

Institutional Review Report 2022

Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin



QAI REVIEW

CINNTE 

Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important functions is to ensure that the quality assurance (QA) procedures that institutions have in place are effective. To this end, QQI carries out external reviews of higher education institutions on a cyclical basis. This current QQI cycle of reviews is called the CINNTE cycle.

CINNTE reviews are an element of the broader quality framework for institutions composed of Quality Assurance Guidelines; each institution's Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Quality Reports (AQR); and Dialogue Meetings. The CINNTE review cycle runs from 2017-2023. During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of each of the universities and the institutes of technology.

Each CINNTE review evaluates the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of each institution. The review measures each institution's compliance with European standards for quality assurance, regard to the expectations set out in the QQI quality assurance guidelines or their equivalent and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures. CINNTE reviews also explore how institutions have enhanced their teaching, learning and research and their quality assurance systems and how well institutions have aligned their approach to their own mission, quality indicators and benchmarks.

The CINNTE review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG 2015) and based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to reviews, including:

- the publication of Terms of Reference.
- a process of self-evaluation and Institutional Self-evaluation Report (ISER).
- an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers.
- the publication of a Review Report including findings and recommendations; and
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This QQI CINNTE review of Trinity College Dublin was conducted by an independent review team in line with the Terms of Reference in Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the review team. It also includes the response of Trinity College Dublin to the report.

The Review Team

Each CINNTE review is carried out by an international team of independent experts and peers. The 2022 institutional review of Trinity College Dublin (hereafter, Trinity) was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. Due to public health restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, some stages of the cyclical review were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In preparation for the main review visit the review team attended training virtually over 2 days on the 21 and 25 January 2022. The planning visit was held on site in Trinity on the 14 February 2022 and was attended by the chair and coordinating reviewer.

A full schedule of stakeholder meetings was held virtually with the review team from the 7 to 11 March 2022, during which the full review team met students, staff and external stakeholders. The timetable for the visit is appended to this report (see Appendix B).

The efficacy of the review process was confirmed by the review team chair on behalf of the whole review team in the oral feedback report provided to Trinity on the final day of the virtual visit. The Provost of Trinity, on behalf of the institution, confirmed the institution's satisfaction and confidence in the robustness of the process.

QQI acknowledges the engagement, commitment and work of the review team and of Trinity in planning, preparing for and implementing the review process.

CHAIR

Professor Elmer Sterken

Professor Elmer Sterken is from the Netherlands and studied Econometrics at the University of Groningen. He specialised in monetary economics and defended his PhD thesis on an econometric model of the Dutch financial system in 1990. In 1991 he was a Fulbright Research Fellow at the Economics Department of Yale University. In 1994 he was appointed full professor of monetary economics at the University of Groningen. He has been visiting professor at Emory University, Osaka University, Fudan University, at CESifo at Ludwig-Maximilian University and acted as an interim-director of the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome.

Professor Sterken has lectured on macro- and monetary economics, financial intermediation and information economics. His research focuses on firm-bank relations, investment theory, sports statistics and Olympic history. He is a member of the CESifo-network, the Euro-Area Business Cycle Network, and the International Society of Olympic Historians.

Professor Sterken has been dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Groningen. Subsequently he served as Rector Magnificus of the University of Groningen for 8.5 years. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Coimbra Group of Universities, academic lead for the University of Groningen in the European University ENLIGHT, chair of the supervisory board of the University of Humanistic Studies, chair of the board of Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities (QANU) and a member of the board of trustees of the Groningen Museum.

COORDINATING REVIEWER

Dr. Catherine Peck

Dr. Catherine Peck has worked in teaching, leadership and programme development roles for Asian, Australian and Irish higher education institutions. Within those roles, she has managed the implementation of a number of strategic institution-wide projects in areas including accessibility in the curriculum, work integrated learning, assessment and blended learning. She

works in independent consultancy in quality assurance, programme development and the implementation of digital, international and inclusive approaches to higher education. Trained as an applied linguist, her main research interests are intercultural competence development, the role of identity and language in intercultural learning, and inclusive educational practices. In recent years, Catherine has participated in over 40 expert panels in Ireland, undertaking quality assurance and programme validation exercises. Over the past decade, she has published a number of research and practice-based papers and book chapters in the domain of higher education. She has also delivered invited lectures, presentations and workshops on learning and teaching in the US, Europe, Asia and Australia.

INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPRESENTATIVE

Dr Achim Hopbach

Dr Achim Hopbach has over 25 years of experience in higher education, having served as research assistant, in university administration, higher education policy, and quality assurance. He recently set up his own consultancy business after having retired from leading the quality assurance agencies in Austria and Germany for 15 years.

Dr Hopbach has extensive experience in the development and implementation of quality assurance legislation, systems and processes in Europe, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. He has served and serves as panel member and chair of evaluation panels in Europe and beyond. His consultancy activities focus on the areas of cross-border higher education and branch campuses, design of quality assurance systems and the setting up of higher education institutions.

He has held various positions in quality assurance agencies and associations, such as President of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) from 2009 to 2013; member of the board of national agencies in Hong

Kong, Dubai, the Holy See, and on international advisory board of various agencies.

Dr Hopbach holds a PhD in History.

LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

Aidan Marnane

Aidan Marnane is a PhD student in the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh. He is a member of the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Data Science. He holds a BSc in Mathematical Sciences from University College Cork (UCC) and an MSc in Data Science from the University of Edinburgh. He was the recipient of a Quercus University Scholarship and a participant in the Amgen Scholars Europe Programme.

He has previous research experience in several institutions: The University of Edinburgh, ETH Zurich, Tyndall National Institute and UCC. In his current research, he is investigating Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) using a data driven approach. Through the construction of patient networks and the use of graph learning methods, he hopes to gain insights into ASD with clinical impact.

During his time at UCC, he was highly involved in student life, serving as class representative on the student council and as vice-chairperson of the Mathematical Society.

IRISH REPRESENTATIVE

Professor Kerstin Mey

Professor Kerstin Mey was born and educated in Berlin, Germany. She studied for an MA equivalent in Art, and German language and literature at Humboldt University and completed a PhD in Art Theory and Aesthetics there. She currently holds the role of President in the University of Limerick. Before joining UL as Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement and Professor of Visual Culture in 2018, she held academic positions in universities in Germany and the UK. These included the research strand lead for 'Art

and its Locations' in Interface, Centre for Research in Art, Technologies and Design, and Director of the Research Institute Art and Design, University of Ulster; as well as the Directorship for Research and Enterprise at the University for the Creative Arts, UK. Most recently, before moving to Ireland, she served as Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Westminster School of Media, Arts and Design, University of Westminster, London, UK.

Her own research is concerned with contemporary and 20th century visual arts. She has a special interest in sculpture and art in public; art as research; public pedagogies and the relationship between creative practice, documentation and archives.

Amongst others, Kerstin Mey was Vice-Chair of CHEAD (Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, UK), served as member of the Austrian Science Council; Director of the Consortium for Excellence in Research Support and Training (GuildHE, UK) and a member of the Supervisory Board of the European Foundation for Press and Media Freedom. At present, she serves on a number of boards in Ireland including the National Forum for the Enhancement for Teaching and Learning; and a number of cultural organisations. She is also a member of the IUA Campus Engage Steering Group.

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Professor Colette Shortt

Professor Colette Shortt is a regulatory specialist, registered public health nutritionist and visiting professor at the University of Ulster. She is passionate about the translation of emerging science innovations and is an active member of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) Sustainable Agriculture and Food Strategy Advisory Panel, Transforming UK Food Systems Programme SPF Funding Assessment Panel and the Regulatory Association Professionals European Council. Colette is on the Advisory Board of two EU microbiome Projects (MASTER and MICROBIOME Support), the UK Knowledge Transfer Network Microbiome

Innovation and the Nutrition Innovation Centre for Food and Health (NICHE), Ulster University.

Over 25 years of experience in scientific and regulatory leadership roles in global value-driven healthcare businesses (Johnson & Johnson (J&J), SmithKline Beecham Consumer Healthcare, Yakult), have given her an appreciation for the value of partnership, collaboration and diversity of thought and opinion in relation to policy development and successful innovation. Throughout her career, Colette has been active across multiple healthcare sectors in the development of products, related standards and health claims and has participated in Institute Assessment Panels throughout Europe. Colette has represented companies externally, serving on boards (Pharmabiotic Research Institute, International Life Science Institute (ILSI), International Sweeteners Association (ISA)); chaired scientific and regulatory committees (Association of the European Self-Medication Industry (AESGP), ILSI, ISA) and been an active member of Cosmetic Europe/ International Cooperation in Cosmetic Regulations Working Group, Euro-Convergence (Medical Devices) and the BBSRC Agriculture Food & Security Strategy Advisory Panel, among others.

Colette is a graduate of the National University of Ireland, Cork with postgraduate qualifications in Nutrition (MSc, PhD), and an MBA from the School of Business Management, University of Surrey. She was awarded Fellowships by the J&J Company, the Association for Nutrition and the Royal Society of Medicine.

Section

Introduction and Context



Introduction and Context

Trinity College Dublin (Trinity) was founded by the Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I in 1592. Notably, Trinity and the University of Dublin are regarded for practical purposes as 'one and the same' institution, with degrees awarded by the University of Dublin. Today, the university serves almost 19,000 students, with over 5,000 of those undertaking postgraduate studies. Situated in the historic centre of Dublin City, the university enjoys a strong reputation for its teaching, learning and research. Undergraduate places at Trinity are 2.5 times over-subscribed and the university attracts over 50% of Irish European Research Council awards.

Trinity's legal framework of governance has traditionally been distinct from other universities in Ireland, with the decision-making structures of the college based upon the Universities Act, 1997, the Trinity College Dublin (Charters and Letters Patent Amendment) Act 2000, the 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and of the University of Dublin, and the Trinity College Dublin Code of Governance 2013. The review team notes that in June 2021 the Revised Trinity Code of Governance was approved by the College Board. The latter has undergone recent revision to align with the Code of Governance for Irish Universities 2019 and further changes are anticipated with the progress of Higher Education Authority Bill 2022. However, the review team notes that at the time of the main review visit to Trinity in March 2022, the composition of Trinity's governing authority (the College Board) remained unchanged, based on the 2010 statutes.

The review team congratulates Trinity on the appointment in 2021, 429 years after its founding, of its first female Provost, Professor Linda Doyle. Provosts are elected by the college community

for a 10-year period. The position of Provost at Trinity is equivalent to that of president in other universities. However, Trinity is unique among universities in Ireland in that the Provost is the university's chief officer and also chairs the College Board. The main review visit of the review team occurred 6 months after Professor Doyle's successful election to the role as Trinity's 45th Provost. During that visit, the work of the review team benefited from wide-ranging discussions with a significant number of staff, students and other stakeholders. Within those discussions, enthusiasm for aspects of the new Provost's agenda was frequently expressed.

The achievements of any higher education institution can be attributed to the calibre and dedication of its people. During the main review visit, the review team noted that Trinity staff members' comments reflected a deep commitment to the institution. Within this report, the review team commends Trinity for the emphasis placed on dialogue and engaged discussion in its participatory systems (see Section 3, Governance of QA). This was reflected in the willingness of staff and students to engage actively and candidly with the review team and contribute their voices to the ongoing development of quality across the institution. Insights were shared with the review team by members of the Trinity community working across academic, research, technical, professional, administrative and support roles.

The review team highlights that active participation in the review by members of the Trinity community is particularly noteworthy given the scheduling of the main review visit. Trinity staff engaged with the review team members in March 2022, at which time the university had spent two full years dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with the rest

of Ireland's publicly funded higher education institutions, Trinity had also been operating with significantly reduced levels of public funding and within the constraints of the national public sector Employment Control Framework for over a decade. It is therefore important that Trinity's achievements and the challenges during this period be considered in light of these contextual factors.

At the outset of this report, the review team observes that Trinity is a valued higher education institution that has achieved and maintained its international reputation and position. Trinity has a diverse, talented and motivated student population and a dedicated staff. The review team notes that the Trinity community as a whole is highly focused on making a positive societal impact.



