a decrease from the previous year. The number of Trinity graduates earning between €25-45k and above €45k was above the national average. The UK was the most popular destination for those employed overseas, followed by the US. This was the first year that the HEA released institutional comparison data. The overall rate of employment for Trinity graduates (72%) ranked 4th of the 7 universities.

The Director informed the committee that the Careers Service is available to liaise with staff in Schools on the survey data.

In response to queries, the Director advised that it was possible to break down salary data by discipline, and that the Careers Service was monitoring the response of Pharmacy graduates in relation to the questions around further study or training.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Director of the Careers Service for presenting the survey results to the committee.

USC/18-19/090 Contingency Days for Semesterised Examinations (reassessment 2018-19, Assessment 2019-20)

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A memorandum from Head of Operations, Academic Registry, dated May 14 2019, was circulated. The Head of Operations, Ms Jennifer Pepper, was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

Ms Pepper spoke to the request for USC to approve contingency days to ensure sufficient capacity and assessment sessions for scheduling the 2018/19 reassessment session and the 2019/20 semesterised assessments and reassessment. She highlighted that assessments had been scheduled on all of the contingency dates for the 2018/19 semesters one and two. She reminded the committee of the parameters that assessments could be scheduled back to back, students would not need to travel between the RDS and Trinity campus on the same day, and the RDS venue would be utilised in the first instance, with Trinity campus used as an overflow venue. She presented statistics on the number of exam sessions, students examined, and examination sittings.

With regard to the reassessment session in 2018/19, five contingency days were proposed: August 19-23. The examination period including the contingency days would run from August 19-30 inclusive. Two options were presented for the 2019/20 semester one and two examination periods. Both options involved 5 contingency days. Option A contingency days fell before both examination periods and Option B contingency days fell after the semester one examination period and before the semester two examination period.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged the prudence of confirming contingency days at this stage in order to allow for proper planning of the examination sessions. He commented that Option A may inconvenience students who may have booked flights and option B would cut into time given to marking. A member noted that staff had been informed that research time would commence on August 26 and some may have booked flights to research events. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate

Studies acknowledge this point but noted that it was not possible to introduce contingency days after the reassessment period as the time is required for marking and appeals.

In response to a member's query on whether the assessment periods should be formally increased rather than adding contingency days, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the situation was in flux for now but once it had settled, it could be reviewed and additional days added to the sessions if necessary.

USC approved the following contingency dates

- Reassessment 2018/19 - 5 days, August 19-23
- Semester one 2019/20 - 2 days, December 16 and 17
- Semester two 2019/20 - 3 days, April 23-25
- Reassessment 2019/20 - 5 days, August 24-28

The importance of communicating the dates as a matter of urgency was highlighted and it was agreed that while the dates could not be confirmed until they had been approved by Council, provisional notice could be given following the USC meeting.

Decision USC/18-19/090 USC approved the proposed Trinity Electives Courts of Examiners process for a 1-year period.

USC/18-19/091 Nomenclature of Law Degrees under New Programme Architecture

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A memorandum from the Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning (DUTL) in the School of Law, dated 14 May 2019, had been circulated. The DUTL referred to the discussions that had taken place in the School of Law regarding how to label degrees as this denotes which students receive a professional Law degree. She highlighted the need to differentiate between pathways that would lead to the professional LLB award and those that would lead to a B.A. award.

A member emphasised that the prospectus and website would need to clearly define the various awards and what they would mean for students.

USC approved the proposal but noted that prior to Council approval being sought, advice would be sought from the Registrar.

Decision USC/18-19/091 USC approved the proposal, noting that advice would be sought from the Registrar prior to submission to Council.

USC/18-19/092 Handbook Policy Review

This item was briefly discussed after item USC/18-19/094. The Academic Secretary advised that a review of programme handbooks was being carried out by Trinity Teaching and Learning. She highlighted the particular importance of ensuring that relevant information was available in handbooks since it had been removed from the Calendar. She noted the difficulty in locating handbooks on School/Department websites and queried whether they were more widely available through Blackboard. She referred to student feedback to the ISSE and ISB that had highlighted concerns over access to handbooks.

Members were asked whether handbooks could be available through open access on our websites. Some members indicated that they would not be prepared to make handbooks available outside of local Trinity access whilst others indicated they would be happy to provide them as open access. It was noted that many students go to Blackboard to locate handbooks.

