



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 21 April 2022 at 2.00 pm, online.

Present: Professor David Shepherd, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Catherine McCabe, Dean of Students
Professor Gerry Wright, Acting Senior Tutor
Professor Graeme Murdock, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Áine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Professor Norah Campbell, Trinity Business School
Professor Jennifer O'Meara, School of Creative Arts
Professor Mark Sweetnam, School of English
Professor Robert Armstrong, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor David Kenny, School of Law
Professor Martin Worthington, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Margaret Walshe, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Clare Kelly, School of Psychology
Professor Michelle D'Arcy, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Julie Byrne, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Jacob Erickson, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
Professor Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry
Professor David O'Regan, School of Physics
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Kevin Kelly, School of Engineering
Professor Vincent Kelly, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Juan Pablo Labrador, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Heather Reilly, School of Dental Science
Professor Damien Brennan, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director of Tangent
Ms Bev Genockey, Education Officer, Students' Union

Apologies: Professor Andrew Loxley, School of Education
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Mr Yannick Gloster, Student Representative

In attendance: Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Academic Affairs; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Director of Academic Practice; Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs; Ms Gráinne de Bhulbh, Activity Lead for Assessment, Progression and Graduation (for item USC/21-22/061); Dr John Bosco Conama and Ms Catherine White (for item USC/21-22/062i); Ms Nilanjana Shihn (for item USC/21-22/062iii); Ms Sviatlana Anishchuk and Ms Yvonne Howell (for item USC/21-22/065).

USC/21-22/058 Minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2022 were approved, subject to amending **Action/Decision 051.05** to read 'USC supported the new bespoke open module, with a strong preference that the mobility requirement be achieved through an appropriate online setting instead'.

USC/21-22/059 Matters arising

- i. **USC/21-22/051ii:** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he met with the Vice-President for Global Engagement and members of the Global Relations team to discuss contact with the HEA. He noted that there is no update yet.
- ii. **USC/21-22/050** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the revised Music Curriculum was approved by Council.
- iii. **USC/21-22/051(i)** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the two Trinity Electives, 'Music Making, the Arts and Society' and 'Creativity and Technology', were approved by Council.
- iv. **USC/21-22/054** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the progression regulation derogation, related to specific modules in the School of Physics, was approved by Council.

USC/21-22/060 Senior Lecturer's Updates

- i. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the Academic Registry is collecting Gold Medal criteria information from schools. Information on TEP Phase 1 courses is now complete and will be submitted to Board for noting and approval in May. He further advised that the deadline for TEP Phase 2 course information is 27 April 2022, and he thanked members and their colleagues for returning this and the earlier information within such a short timeframe. Responding to a query regarding the effect of rounding on the eligibility for a Gold Medal, he advised that this would be explored and confirmed.

Action/Decision

060.01: The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies to seek information on whether or not the overall degree result is rounded in SITS and to provide guidance on the effect this has on the eligibility for a Gold Medal.

- ii. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he would be in touch shortly with those who had submitted questions about online module enrolment. He extended his thanks to those who had confirmed their module information and noted that staff from the Academic Registry would be in touch in cases where information appeared to be missing. He advised that Friday 29 April 2022 is the absolute final deadline by which changes can be made. Thereafter, module information held in SITS will be rolled-forward to the coming academic year, on the assumption that because no changes have been notified, none are required.
- iii. Providing an update on Academic Integrity, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the working group would meet in the following week and would soon finalise a statement of principles. He noted that he and a representative from Academic Practice would attend a masterclass on contract cheating and that the Junior Dean and the Assistant Academic Secretary had been nominated to the National Academic Integrity Network, as additional representatives from Trinity.

USC/21-22/061 Semester 2 Examination Session – Operational Update, and Contingency Days

A memorandum from the Director of the Academic Registry and the Activity Lead for Assessment, Progression and Graduation, dated 8 April 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Ms Gráinne de Bhulbh, Activity Lead for Assessment, Progression and Graduation to the meeting.

Ms de Bhulbh brought the meeting through the memorandum and outlined key operational details for the Semester 2 assessment session. She noted that while there are no social distancing requirements in place, the RDS would operate at 80% capacity for the assessment session. There will be 35 examination venues in operation on campus, mainly for those who require examination accommodations. She confirmed that there will be space on campus

for students who require it. Responding to a query, she advised that an e-mail would issue to students soon with a link to a booking form, for those who require space on-campus.

She outlined the proposed contingency days for both the Semester 2 examination session (Thursday, 28 April to Saturday, 30 April) and the reassessment period (Thursday, 25 August to Saturday, 27 August). She advised that since there is time ahead of the reassessment session, these contingency dates could be altered slightly; it was noted that a majority of members indicated a preference for Wednesday, 24 August to Friday, 26 August 2022.