Section 2

Institutional Self-Evaluation
Report (ISER)



Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

METHODOLOGY

Trinity commenced preparation for this Institutional Review in November 2019, establishing an Institutional Self-Evaluation Team (ISET) in December of that year. The ISET was chaired by the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer in post at the time. The ISET comprised of college officers as well as academic and professional staff with responsibility for the key areas such as research, education programmes and student services. The ISET also included the President of the Graduate Students' Union as a representative of the student body.

In discussions with the review team during the main review visit, members of the ISET looked back positively on the experience of compiling the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). However, the challenges the team encountered were also acknowledged. Notably, consultation informing the document was conducted under the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. A priority for the ISER 2022 Review was to engage the college-wide community in the process of self-evaluation. Although face to face engagement across the college community was considered preferable by the ISET, the pandemic meant that, in practice, a survey was used as the primary mechanism for obtaining the opinions of various stakeholders.

During preparations for the institutional review, an open call was also made across Trinity for representatives of the college community to submit case studies of quality enhancement activities. This resulted in 35 cases being submitted for review alongside the ISER. The ISET was of the view that these reflected some of the benefits of devolved responsibility for quality. The review team acknowledges the work of the teams submitting those case studies and their illustrative nature.

Many of these are referenced throughout the body of this report.

ENGAGEMENT OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The review team noted that engagement of external stakeholders was not explicitly mentioned in the priorities set for the ISER 2022 Review. In the ISER, it was outlined that the ISET's ability to obtain external stakeholders' input was particularly curtailed due to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the team noted that Trinity routinely and regularly seeks feedback from external stakeholders including alumni, employers, industry partners and HEI education partners and that feedback from them had been incorporated into the ISER. Specifically, the ISET obtained input from the external members of the main committees of the Trinity Board and Council during the consultative phase of the ISER.

In addition, the ISER indicates that Trinity had interactions (annual dialogue meetings/ extraordinary meetings) with the linked providers (Marino Institute of Education and the Royal Irish Academy of Music). A planned review of The Lir Academy of Dramatic Art was postponed due to Covid. The review team noted that all external reviewers are asked to provide feedback as part of the annual internal review of quality review procedures and that Trinity has an accredited master-list of professional regulatory and statutory bodies, that it has relationships with, which is updated annually. Further, some transnational partners and linked providers indicated their willingness to participate in meetings with the review team during the main review visit in March 2022.

EFFECTIVENESS

Delays to the review team's main review visit associated with the pandemic and changes in leadership at Trinity meant that some of the work informing the ISER appeared to have taken place one and a half years before the review team commenced the evaluation. This meant that certain information and views represented in the ISER had dated and that measures to address issues identified in the ISER were already in progress by the time the review team met with Trinity representatives.

The ISER was noted by the review team to be well-structured, well-presented, and very clearly written. The main ISER document was supplemented by a suite of appendices and hyperlinks and so provided a comprehensive overview of Trinity's quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The review team considered that it would have been valuable to present a more concise document that placed more emphasis on specific quality issues in the document. This would have been particularly helpful in facilitating focused discussions on those core topics with the review team.

During the main review visit, members of the ISET expressed a view that the process of compiling the ISER made visible the interaction between top-down and bottom-up management of quality at Trinity. The review team agrees that the ISER effectively outlines the complex internal governance and management structures of the college. It demonstrates how Trinity is able to implement innovations, for instance the reform of the undergraduate programme (Trinity Education Project, TEP) and also the multiple levels of decision-making and approval that implementation of new initiatives at Trinity entails.

The institutional review report will be of great interest to all stakeholders at Trinity. This is especially the case since the last institutional review occurred a decade ago (2012). The review team is confident that this report will provide a useful insight into Trinity at this point in the institution's journey and support Trinity's ongoing quality enhancement.



Section 3

Quality Assurance/Accountability



Quality Assurance/ Accountability

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

Trinity describes its approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement in its Quality Policy Statement. This outlines the context of Trinity's commitment to quality, encompassing governance of quality as well as the framework for processes and engagement of stakeholders.

The review team notes that the quality framework encompasses both internal activities, for example, curriculum reviews, and external activities, such as professional accreditation and the provision of an Annual Institutional Quality Report to QQI. This integrated approach not only offers the opportunity for a holistic perspective on quality, but also paves the way for the efficient use of resources. For example, Trinity's Quality Policy Statement identifies that quality reviews of schools or units may be adapted if relevant external statutory reviews occur around the same time.

The review team commends Trinity for taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to the quality framework which acknowledges and supports the interrelationship between internal quality assurance activities and external reviews.

A core feature of the quality assurance framework is the combination of annual reporting and regular quality reviews of schools and units across a seven-year-cycle. School level reports are analysed and consolidated at faculty level, and Annual Faculty Quality Reports are analysed and consolidated at college level. These reports also play an important role in Trinity's risk management by addressing quality related risks as a standing item. The day-to-day implementation of the quality assurance policy framework is supported by the Quality Office, which is a unit within Trinity

Teaching and Learning, led by the Academic Secretary.

The Annual Faculty Quality Reports were noted to be good practice in QQI's Quality of Higher Education Insights report, 2017, and the review team confirms that they are an important and effective instrument of internal quality assurance. These reports also take into account the outcomes of external surveys, including the National Student Survey. Reporting activities are complemented by regular academic reviews of the schools, which introduce an external perspective and provide feedback to be considered for future development. The review team particularly appreciates the transparency Trinity demonstrates through its publication of the quality reports, including reviews of schools, programmes, Trinity research institutes and administrative or support units. These reports, as well as the Annual Faculty Quality Reports and the Consolidated Annual Quality Reports are available on the college website.

The review team concludes that the documented quality assurance procedures constitute a robust integrated system that addresses the learning experience of students and notably covers teaching, learning and assessment. The procedures have regard to part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and to QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

a) Governance of Quality Assurance

The College Board is the governing authority of Trinity and has oversight of Trinity's strategy and

financial affairs. As noted in the introduction to this report, the Provost is both the chief officer of the university and the Chair of the Board. The Provost is supported by an Executive Officers Group (EOG), which acts as a senior management team. The EOG and any subgroups thereof are not a permanent management structure at Trinity and can be stood down as and when necessary. The University Council, chaired by the Provost, assumes responsibility for governance of academic affairs subject to financial constraints and decisions by the College Board. The University Council is charged with overseeing the academic strategy and integrity of the university.

These bodies are supported by a cascade of central committees, notably five principal committees of the College Board, mainly dealing with resources and internal audit and five academic committees of the University Council dealing with academic and student matters. A further five compliance committees report to both the Board and Council (including the Quality Committee). A key feature of Trinity's governance system is representation via such committees and bodies. Heads of Schools and Deans participate in various committees centrally and at faculty and school level. This highly participatory and representative system forms the backbone of Trinity's approach to governance. The principle of broad participation and a commitment to representative governance was explained to the review team during their main review visit as part of the 'DNA of Trinity.' However, it is noted that the implications of this system of representative governance are central to some of the review team's concerns regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of Trinity's governance of quality assurance.

The review team holds concerns that a common and coherent understanding of the specific role and function of the Board is lacking at Trinity. This is noted following a review of the documentation, including the report of the Trinity Board Review Working Group, and wide-ranging discussions during the main review visit. The review team concluded that no consistent view was discernible in the Trinity community as to whether Board members served primarily to represent the

interests of their various constituencies or to contribute experience and expertise to strategic decision-making and oversight (as would be expected). During interviews with a broad range of stakeholders, the review team noted the recurrent emphasis placed by both staff and students on the representation of constituencies at Board level. This was noted along with a lack of focus on strategic issues and overemphasis on operational questions that would be better dealt with at other levels, in accordance with the appropriate application of the principle of subsidiarity. The review team considered this to be a significant threat to the governance of quality assurance in Trinity, which requires that the College Board be focused on its strategic role and governance duties. Trinity's current College Board composition also does not benefit from the level of externality that is common at this level across the sector. The review team was of the view that this was also disadvantageous to the governance of quality assurance, as the nexus of proximity and objectivity is a serious challenge for a Board largely composed of internal members.

Notably, between 2019 and 2021, Trinity's own Board Review Working Group undertook an evaluation of the Board's effectiveness. Following the main review visit, including meetings with members of the Board and other stakeholders, the review team's views were largely consistent with the findings of the Board Review Working Group report. The report made substantial recommendations, which included increasing the proportion of external members, streamlining and focusing the work of the Board on substantial and systematic consideration of strategic issues, clarifying the competencies required for members, separating the role of the Provost and the Chair of the Board and reducing the overall size of the Board. **The review team commends Trinity for undertaking a sound and comprehensive self-evaluation of the Board, and in a frank and constructive report laying out deficiencies and making recommendations to address these.**

However, the review team was concerned that planned uptake of recommendations made in the Board Review Working Group report appeared somewhat vague and seemed to be dependent

on anticipated legislative changes. Across the next decade, having appropriately qualified Board members, sufficient externality and strategic oversight will be essential to ensuring Trinity's success. The review team also identified gaps in specialised expertise that would be expected to be present and contributing at Board level and across the structures that manage and govern quality assurance at the college. This was particularly noticeable in information and data management. This issue is discussed in detail under Section 3, Information and Data Management, in this report. The review team therefore strongly encourages that Trinity proceeds with implementing, without delay, those measures recommended in the final report of the Board Review Working Group, allowing for the fact that changes to Board composition can only be made via legislation and is dependent on the enactment of the HEA Bill, 2022.

The review team also notes that appropriate levels of externality at Board level (in addition to the externality present in the compliance committees of the Board) would significantly enhance the university's strategic planning process. Robust input from external Board members as well as structured consultation with other external stakeholders would provide valuable inputs into the university's strategy and add value to the operating environment. Going forward, the review team encourages Trinity to draw upon an appropriate level of externality in strategic planning activities.

The University Council also plays a central role in quality assurance at Trinity. As previously noted, each Faculty at Trinity provides an Annual Faculty Quality Report to the Quality Committee, with a Consolidated Annual Quality Report provided to the University Council. The University Council has, in some instances, returned quality control reports submitted by the schools, which indicates that the quality assurance system is functioning.

During the main review visit, the review team heard the role of various committees engaged in policy development commended by various internal stakeholders. These were seen to facilitate the culture of Trinity that is characterised by robust discussion and geared towards broad

consensus in decision-making. The review team observed a culture of openness and collegiality and transparency that is fostered and championed by the leadership and constituents of the institution. **The review team commends Trinity for placing emphasis on dialogue, consultation and engaged discussion in the institution's participatory systems of governance, and the appreciation of consensus in decision-making throughout the college.**

However, the review team noted that during the main review visit Trinity's internal stakeholders were equally consistent in their criticism of the lack of efficiency of the discussion and decision-making processes. These were attributed to lengthy and not always targeted discussions in the committees. The review team concluded that there was a significant tension between the high value placed on participation and consensus in decision-making on the one hand, and the widely acknowledged ineffectiveness of this in progressing issues of substantial importance on the other. Moreover, following meetings with representatives from across the Trinity community, it was observed that this tension seemed to be taken as given, with no substantial effort to address inefficiencies, or the need for greater agility discernible.

One example of the need to improve effective governance of quality assurance pertains to capital projects. During the main review visit, Trinity representatives noted that in relation to quality of buildings, it would be beneficial if the Capital Review Group engaged earlier with stakeholders to ensure that documents that go out for tender are satisfactory, as opposed to at the later stage when the case goes to the Board. Further, record keeping in relation to capital projects was viewed as an area where improvement could be made, for example, ensuring deadlines are associated with all agreed actions decided at meetings.