Some members commented on the usefulness of having all handbooks available in one location and it was noted that a central repository had previously been created but had not been widely used.

The Academic Secretary advised that a fuller discussion on handbooks would take place when the handbook review had been completed.

USC/18-19/093 Requests for Derogations to the Progression and Awards Regulations

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A request for derogations from Council-approved progression regulations was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised the committee that the derogations were being sought to formalise existing practice in the relevant programmes.

The Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in the School of Pharmacy introduced the request for a derogation from progression regulation 6 which states that a 5-year programme should be completed in 7 years. He referred to the statutory instruments that stipulated that students of Pharmacy may complete the course within eight years of starting, and in exceptional circumstances may extend this time by one year. It was noted that regulation 6 does allow for a different completion time where 'specified by accrediting bodies'.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies spoke to the request for derogations to progression regulations 6 and 7 to allow the four year programme In Occupational Therapy to continue the practice of only allowing a placement to be repeated once over the course of programme.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies also introduced the request for a derogation to progression regulation 8 to permit the Medicine programme to continue to require students who fail or are absent from the clinical component of an examination to repeat the written and clinical components, even if they have previously passed the written component.

USC approved the requested derogations.

Decisions:

USC/18-19/093.1 USC approved a derogation to progression regulation 6 for the Master in Pharmacy.

USC/18-19/093.2 USC approved derogations to progression regulations 6 and 7i and ii for the BSc in Occupational Therapy.

USC/18-19/093.3 USC approved a derogation to progression regulation 8v for the Medicine programme.

USC/18-19/094 Calendar Changes 2019/20

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The following draft Calendar sections 2019/20 had been circulated: General Regulations, Two-subject Moderatorship, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, Validated Undergraduate Courses (Marino Institute of Education only). The circulated sections displayed changes made by Schools and by Trinity Teaching and Learning through 'tracked changes'.

Ms Elaine Egan, Academic Affairs, introduced the Calendar changes and thanked the committee and Schools for their assistance in the process and for their support to refine the information provided in the Calendar. She noted that while most issues had been resolved at this stage, there were still a small number of outstanding issues to be resolved, and that some Schools had indicated the need to make further minor changes.

A member suggested a change to the wording of line 71 in the General Regulations and it was agreed that the sentence would be amended to the following: "The overall credit-weighted average for the academic year will be calculated using the most recent marks achieved."

The sections for the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Joint Honors, and Foundation Scholarship would be circulated for the USC meeting that will take place in June 2019.

USC/18-19/095 Any other business

A member highlighted an issue that arose in SITS regarding some students who had failed non-compensatable modules but passed enough modules to achieve an overall pass. According to the regulations, the students should only be required to repeat the non-compensatable elements, however, when entering the marks in SITS, the system was necessitating re-inputting for all marks. Members agreed that the students were only required to repeat the non-compensatable elements and that a workaround in the system was to re-input the marks already achieved in passed components.

A number of members referred to problems in SITS where it appeared that changes were being made to the back-end of the system that were overwriting inputs by Schools. Errors in calculation were also highlighted by some members. Some of these issues had been reported to AR but were taking a while to be resolved.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies said he would follow up on the issues with AR and request that issues already reported be followed up as a matter of urgency.

Action USC/18-19/095

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies will follow up on the SITS issues with AR.

USC/18-19/096 Items for noting

USC noted and approved the following items:

- XX 1. **Draft minutes RIAM ACDC, 1 May 2019**
including the decision re item RIAM ACDC/18-19/135 which recommends a 2 year part time format of delivery on the Diploma in Music Teaching & Performance from 2020/21 for approval by Council via endorsement of the USC.
- XX 2. **Draft minutes MIE ACDC, 9 May 2019**
including ACDC/18-19/319 new optional module Educational Disadvantage and Community Mentoring on B. Sc. In Education Studies yr 2.
- 3. **Widening Participation Group minutes, 1 April 2019**
- 4. That **Trinity Open Day** will be held on Saturday the 23rd November 2019 and **Higher Options** will be held on 18th - 20th September 2019
- XX 5. **Additional Degree Destinations for the Trinity International Foundation Programme**