A significant number of members expressed concerns about the very limited time available in which to correct examination papers, hold courts of examiners and publish results, which makes it difficult to quality assure the assessment process and catch possible errors. Ms de Bhulbh commented that the timescale around the Semester 2 assessment period is driven by the Trinity approved academic year structure, rather than by the Academic Registry. A member commented that contingency dates are approved every year so perhaps they should simply become part of the standard assessment period or that at least they should be approved and communicated at the start of the year. Ms de Bhulbh commented that contingency dates are not always used but they are being used increasingly to schedule larger examinations to allow more time for marking. She confirmed that contingency dates could be circulated to USC at the start of the year. She flagged that the current assessment and marking period provided in the approved academic year structure would become even more pressurised with a further growth in student numbers.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies spoke briefly about plans for dealing with illness due to COVID-19 during the Semester 2 assessment session. He noted that deferred examinations would be scheduled in the reassessment session, and that students would not have an automatic right to defer assessments; they are required to apply through their tutor to Student Cases. If they seek a deferral due to a positive COVID-19 antigen test, they must provide a screenshot of the uploaded result from the HSE website. There were differing opinions voiced during the discussion, with a member querying whether students might pick and choose which examinations they would sit, whilst another suggested that Trinity should err on the side of caution, in line with Government advice that students should not attend if they have symptoms, even if they have a negative antigen test. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that he and Ms de Bhulbh would look at the proposed communication to students to ensure that it strikes the right balance.

Action/Decision

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061.01: USC noted the Semester 2 assessment contingency days, as circulated.

061.02: USC noted the circulated contingency days for the reassessment session but supported an alteration so that these would run from Wednesday, 24 August to Friday, 26 August 2022.

Ms Gráinne de Bhulbh withdrew from the meeting.

USC/21-22/062 Admissions

i. Proposal to amend entry requirements for Bachelor in Deaf Studies

A memorandum, from the Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate) (DUTL) in the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, dated 14 April 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Dr John Bosco Conama, from the Centre for Deaf Studies, and Ms Catherine White, Irish Sign Language (ISL) Interpreter, to the meeting.

The DUTL in the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences spoke to the memorandum and noted that the Deaf Studies programme currently requires a H4 in English in the Leaving Certificate, which is out of reach for many deaf and hard of hearing applicants because they do not have full access to spoken English and/or their

secondary schools do not offer English at the higher level. It is proposed that the successful completion of an ISL test for deaf and hard of hearing applicants would be accepted instead. She confirmed that such applicants would still be required to meet Trinity's standard matriculation requirements for entry, including a pass in English, and that for all other applicants, the result of H4, or equivalent, would remain. She referred to the ISL application test developed by the Centre for Deaf Studies for entry to a new programme for deaf primary school teachers in Dublin City University (DCU), which would be used in this case, if approved.

Dr Conama added that a key aim of establishing the undergraduate programme in Deaf Studies was to attract more deaf and hard of hearing students, however, numbers have remained low. Responding to a question about setting the English subject requirement at H4 and whether or not there are plans to consider the lowering of this requirement, Dr Conama explained that the Bachelor course developed from a Diploma course originally, and that it was felt at the time that the H4 was appropriate. He explained that consideration has not been given to altering the general H4 requirement at this point, as the recent focus has been on the ISL test; since it has been accepted by DCU, it should also be acceptable for the Deaf Studies programme in Trinity. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that it is important to remove unnecessary barriers to entry and to encourage students from a variety of backgrounds. He thanked Dr Conama and Ms White for their attendance.

Action/Decision

- XX** **062.01:** USC supported the proposal to implement an ISL application test for deaf and hard of hearing applicants, instead of requiring them to present a H4 in Leaving Certificate English, for entry in September 2023 onwards. It was noted that the H4 English subject requirement would remain for applicants outside of this category.

Dr John Bosco Conama and Ms Catherine White withdrew from the meeting.

ii. Integrated Computer Science Non-EU Competitive Admissions Band

A memorandum from the DUTL in the School of Computer Science and Statistics, dated 11 April 2022, was circulated. Speaking to the proposed changes to the admissions requirements for non-EU students, the DUTL for the School of Computer Science and Statistics noted the integrated Computer Science programme is currently located in Band 3 and the School wishes to move the programme to Band 2. He noted that the proposed change would only apply to the integrated Computer Science programme and not to the Computer Science subject in the Trinity Joint Honours programme. Since the majority of students already meet this standard, very few applicants would be affected by this change.