Notably, the review team learned that in the months directly prior to the main review visit the relationship between the University Council and its committees was reviewed in order to better focus its discussions and decision-making processes

and avoid duplication of the work undertaken by its principal subcommittees. The review team were encouraged to hear that Trinity had reoriented the Council's agenda toward items of a strategic or enhancement-oriented nature, providing oversight to the quality assurance activities of its principal committees without duplicating their activities. The review team is of the view that Trinity can maintain its much celebrated "culture of freedom and autonomy" but increase the efficiency of its governance by more consistently applying the principle of subsidiarity as appropriate. The review team is of the view that to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and agility of Trinity at a pivotal time for the institution, Trinity must continue to appropriately devolve decision-making.

The review team strongly recommends that Trinity, without delay, implement tangible and formal improvements to its current structures for the governance and management of quality assurance, appropriately devolving decision-making to its principal and compliance committees and other substructures for managerial and operational quality assurance matters.

Further:

The review team recommends that Trinity ensure that the Board and Council focus their agendas appropriately and exclusively on matters of strategy, principle and policy as required by the Code of Governance of Irish Universities 2019. Within this, clarify unambiguously the remit and responsibilities of Board and Council for the governance of quality assurance for all members, including incumbents.

b) Management of Quality Assurance

The college structure encompasses three faculties, managed by Deans, and 24 schools, managed by Heads of School. Responsibility for the strategic coordination of the faculty, budget and recruitment of academic staff is located at faculty level. Regarding quality assurance, a crucial role of the Dean is the receipt and consideration of school reports. As previously noted, these are

consolidated into the Annual Faculty Quality Report and sent to the University Council via the Quality Committee. The review team observed that in practice, Heads of School have the core responsibility for implementing academic policies in teaching and learning and carrying out quality assurance activities 'on the ground'. Each school's management structure comprises various directorships that assist with this, for example for teaching and learning, research and global relations.

The review team heard from stakeholders across the university that Trinity facilitated policy development well, albeit slowly. The review team also heard repeatedly and from multiple stakeholders that Trinity struggled with the consistent implementation of policy. This was congruent with the review team's own observations. Communication in terms of reporting information (outcomes, decisions or new policies) back to faculty, school and discipline stakeholders was noted to be inconsistent and variable. It was suggested that this varied according to the levels of diligence individual role holders or committee members demonstrated in their communications about such matters. However, the review team felt this explanation reflected a deficiency in formal internal communications.

The review team considered the emphasis placed on oral communication via individual role holders instead of formal internal communication channels to be problematic from a managerial and compliance perspective at Trinity. Although the dialogic and consultative orientation of much communication at Trinity is hugely valuable, this does not represent the totality of communication required to facilitate the operations and quality assurance processes of a complex and sizeable university. Greater thought needs to be given to how Trinity engages in internal informational, transactional and operational communication and the modalities and platforms that are used to support this. Trinity must also ensure that the recipients of academic policy information fully comprehend its meaning and implications for their own practices as well as the consequences of failing to implement policies.

The importance of this was apparent to the review team across multiple interviews with Trinity's students, academic staff and other stakeholders. Many interviewees were not aware of (or had only a peripheral knowledge of) core academic policies. This lack of consistency is a recurrent theme throughout this report and is particularly prominent in sections pertaining to Staff Recruitment, Management and Development and Learner Supports. Specific issues were also raised in relation to the navigability of key policies and regulations for students and the consistent adoption and communication of these within schools. Upon reviewing the presentation of policy information available on the college website (and regulations locatable via the college calendar), the review team is of the view that this is an area in which Trinity can make significant improvements to the benefit of the entire college community. **The review team recommends that Trinity act to provide clarity in relation to specific accountabilities for the management of quality assurance and formalise professional communication pertaining to all aspects of quality assurance in the college.**

When implementing this recommendation, the review team strongly encourages Trinity to prioritise and improve the efficacy of its institutional management communications (top down and bottom up) in relation to key areas of Trinity's operations. This could be achieved by formulating a comprehensive action plan to improve college-level communications to students in relation to the policies, systems and supports that are in place; improving the orientation and signposting to, as well as general navigability of, policies and procedures; giving appropriate consideration to enhancements needed to platforms, systems and interfaces, for example, webpages or intranet, that support college-level communications.

The review team would like to emphasise that it supports Trinity's approach to devolved responsibility, which should serve to strengthen the culture of responsibility for quality culture. However, that devolution does not remove the need to monitor the implementation of policies and procedures. It was the view of the review team that inconsistent implementation of these was closely

related to an issue that was self-identified by Trinity in the ISER. This was the perceived disconnect between the Heads of School, who were observed to have (in practice) the core responsibility for policy implementation, and the college level of governance, where policy development occurred. That disconnect was highlighted in two internal evaluations in the last 10 years and was also reported to the review team during the main review visit. No significant measures to address this issue could be identified in the documentation submitted by Trinity, despite it being identified and highlighted in two internal evaluations.

During the main review visit, the review team struggled to identify whether the disconnect itself was most directly attributable to a lack of information and/or communication, a lack of decision-making power, a lack of influence on decision-making at college level or other factors. Vague and contradictory interpretations were put forth in interviews. Regardless, given the Heads of Schools' core responsibility for managing Trinity's academic affairs 'on the ground', addressing this issue must be considered a priority. The review team considers that the volume of communication is not the issue, but that the processes for and nature of communication require review, as per earlier discussion in this section. This review should aim to facilitate effective two-way communication and ensure that the processes for making input as well as the decision-making processes are transparent, with outcomes clearly communicated to all involved. Notably, during the main review visit interviewees expressed their appreciation for the fresh and open approach of the new leadership team and their comments reflected a sense of positivity that the issue could be addressed. **The review team recommends that Trinity hold the schools both responsible and accountable for implementing policies and procedures consistently, thus empowering their role in the process and applying the principle of subsidiarity as appropriate. To facilitate this, the review team recommends that Trinity immediately progress plans for building leadership and management capability across the university as this will impact positively on the management and governance of quality assurance at all levels.**

The review team notes that poor monitoring of policy implementation needs be considered in tandem with poor policy management. At the time of the main review visit, 11 out of 30 academic policies were overdue for revision. This does not necessarily indicate that the policies themselves are outdated but it demonstrates the need for improved policy management. The review team notes that in 2019 Trinity self-identified policy management as an issue in its Policy Management report to the Trinity Audit Committee which stated, "limited assurance as to the effectiveness of policy management" (ISER: Appendix 7, p. 2). It is cause for concern that during the main review visit the persistence of this issue was confirmed with no evidence of how the issue was being visibly addressed. **The review team recommends that Trinity focus the management of quality assurance on enhanced monitoring of the implementation of academic policies and ensuring understanding by end-users (students and staff members), with consistent implementation and overall compliance.**

c) Approval of Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures

In 2020 Trinity revised its Framework for Quality, including the Policy on the Approval of Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures. The revised policy limits Trinity's approval of its linked provider quality assurance procedures to those pertaining to validated programmes of education, the quality assurance of teaching and learning, and the student experience. It requires linked providers to provide a list of all policies and procedures pertaining to their corporate responsibilities and to self-certify that they have been approved by relevant governance and management bodies, in accordance with internal quality assurance policies and procedures. All corporate policies and procedures of a statutory nature are required to undergo external third-party review and linked providers are required to ensure that such policies comply with national legislation.

The review team appreciates the revision of the policy which details the process of approving the quality assurance procedures at the linked

providers. It is noted that since the adoption of the QQI Core Quality Assurance Standards (April 2016) and Sector-specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies (July 2016) the regulations for exercising the approval of Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures according to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 were not clear, neither to Trinity nor to the linked providers.

The review team commends Trinity for involving two linked providers, the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) and the Marino Institute of Education (MIE), in the main review visit.

The Review Team also appreciates that Trinity focuses its policy on a self-certification of the internal quality assurance processes of the linked providers, which recognises that the provider has the primary responsibility for quality and its assurance. Consequently, the linked providers revised their internal structures and policies with a view to establishing responsibilities and resources for internal quality assurance.

PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

New programme and course proposal and approval are developed and delivered in line with the statutory requirements of QQI and in alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). Trinity's ISER notes that streamlining the process of new programme proposals and approvals has been a priority in recent years due to the need to keep pace with the emergence of new disciplines and pedagogies in higher education. Templates provided by Academic Affairs are used by course proposers, with space given to academic, logistical, administrative and resource implications. The current process is acknowledged to be manual, with a curriculum management system interfacing with the Student Information System (SITS) desired by current users. The review team has commented on the potential benefits of prioritising system development in the section of this report pertaining to Information and Data Management.

Quality assurance of existing programmes is initiated by the schools. Overarching Faculties are the second layer before final reporting to the Academic Council. An important element of the quality assurance procedure is the externalisation and benchmarking of quality assurance through external examiners and professional bodies where applicable, as well as the feedback from student surveys. These are discussed further in sections of this report pertaining to Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review.

Trinity undertook a renewal of its undergraduate education programmes, known as the Trinity Education Project (TEP) over the period 2013-2020. It is referred to in Trinity's ISER as one of the most significant quality enhancement projects of education ever undertaken by the university. During the main review visit, the review team met a range of stakeholders involved in the TEP and were able to gain an insight into the processes and challenges surrounding its implementation. The TEP has facilitated the introduction of elective module pathways in many programmes, facilitated the embedding of employability in the curriculum, improved the alignment of assessment approaches to learning outcomes and enabled student participation in an undergraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The review team was impressed by the overall achievement of the TEP. At the same time, it was noted by numerous stakeholders that the TEP is illustrative of how difficult it can be to achieve change and innovation while navigating Trinity's current governance and management structures. The review team commends all of those at Trinity who have been involved in initiating, promoting and implementing the Trinity Education Project (TEP). The achievements of the TEP are significant and provide enhanced opportunities for Trinity learners. The review team encourages Trinity to harness learning from this project and consider what enablers may be required to allow future innovations in education at Trinity to progress at an accelerated pace.

Trinity is relatively new to international partnerships and not all international best practices have been incorporated. The review team learned that as part of its dual degree with Columbia University, Trinity places an additional academic burden of 30 ECTS credits on Trinity students completing their degree in Columbia in order to attain the Trinity element of the dual degree. Columbia does not place a similar requirement on its students attending Trinity. The additional requirements are difficult to understand when the credit of courses in Columbia are recognised as equivalent. Contact hours are acknowledged to be relatively comparable and the additional credit requirement places an unnecessary burden on students undertaking the dual degree. Furthermore, equivalent credits have been identified between the two programmes. The additional requirement was originally 60 ECTS but this has since been reduced. This additional burden is not conducive to establishing new global partners or encouraging students to engage with the dual degree programme. The review team encourages Trinity to give consideration when creating dual degrees to the equivalence of credits or other issues arising and to ensure workload parity for all students.

ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

a) Access

Trinity's University Council is responsible for approving the admission policy and criteria for entry to all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Within this, the Academic Registry assesses and manages undergraduate and study abroad applications using entry criteria set by schools and approved by the University Council. In the case of postgraduate taught applications, these are assessed by the schools and approved by the University Council. Academics make recommendations to the Academic Registry. Access applications are administered by Trinity Access and the Trinity Disability Service.

Notably, Trinity has made significant improvements to its applications and admissions reporting process. A case study in quality submitted by

Trinity to the review team outlined how the project, driven by the Director of Student Services, Academic Registry and Global Relations, had worked to improve the accuracy of data that would, among other functions, help inform planning and forecast revenue. Ongoing work in this area aims to provide end-users of the data the opportunity to conduct self-service analytics safely and reliably. Following discussions with stakeholders at Trinity, the impression of the review team was that the achievement of this objective and other efficiencies would be contingent on Trinity adequately prioritising and resourcing the strategic development of its systems. This is discussed further in the section of this report pertaining to Information and Data Management.

