



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 1 October 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 Joanne Banks, School of Education
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 Phillip Curry, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Alexandra Grieser, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
Professor Goetz Botterweck, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Kevin Kelly, School of Engineering
Professor Juan Pablo Labrador, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Jan Manschot, School of Mathematics
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 Valeria Nicolosi, School of Chemistry
Professor Jean Fletcher, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Miranda Fay Thomas, School of Creative Arts
Professor Matthew Saunders, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Ana Perez Luno, Academic Director of Tangent
Professor Aileen Lynch, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

In attendance: Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Ms Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary: Academic Affairs; Dr Pauline Rooney, Head of Academic Practice; Mr Ronan Hodson (for item USC/24-25/005)

USC/24-25/001 Welcome

The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed members and attendees, particularly new members, to the first USC meeting of the 2024/25 academic year and invited participants to introduce themselves.

USC/24-25/002 Minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2024 were approved.

USC/24-25/003 Matters arising

- i. USC/23-24/091 The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the proposed changes to the Calendar Part II for 2024/25 were approved by Council.
- ii. USC/23-24/092(i) The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the amendments to the student attendance procedures were approved by Council.
- iii. USC/23-24/092(i) The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the revisions to the Fitness to Study Policy were approved by Council.
- iv. USC/23-24/094 The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the proposed scaled system for English language requirements for admission was approved by Council.
- v. USC/23-24/095 The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the Senior Lecturer Annual Report for 2022/23 was approved by Council.
- vi. USC/23-24/097 The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the suspension of the UG Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship for 2024/25 was approved by Council.
- vii. USC/23-24/100 The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the new programme learning outcomes for the MPharm integrated programme was approved by Council.
- viii. USC/23-24/100(iii) The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the Academic Integrity policy and procedures was approved by Council.
- ix. USC/23-24/100(iv) The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the Columbia Dual B.A. Degree Calculations and Derogations for 2024/25 were approved by Council.

USC/24-25/004 Senior Lecturer's Updates

- i. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked all colleagues who participated in the Higher Options event in September 2024.
- ii. A document outlining an institutional statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research was circulated, and the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies spoke to the item. He acknowledged that many Schools have already begun to develop policies on the use of Gen AI, but there was a need for an overarching College statement connecting College values and mission with associated uses of AI. The statement has been developed in collaboration with Academic Practice, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Research and the Senior Lecturer. The statement provides guidance for staff delivering teaching, learning and research activities as well as advice for students and professional staff. It outlines Trinity's approach and the principles that should underpin the use of Gen AI to ensure students and staff are appropriately informed. He advised that a website is being developed (called the GenAI Teaching and Learning Hub) with useful resources and information on the appropriate use of Gen AI aimed at the whole College community. FAQ has been developed. Noting the fast-evolving nature of the technology underpinning Gen AI, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies stressed that the statement is a living document and subject to change as practices and understanding of the technology evolve.

Members broadly welcomed the statement but raised several queries and comments in the discussion that followed. A number of members felt that the statement does not highlight negative impacts that can result from the use of Gen AI such as the environmental impact, ethical considerations and the need to address the threat to the integrity of assessment. It was highlighted that some discipline specific customisation will need to be developed, and the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that Schools have some flexibility to do so but should be consistent with the overarching document's principles. A member commented that students in programmes delivered

across multiple schools, such as in TJH, find it difficult to navigate different approaches and suggested that a consistent approach should be adapted across Faculties. A member had a number of suggested revisions regarding specific wording of sections to better reflect the reality of why the use of Gen AI is not being prohibited and the potential for errors being generated. In response, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed to take on board feedback and revise the statement appropriately. He stated that the aim is for Trinity to position itself as a university of change and to pioneer green initiatives to reduce the environmental impact, noting that work is already being carried out in Trinity on ways to develop sustainable, smaller Gen AI models. He agreed that assessment will need to be addressed in the future.

The SU Education Officer stated that while significant work has been done in the area to date, more guidance for students is needed as some Schools have yet to develop a policy. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged more is to be done, and Student Learning Development (SLD) are working to this end and noted that Academic Practice is already giving support to SLD and are available to support Schools. The Head of Academic Practice drew attention to the resources available online on the GenAI Teaching and Learning Hub and welcomed members to contact Academic Practice if support is required. The Library Representative invited members to the SLD-led workshops.

Concluding the discussion, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that his intention is to work in a transparent way to best support the College community in navigating the use of Gen AI and invited members to get in touch with him. The statement will be revised as necessary and submitted to Graduate Studies Committee later this month.

The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies drew members attention to the events that will take place during the Academic Integrity Week 14th -18th October 2024 and encouraged members to participate.

- iii. A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies was circulated which outlined a draft workplan for USC for the academic year 2024/25, noting that this was a draft and input from members is welcome. He brought the meeting through some items that USC will be tackled in the upcoming academic year. The following suggestions were put forward by members:

- A policy or process regarding student extensions should be developed.
- Consider if marks gained while studying abroad should count towards the degree calculation.
- Grade conversion for students returning from study abroad should be reviewed.
- Consider if students should have the ability to carry failed modules from one academic year to another in certain instances.
- Issues inherent in the module enrolment process for students returning from study abroad should be addressed.
- Guidance on marking conventions would be welcomed.

The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked members for their input.

- iv. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies reminded members that the Open Day will be held on the 2nd November 2024.

USC/24-25/005 EU Qualifications Framework

A memorandum from the Admissions Officer, dated 19 September 2024, was circulated and the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Mr Ronan Hodson to the meeting to speak to the item.

