



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 5 November 2024 at 2.00 pm in the Boardroom, Trinity Business School.

Present: Professor Vincent Wade, Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Richard Porter, Dean of Students
Professor Stephen Smith, Senior Tutor
Professor Mark Sweetnam, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Professor Martha O'Hagan Luff, Trinity Business School
Professor Miranda Fay Thomas, School of Creative Arts
Professor Mark Faulkner, School of English
Professor Anna Chahoud, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Sarah Hamill, School of Law
Professor Martin Worthington, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Yvonne Lynch, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Paul Dockree, School of Psychology
Professor Dino Hadzic, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Alexandra Grieser, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
Professor Jean Fletcher, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Valeria Nicolosi, School of Chemistry
Professor Goetz Botterweck, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Jan Manschot, School of Mathematics
Professor Matthew Saunders, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Cormac McGuinness, School of Physics
Professor Heather Reilly, School of Dental Science
Professor Richard Deane, School of Medicine
Professor Deirdre D'Arcy, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Mr Eoghan Gilroy, Education Officer, Students' Union
Mr Conchúr O Cathasaigh, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Joanne Banks, School of Education
Professor Phillip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Kevin Kelly, School of Engineering
Professor Juan Pablo Labrador, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Ana Perez-Luno, Academic Director of Tangent
Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative

In attendance: Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs; Ms Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary: Academic Affairs; Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Professor Neville Cox, Registrar (for item USC/24-25/014); Ms Sheena Brown, Project Manager, Secretary's Office and Ms Vicky Butler, College Secretary (for item USC/24-25/015(i)); Dr Graham Glanville, RPL Project Lead (for item USC/24-25/015(ii)); Mr Peter Dudley, Sub Librarian (for item USC/24-25/016)

USC/24-25/011 Minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2024 were approved.

USC/24-25/012 Matters arising

- i. **USC/24-25/004** The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies informed USC that the Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI was amended based on feedback at the last USC meeting. It has been subsequently approved by the Graduate Studies Committee on 17 October 2024 and by the Research Committee on 5 November 2024, with requested amendments from both committees. He noted that the IT Services User Group will review the statement before it is submitted to Council for consideration.
- ii. **USC/24-25/005** The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the EU Qualifications Framework was approved by Council.
- iii. **USC/24-25/010iv** The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the International Education Mark (IEM) Application was approved by Council.
- iv. **USC/24-25/010vi** The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the revised Internships and Placement Policy was approved by Council.

USC/24-25/013 Senior Lecturer's Updates

- i. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted the success of the Academic Integrity week, which was held on 14th-18th October 2024. He advised that Academic Practice have developed a Gen AI Hub and are rolling out relevant supports to be embedded across College. He stated that the Research Committee called for comment on the ethical aspects of the various GenAI tools available, but that this is difficult to assess given the fast-evolving nature of the industry.
- ii. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked all those who volunteered for the Open Day on 2 November 2023. He highlighted the need to ensure applicants from Northern Ireland are informed of the recalibration of A-Level equivalences for admission that was approved in 2023/24. He advised that it may be timely to re-examine Trinity minimum entry requirements (matriculation), specifically the restriction on counting of some subject combinations.
- iii. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies gave an update on the Blackboard upgrade (called Blackboard Ultra), stating that an upgraded version of Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) is currently being piloted with a limited number of courses and will be piloted with a larger number of courses during Semester 2, with a view to implement it college wide in 2025/26. In response to a query on the feedback collected from teaching staff regarding requirements for a new LMS, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that this has been retained and will be taken into consideration when the tender process for a new LMS will be progressed in 2026/27.
- iv. Speaking about Senior Academic Promotions, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies highlighted that performance categories are being examined and an update on this will be provided by College in due course.

USC/24-25/014 Degree Nomenclature for Science programmes

A memorandum from the Registrar, dated 24 September 2024, was circulated, and the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Professor Cox to USC.

It is proposed to change the degree nomenclature from a B.A to a B.Sc. for five Science programmes, to be implemented for entrants to the AY 2026/7. The first graduands eligible for the award of B.Sc. will be those of 2029/30. The Registrar explained that the proposal has received positive feedback from students, and it better reflects practices in other HE institutions, both nationally and internationally.

A member noted that it is common in other institutions to indicate that it is an honours degree in the award title to clearly distinguish it from a Level 7 ordinary degree and suggested Trinity follows suit. The Registrar clarified that the commencement clearly differentiates between candidates for honours and for ordinary degrees and the parchment also states honours in Latin. The Assistant Academic Secretary pointed out that the degree supplement provides clarification on the NFQ level. Regarding the protocol for commencement ceremonies, a member queried if the Senior Lecturer could continue to call out the names of candidates for the B.Sc. at the commencement ceremonies. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Registrar agreed to look further into the matters raised but stressed that they want to avoid delaying the proposal from progressing to Council.