The review team also notes that significant concerns were raised by stakeholder groups regarding the efficiency of current processes in the Academic Registry. The first interaction of any new potential student with Trinity occurs through the admissions process. It is key to the success of Trinity's globalisation strategy and is in the remit of the Academic Registry. Academic Registry has seen direct applications rise by 70% in the last decade; however, an equivalent increase in funding has not occurred. As highlighted in the ISER, there is a danger here of reputational damage to the university. For example, although the experience of international students interviewed by the review team was largely positive, the review team heard multiple reports of issues in the admission process. Instances of processing delays, uncertainty over status, slow response rates and a lack of assistance with immigration processes (the latter is noted to fall within the remit of Global Relations) were raised. **The review team recommends that enhanced resources and staffing be introduced to the Academic Registry at Trinity.**

Trinity implemented a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy in 2016/17 to facilitate student access and mobility. The policy commits Trinity to endeavouring to accommodate learning mobility through RPL, with the caveat that some programmes are not suited to admission or the granting of exemptions via RPL. Within the ISER, Trinity states that more robust reporting is needed

on the turnaround times for applications on the basis of RPL.

b) Widening Participation

In alignment with the Irish government's strategy for expanding participation in higher education, Trinity initiated the Trinity Access Project (TAP) in 1993. The TAP was a multifaceted educational outreach project that endeavoured to increase admissions of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to the college. The TAP facilitated parents' workshops, university-based summer schools, extra tuition programmes and campus student shadowing days, among other activities.

Since 2014, Trinity has also used a U.S. model (College for Every Student – CFES) and is implementing this in partnership with Irish schools that are located in geographical areas where progression to higher education is historically low. Known as Trinity Access 21 (TA21), the initiative aims to build capacity in the 20 DEIS schools (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) in Dublin that Trinity works with. TA21 supports teaching staff to implement 21st century pedagogies and contribute to structural and cultural changes in the school system. A primary goal is supporting educational attainment and progression to post-secondary education.

The achievements of the TAP and TA21 were highlighted in the booklet of case studies in quality that Trinity submitted alongside the ISER and other documentation as part of the review process. **The Review Team commends Trinity on achieving significant outcomes thus far through both the TAP and TA21, noting the importance and impact of the work undertaken in this area.** The review team also acknowledges the prominence of equity of access in Goal 1 of Trinity's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 and the commitment made in that plan to intensifying work in this area. This commitment is strongly endorsed by the review team, as there is much scope to further increase the diversity of the student body at Trinity.

At the time of the review team's visit, the Widening Participation Group (WPG) was the umbrella

group for all non-standard entry routes. The WPG is focused on students entering the university with a disability, who are economically disadvantaged, asylum seekers, mature students or international foundation programme students. During the main review visit, the review team heard from a range of stakeholders, including students, that the needs of students in these groups are not always well-supported by their schools and disciplines. For example, the review team heard repeatedly that there was inconsistent provision at school level of the reasonable accommodations that learners entering the college via some of these routes require. The impression of the review team was that further work was needed to ensure that the achievements of the TAP, TA21 and WPG were not undermined (or underserved) by policies that might not fully consider the implications of widened participation throughout the student lifecycle. Moreover, inconsistent implementation of policy and differing procedures across schools at Trinity must be reflected upon, as local variability may not be well-suited to facilitating equality, diversity and inclusion. These issues are discussed further in the section of this report pertaining to Learner Supports.

c) Transfer

Trinity has an Admission and Transfer policy to facilitate transfer by students into programmes within Trinity and from outside of the college. The ISER states that transfer is not permitted for postgraduate taught students (the reason for this is not outlined) and is considered on a case-by-case basis for postgraduate research students.

It is reported in the ISER that the reason for a transfer request not being successful normally relates to either the applicant not satisfying the entry criteria or the course quota being full. Undergraduate transfer data for the years 2016/17-2018/19 is presented in the ISER and noted to reflect small numbers. Given that transfer is a helpful tool within a broader suite of policies and supports that facilitate retention and progression, the review team encourages Trinity to exploit recent enhancements in data management and

reporting to ensure that activity in this area is closely monitored.

d) Progression

It is noted in the ISER that prior to a review in 2011/2012, progression regulations at Trinity evolved over many decades and were characterised by complexity and variations in practice, and supported by an unsustainable proliferation of committees, leading to the differential treatment of students both between and within courses. The review, which resulted in a harmonisation of regulations being approved by the University Council in 2017, is considered to have provided greater transparency and equity of treatment of students. The review team acknowledges the positive impact of this process but also note that the slow progression of this important and impactful process is reflective of the need to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and agility of Trinity's governance and management structures. This has been discussed in this report in sections pertaining to the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance.

Trinity has also made improvements to its reporting of progression and retention data, and these were outlined in a case study of quality provided to the review team. The data presented by the project team for 2018/19 was the first time that Trinity had reported on retention for undergraduate students across all years of study. The review team notes the value of these data in informing quality assurance activities. The review team has made a recommendation to Trinity in the section of this report pertaining to Information and Data Management pertaining to the development and resourcing of its information management systems to ensure decision-making is evidence-based.

INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY

In 2012, Trinity developed its first Global Relations Strategy, focusing on student recruitment targets and doubling non-EU students between 2011 and 2016. Trinity has shown adaptability to the ever-changing environment of internationalisation,

implementing significant changes to its global strategies following two mid-term reviews. The latest of these, implemented in 2017, resulted in Trinity's third and current Global Relations strategy (GRS3). GRS3 focuses on "facilitating global partnerships by more direct engagement at school level" and "renews focus on engagement with Europe"¹.

The GRS has been reviewed and revised twice since its inception with the latest GRS3 (established in 2019) aiming to build on existing partnerships, improve student mobility, continue to enhance diversity (through a focus on non-EU recruitment) and enhance the marketing of Trinity College internationally. Internationalisation is one of the key cross-cutting goals of the College Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and aims to "foster an ever more diverse and inclusive student community" and "enrich and expand our global network"².

The review team observes that Trinity has achieved highly in developing a suite of diverse global partnerships. These included membership in the European network CHARM-EU, the success at school level of new global partnerships such as articulation programmes with University of Science and Technology Beijing and Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology and the expansion of the Columbia UG Dual Degree. The review team notes the positive growth of a more diverse and global student body at Trinity with non-EU students rising from 1123 in 2011/12 to 2897 in 2018/19. The Global Relations Strategies have been supported by development and implementation of several policies such as the Non-EU Collaborative and Transnational Education Partnerships Policy and the Education Recruitment Agents Policy. The review team notes that issues pertaining to the experience of international students during their time at Trinity, particularly in relation to the implications for the college of resourcing support services appropriately, are discussed elsewhere in this report in sections pertaining to Learner Supports and the Provision of Programmes for International Learners.

PROVISION OF PROGRAMMES FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS

The VP for Global Engagement (VP Global) oversees alignment with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners. Supported by the Global Relations team, the VP Global is the key driver in achieving the goals of the 3rd Global Relations Strategy (GRS3). The principal governance structure in Trinity to enact GRS3 is the Global Relations Committee. It is a principal committee of Council, chaired by the VP Global and includes the 24 directors of global relations, relevant college officers and representatives from the Students' Union. The progress on the implementation of GRS3 is reported through annual reports to Council. The review team concluded that Trinity meets the core provisions of the QQI Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

The Global Relations Committee was established in 2019 and has primary responsibility for the governance of all global partnerships and coordinating the global relations strategy of the 24 schools. Comprising 42 members, the efficiency of such a large body was questioned in interviews with the review team. Alternative governing structures are currently being explored with a focus on establishing separate forums for exploring new 'big' ideas and troubleshooting operational issues. The review team observed that Trinity may benefit from reviewing the size of the Global Relations Committee, for example, allocating a representative for each of the faculties from the 24 directors of global relations.

To aid international recruitment, Trinity employs an extensive network of 130 Education Recruitment agents from around the world. The primary quality assurance of these agents is conducted through relationship management between Regional Managers in the Global Relations Office and individual agents as well as the annual Education Recruitment Agent survey offered to non-EU students. With the increasingly high volume of

¹ TCD, *Case Studies in Quality*, p. 15. [Accessed 30 September 2022]

² TCD, *Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025*, p. 21. [Accessed 30 September 2022]

applications arriving through the agent network, the lack of an agent portal incorporated into the application process has been identified as a key limiting factor in the quality assurance process. As highlighted in the ISER, updating the Global Relations Office CRM system to include a formal feedback system and track agent training is essential to assure the quality of the agent network. The review team notes that there is already a significant number of system improvements to be made (discussed in this report under Information and Data Management) but considers that the incorporation of such a system will greatly enhance the application process.

Trinity has placed supporting international students as central to its internationalisation aims. The creation of the Global Room in 2013 was key to Trinity's 1st GRS and is commended for this by the review team in this report in the section pertaining to Learner Supports. The Global Room provides a 'one-stop shop' for international students and is the primary student-facing activity undertaken by the international student experience team. Currently comprised of two professional staff, six global officers and 25 student ambassadors, the Global Room provides specialist advice, runs short programmes, and hosts numerous social events. The detrimental effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Global Room's activities must be noted. Many of the Global Room's primary activities were moved online but the impact and awareness of the service has been negatively affected. It was noted that all but one of the cohorts of international students interviewed had no knowledge of the service. The review team acknowledges the suggestion from staff that the students were likely to have participated in a Global Room event over the past two years but have not been aware of the Global Room's involvement. As Trinity returns to campus and in-person events, re-establishing the awareness and important community role played by the Global Room will be essential. **The review team commends Trinity for implementing a wide-ranging and sustained response to supporting international students during the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, a pre-orientation programme, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year activity programmes.**

The 2018 International Student Barometer identified orientation as a key area for improvement with 30% of students indicating they had not participated in a formal orientation (many due to arriving after it took place). Following this feedback, the Trinity Twelve Weeks Transition Programme restructured postgraduate orientation to accommodate students arriving at intervals throughout the year and in 2019 targeted on-site orientation sessions were organised for international students. The review team notes that this is a positive example of Trinity incorporating and responding to student feedback directly. The pandemic has had a striking effect on all aspects of life at Trinity but the impact on student orientation must be noted. While initiatives like the two-week pre-orientation programme in 2020 were invaluable to ensuring international students could continue to study at Trinity, the pandemic has had a detrimental effect on the orientation of new international students. All international students interviewed by the review team felt their orientation process to have been insufficient. However, one individual who had experience of Trinity pre Covid-19 reported very positively on the on-site orientations provided in 2019. The lack of an adequate orientation is a likely contributor to the general lack of awareness of support services identified in interviews.

The review team notes that overall student numbers have increased since 2012, but international student figures have more than doubled. However, the additional support needed by international students has not been reflected in the funding allocated to student support services. The review team noted that it may be timely to reassess the allocation of non-EU student fees within the university. This may offer an opportunity to bolster the resources of the learner support services non-EU students typically access.

Throughout the past decade, Trinity has seen consistent increase year on year in student mobility with 30% of undergraduate students partaking in some form of study abroad in 2018/19. As part of its current GRS3, Trinity established the ambitious aim for 50% of undergraduate students to engage in part of their studies abroad. To achieve this, an Erasmus+ support office has been integrated

into the Global Room, a 'one-stop shop' for all students undertaking international study, and the Global Mobility Group was created, an action group reporting to the Global Relations Committee – headed by the VP Global. The review team acknowledges that Trinity prioritises student mobility and a transformative student experience.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

A stated goal in the college's Strategic Plan 2020–2025 is to recognise and reward staff achievement in fair and transparent processes. The Strategy document further commits to investing in the development of staff in all levels of the university and creating opportunities for all categories of staff to enrol in available modules for continuous professional development and micro-credentialling. The review team strongly endorses these goals. Following discussions with academic, professional and technical staff working across the institution, the review team was of the view that at this critical juncture, Trinity must recommit itself with renewed emphasis to the achievement of this goal. The reasons for this are outlined in the paragraphs below.

a) Recruitment

Trinity's ISER states that a suite of clear and transparent policies and procedures are in place to address the recruitment process, supports and entitlements available to staff. However, the ISER also acknowledges the need to socialise these policies more proactively to ensure staff are aware of them. Notably, a quality review of the Human Resources Department conducted in 2019 observed that the recruitment process was at that time failing to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders across Trinity. This was attributed to a complex set of factors including a lack of capacity in the HR recruitment team and an overly complex decision-making and approvals processes. In March 2022, the review team also heard of substantial delays with recruitment, with positions often taking six months or longer to be filled. This issue was noted to be putting pressure on teams throughout the college. The impression of

the review team was that little progress had been made in this key area of importance for Trinity.

b) Academic Staff Promotion

The review team also found that a consistently high level of frustration with the academic promotion process was expressed by staff, with Heads of School and academic staff in particular noting substantive issues. These included a perceived lack of transparency pertaining to promotion processes, the perception that information was unclear and a sense that research was the clear priority for achieving promotion. Comments heard during the review meetings included:

'Information is inconsistent and shifting'

'You are left mopping up the anger and distress that the poor process causes'

'It's all about research. Teaching doesn't count'

The review team notes that Trinity outlined the development of a new Senior Academic Promotions Procedure in a case study of quality submitted alongside the ISER. The four essential criteria in the procedure are: (1) research and scholarship, (2) teaching, (3) service to college, (4) engagement with discipline/society. The largest weights are given to research and scholarship. Candidates would have to be outstanding in at least one of the two criteria Research and Scholarship or Teaching. A threshold scoring to all four criteria methodology is applied and thresholds can be discipline specific. This 2018 policy includes a quota.