The Admissions Officer advised that a framework which formalises the delegation of authority for setting criteria for students applying through CAO with EU/EFTA and UK qualifications for admissions into undergraduate programmes to the EU Qualifications Group has been proposed. He explained that the group have been carrying out this work to date, with the aim to ensure consistency across the more than 40 qualifications that are received via the CAO annually. The framework sets out the principles and protocols to determine and revise admissions criteria, as well as defining the significant changes that would require HEIs to approve through their own governing structures.

In the discussion that followed, it was raised that some EU students are at a disadvantage as the maximum points are capped and the member felt that more granularity was needed. The Admission Officer explained that the quality of qualifications is carefully assessed and statistical analysis is carried out on data from highly reputable sources to ensure fairness. He pointed out that bonus points can only be awarded where curricula contain two distinct levels, such as with Maths in the Leaving Certificate. In response to a query, he confirmed that institutions do have the ability to diverge from the recommended entry criteria for EU/EFTA/UK qualifications.

Action/Decision:

USC/24-25/005 USC approved the EU Qualifications Framework and recommended it to Council.

USC/24-25/006 Learning and Innovation Research Hub

A memorandum from the Academic Secretary and the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 26 September 2024, was circulated, with an attached report which outlined the proposal.

Speaking to a presentation, the Academic Secretary advised that the proposal has been developed by a Learning Lab Advisory Group and thanked Prof Hamill and Prof Worthington for their input. She provided context to the development of the proposal, which was an objective of the College 2020-2025 strategic plan. She noted that this is to be established as a two year feasibility study with the following aim : *“To define a structure that empowers Trinity College academic staff, teaching and learning support staff, and students to respond to educational challenges by (co)researching pedagogical and digital learning innovations, evaluating and, as appropriate, integrating successful innovations within Trinity College curricula”*. She presented a diagram of all the existing teaching and learning resources across units in College, stating that it is hoped that the establishment of a Hub will bring coherency to the process of proposing new initiatives. The expertise in all relevant units will be harnessed to enable academics to devise and apply new teaching and learning innovations and technologies and to conduct pedagogic research. The hope is that, where appropriate, the mainstreaming of new developments in curriculum design and teaching, learning and assessment practices can be accelerated. She outlined the recommendations of the Advisory Group to bring the proposal to fruition.

In the discussion that followed, a member queried that the initiative may be more suited to disciplines that focus primarily on the acquirement of ‘hard skills’ and wondered if there was scope to consider how Arts and Humanities focused programmes can also benefit and recommended that a range of disciplinary representation are involved. The Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies reassured USC that supports and resources will be designed to meet all disciplinary specific needs, advising that the aim is for any developments and learning are both transformative and transferable, so that all areas of College can benefit. The intention is that academics themselves can propose innovations so that the Hub can be truly transformative across college.

A member suggested that the diagram the Academic Secretary presented, which outlines all relevant stakeholders, should also encompass external bodies from which national initiatives that Trinity are obliged to align to, and the Academic Secretary welcomed the suggestion.

A member expressed concern that the process would add an additional layer of bureaucracy while not providing additional advantages than developing proposals on a local level. Responding, the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the Hub would provide additional resources, support and expertise not available locally in schools. It would also enable innovations developed to have maximum effect and visibility across disciplines and schools. In particular it would enable schools to mainstream piloted innovation more effectively and efficiently. Such advantages have already been proven in similar Learning Innovation project rolled out previously in college. While there would be no requirement for an academic to engage with the Hub if they don't wish to, the aim is to support those who do want to embrace and implement new teaching and learning innovations. He confirmed that both pedagogical advice and support with funding applications will be provided via the Hub and its offerings. He also noted that the Hub could provide a central point to gather teaching infrastructure required for learning innovation in College and assist in liaising with and mainstreaming learning service infrastructure. In response to a query, he advised that once the proposal has been approved by Council, an open call for projects will go out and academics will be able to apply for support.

Action/Decision:

USC/24-25/006 USC approved the proposal for a Learning Innovation and Research Hub.

USC/24-25/007 Items of Business following the last USC meeting of 2023/24

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 24 September 2024, was circulated. He noted that further minor amendments to the Calendar Part II and a derogation for the School of Chemistry to permit capping of reassessments at 60% were approved by Council under vacation procedures since the last meeting of USC in May 2024.

USC/24-25/008 Any other business

- i. The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies drew attention to the Academic Affairs workshop that will be held on 14 October 2024 aimed at DUTLs and School Managers.
- ii. A couple of members raised issues being experienced, including the lack of teaching resources in some teaching spaces and an issue with the timetable display in SITS. The Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies requested a list of said spaces be compiled and sent to him.
- iii. The SU Education Officer thanked members for their support during the class representative elections and advised that results will be available on Monday 7 October 2024.

USC/24-25/009 Minutes (Section B)

None

USC/24-25/010 Items for noting (Section C)

USC noted and approved, where necessary, the following items:

- i. **Derogations from Progression and Award Regulations for 2024/25**
Memorandum from Dr Liz Donnellan, Academic Affairs, dated 20 September 2024.
- ii. **Trinity Elective Sub-Committee Membership 2024/25**
Memorandum from the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education and Chair of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee, dated 12 September 2024.

- iii. **Self-Evaluation Survey Results 2023/24**
Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer & Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 24 September 2024.
- iv. **International Education Mark (IEM) Application**
Memorandum from the Assistant Academic Secretary: Academic Affairs, dated 1 October 2024.
- v. **Laidlaw Programme Report**
- vi. **Revised Internships and Placement Policy**
Memorandum from Ms Sorchá Mulcahy, Acting Director of Careers, dated 30 July 2024.

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