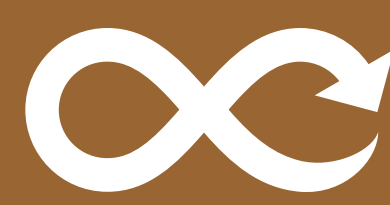


Student Lifecycle: Application and Admission

Design a Framework for English Language Entry Requirements



WP1 – Postgraduate Taught Students

What you said (voice of the community):

PGR Students	PGT Students	Academic & Research Staff	Professional Staff
41	23	50	28

Postgraduate Renewal Survey results	Appropriate threshold	Inappropriate threshold)
PG Research student perspective	77.6%	
PG Taught student perspective	37%	
Academic and research staff		27.9%
Professional staff		21.3%

“The current requirements should be reviewed for postgraduate programmes, as views diverged in terms of whether requirements were too demanding, too low, or poorly linked to students’ classroom presentation.”

Horizon 1 - What we learned (analysis):

- There was a clear need for a fully renewed scale of accepted English language tests, and associated scores, for admissions purposes.
- Consideration should be given to qualifications that may be accepted in lieu of standardised English test certification.
- The new rubric should be supported by a formal process for the review and updating of English language certifications, and of scores, accepted for entry.
- Out-of-date information was publicly available across the Trinity website, Calendar, and legacy publications.
- 8 PGT courses had been granted derogations to the existing rubric.
- Academics faced increased workload and additional time spent assessing the performance of students whose written English poorly expressed their work or ideas.

Horizon 2: Solution we delivered

Trinity Bands	Course Entry	IELTS Academic	Duolingo English Test (See Note 3)	TOEFL iBT	Cambridge Advanced or Proficiency	PTE Academic (Pearson)
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 1)	Trinity International Foundation Programme	5.0 overall 5.0 in Writing 4.5 in other bands	80 overall 80 in Literacy 65 in other subscores	64 overall 16 in each section	160 overall no score below 150	45 overall 40 in each section
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 2)	Trinity International Foundation Programme specified higher requirements	6.0 overall 5.5 in each band	105 overall 90 in each subscore	72 overall 18 in each section	170 overall no score below 165	59 overall 50 in each section
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 3)	CELLT Pre-Sessional Summer Programme	6.0 overall 5.5 in each band	105 overall 90 in each subscore	72 overall 18 in each section	170 overall no score below 165	59 overall 50 in each section
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 4)	CELLT Pre-Sessional Summer Programme specified higher requirements	6.5 overall 6.0 in each band	120 overall 100 in each subscore	90 overall 21 in each section	180 overall no score below 170	69 overall 59 in each section
Band B (Standard entry)	UG & PG Standard requirements	6.5 overall 6.0 in each band	120 overall 100 in each subscore	90 overall 21 in each section	180 overall no score below 170	69 overall 59 in each section
Band C (Higher entry)	UG & PG Higher requirements	7.0 overall 6.5 in each band	130 overall 110 in each subscore	100 overall 23 in each section	190 overall no score below 180	75 overall 69 in each section

<https://www.tcd.ie/study/english-language-requirements>

- A three-band scale delineating English language requirements for courses in all study cycles from Foundation level through to Doctoral study.
- Standard and Higher bands of entry accommodate all courses, eliminating the need for derogations.
- Overall score requirements are now accompanied by sub-score requirements (reading, writing, oral).
- Proposed courses select their English Language Band in the first stage of the new 2-Stage New Programme Development process.
- Membership of a defined list of professional bodies may also satisfy Trinity's entry requirements, provided the English Language certification presented is also on Trinity's approved list.



Impact:

- The new English Language scale has provided a definitive reference point for admission to all Trinity programmes, in all study cycles.
- The pilot 2-Stage New Programme Development Process has integrated the selection of an English Language Band into the Proof-of-Concept template (Stage 1).
- Members of Irish professional registration bodies are exempt from providing English Language certification for admissions purposes, provided:
 - i. They registered with the professional body with an accepted English language certificate within two years of issue.
 - ii. They achieved a score higher or equal to Trinity's entry criteria.
 - iii. They can evidence continuing employment within a high intensity English language environment.