The review team appreciates the change of policy to include a larger weighting on teaching. However, across multiple interviews with academic staff members it was noted that the promotion criteria needed to be communicated more effectively. It was also noted that the perception that research and scholarship still dominate academic promotion was widespread. This confirmed the statement in Trinity's ISER that acknowledged better communication was needed to improve the understanding of what was expected. Interviews also consistently reflected that the impact of the

quota is highly demotivating. The review team held concerns in relation to the quota, endorsing a more transparent, competency-based approach.

The review team acknowledges that the availability of financial resources is an absolute prerequisite for an effective promotions policy. Notwithstanding this, modernisation of the policy is recommended. This could be based, for example, on the TRIPLE model used by Utrecht University in its Recognition and Rewards policy. This system stimulates a strong foundation in Open Science and has moved away from simply counting research performance, requiring narratives and indications of societal impact. Six components are distinguished: team spirit; research; impact; professional performance; leadership; and teaching. The team spirit is an essential indicator of future success.

The review team also notes that it is crucial to not only focus on the senior academic promotion procedure, but to direct explicit attention to the positions of junior faculty. The view that achieving promotion internally was unlikely was noted by Heads of School to be contributing to the departure of talented junior staff members. These were said to be gaining experience at Trinity and leveraging that to gain promotion in the process of changing institutions. Significantly, staff acknowledged that the college's new Provost had committed to addressing this issue.

The review team makes recommendations elsewhere in this report pertaining to the need to increase the efficiency of decision-making processes at Trinity and the effectiveness of communication. Recommendations are also made in relation to monitoring the effectiveness of policies and procedures 'on the work floor'. The review team notes that the issues raised in the preceding paragraphs pertaining to recruitment and promotion (and the potential impact of these on the college's capacity to attract and retain talent) exemplify the need for those recommendations to be actioned.

c) Academic Staff Workload

During interviews with stakeholders across the college, the review team noted that the management of academic staff workloads, specifically, the allocation of time for teaching, research and service/administrative duties, was widely perceived to depend upon localised practices in schools and disciplines, with considerable variability across the college. A tension was perceived to exist between teaching obligations and research activity at school level. It was suggested by multiple stakeholders that as no overhead was returned to the schools from research grants won by their staff, schools were poorly incentivised and consequently gave priority to teaching, service or administrative duties. This issue seemed to the review team to be exacerbated by the perceived lack of capacity in schools to support staff post award of a research grant and a lack of supports at college level for this. Workload concerns were also noted to be exacerbated by student/staff ratios that compare unfavourably with comparator groups e.g. Russell Group, LERU and Coimbra.

The review team observed that academic promotion criteria must provide incentives for academic staff members to balance teaching, research and service obligations to the benefit of both their professional development and the needs of the organisation. Further, the management of academic workloads must provide the means for this to be achieved.

d) Career Development Opportunities for Professional Staff

A stated objective of Trinity is to deliver a 'Career Framework' for professional staff that is inclusive of job sizing for vacant posts (using the Hay job-sizing methodology) and role grading for posts with incumbents. The implementation of the Career Framework commenced in 2017 but has stalled in the intervening period. The ISER attributes this in part to delays in reaching agreement with staff representative bodies. This is because the Career Framework replaces a previous system that allowed professional staff to seek promotion within their existing role. The ISER notes that

there is some resistance to this, as under the new framework, roles will be advertised at specific grades and promotion will only be attainable by applying (in competition) for an advertised higher post. The review team acknowledges the sensitivities associated with this issue. However, the review team encourages Trinity to move forward in resolving outstanding concerns and implementing a coherent, transparent framework. This will offer professional staff clarity regarding the expectations associated with their current roles, the opportunities to progress within the organisation available to them and processes for pursuing these.

e) Performance Management

A significant expectation reflected in QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines is that further professional development is provided to all staff engaged in delivering programmes and related services, for example those responsible for administrative, technical or other supports. Moreover, procedures should address staff performance management, with mechanisms in place to impart feedback to staff members on their strengths and on areas requiring improvement. A 2019 quality review of Trinity's Human Resources division found that there was no annual appraisal system in place and that only some staff had individual objectives, making it difficult for staff and managers to be clear regarding expectations.

This issue is further intensified by a lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities associated with particular management positions and an absence of preparation for leadership roles in Trinity's governance and management structure. For example, during the main review visit the review team learned that training for Heads of Schools is scarce and not systematic and training for Deans and Board members non-existent. The approach at Trinity was referred to by stakeholders as an apprenticeship model, where incumbents learn by doing. However, the devolved structure of Trinity requires that the responsibilities and comprehensive job descriptions of individuals at all levels must be clear for the university to operate effectively.

The review team heard from staff across the institution that annual appraisals and other performance management processes were not implemented at Trinity. The review team also heard that no consistent framework was in use to guide decision-making or individual career development supports offered, for example, support to complete further studies. This appeared to be managed locally. Trinity's ISER outlines that a Performance Management Development System was developed for professional staff in 2014 but had been classified as a pilot project. At the time of the ISER's publication the approach to managing the performance of professional and administrative staff was noted to be under review. The review team acknowledges the HR/Human Relations issues referenced in the ISER. Nonetheless, the review team considers this to be a critical issue for Trinity to achieve its vision of being ready to meet the challenges of the future and to reflect an important aspect of its core mission, to "foster an effective and flexible organisation, which values all members of our community."

Considering the issues discussed in the preceding sections, **the review team recommends that Trinity develop and implement explicit, well-documented and clearly communicated employment, tenure and promotion criteria for academic staff at all levels. Concurrently, implement and communicate a career development framework for non-academic staff. Within this, implement annual appraisals as part of a Performance Management and Development System for all staff members at all levels.**

f) Learning and Development

The review team heard praise from staff working in this area, which was noted to have improved substantially in recent years. Trinity's ISER notes that the training budget for Trinity's 3,400 staff is typically between €120,000–150,000 per annum, which is considered by Trinity to be insufficient. Given the restrictive budget allocation and capacity in this area, the review team was impressed by what had been achieved in this area at Trinity in recent years. A variety of courses and workshops have been offered since 2020, with delivery

facilitated online. **The review team heard that during the pandemic it was made clear that social and peer learning opportunities were valued by the participants in addition to skills development. The review team commends the delivery of varied and well-received learning and development activities at Trinity and the resourcefulness demonstrated by the team involved in delivering this with minimal resources.** However, given the complexity and change anticipated not only in Trinity but across the landscape of higher education in the next decade, the review team considers that there is an ongoing need for staff development. The review team makes a recommendation that relates to this in the subsequent section of this report.

g) Summary

Given Trinity's stated and ambitious vision of being an institution ready to meet the challenges of the future, some of the issues raised in this section give cause for concern. Trinity's ISER outlines that the lack of a learning and development strategy is an inhibiting factor in the university's development and acknowledges many of the issues raised around career development opportunities and performance management. The review team is of the view that the capacity to address these issues is within Trinity's gift. Much can be achieved to ensure that the institution's policies and procedures in this area work more effectively toward the achievement of its core mission, to "foster an effective and flexible organisation which values all members of our community." The review team offers an overarching recommendation to Trinity in this respect. The review team encourages Trinity to recognise, reward and celebrate high performance and best practice across the entire college staff.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

At the outset of this section, the review team would like to highlight its finding that the teaching and learning community at Trinity rose admirably and well to the challenges associated with pivoting to fully online delivery. Despite the unprecedented nature of the events that unfolded during 2020, Trinity was able to facilitate ongoing learning

and progression for students throughout that year (and the following) as the nation endured successive phases of lockdown through the Covid-19 pandemic. During the review team's visit, the pressures this period had placed on all members of the community were candidly acknowledged. However, students and staff also reflected positively on the sense of community that underpinned Trinity's response to the emergency. The rapid and highly effective guidance provided by Trinity's Academic Practice Unit to teaching staff delivering online (in many cases for the first time) was particularly singled out for praise by teaching staff. Facilitating continuity for Trinity's enrolled learners throughout the Covid-19 pandemic was a significant achievement. Numerous stakeholders that the review team engaged with reflected on the events of this period. It was widely felt the university's response to the emergency demonstrated that although change at Trinity may seem hard to achieve, the Trinity community can, when required, move fast and respond decisively to a rapidly changing environment. **The review team commends all involved in teaching and learning at Trinity (inclusive of teaching, research, administration, technical, support and professional staff) on successfully executing a pivot to fully online programme delivery in highly adverse circumstances.**

At the time of the main review visit, Trinity was in the early phase of a return to in-class teaching. During the interviews, both staff and students expressed a desire to see some of the innovations in teaching, learning and assessment that were forced and/or accelerated by the pandemic, maintained in a post Covid-19 environment. An issue raised by a number of teaching staff who had integrated the use of various educational technologies into their practice during the pandemic was a lack of confidence in the reliability of hardware, availability of software or uniformity in the support across locations. Concerns expressed by some teaching staff during the main review visit extended to issues with basic building services such as lighting and power. Improving this was considered essential if staff were to carry forward newly adopted digital learning and teaching strategies. Another issue pertained to the adoption

of more diverse and authentic assessment methods, including project work and open-book examinations. Student groups reflected positively on the more meaningful work they had been able to undertake, albeit under difficult conditions, and were keen to see this continue. Across the board, there was a perception that the enhancements made to teaching and learning might be lost in a slide back to pre-pandemic practices.

Trinity has a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) policy, which was adopted 5 years before the main review visit and noted by representatives of the Academic Practice unit to have been very useful. The policy promoted broad adoption of a single VLE platform and online access to a minimum standard of programme information and learning resources. It is clear that the timely adoption of that policy in 2017 stood Trinity in good stead as the events of 2020–2021 unfolded. Given the accelerated use and high dependency on the VLE during the pandemic, it was noted by the Academic Practice team that this policy could be usefully reviewed. The review team concurs and encourages Trinity to ensure the VLE policy continues to align to and guide users toward Trinity's future vision for digital teaching and learning.

Professional Development for Staff who Teach

The review team notes that Ireland has a national professional development framework for all staff who teach in higher education. That framework acts as a guide for higher education institutions to create an environment in which staff are encouraged and supported to develop and reflect on their practice and aims to drive improvements in learning and teaching across the sector. During the main review visit, the review team heard consistent praise for the work of Trinity's Academic Practice Unit from those staff and faculty who had interacted with the supports and development opportunities they offered. However, the review team also interviewed staff involved in teaching who (due to their status) said they were unaware of their eligibility to attend teaching and learning modules offered by the Academic Practice Unit. The review team heard that others may have had

access but had little incentive to do so due to their hourly paid status.

