



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of Trinity Electives Sub-Committee

25 November 2024 at 2.00 pm in the FSTEM Conference Room

Present: Chair: Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Professor Mark Sweetman, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Nollaig Bourke, Health Sciences Representative
Professor Tylor Brand, AHSS Representative
Mr Shane Coultry, Academic Registry
Mr Eoghan Gilroy, SU Education Officer
Ms Ciara Conlon, Representative from Academic Affairs

Apologies: Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice
Prof. Rachel McDonnell, STEM Representative

In Attendance: Secretary: Ms Ellen Kampinga, Education Support Officer, Academic Affairs

The ADUSE welcomed the committee to the first meeting of TESC in 24/25 academic year. The ADUSE reiterated the purpose of TESC and introduced the new members to the committee; Professor Nollaig Burke as HS Rep and Ellen Kampinga as secretary.

TESC/24-25/001 Draft Minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 6 February were approved.

TESC/24-25/002 Matters Arising

- i. **TESC/23-24/012:** The ADUSE noted that a proposal for a Trinity Elective ESD module has not been developed and that there is ongoing consideration as to how sustainability will be embedded in the undergraduate curriculum. He advised that he will keep the committee updated as to how this will pertain to Trinity Electives.
- ii. **TESC/23-24/013:** The ADUSE confirmed that the proposals for Post-beginners Chinese Language and Culture, Post-beginners Japanese Language and Culture, and Polish Language and Culture (Beginners) were approved by Council.
- iii. **TESC/23-24/014** The ADUSE confirmed that the moderate changes to the Trinity Elective entitled "Psychology of the Climate Crisis" were approved.
- iv. **TESC/23-24/015** The ADUSE confirmed that the proposal to suspend the Trinity Elective entitled 'Cancer: The Patient Journey' for 2024/25 was

approved - He noted that a later request to suspend the TE 'Engaging in the Digital World: Today and Tomorrow' was received and approved by the Chair on behalf of the committee.

- v. **TESC/23-24/016** The ADUSE confirmed that the proposal to allow students from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to take Trinity Electives was approved.
- vi. **TESC/23-24/018** The ADUSE confirmed that the membership of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee 2024/25 was approved.

TESC/24-25/003 Trinity Electives Enrolment Data 2024/25

A memorandum from Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE) and chair of the Trinity Elective Sub-Committee, dated 19 November 2024, was circulated.

The ADUSE noted that, overall, Trinity Electives are performing well and that many of the electives have over 50% capacity filled, while still providing a broad selection of electives remaining for Semester 2 visiting students who will enrol in January. The ADUSE notes that while 80 Pharmacy students are now enrolled in TEs, the School have proposed a new Trinity Elective to be offered from 2025/26.

The member from Academic Affairs noted that NCAD students are enrolling to TEs for the first time in January 2025. NCAD students will initially be processed as visiting students, although they will be added to the normal enrolment process for 2025/26. Mr Coultry thanked Academic Affairs for the note and advised that he will reach out to NCAD to discuss the enrolment process. A member drew attention to the high number of withdrawn students in 2024/25 and Mr Coultry explained that this is due to issues related to OME which result in Trinity outbound exchange students having to enrol in Trinity modules for progression purposes and he confirmed that work is ongoing to identify a solution to rectify this.

Action/Decision

003.01 The AR representative to contact NCAD regarding enrolment in Trinity Electives in January 2025 students as visiting students for 24/25 and to add the students to normal TE enrolment process for 25/26.

TESC/24-25/004 Trinity Elective Proposals

i. Histories and Futures of Climate Change

A TE proposal developed by Dr Katja Bruisch from the School of Histories and Humanities was circulated to members for consideration. The ADUSE welcomed the proposal, stating that it is a remarkably interesting module and invited comments or questions from the committee.

In the discussion, the following points were made:

- The student capacity is noted as 60 which is not high, but constrained by having five tutorial groups of 12 places.
- The learning outcomes are noted and their clear connection to the assessment methods.

A member expressed concern that students may struggle to complete the re-assessment if they were not involved in the group project, although it was noted that as they could base it on a 'related topic' that the scope is sufficiently broad. Further clarity on this will be sought.

Actions/Decisions

004.01 The TESC approved the proposal entitled Histories and Futures of Climate Change for progression to USC.

004.02 The ADUSE to communicate to the proposer to clarify the issue related to group work integration and re-assessment reformulation.

ii. Introduction to Medicinal Plant Use and Integrative Medicine

A TE proposal developed by Dr. Fabio Boylan from the School of Pharmacy was circulated to members for consideration. The ADUSE noted that there was a short turn around for the TESC to read the module proposal, and members confirmed that they were happy to proceed with discussion.

Members welcomed the addition of another TE from the Faculty of Health Sciences and noted that the module in general was a very encouraging addition to the TE offer.