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

- Develop a multi-annual cycle of review for the new English Language scale, to ensure it is working and remains fit for purpose.
- Provide guidelines to support academic staff in assessing prospective students’ English language competency at interview.
- Conduct a data analysis exercise to examine the relationship between English language scores and academic attainment.

Post December 2025

- Further investigate the potential for additional pre-sessional and in-sessional English language support programmes for prospective students at PGT level.

Curriculum: Awards

Develop an Exit Award Framework for Postgraduate Taught Programmes



WP1 – Postgraduate Taught

Existing Provision

- No definition of an Exit Award existed in Trinity’s regulations for Higher Degrees.
- Most Postgraduate Taught Degree programmes did make provision for an Exit Award pathway.
- Where available, Exit Awards were made at Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (P.Grad.Dip)
- Exit Awards were available to students who successfully passed all taught components of the Taught Postgraduate Degree to a minimum value of 60ECTS.
- Exit Awards were available to those who either chose not to take, or failed, the Research module in their programme.

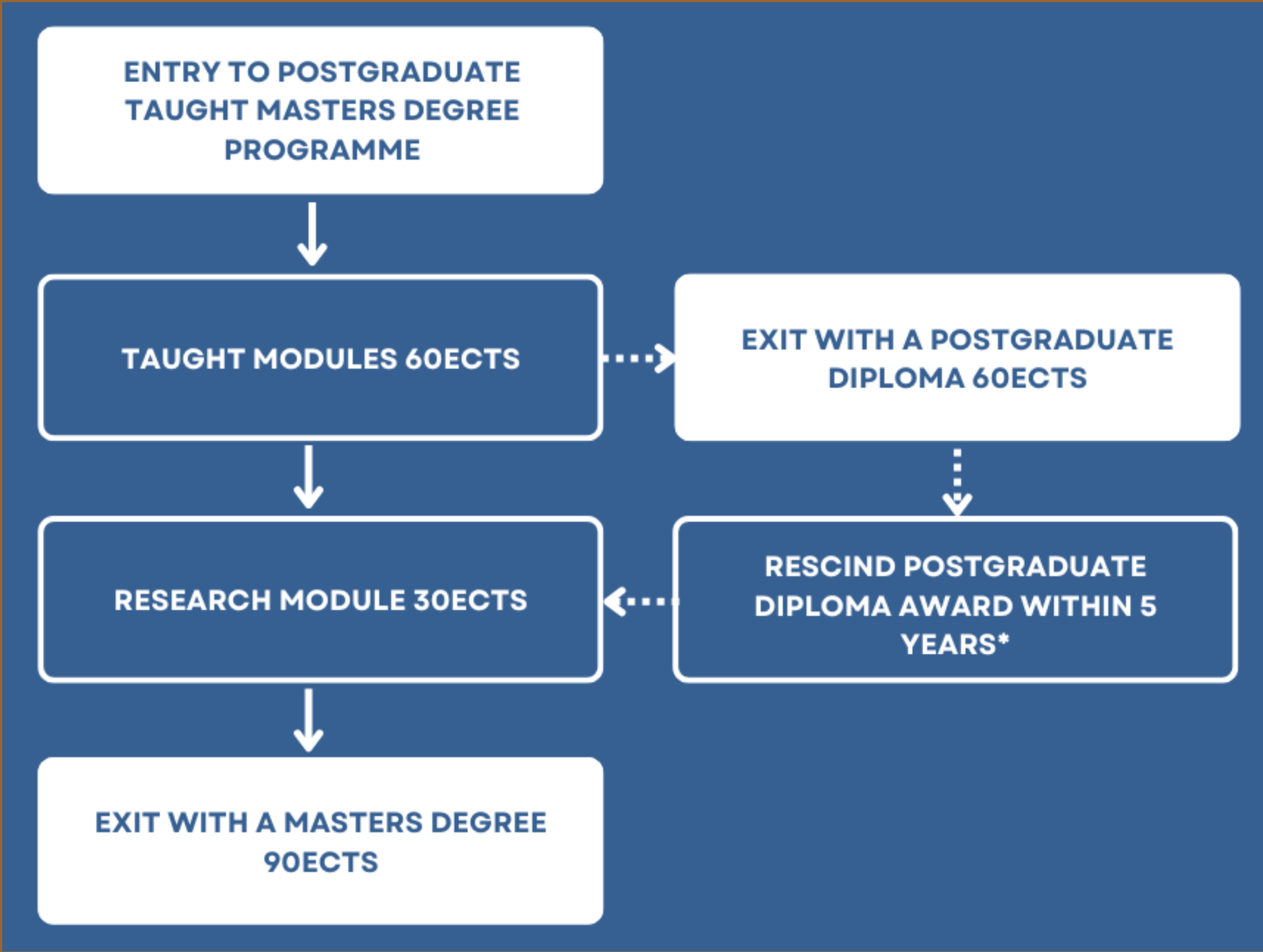
Horizon 1: What we learned

- There is no national guidance on Exit Awards, or defined pathways to an Exit Award.
- 5 ‘Trinity’ degree programmes did not offer students a pathway to an Exit Award (See Table 1).
- 9 professionally accredited programmes were prevented from offering Exit Awards in compliance with regulations of the accrediting authority (See Table 1).

Programmes without an Exit Award	Professionally-accredited Programmes without an Exit Award
M.Sc in Applied Psychology	M.Sc in Diagnostic Radiography
M.Sc in Biomedical Sciences (Intercalated)	B.A.I/M.A.I – Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering
M.Sc in Hospital Pharmacy	B.A.I/M.A.I – Computer Engineering
M.Phil in Creative Writing	B.A.I/M.A.I – Electronic Engineering