Action/Decision

- XX** **062.02:** USC supported the proposal to alter the position of the integrated Computer Science programme from Band 3 to Band 2, for non-EU applicants for entry in September 2023 onwards.

iii India Standard 12 Examinations

A memorandum from the Admissions Officer and Associate Director: Student Recruitment, Global Office, dated 11 April 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Ms Nilanjana Shihn, Regional Manager for India, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, to the meeting. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies briefly introduced the substance of the memorandum and noted that approval had been granted in Trinity over the last two admissions rounds to admit students using predicted grades from the India Standard 12 Examinations. Ms Shihn offered further details explaining that it is proposed to extend this by a further year due to the effects of the pandemic still being experienced in India,

which has led the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE); the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and various State Boards in India, to alter the pattern of this terminal secondary level examination. Prior to the pandemic, all examinations were completed by mid-April, with results available by the end of May. This academic year, the first term examinations took place in November 2021 and the second term examination are due to take place from the end of April to early June 2022, with results not expected until August 2022. As a result, it is proposed that unconditional offers for entry in September 2022 be offered earlier in the summer based on predicted or provisional grades, which meet the competitive band and other entry requirements set for programmes. She noted that universities in the US are offering unconditional offers on predicted results.

The Academic Secretary queried if this is likely to become a permanent request, particularly if the change in the conduct of the India Standard 12 Examinations, spread over two terms, becomes the established pattern in the future. Ms Shihn commented that currently this pattern is in response to the pandemic, however, she could not predict the future pattern of the examinations.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the circulated request is only for an additional year. If a longer-term solution is required in relation to the India Standard 12 Examination, this could be considered at a point in the future. He thanked Ms Shihn for attending the meeting.

Action/Decision

- XX 062.03:** USC supported the extension of the measure to accept predicted grades from the India Standard 12 Examination, to enable unconditional offers for entry in September 2022.

Ms Nilanjana Shihn withdrew from the meeting.

USC/21-22/063 Proposals for Trinity Electives

A memorandum from the ADUSE, as Chair of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee, dated 11 April 2022, was circulated.

Speaking to the proposals, the ADUSE provided information about the two modules. The first 'Life and Death in Data: Plagues, Pestilence, and Pandemics' has been put forward by the School of Genetics and Microbiology. The primary module co-ordinator is Dr Máire Ní Leathlobhair, but it is an interdisciplinary module with contributions from the Schools of Medicine, English, and Histories and Humanities.

The second, 'Systems - the Science of Everything' is also being proposed by the School of Genetics and Microbiology. The primary module co-ordinator is the former Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dr Kevin Mitchell, while secondary co-ordinators come from the Trinity Business School and the School of Engineering, with contributing teaching staff coming from a number of additional schools.

Action/Decision

- XX 063.01:** USC supported the two Trinity Elective proposals 'Life and Death in Data: Plagues, Pestilence, and Pandemics' and 'Systems - the Science of Everything' for delivery in 2022/23.

USC/21-22/064 Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2020/21

The Senior Lecturer's Annual Report for 2020/21, dated April 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies introduced the item by thanking the Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms Ciara Conlon and the staff in the Academic Registry for their work in collating the required data. He advised that he plans to seek comments and suggestions in relation to the types of data which should be gathered for the Senior

Lecturer's Annual Report and on the ways in which the report could be improved. He then brought the meeting through the report by way of a presentation, which covered the following areas:

- An overview of developments 2020/21
- Undergraduate admissions 2020/21
- Undergraduate admission by alternative entry routes
- Student lifecycle, post-admissions

In the discussion that followed, a member commended the number of students entering Trinity via alternative entry routes noting that this represented 25.3% of new CAO entrants in 2020/21 and suggested that this should be communicated widely. He also suggested that the report could delve deeper into an analysis of progression and retention data both in terms of financial implications and to establish if there are key indicators for students who withdraw.

There was a brief discussion in relation to the Foundation Scholarship following the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies' comment that Board approved the establishment of a working group last year to review the purpose and operation of this examination. He confirmed that he would provide an update to USC, when there is further information.

XX Action/Decision

064.01: USC supported the Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2020/21 and recommended it to Council.

USC/21-22/065 Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement - Enhancing Resilience in Undergraduate Dental Training

A presentation from Ms Sviatlana Anishchuk and Ms Yvonne Howell from the School of Dental Science, dated April 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed both to the meeting, and they brought the meeting through their presentation, which covered:

- Rationale for the project
- Project goals and objectives
- Project deliverables
- Impact and sustainability

Discussing the main output from the project, which was the development of a core module on building and enhancing resilience in students, delivered across all undergraduate dental programmes in Trinity, it was confirmed that it is currently delivered in the final year of these courses. Responding to a query, Ms Howell advised that further consideration will be given to the year in which it is delivered but student feedback on this point must be analysed first. Ms Anishchuk noted that preliminary findings seem to indicate that mature students seem to prefer the delivery of the module in the later stages of their programmes, whereas younger CAO entrants have indicated a preference for earlier delivery.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Ms Sviatlana Anishchuk and Ms Yvonne Howell for their presentation.

Ms Sviatlana Anishchuk and Ms Yvonne Howell withdrew from the meeting.

USC/21-22/066 Any other business

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he would like to hold the final USC meeting of the year in-person instead of online. However, he advised that he would seek the views of members before confirming the format.

USC/21-22/067 Minutes (Section B)

USC noted and approved the following set of minutes.

- i. Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee**
Minutes of the meeting of 8 March 2022.