

## **General Terms of Reference for the Review of Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs)**

### **Context**

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin is a research-led university of global consequence that undertakes research for impact.

Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs):

1. Are central to the delivery of the University's research strategy and are established to promote the development of centres of excellence in a limited number of key areas.
2. Represent an area of acknowledged research excellence at the University and have, at their core, a critical mass of scholars/principle investigators (PIs) of acknowledged high international standing.
3. Are recognised by the University as long-term strategic resources that must be sustainable and serve to increase the level and impact of research in the corresponding area at the University.
4. Are in receipt of strategic funding from the University to enable their mission.
5. Are granted approval for a period of five years after which they will be subject to an external quality review, including a site visit.

The College [Policy on Trinity Research Institutes](#) states that TRIs are subject to a quality review every five years, under the College approved [procedure for review of a Trinity Research Institute](#).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the review is to:

1. Assess the purpose, goals and priorities of the TRI and to ensure the continued alignment of the TRI with the University's strategic aims.
2. Evaluate the strategic aims of the TRI itself and its effectiveness in delivering on this ambition.
3. Facilitate a critical self-assessment of the Institute by the Institute Director, its PIs, the Heads of the participating Schools and the relevant Faculty Dean including:
  - i. whether the TRI has made the appropriate investment in facilities and enabling personnel to deliver on its mission and to facilitate the submission of competitive proposals at an individual PI and institute level;
  - ii. whether the TRI has established the requisite network of academic, industry and other third-party relationships to deliver an internationally visible activity of scale;
  - iii. whether the TRI demonstrated the capacity to be an effective magnet to attract the best talent internationally.

4. Facilitate an assessment by an independent, external review panel of both current and potential performance against analogous international centres
5. Demonstrate the continued added - value of the TRI in leveraging research in the corresponding field over and above that achieved through Schools alone.
6. Provide recommendations to the University on the provision of future strategic funding to the TRI.

## Scope

The quality review is to focus on the effectiveness of the TRI in enabling internationally competitive research, rather than the research outputs themselves. Specifically, it is not intended to be a Research Excellence Framework (REF) type review. The unit of assessment is the TRI, not the School(s) or individual researchers.

## Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference outlined below are generic to any TRI. Given the unique focus of each TRI, the ToR may be further specified prior to a quality review in agreement with the Institute Director, the Dean of Research and the Quality Office.

The Review Team will be asked to provide a strategic report to College that provides:

- a. an overall assessment of the Institute and to assign rating as set out below that articulates the achievement of the TRI in terms of enabling research excellence:
  1. international reference point in terms of providing the facilities, supports and research environment that enables research excellence: clearly a world leader;
  2. internationally competitive in the provision of enabling facilities, supports and research environment that enables research excellence: a significant player internationally in the field;
  3. internationally competitive but with identifiable gaps that need to be addressed: a potential player at an international level;
  4. nationally competitive but not an international player;
  5. the TRI provides no obvious added value.
- b. an assessment of the degree of success/constraints on the TRI in leveraging research in the corresponding field over and above that achieved through Schools alone, as demonstrated by a mature approach to governance, planning, human, financial, and infrastructure resource management.
- c. recommendations to the University on whether or not the TRI should continue to be recognised as a Trinity Research Institute.