M.Phil in Early Irish	B.A.I/M.A.I – Electronic and Electrical Engineering
	B.A.I/M.A.I – Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering
	B.A.I/M.A.I – Biomedical Engineering
	B.Sc (Ing)/M.A.I (optional) Engineering with Management
	M.Pharm

Table 1

Horizon 2: Value we delivered



- A new definition of an exit award has been entered into the Calendar Part III (Higher Degrees). P.Grad.Dip exit awards have been approved for the 5 programmes identified without an exit award pathway.
- All P.Grad.Dip exit awards will have a minimum value of 60ECTS and be available to students who either fail the research component of their programme, or choose not to progress to the research stage of their programme.
- Students have the option to rescind the P.Grad.Dip within 5 years and complete the research module in fulfilment for a Masters degree. This option is not available to those who have failed the research module.
- Provision for exit awards is now made for all new programme proposals, with an opt-out feature for externally accredited professional programmes.

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

- Explore the potential for professionally accredited programmes to confer Exit Awards.

Curriculum: Awards

Developing a Postgraduate Taught Research Model Framework
WP1 – Postgraduate Taught



What we learned (analysis):

- We examined research project options for postgraduate taught students across all 26 of Trinity's Schools.
- We compared these with postgraduate taught research models in four comparator LERU universities (Edinburgh, Imperial College London, UCL and Utrecht).
- We held a consultative interview with the Dean of Graduate Studies at King's College London, where they had recently produced an An evaluation of the Code of Practice for PGT Research Governance and the Dissertation Framework. This served as a 'good practice' example for Trinity's **new 5 Model Framework for Postgraduate Taught Research**.
- We held a student consultation on Wednesday 22 March 2023 to hear the views of current and past PGT students.