Action/Decision:

USC/24-25/014 USC approved the proposal for the change of degree nomenclature from a Bachelor in Arts (B.A) to a Bachelor in Science (B.Sc.) for graduands of Theoretical Physics, Biological and Biomedical Science, Chemical Sciences, Geography and Geoscience and Physical Sciences to apply to entrants to the named programmes from the academic year 2026/27. It would seek to ensure that the change to the declaration and calling out of names of candidates would be as minimal as possible.

USC/24-25/015 Policy Revisions

i. Revised Fitness to Practice Policy

A memorandum from Ms Victoria Butler, Secretary to the College/Director of Governance and Ms Sheena Brown, Project Manager, Secretary's Office dated 30th October 2024, was circulated, with attached amended policy. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed them both to USC to speak to the item.

The College Secretary brought the meeting through the key changes to the policy, which were based on learnings from Fitness to Practice committees and feedback from relevant Schools, professional staff and students. Two suggested amendments were put forward by members: (i) that section 6.7 on students with disabilities clarify that reasonable accommodations can be made in instances where the disability is relevant to the issue that has arisen (ii) the word 'reason' be changed to 'rationale' on page three of the policy. The College Secretary thanked both and advised that the feedback will be taken into consideration.

Action/Decision

USC/24-25/015i USC approved the proposed revisions to the Fitness to Practice Policy and recommended it to Council.

ii. Revised Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

A memorandum from Dr Graham Glanville, Lead of the RPL Project, dated 22 October 2024, was circulated, with attached amended policy. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed him to the meeting.

Dr Glanville explained that the review of the policy was initiated by the national RPL in Higher Education project and a working group has been progressing work in this area. He outlined the key changes in the policy, which are aimed at aligning policy and practice across Irish HE institutions. He advised that resources will be made available to assist Schools in assessing candidates, which will ensure consistency across College.

In the discussion that followed, Dr Glanville confirmed that schools will still have discretion in assessing applications related to RPL. A member queried if the revised application form is available and Dr Glanville stated that a draft can be shared

on request. He explained that exceptional circumstances have not been defined to allow flexibility in decision-making. In relation to Micro-Credentials, he clarified that RPL can only be taken into account at application, not credit exemptions.

Action/Decision:

USC/24-25/015ii USC approved the proposed revisions to the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and recommended it to Council.

USC/24-25/016 Library Life Pulse Survey

A memorandum from Ms Siobhán Dunne, Deputy Head of Readers' Services, dated 24 October 2024, was circulated, with the survey results report attached. Mr Peter Dudley, Sub Librarian, attended to speak to the item.

Speaking to a presentation, Mr Dudley summarised the main findings of the Library Life Pulse survey. He noted that while the response rate was low, the results demonstrated broad satisfaction with library services overall. He explained that the survey focused on strategic initiatives that the library has rolled out, including themes of sustainability, inclusivity as well as gathering data on user experience of library services. He brought the meeting through the action plan the library have implemented, highlighting projects such as establishing sensory spaces and child-friendly spaces, as well as strengthening online supports for users.

In response to a query on the status of a procurement process for a library management system, Mr Dudley advised that the library is looking at improving IT systems utilized, including a replacement for the Stella Search. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies underlined the need to prioritise the improvement of the user interface.

A member queried when the restoration of access to UK electronic legal deposit materials can be expected and Mr Dudley advised that work is ongoing to resolve the issue, which was a result of a cyberattack on the British Library in October 2023.

A member pointed out the need to prioritise the availability of both electronic and print versions of materials, while another questioned whether the survey captures the experience of those who don't attend the library. Mr Dudley advised that both comments will be considered and thanked USC members for their feedback.

USC/24-25/017 Any other business

- i. The Director of Student Services advised that issues related to OME for students who study abroad for one semester is being prioritized and it is hoped a solution is in place for the next academic year.
- ii. A discussion on the issues with the Semester 1 exams timetabling took place, with a member highlighted that the scheduling of exams during revision week disadvantages students. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged the issues with assessment and progression timelines more generally and advised that a working group is examining options aimed at alleviating them. These will be presented to USC in December and Schools will have time to consider before being asked for approval to implement.

The Director of Student Services explained that it was necessary to schedule exams with a longer duration in the contingency days that fall in revision week. In response to a query, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that

while shorter exams are logistically easier to manage and better from a student perspective, he is aware that there may be academic reasons for longer duration of exams.

USC/24-25/018 Minutes (Section B)

USC noted and approved the following minutes:

- i. **Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee**
Minutes of the meeting of 7 May 2024.

USC/24-25/019 Section C (For information)

USC noted and approved the following items:

- i. **Amendment to the Entry Requirements for Business, Economic and Social Studies (BESS)**
Memorandum from the DUTLs of the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy and the Trinity Business School, dated 5 November 2024
- ii. **Amendment to the Entry Requirements for Global Business**
Memorandum from the DUTL of the Trinity Business School, dated 5 November 2024
- iii. **Updates to the Principles for Study Abroad and Undergraduate Common Architecture**
Memorandum from the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture, dated 17 October 2024