The review team acknowledges and concurs with the insight offered by members of the Academic Practice Unit that mandatory completion of existing professional development modules would be helpful for academic staff who were at an early stage in their career, but it was likely to meet with strong resistance from those at a midpoint or later stage in their career. The review team notes this and suggests that a broader range of differentiated options needs to be developed or accessed. The review team suggests that a professional development framework could take account of staff participation in a diversity of activities, including those externally facilitated by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

Considering the discussion in this section of this report and also in relation to staff development in preceding sections, **the review team recommends that Trinity develop an overarching strategy for Staff Learning and Development that aligns to Trinity's developmental needs and strategic objectives for the decade ahead. As a central pillar of this strategy, the review team recommends that Trinity implement compulsory participation for all staff involved in teaching in some form of professional development in teaching and learning in line with the National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education.**

In relation to the recommendation above, it is noteworthy that a very recent (2021) quality review of the Academic Practice Unit highlighted the lack of capacity within the team and the instability of staffing and funding for the team's work. The review team was surprised to learn that in an institution of Trinity's scale with ambitions to deliver next generation teaching and learning, only one academic developer in the team held a permanent role. The severe budgetary constraints that Trinity and all higher education institutions nationally are operating under were acknowledged at the outset of this report. However, the review team considers the importance of the Academic Practice Unit's

work in supporting and guiding staff who teach to be essential. The review team supports and echoes the findings of the 2021 quality review of the Academic Practice Unit. Specifically, the review team concurs that "sustained funding is crucial for Academic Practice to plan long term and formalise roles and responsibilities in support of the College's mission". This will be an important enabler for sustained excellence and innovation at Trinity and will be necessary to facilitate implementation of the review team's recommendations in this section of the report.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

It is widely acknowledged that assessment and feedback practices shape the experiences of students and can influence their learning behaviour more than any other aspect of teaching and learning. The challenge that the Covid-19 pandemic posed to the implementation of traditional invigilated examinations has prompted much dialogue across the sector about alternative modalities for assessing learners. In 2022, higher education institutions are increasingly incorporating multi-modality in assessment and prioritising inclusivity and authenticity in assessment design. The review team heard about many positive developments at Trinity that will facilitate the university embracing contemporary practices in this area. For example, the Inclusive Curriculum Project (Trinity-INC) commenced in October 2020 under the Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, which aims to embed the principles of inclusion in all aspects of the academic cycle. As previously noted, students at Trinity also expressed appreciation for the more diverse assessment formats and open-book examinations they had recently experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, during the main review visit, the review team spoke with a number of academic staff who expressed feeling that they were constantly assessing students. Staff also complained that they were navigating constant changes in regulations and that the combined pressures of multiple exam periods, exam resits, reassessment processes and deferrals were adding to staff workloads and

creating unreasonable deadlines. For example, staff were in some instances asked to mark over 200 papers within a matter of days. Dialogue with various student groups during the main review visit confirmed that their learning experience, particularly within undergraduate programmes, tended to be dominated by the pressures of assessment, often in the form of traditional invigilated exams. Moreover, assessment and feedback practices were reported to be highly variable across and within programmes, with the timeliness, quality and quantity of feedback learners received appearing to be unregulated. The review team noted that the provision of timely feedback to learners that supports student learning is a feature of Trinity's Assessment and Academic Progression Policy. However, as has been noted elsewhere in this report, a disconnect was apparent during review meetings between the principles articulated in the central policy and the implementation of this in practice.

Trinity is recommended to commence a process of programme-level reviews of its assessment and feedback strategies. Within this, the teaching and learning community at Trinity should draw upon learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic regarding alternatives to invigilated exams and work toward the implementation of renewed assessment and feedback strategies that offer authentic, inclusive and (where feasible) integrated experiences that take account of the growing diversity of learners. Academic Policy in this area could be usefully expanded.

All taught awards at Trinity are subject to external examining in the degree awarding year, with the use of 'viva exams' utilised for some undergraduate programmes. Trinity has an External Examiner Policy and engagement between programme staff and external examiners occurs during the review of examination questions and during the annual visit for the Courts of Examiners. Trinity submitted a case study of quality outlining enhancements to the external examiner system in recent years, with a notable outcome being the development of a designated external examiner website to provide a single source of information to both external examiners and schools.

THE STUDENT VOICE

As part of its quality assurance processes Trinity collects a large amount of survey data, including feedback from learners on their experiences of teaching, learning and assessment at Trinity, which is commendable. Trinity participates in the National Student Survey, which further augments this. In response to a recommendation made as part of the previous institutional review in 2012, Trinity has put in place a policy of annual module evaluation at undergraduate level and programme evaluation at postgraduate level. This was introduced in 2014.

However, the review team notes that there is a lack of consistency in how student feedback is gathered across schools and programmes, which does not facilitate easy comparisons. The ISER explains that this is because although all modules must be evaluated, “the method of evaluation is at the discretion of the school/course” (p.95). This may include surveys, engagement with student representatives, in-class discussions and/or focus groups. Trinity has a Procedure for the Conduct of Focus Groups for Student Feedback on Modules and Programmes. The review team notes that the supplementation of reliable survey data with richer and more qualitative sources of input is highly valuable. However, the review team held concerns that the high level of autonomy schools and programme teams enjoyed in deciding how to collect student feedback undermines the reliability and validity of this data. The review team has made a recommendation pertaining to the use of surveys to elicit feedback from learners in the section of this report pertaining to Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review. Notably, learners engaged with during the main review visit acknowledged that opportunities to provide feedback were visible to them. However, learners were unclear as to how or whether their feedback was being duly considered or actioned, suggesting there is work to be done on ‘closing the loop’ with Trinity’s learners.

SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

Trinity provides learners with a range of supports, which it categorises as pastoral supports (Counselling, Disability, Health, Sport, Tutorial Service, Nursery, Global Relations, Chaplaincy),

academic-related supports (Library, Student Learning Development, Careers), services that support the learning environment (IT, Estates and Facilities, Accommodation Services) and services that support the student lifecycle (Academic Registry and orientation activities). During the main review visit, the review team engaged with staff working across the breadth of these services and heard from diverse cohorts of learners about their experience as service users.

Learner supports at Trinity are acknowledged by all stakeholders to be lacking in capacity to meet demand. For example, demand for Trinity’s counselling services is growing, with 11-12% of the student population availing of the service each year. In 2020/21 this equated to approximately 16,000 individual or group clinical sessions being provided. The counselling service operates a system of initial triage to prioritise critical cases and manage demand. Issues pertaining to lack of capacity are discussed throughout this section. Nonetheless, a focus on quality enhancement is visible within this area at Trinity. A noteworthy case study in quality submitted by Trinity outlined the implementation of a stepped care model. This has entailed close coordination between Trinity’s counselling and medical services. Although ongoing capacity and resourcing issues are acknowledged, **the review team commends Trinity’s support services for working to maximise limited resources, coordinate service provision where appropriate and deliver continuity of care and support to Trinity’s community of learners throughout the pandemic.**

a) Learner Information

The review team was of the view that Trinity meets its quality assurance obligations for information to prospective learners. Trinity manages six social media channels, underpinned by a social networking and social media policy. In addition, the website has a particularly engaging and lively feel as demonstrated by ‘Trinity is Social’ which has multiple blogs, podcasts, and digital content. The website also hosts learner information for undergraduate and postgraduate students, in line with statutory QA guidelines, including programme

admission requirements and award information, fee information, financial supports, accommodation information and more. This is generally housed in an accessible location and an easily navigable format. Information is also available on alternative pathways to entry, upskilling courses, transition year courses, summer schools and online courses.

However, as is noted in the ISER, “this information tends to be spread across a number of webpages, websites and information sources” (p. 173). More critically, key information such as fee information does not have one central location but is instead scattered across the Academic Registry website. The ISER highlights that this lack of central information occasionally results in third party partners such as FindAMasters linking instead to school websites where information is not updated as frequently and can result in students receiving outdated information. The review team noted that Trinity could consider restructuring the website to make access as simple as possible for prospective students. The review team notes that the recent development of a content management system will greatly assist in this process.

b) Supports for International Students

Trinity introduced its first Global Relations Strategy (GRS1) in 2012 with the aim of expanding international student numbers and creating a more diverse student community. It has succeeded in that aim, transforming rapidly into a truly global university, with non-EU student numbers increasing from 1,123 in 2011/12 to 2,897 in 2018/19. Arriving from more than 120 countries, 26% of the student body is from outside of Ireland. Internationalisation is one of the key cross-cutting goals of Strategy 2020-2025 and aims to “foster an ever more diverse and inclusive student community” and “enrich and expand our global network”³. In relation to this activity **the review team commends Trinity for developing the Global Room as a support hub and social space for international students at Trinity.** This was outlined in a case study of quality submitted alongside

the ISER, as discussed earlier in this report in the section pertaining to Provision of Programmes for International Learners. However, based on comments made by multiple internal stakeholders during the main review visit the review team finds that the extent to which extra supports are needed for international students has been underestimated.

As highlighted in the ISER, the Counselling Services report international students are four times more likely than Irish students to avail of their services. International students are also more likely to interact with the accommodation services, both for accommodation offered by Trinity and accommodation advisory services. Further, 60% of students engaging with the postgraduate advisory service are international. Extra pressure from a more diverse body is impacting in areas such as admissions and health services as well. The review team heard multiple stakeholders complain of delays and errors by Academic Registry and frustrations with admissions processes. It is the opinion of the review team that these additional requirements have been underestimated by Trinity’s current GRS3.

The ISER highlights that the extra resources needed by international students are not currently factored into the college’s Baseline Budgeting Model (BBM). At the time of the main review visit, the review team heard plans to review international student recruitment at Trinity and undertake a review of the strategy in this area with regard to implications for resourcing and supports. **The review team recommends Trinity draw upon its significant experience of recruiting, hosting and supporting international students over the past decade to formulate a more sustainable strategy for international student recruitment in the post Covid-19 era. That strategy should continue to facilitate and promote diversity and a global orientation across the student body, while safeguarding the quality of the experience and the timely and appropriate availability of supports for all students.**

³ TCD, *Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025*, p. 21. [Accessed 30 September 2022]

c) Supports for Widening Participation

The review team had an opportunity to meet with students who had entered Trinity via the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) or under the auspices of the Widening Participation Group (WPG). The WPG encompasses, for example, the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) focused on combating economic disadvantage, the Asylum Seekers Access Provision Scholarships, Mature students and International Foundation Programme students. The review team spoke to student representatives from these programmes and the staff working to support them across a range of areas including the Disability, Health and Counselling Services as well as the Director and Acting Director of the TAP and a Mature Student Officer.

The significant achievements of Trinity's TAP/WPG notwithstanding (these have been commended in this report in the section pertaining to Access, Transfer and Progression), discussions with a range of stakeholders made clear that the post-admissions experience of students from these cohorts remains challenging. These challenges can in many instances be attributed directly to the inconsistent implementation of supporting policies in Trinity and the highly discretionary management of important processes at school level.

One example of inconsistent implementation of learner supports pertains to students with disabilities. Multiple stakeholders described students following the process outlined in the college's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities, only to find accommodations they were granted were not implemented by academic staff at school level. The process itself entails (1) registering with the Disability Service, (2) participating in a needs assessment, (3) having a Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) generated and (4) having the LENS communicated to the relevant academic and service area. The written policy represents good practice. However, the inconsistent implementation of the policy in practice is a cause of significant anxiety to this cohort, which serves to

compound their disadvantage. This is an obvious matter for concern that the whole community at Trinity must work to address.

An example of highly (and perhaps overly) discretionary management of an important process relevant to learner supports relates to submission deadlines. The review team heard from former TAP students who had sought extensions on the submissions of coursework during the Covid-19 pandemic due to mental health issues and pressures associated with home contexts (including increased caring responsibilities). Students taking multi-disciplinary programmes described having to navigate different practices across schools and being 'at the mercy' of individual academic staff members. The review team noted that this aligned to the perceptions of student representatives from other cohorts, who consistently referred to a lack of clarity regarding the rules or procedures to be followed in such instances.