Value we delivered: The 5 Model Framework for Postgraduate Taught Research

Models for PGT Research		
<p>The Table below describes the research models associated with PGT research projects. Within a programme, the model(s) for PGT research should be selected by the Course Director. In the interest of exposing students to a broad range of research practice, or to offer students choice in the research output, more than one model may be employed per course.</p> <p>In some instances, specific examples of research outputs are offered. These examples have been included at the request of Disciplines across the university and are intended to augment, and not to restrict, the type of outputs submissible under the model in question.</p>		
Model		
1	Dissertation	<p>This model applies to research projects in all disciplines and normally constitutes an extended piece of academic writing on a specific topic using a research methodology agreed between the student and the course director.</p> <p>An institutional maximum word count of 15,000 words is proposed for the PGT Dissertation.</p>
2	Performance	<p>This model applies to research in the creative arts which involve a significant component of live performance or exhibition as the research output.</p>
3	Digital artefact	<p>This model includes research presented through a digital medium or where a digital artefact is constructed in answer, or part-answer to a research question. The artefact can be composed of audio, video, code, database, AR/VR, and/or other elements as required by the nature of the research.</p>
4	Portfolio	<p>This model is suitable for applied disciplines where a portfolio of original work is required to satisfy the research element of the masters degree. Examples include, but are not limited to, creative writing (including poetry, fiction, screenwriting, playwriting) and critical writing (e.g., collection of essays). Composition of the portfolio should follow the rules laid down in the course handbook.</p>
5	Practice	<p>This model applies to disciplines in which there is a professional practice through which research can be carried out and analysed, and where the research output is produced in a format other than a written dissertation, e.g., a case study, clinical audit, internship report</p>
Research Methodology		
<p>The models are defined by the nature of the research output, and not by its research methodology. Research methodologies vary across and within disciplines, and the student should, with guidance from their supervisor and as part of the early stages of the research, select the research methodology most appropriate for their project.</p>		
Assessment		
<p>Rubrics for the assessment of PGT research should be included within the Student Handbook for the course or equivalent publication.</p>		

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

Evaluate adoption and impact of new model.

Scan to access
PGT Research Model Framework

A square QR code with a black and white pixelated pattern, used for quick access to the research model framework.



What you said (voice of the community):

The subgroup designed a set of questions that formed the basis for semi-structured interviews with Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate).

We held 22 interviews with DTLPs between October and December 2023.

We aimed to understand:

- Current PGT supervisory practices in Trinity
- How these practices were shaped by organisational structures or limitations within Trinity
- How disciplinary cultures influenced who supervises PGT dissertations
- How supervision is carried out.

What we learned (analysis):

- **Supervision structure and management:** Most PGT students have a primary supervisor who is a full-time member of the academic staff in Trinity. This is the only current requirement where day-to-day oversight of the research project is required, supervisory duties can fall to (a) nominated alternative(s).
- **Availability of supervisors:** Most Schools reported a shortage in matching students with suitable supervisors due to a combination of factors including high enrolments, availability of subject matter experts, or low cultures of participation among the academic staff within the School. Some Course Directors face excessively high supervision loads, even with workload allocation practices in place.
- **Training and guidance:** Most Schools express confidence in the abilities of academic staff to supervise PGT projects, and implement informal mentorship programmes with new staff where needed. Supervisor training is not identified as a need by most, although some agreed that some ‘best practice’ guidelines may be useful, particularly regarding an introduction to academic regulations.

