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## Programme Handbook Policy

### 1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, herein referred to as Trinity, recognises that programme handbooks are a key method to communicate information to students on taught programmes of study. Trinity is committed to ensuring that handbooks on all taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are accessible and meet standards that reflect good practice in higher education.

### 2. Purpose

This policy will establish minimum requirements and good practice recommendations for handbooks across all taught programmes within the University, improving transparency and accessibility of information for students.

### 3. Benefits

- 3.1 Programme handbooks provide students with standardised information and academic regulations regarding their programme of study and may be utilised to stipulate further programme requirements, e.g. professional placement requirements or study abroad
- 3.2 Student awareness of University policies that affect the experience of Teaching & Learning, e.g. [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Appeals Policy \(Academic Progress\)](#)
- 3.3 Handbooks can act as a tool for recruitment, providing prospective students with detailed insight on academic and student life within Trinity.



## **4. Scope**

- 4.1 A programme handbook will be published annually for each taught postgraduate degree, undergraduate degree, diploma, certificate or foundation course leading to an award by Trinity College Dublin or the University of Dublin. This policy does not apply to courses delivered by Trinity's linked providers.
- 4.2 The model for the handbook will take the form of a School, Programme, a Year or a Subject handbook. Academic Units are responsible for choosing the appropriate format for the Handbook. This may require the use of two models to address changes where existing programmes are phased out in order to implement new and/or revised programmes. Schools can present information common across programmes in a School/department wide handbook, and provide programme specific information in separate programme handbooks, which link to the School/department wide handbook.

## **5. Principles**

- 5.1 Handbooks are a key information resource for current and prospective students.
- 5.2 Information contained in handbooks will be consistent with the information set out in the College Calendar and Academic Policies approved by Board and Council. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the [University Calendar](#) and information contained in programme handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations for that Academic Year will prevail.
- 5.3 Where cross Faculty, School and/or departments contribute to the delivery of the programme leading to an award, such as Multidisciplinary awards, those areas will collaborate on the design and content of a Programme-level handbook, designed to present standardised information relevant to the programme and which directs students to relevant School Handbooks.



## **6. Definitions (see also Curriculum Glossary)**

- 6.1 A handbook is a document that provides key information to students on matters relating to their programme of study and the University regulations that apply to all students.
- 6.2 A programme is a coherent offering of modules, including elements such as internships and dissertations, which lead to the achievement of defined learning outcomes and of a particular award (e.g. a degree).
- 6.3 A programme strand is a series of modules that creates a distinct thematic pathway within a programme.
- 6.4 A subject refers to a branch of learning or discipline.

## **7. Policy**

- 7.1 Handbooks will comply with the Trinity design and accessibility requirements in digital and/or printed formats.
  - i) [Trinity's Visual Identity Guidelines](#)
  - ii) [Accessible Information Policy](#)
- 7.2 [Appendix 1](#) outlines core content items for programme handbooks. The Handbooks will contain items specified in Appendix 1 as core content or will at a minimum signpost where detailed information relating to the core content is available, e.g. VLE, MyTCD, or University web address. Appendix 1 will be updated on an annual basis and published on the Academic Affairs website, and Graduate Studies website respectively for reference. [Appendix 2](#) contains two templates (School/department generic content and programme handbook specific information) that may be used by Schools/departments in developing Handbooks.
- 7.3 Handbooks will be updated each academic year and will be accessible to students on the Friday preceding the Postgraduate Orientation in Michaelmas Term or the



University Orientation weeks, as applicable to the programme. Where programmes have approved start dates outside of the normal Academic Year Structure publication will fall no later than the Friday before the start date.

Where core content aligns with the College Calendar and where the Calendar is not available ahead of the deadline for handbook publication, the handbook will reference the web address where the Calendar will be published. Once the College Calendar for that Academic Year is published, the entry from that Calendar will prevail as per the General Regulations of the College Calendar and Principle 5.2 of this policy.

7.4 Handbooks will be published in totality at:

- i) School and/or Programme Website, and/or
- ii) The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and,
- iii) A minimum of one hard copy in large print will be available in the relevant school or programme office, and,
- iv) A hard copy will be made available to students on request.

7.5 Once published, students and staff will comply with the information set out in the handbook for the indicated academic session.

7.6 Changes to the published handbook should be avoided, however:

- a.) in rare and exceptional circumstances, and provided the changes do not affect the form, workload<sup>1</sup> or weighting of assessment(s), the award of the degree and/or the programme learning outcomes, changes to the published handbook are allowed through the publication of an addendum to the Handbook. In this case, all students who are affected by the change will be advised in advance of the change.
- b.) where changes to the published handbook do affect the form, workload or weighting of assessment(s), the award of the degree and/or the programme learning outcomes, a formal notification will be sent to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Dean of Graduate Studies. They will confirm if the change

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<sup>1</sup> Workload refers to duration of examination, word-count, number of lab reports, etc.



can be implemented or if it must wait until the following academic year. Where approved, the school will consult with the affected students and/or their representatives prior to implementing the change.

## **8. Responsibility**

- 8.1 Directors of Teaching and Learning, or their nominees, will ensure the accuracy of programme handbook information and that the policy is implemented at local level. In order to facilitate a review of handbooks, programme staff will circulate handbooks to appropriate Directors of Teaching and Learning prior to publication.
- 8.2 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies oversees this policy for handbooks relating to undergraduate programmes.
- 8.3 The Dean of Graduate Studies oversees this policy for handbooks relating to postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes.

## **9. Related Documents**

- 9.1 [College Calendar](#)
- 9.2 [NALA Plain English Guidelines](#)
- 9.3 [Trinity Accessible Information Policy](#)
- 9.4 [Policy on the Trinity Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#)
- 9.5 [Trinity Visual Identity Guidelines](#)

## **10. Document Control**

- 10.1 Date approved: 20 June 2018
- 10.2 Date of most recent review: 13 March 2024
- 10.3 Date of next review: Academic Year 2026/2027