- It was noted that the process of the extraction of the natural compound would have an effect on module capacity.
- Further detail on the nature of the yoga class, how it fits and how the two workshops are different in nature to be requested. Members questioned if two sessions were necessary and wondered how it fits into the overall module content.
- It was suggested that there is scope to make the module interdisciplinary by collaborating with a School in AHSS to integrate sociological view on medicine.
- The weighting given to formative assessment was highlighted, and it was noted that formative assessments typically do not bear credit. Members wondered about the distinction between the pre-class MCQ and post-class MCQ and the difference in weighting.
- Members discussed the live discussion boards, noting that a high weighting of marks are assigned to this component. It was noted that this may not be an inclusive form of assessment and should be reconsidered, for example utilizing post-discussion reflections instead.
- Further clarity on the re-assessment, and whether it would cover all components was sought.
- In addition, the proposer should also provide further information on how LO5 is to be assessed. It was suggested that this could work as formative assessment because lab presence is required as part of successful isolation of the compound.
- SU Officer noted the description of the module includes raising awareness about self-medication. The phrasing and the topic should be reevaluated because self-medication is essential in some forms of health treatment.

Actions/Decisions

004.03 The ADUSE to communicate the TESC feedback to the proposers.

TESC/24-25/005 Trinity Elective Draft Annual Report 2023/24

The Trinity Elective Draft Annual Report 2023/24 was circulated to members and the ADUSE thanked Mr. Michael Cleary-Gaffney and Ms. Ciara Conlon from Academic Affairs for putting together the Annual Report over the last year.

The ADUSE noted that overall, the Trinity Electives work well in providing breadth in Undergraduate Studies, and the report reflects this. The ADUCA added that staff and students involved with TE report good experiences.

A discussion on the need to predict capacity in advance followed, and it was clarified that this would be difficult to predict given the fact that many programmes which require students to take TEs are not utilizing OME. It was noted that there is less capacity remaining every year, as more students join, and the TE offers change.

A member queried why some modules are missing in the results table, and it was confirmed that the results were downloaded after the inputting of marks deadline and some module co-ordinators may have missed the deadline.

A member drew attention to the low result for the module Vaccines – Friend or Foe, although a high standard deviation was also observed, although recognised that the results would have to be compared to last year's marks, to see if result is an outlier. The ADUSE noted that the average marks for the module Chinese Language and Culture was quite high last year, and the module co-ordinator was notified of this. In response to a query, the ADUSE stated that language modules assess students' language proficiency in the first week that the module commences.

TESC/24-25/006 Student Evaluation Summary Reports 2023/24

The Evaluation Summary reports were circulated and the ADUSE explained that these are carried out by the Quality office.

The low response rate was highlighted, and members questioned how representative the results are. The aggregate response total were 235 and 374 responses for semesters 1 and 2 respectively. A member suggested using an incentive to increase the response rate, although it was noted that this may not improve quality. It was also suggested that module co-ordinators could be asked to include the link of the survey in Blackboard. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the results are disseminated to the TESC and to all module coordinators.

[The new AHSS Rep Professor Tylor Brand joins meeting.]

TESC/24-25/007 Updated Agreement with NCAD

The updated agreement between Trinity and NCAD was circulated and the ADUSE noted that the amendments are minor and relate mostly to the change in the enrolment process.

The ADUSE stated that the process of exchanging marks between the two institutions should be reviewed and that the school of History and Humanities, as host School, plays a role in this. He agreed to a suggestion to communicate the responsibilities the school has in relation to the running of the NCAD TE.

Actions/Decisions

007.02 The Chair of TESC to contact the School of History and Humanities regarding operational activities relating to the NCAD-run module.

TESC/24-25/008 Updated Trinity Elective Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

The TESC Terms of reference were circulated and the ADUSE brought the meeting through the amendments. He highlighted that the role of Chair will pass to the ADUCA in semester 2 and highlighted the need for overlap in membership to provide continuity.

Actions/Decisions

008/01 The revisions to the TESC terms of reference were approved.

TESC/24-25/009 Amendments to Trinity Electives

A memorandum from Dr Ashley Clements, Head of Classics, School of Histories and Humanities, dated 4 November 2024, was circulated.

The memo outlined two changes in relation to modules delivered by the School: (i) a change in the semester of delivery for 'A World to Discover' from Sem 1 to Sem 2 and (ii) a change in module co-ordinator for the module 'Ancient Culture Lab'.

The ADUSE stated that the TESC must be notified of amendments to TEs well in advance and module co-ordinators will be reminded of the timelines before the meeting in February.

Actions/Decisions

009/01 TESC approved the change of semester of delivery for the TE 'A World to Discover'.

TESC/24-25/010 Any Other Business

The ADUCA raised the issue of late mark entry by TE co-ordinators, and it was clarified that the Secretary of TESC communicates the deadlines to all co-ordinators in advance and will include DUTLs and School managers this year.