Value we delivered: The Framework for Postgraduate Taught Research Supervision

Person	Role	Responsibilities
Primary academic supervisor or co-supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The primary academic supervisor or co-supervisor serve(s) as the main point(s) of contact and mentor(s) for the PGT student throughout their research.▪ The primary or co-supervisory team may be (a) academic member(s) of staff in Trinity, and (b) Senior Research Fellows.▪ Postdoctoral researchers may act as primary supervisors when contract permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The primary academic supervisor may or may not be directly involved in the student's research project but bears overall responsibility for their academic progress.▪ Oversees the academic design of the project, providing advice in identifying resources, including literature, data, and expertise, necessary for the successful completion of the research project.▪ Monitors progress of the student's work and provides constructive feedback.▪ Ensures compliance with academic standards, ethical guidelines, and university regulations.▪ Facilitates opportunities for academic and professional development.
Co-supervisor or secondary academic supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The secondary supervisor or co-supervisor contributes subject-specific expertise, teaching resources, and academic mentorship.▪ In co-supervision arrangements, they may be of equal standing in relation to the roles and responsibilities of a primary supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide guidance on theoretical frameworks, conceptual models, and disciplinary perspectives.▪ Offer feedback on research proposals, methodology sections, and academic writing.▪ Facilitate access to course materials, academic workshops, and research seminars.▪ Mentor students on academic and professional development opportunities within their field of study.
Subject Matter Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ May be an adjunct member of staff with either/both professional or academic affiliation to Trinity and professional affiliation with another organisation.▪ May be part of a supervisory team in co-supervision arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Collaborates with the student and primary supervisor to offer subject-specific guidance and insights.▪ Reviews drafts, provides feedback, and suggests improvements in their area of expertise.▪ Assists in data collection, analysis, or interpretation, as relevant to their domain.▪ Offers mentorship and support based on their practical experience and insights.
External Support Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide specialized knowledge and expertise related to specific aspects of the research project.▪ May combine their supervisory role with another role in the organisation (e.g., line manager if the student is also an employee).▪ Will participate on the basis of co-supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Oversees day-to-day activities related to the research project within the organisational context.▪ Offers context-specific guidance, resources, and access to relevant networks.▪ Facilitates opportunities for students to gain practical experience, such as internships, fieldwork, or access to proprietary data.▪ Collaborating with academic supervisors to ensure alignment between academic requirements and industry expectations.▪ May combine their supervisory role with another role in the organisation (e.g., line manager if the student is also an employee).
Supervising academic from other university	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Collaborating academic staff from other universities bring diverse perspectives and expertise to complement the supervision process.▪ May also be a collaborative partner on joint research projects, interdisciplinary initiatives, or international partnerships.▪ May be part of a supervisory team in co-supervision arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provides specialized knowledge or resources not available within the home institution to enhance the student's academic experience.▪ Facilitates access to research facilities, funding opportunities, or academic networks.
Postdoctoral researchers, research assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Postdoctoral researchers and research assistants contribute to the supervision process by offering peer support, technical expertise, and mentorship.▪ Postdoctoral researchers may act as primary supervisors when contract permits.▪ May not act as a primary supervisor.▪ May be part of a supervisory team in co-supervision arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide guidance on research methodologies, data analysis techniques.▪ Assist with practical aspects of research, such as data collection, laboratory work, or statistical analysis.▪ Offer feedback on literature reviews, and draft manuscripts, if appropriate.▪ Share insights from their own research experiences and academic journey.

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

- Explore the role of the PhD researcher in the supervision of PGT research.