In addition to these examples, the review team notes that a supporting policy of the college pertaining to time 'off-books' was identified by multiple staff and student stakeholders as problematic. The current process means that students who are typically struggling or experiencing hardship are cut off from access to their learning materials and the college's support structures. Trinity's ISER attributes this to a HEA policy of not recognising students who are 'off-books' as registered. The review team acknowledges that there are resource implications for Trinity associated with allowing students who are technically unregistered while 'off-books' to access services. However, it was unclear to the review team that this would necessarily preclude learners from having provisional access to the library or counselling services. Notably, both tutors and support staff described intentionally disregarding the policy to provide continuity for students at a time they were perceived to be highly vulnerable.

d) Summary

It is clear to the review team that Trinity is working hard to increase the diversity of its student body, and this is strongly endorsed. Students highly praised the support they had received directly from the specific support services and particular individuals within those services, and this is noteworthy. The review team notes that overall efforts at Trinity to create links and synergies between support services are discussed in the ISER. These include the launch of a student supports and services handbook in 2018 and the creation of the 'Big Wheel' graphic in 2018/19. The latter was outlined in a case study of quality submitted to the review team alongside the ISER. However, the ISER acknowledged an ongoing need for greater clarity and awareness of the types of services available.

The policies and procedures pertaining to learner supports appear to be generally fit for purpose. However, the inconsistent implementation of those policies and procedures 'on the ground' undermines their value. The review team notes that the issue of inconsistent implementation of policy at Trinity is a recurrent theme throughout this report. The review team notes that the diversity and complexity of issues faced by students has also increased substantially among those who enter third-level education via standard or conventional entry routes. **The review team recommends that Trinity provide all cohorts and subgroups of students with timely, clear and consistent information about key policies, including (but not limited to) those that relate to access, transfer and progression, learner supports, assessment and feedback. Within this, Trinity should pay particular attention to the needs of international students and students entering the college via access routes.**

INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Effective information and data management (IDM) is crucial to provide analytical information that will help drive strategic planning and operational decision-making. This aspect of quality assurance is critical to Trinity attaining its vision of being "a globally connected community

of learning, research and scholarship" and its goals for providing "a transformative student experience" and the delivery of "next generation teaching and learning." Significant investment and enhancements have been made to IDM in Trinity to date. Nevertheless, Trinity's IDM workload is continuously increasing. Trinity is currently engaged in delivering a programme of Digital Transformation Initiatives (Digital Trinity). In addition, physical and digital conservation of the Old Library (encompassing the Old Library Project and the Trinity Virtual Library) is underway. This activity is central to the Inspiring Generations philanthropic campaign efforts.

Trinity sees IDM as an institutional asset that can be used to make more informed decisions, improve the learning environment, and optimise engagement. In recent years, IDM has also grown in importance as the institution is subjected to an increasing number of regulatory compliance requirements, including data privacy and protection laws, for example, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). With the capture of ever-larger volumes of data and a wider variety of data types, these trends will increase.

During the review, it became evident that the absence of adequate reporting functionality was creating heavy administration burdens. In addition, potential problems with data accuracy and integration due to siloed systems and the lack of an overarching data architecture were also highlighted. The review team heard that these issues sometimes led to the need for reconciliation of data or duplication of efforts to ensure data quality. The review team noted that it is highly problematic that no one technical person is responsible for oversight of data architecture at Trinity. Moreover, although robust processes are in place to approve large IT initiatives, the prioritisation and management of smaller projects is problematic. The review team heard that projects and competing requests for changes may arrive without sufficient lead-in time and are therefore difficult to accommodate alongside ongoing work. The review team was also of the view that there was not enough recognition of what sits around actual system development outside of the teams

undertaking that activity. Annual planning, in terms of which projects are coming up, would help staff in these areas manage the workloads more effectively. The review team believes that an appropriately qualified voice at executive level would assist with this and a recommendation on this has been made under Governance of Information and Data Management.

Digital Trinity is intended to drive IDM change from a system-centred to a more individual-centric model and aims to deliver increased connectivity, an enhanced teaching and learning experience, improved digital engagement, and enhanced operational efficiencies. However, the review team heard that competing priorities often mean that certain projects are not funded, such as online module registration and module billing. These issues in turn lead to increased inefficiencies and workloads. It is evident that further overall investment in IDM is required. Trinity needs to move away from the siloed approach and be aware that 'kicking the can down the road' is exacerbating problems with its systems.

Trinity has distributed data environments that include a diverse set of systems that require funding for enhancements. The 'We Value your Opinion of Quality Survey' highlighted staff views of the IT systems and showed that while there was scope for improvements across all systems, admin (CMIS and SITS) and research support systems (RPRAMS, RSS) require urgent attention.

a) Learner Information Systems

There has been significant investment in Trinity's Learner Information Systems, including the VLE, which has been upgraded significantly to facilitate teaching (lecture capture software), enhance the student experience (e.g. virtual classrooms, class voting) and facilitate quality assurance processes (e.g. anti-plagiarism software and Grades Journey). The Academic Registry is responsible for statistical reporting, reporting to the Department of Justice & Equality. IT Services is responsible for mainstreaming TEP deliverables and building capability in SITS. The review team noted that the administrative systems were significantly

upgraded during Covid-19. SITS was adjusted to process remote assessments, in relation to fee administration, instalment options for fee paying were introduced, and CAO file processing and new student registration were accelerated. The review team noted that IT Services and Academic Registry enable online remote access and other supports to new student registrants within one day of their acceptance of offers to study at Trinity.

The review team commends all involved at Trinity for collaborating effectively to upgrade the Virtual Learning Environment, SITS and associated remote learning and working IT systems and for responding agilely to the rapid pivot to online delivery.

One challenge that was cited in the ISER and the review team also heard from staff, was that some administrative processes must be conducted manually. This increases the work burden on the Academic Registry and, in turn, IT staff considerably. The need for improvements in processes such as online module registration and module billing automation was evident to the review team. The review team encourages Trinity to undertake a review of SITS to ensure ease of access and navigation for non-specialists and end-users. As part of the Trinity Digital initiative, the review team considers that the CMS, SITS, RPRAMS and RSS systems must be appropriately resourced to ensure that they are fit for purpose and effectively utilised by all end-users.

The review team recommends that Trinity undertake a comprehensive review of systems, projects and staffing requirements in IT services and Academic Registry to ensure that the works planned will enable Trinity to achieve its stated vision and goals and accommodate expected growth in student and staff numbers. The review should consider system-level supports for quality processes e.g. automation of reporting on quality metrics and development of self-service analytical tools to support data interrogation and reporting.

The review team notes that much focus in 2020/21 was placed on IT security (VPN and two-factor authentication) due to shift to remote working, online learning, increased use of video conferencing and of remote external examination. The review noted that IT Services had implemented an agile and robust response to Covid-19 to ensure ongoing data and information protection, facilitate access to remote learning, offer remote assessment capability and support online staff communications (including associated training).

b) Data Protection and Freedom of Information

Trinity is a large institution, which collates a significant amount of data on students, faculty, staff, learning and teaching, research, and enterprise. The university has a framework that governs the use and storage of information and data management. Staff who process personal data in the course of their duties and students conducting research involving personal data processing are required to take mandatory GDPR training and staff are required to comply with GDPR and related college security policies when using personal data. There are Personal Data Breach Notification Procedural Guidelines and a Data Breach Report Form in place. There is a specific GDPR website containing information, guidance, template documents and support materials relevant to data protection and IT security. In the ISER, the Data Protection Officer highlighted that certain policies require updating, for example, the GDPR policy (which is underway). Additionally, greater oversight was required of software used by individual schools and units. Dedicated personnel and processes are in place in Trinity to manage freedom of Information (FOI) requests which have been increasing in recent years. There was also evidence that staff receive training to understand the college's obligations in relation to FOI and that FOI reports are published. The appointment of a deputy Data Protection Officer (DDPO) specifically for research to ensure that the college research community receives adequate support with regard to GDPR compliance is a positive step. This can help reduce the burden on researchers, in turn, saving them time which they can devote to research, and facilitate compliance.

The review team noted that Trinity has developed a Cyber Crime Watch website and runs associated online events. The fact that reported personal data breaches have Cyber Crime Watch reduced in recent years and that the notification threshold has never been reached attest to the work that is being undertaken in the institution on compliance with data protection legislation. The review team acknowledges that Trinity continues to recognise the crucial importance of data collection, management and security for the institution, particularly in relation to compliance with GDPR, Health Research Regulations and the Research Integrity in Ireland policy statement (2019) and also in the use of data to inform and provide an evidence base for effective decision-making.

c) Governance of Information and Data Management

While the College Board is responsible for IDM, it is acknowledged that management is a "distributed and shared responsibility". Indeed, two schools (School of Computer Science & Statistics and School of Dental Science) are fully responsible for their own IDM governance as they operate on their own autonomous networks and servers. Dispersion of responsibility coupled with siloed activities can lead to inefficiencies and potentially increased risks. A well-designed data governance programme, outlining roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, is a critical component of effective IDM strategies, especially in organisations with distributed data environments that include a diverse set of systems. A strong focus on data quality is also necessary, which is evident in Trinity.

The review team heard that in Trinity that distinct functions work collectively and collaboratively together to make sure that the data in the institutions systems are accurate, available, and accessible. While a large part of the required work is done by IT, other groups also participate in parts of the process to ensure that the data meets their needs, and they comply with policies governing data use. The Quality Review of IT Services (2018) concluded that "the network infrastructure seems to be robust, reliable and secure". A single Security Manager is responsible for planning and approving

security measures to protect data and information from unauthorised access and theft.

Responsibility for policy development in relation to information management is highly devolved across multiple units (IT Services, Public Affairs & Communications, Academic Registry, and Information Compliance) of the university (AIQR). Several reviews in this area have recommended establishing a Chief Information Officer role with the appropriate oversight and authority. However, this has not come to pass. This position, together, with an adequately funded, coherent and overarching digital strategy are warranted. Currently, in Trinity, IDM is not directly represented at Board level. This underplays its strategic relevance to the institution. The review team considers that there is an urgent need for executive-level expertise in this area to ensure that the IDM strategy, next generation data management systems, technology architecture, people and processes of the institution are future ready and able to improve operational effectiveness and agility. **The review team recommends that Trinity explore how executive-level expertise in IDM can be resourced and facilitated to contribute across the college and be represented on the College Board.**

d) Summary

Effective IDM is crucial to Trinity attaining its vision. There is a need for further funding, consideration of staff workloads and an IDM champion at Board level with authority and buy-in to do the work required across the institution. There is a clear need for prioritisation of investment in fit-for-purpose and interoperable information management and administrative systems to facilitate consistent data-informed and evidence-based decision making at all levels of Trinity's operations.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

As Trinity's vision is to be a "globally connected community," it is not surprising that a key focus is on communication with the public at large including prospective students. Official

communication between Trinity and the public is the responsibility of Trinity Communications (TC). In addition to internal communications, TC engages with external stakeholders on public affairs matters, media interactions and social media. The work of TC is informed by the Public Affairs and Communications (PAC) Strategy which was launched in 2020 with an outward focus and directed specifically at the many parts of the university which communicate, or could communicate, with the outside world.

The PAC strategy aimed to simplify Trinity's public messaging by reducing the number of messages, explaining Trinity more clearly and pulling together the various areas of college which amplify their messages. The strategy outlined that the website is the single most important communication tool. Overall, the review team considers the website plays a significant role in communicating with both the public and the Trinity community and that Trinity is achieving their strategic public communication aims. The website provides high quality information as well as topical news about life at Trinity in an engaging format. It also provides comprehensive information to broaden the public's understanding of Trinity as a research university and shows Trinity as a source of teaching and learning, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and research.