Curriculum: Quality Assurance

WP1 – Postgraduate Taught



Two-stage approval process for postgraduate programme proposal development

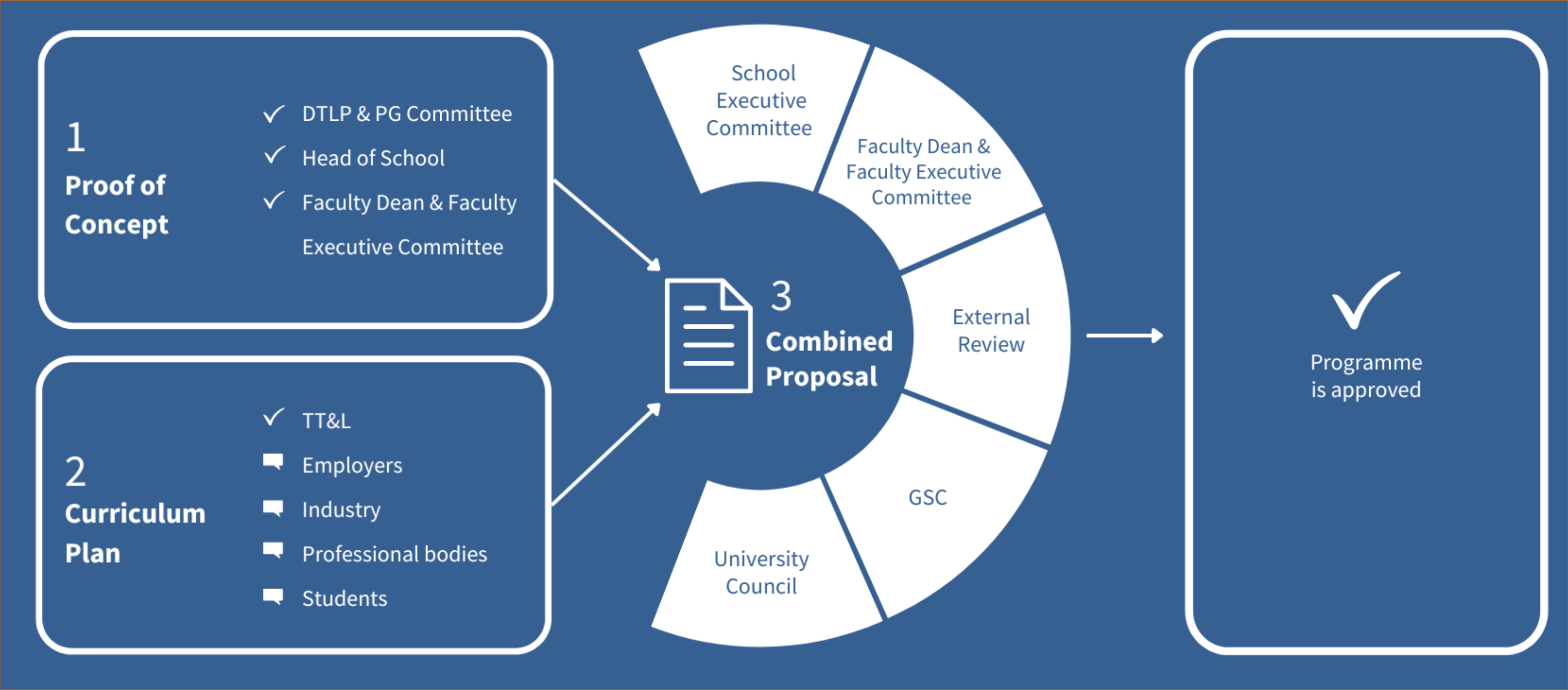
Stage 1 Proof of Concept

- I. Course proposers develop a **Proof-of-Concept proposal** (business case), using a designated template provided by Academic Affairs.
- II. The Proof of Concept includes essential course information such as mode of delivery, mode of attendance, course structure and professional accreditation requirements. To support Schools and Faculties in their decision-making process, detailed information on whether the course will be financially and academically viable is provided, including market research for potential student numbers and careers outcomes for graduates. Course proposers must engage with Trinity Careers Service and Trinity Global on this stage of the proposal.

Stage 2 – Curriculum Plan

- I. Development and approval of the proposed **Curriculum Plan** for the new programme. Course proposers consult, and may attend workshops, with Trinity Teaching and Learning (Academic Practice and Academic Affairs), as well as with enterprise partners, professional accrediting bodies and students in crafting the new curriculum.

New Two-stage Approval Process for Postgraduate Programme Development:



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online resources

Year 3 review of the new programme

- A. Preparation of a report on the financial viability of the programme cross-referenced with the financial information presented in the Council approved programme proposal.
 - B. Preparation of a report on the curriculum cross-referenced with the curriculum presented in the Council approved programme proposal.
- The two above reports will be combined and submitted to GSC for consideration and approval. GSC will recommend validation/invalidation of the programme.

Modifications to existing Postgraduate Programmes: Abridged Approval Process

- A. Amendments to existing programmes are categorised as minor, moderate or major
- B. Minor and Moderate changes (not resulting in changes to programme learning outcomes) are approved at a Programme/School level.
- C. Major changes follow a new abridged (one-stage) approval process supported by prescribed templates.

Still to do:

Horizon 2 (ending Dec 2025)

- Review the pilot Two-Stage Approval Process for new postgraduate programme development.
- Evaluate pilot abridged process for approving proposed amendments to existing PGT programmes.
- Develop evaluation criteria for the review of new programmes, in their third year.
- Transition ownership for programme approval process to Academic Affairs.