In compliance with the QQI Act 2012, the review team noted that quality review reports, procedures, enhancements, education recruitment agents' details and academic policies and procedures are made available on the website. The review team understands from interviewees that improvements are being made to allow web content to be modified more easily which should further enhance the website as a key source of academic and socially orientated public information. The review team notes that Trinity has taken the positive step of developing key performance indicators to measure the success of the PAC Strategy. The review team encourages Trinity to publish the university's Key PAC Performance Indicators to demonstrate the success of its public communication activities.

a) Public Information

A focus of the public information strategy is “digital first” consequently Trinity has a strong web presence. The Trinity website houses a comprehensive collection of publicly accessible, interlinked webpages. The homepage has signposts to aid current students, prospective students, alumni and friends, enterprise and partnerships and visitors to navigate to the most relevant section of the website. The ‘Study at Trinity’ webpage contains infographics and information for prospective students, including information on the various pathways available, application process and courses. Research, innovation, sustainability and global relations themes each have a dedicated web section and are easy to navigate. Trinity’s research webpage provides information on, for example, research structures, research matters, themes and the charter, and it is possible to navigate to research information linked to all 24 schools and to the Dean of Research’s local webpage. However, research ranking information was not easily accessed and the ‘search for expertise’ section is only available to Trinity staff and current students.

Several other websites provide information for specific groups. These include the Quality Office website, which provides access to comprehensive information on quality management and holds the published quality review and enhancement reports as per QQI’s Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. The review team welcomed the university’s commitment to publishing such reports, particularly in relation to the openness and transparency this demonstrates. This commitment to continuous improvement is critical for Trinity as it seeks to demonstrate to the public the ongoing significance and impact of its education and research.

b) Information and Communication Governance

There is a Web Governance Group whose terms of reference include a focus on policy for access to the university website, identifying risk, providing guidance to stakeholders on how to present profiles and clarifying resources required. The review team noted that policies and procedures

to ensure that public information is clear, accurate, up to date, objective, and accessible are evident. The review team understands that actions are underway across the university to help maintain the quality of website content using an all-in-one platform tool used to check the website for errors, and enhance quality assurance efforts, search engine optimisation and accessibility. Active Web Authors can access this tool to help them deliver an engaging, compliant, and optimised digital experience to their audience. The Digital and Web Team also offers a web quality check audit to those publishing on the web. The review team considers that the mechanisms in place to assure the quality and accuracy of public information and communications, based on the evidence provided, appear to be robust. To ensure that the website information is accurate, the review team encourages Trinity to formalise the frequency of website audits for compliance with legislation and policies.

OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

During the main review visit the review team met with various external stakeholders, including linked providers, industry representatives and collaborators. All stakeholders were positive about their interactions with Trinity, their ability to initially connect easily with the right group or person, the responsiveness of personnel and the ability to set up longstanding collaborations. They found it straightforward to engage and develop strong collaborations. The initial contact point varied by stakeholder e.g. individual researchers, mentors of PhD students, the Procurement Office, the Office of Corporate Partnership and Knowledge Exchange, the School of Pharmacy.

The stakeholders reported that the drafting of research contracts, consortium agreements or implementation agreements was professional and efficient, even when multiple partners were involved. Stakeholders noted that all project-related data requirements are processed thoroughly and promptly, the delivery of outputs was as planned, and the quality of deliverables was mostly high. The stakeholders did not voice any quality concerns

and highlighted that if these did arise, they could have informal meetings to address them. One example of best practice was mentioned, the development of a single memorandum of understanding between an industry partner and Trinity, so that all activities are channelled through one contact point. This formalisation of contact through a single responsibility facilitates collaboration.

While it was highlighted that, in the stakeholders' view, Trinity manages external stakeholder interactions better than other institutions, areas for improvement were identified. This included increasing capacities within offices, such as the research contract team, to enable them to proactively engage with external partners. It was thought there was some vulnerability due to a lack of capacity. The review team was of the view that discussions with external stakeholders confirmed a general alignment of practice at Trinity to QQI's guidelines in relation to external partnerships and second providers.

To aid the development of new initiatives, Trinity's Global Relations Office developed an international partnership toolkit in 2018. While the toolkit has provided academics with greater clarity regarding the processes involved in establishing a new partnership, the review team heard that the process of developing a new partnership remains quite intensive and that the time involved can be extensive. In interviews with stakeholders at school level, they found the development of new partnerships continued to be heavily 'reliant on the passion of individuals' and 'added a severe administrative burden' even when following the process outlined by the international partnership toolkit. The process was flagged as particularly burdensome in the case of articulation programmes where quality assurance processes for the degree award were included in the standard quality assurance process for Trinity programmes and the repetition of paperwork could be eased. The review team encourages ongoing review of the toolkit and identification of areas in which the partnership process could be streamlined. **The Review Team commends Trinity for developing an International Partnership Toolkit, easing the**

process of establishing global partnerships at school level.

SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

An important element of the feedback loop within a Plan – Do – Check – Act (PDCA) process is the conduct of surveys. Trinity uses various surveys to monitor student satisfaction (see also previous discussion in the section of this report pertaining to Teaching, Learning and Assessment). Trinity participates in the National Student Survey, the Postgraduate Research Survey and the International Student Barometer. The results of the surveys are systematically presented in the Annual Faculty Quality Reports (AFQRs) that feed into the AQR. The response rates for student surveys are typically modest to low.

During the main review visit, the review team heard from stakeholders at Trinity that this issue could be attributed to survey fatigue among students. The review team also heard that inconsistent use of surveys in different schools and faculties was not considered problematic. The review team acknowledges these views and the common challenge across the sector regarding survey fatigue. However, the review team is of the view that Trinity should be taking a significantly more proactive stance to improve survey response rates and consistency across the various mechanisms employed for collecting student feedback. **The review team recommends that Trinity formulate and implement initiatives to increase survey response rates and improve the consistency of feedback mechanisms across the student population in line with international best practice.** This may usefully include the development of a policy to guide the use and timing of surveys directed at students. The review team notes that the majority of schools have adopted Staff Student Liaison Committees to ensure continuous mutual engagement, as was proposed following a recent evaluation of student feedback processes.

Trinity students are actively involved in decision making via the Trinity Student Union and Graduate

Student Union. Students participate in the different layers of the internal governance structure. The Trinity Student Union also runs its own surveys; the responses show that students would like more opportunities to directly pose questions and interact with representatives of the institution. The review team encourages Trinity to continue to invest in inducting students in their various roles. This applies not only to their contribution to their academic programmes, but also to their input in relation to extra-curricular activities and other aspects of the student experience, for instance, access to spaces on campus.

An important element of self-evaluation is the monitoring of effective implementation of academic policies. This issue has been discussed previously in the section of this report pertaining to the Management of Quality Assurance. Here, the review team wishes to reinforce the comments and recommendations made earlier, and also to point to the opportunities Trinity enjoys. Trinity has an internal governance structure with many layers, and such a management system could lead to benefits. This would require a review of system-level support for quality processes. Greater resourcing to support automation of reporting on quality metrics, self-service analytical tools and reporting systems in Trinity's Information Management Systems could be helpful (see previous discussion pertaining to Information and Data Management). The review team encourages Trinity to pursue these opportunities for enhancing its self-evaluation and monitoring capacities. The review team notes that it has previously recommended that monitoring of the implementation of academic policies and overall compliance should feature within quality assurance reporting processes.

During the Covid-19 lockdown the survey, We Value your Opinion of Quality in Trinity, was aimed at assessing the perception of quality and Trinity's quality culture among staff. The results of the survey have been used in the ISER and the review team encourages Trinity to continue using comparable surveys in the future.

In the research domain, Trinity is encouraged to further develop and enhance information systems to support benchmarking of its international competitive position. With all pitfalls acknowledged, bibliometric and ranking data, success rates in European Framework and national research funding and indicators of expanding international collaboration, such as the Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based, Mobile European-University (CHARM-EU) could be benchmarked with data from League of European Research Universities (LERU) members. Research is discussed in more depth in the following section.

TRINITY RESEARCH

Trinity is the leading academic institute in Ireland in terms of research output and impact, and research in Trinity is extensive, collaborative, and diverse with a strong entrepreneurial focus. Trinity's core mission includes research as a key pillar – "pursued at the frontiers and intersections of disciplines, our research benefits our students, Ireland and the world." In addition, research is a key component of its cross-cutting goals – "We will stand up for research, its quality and impact" and "We will shape our organisation and focus research around the challenge of achieving a sustainable and healthy planet".

Research at Trinity is conducted across all three faculties with some inter-disciplinary focus. There are five Trinity Research Institutes, over 50 Research Centres, several Trinity-Led Research Consortia and three Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Inter-Institutional Research Groupings. Trinity also prides itself on commercialising research and educating students to be entrepreneurial. The review team notes that Trinity is an institution whose alumni progress to take up important positions, both nationally and internationally.

a) Research Governance

Research at Trinity is guided by a variety of policies, which are publicly available on the website. The 2019 Research Charter and Living Research Excellence Strategy is integral to the strategic plan of 2020-2025. The Research Committee, chaired by

the Dean of Research, has oversight of QA related to research, reports directly to the Council, and operates flexibly under their delegated authority. In addition to the Research Committee, consultation and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and analytics and metrics are used to provide feedback that can support and enhance research structures and processes. Research Centres are guided by the Trinity Research Centre Policy and quality reviews are conducted by the Research Committee. The Policy on Trinity Research Institutes guides the five institutes. Each institute is reviewed every five years and the reports are published on the Quality Office webpage. SFI Research Centres hosted by Trinity are independently reviewed every two years.

Research-related policies and regulations have been continually updated and are generally adopted, driven by internal consultation and feedback, and in response to external bodies, and Regulations, such as SFI, IRC, IUA and GDPR, respectively. For example, SFI's 2021 report findings on research integrity governance is currently under consideration by the university. Trinity returns a range of research performance information to the Higher Education Authority and exacting standards are also notably driven by Trinity's involvement with international bodies, such as LERU, the Coimbra Group of Universities, and the European University Alliance CHARM-EU.

The review team has previously noted the appointment of a Data Protection Officer, specifically to ensure that a standardised training and implementation approach to GDPR compliance was adopted for research (see discussion in the section of the report pertaining to Information and Data Management). Such measures mitigate administrative demands that take time away from the conduct of research, a general concern expressed by the researchers during the main review visit. The review team heard that Research Committee oversight of new policies is not consistent and often leads to strategies and policies being adopted without review. Moreover, research policies are not always implemented in the schools. However, the review team understands that a policy mapping exercise is underway to

collate research-related policies and guidelines and to develop tools to facilitate researcher understanding. The review team encourages Trinity to prioritise the completion of the research policy mapping exercise underway and identify mechanisms to ensure consistent implementation of policy across the university. The review team also acknowledges that a review of the ethics process and the installation of a research ethics management system is underway. The findings of that review will assist the university to ensure that a robust ethics management system is in place. This is critical to assuring high research quality as the way research is commissioned and conducted is a key component of assuring quality and high ethical standards. The review team encourages Trinity to support the Research Ethics Committee in the review of the ethics process.

The review team considers that the research QA processes generally show due regard for the QQI Core Statutory and QA guidelines and that the research community recognise the important contributions that QA and evaluation activities make to better outcomes, and more efficient and effective work processes. For example, the review team notes the Dean of Research's actions in ensuring the continuation of research activities during lockdown, the establishment of the research issues log, the development of the position paper on research challenges and securing Government support to ensure the continuity of research. **The review team commends Trinity for establishing a research impact pilot in 2020 aimed at advancing a culture of strategic engagement and impact assessment.**

b) Performance, Metrics, and Rankings

The review team commends Trinity Research and Innovation for delivering significant grant funding from SFI and Horizon2020 and consistently demonstrating national leadership in this endeavour. Trinity's strong research capabilities are clearly demonstrated by the fact that it obtained over 50% of the European Research Council H2020 PI Awards over the period 2014-2019, when compared to the other Irish universities. Further, **the review team commends Trinity's innovative**

efforts in aligning the philanthropic campaign Inspiring Generations, which has raised €400 million, with the advancement of research-related projects (TSJCI, E3RI, redevelopment of the Old Library). Such initiatives are invaluable in securing financial security so that Trinity can realise its vision.

The Deans of Faculty are responsible for oversight of Faculty Research Productivity Metrics. Each School monitors and reports their metrics in the Research Support System. Metrics are reviewed annually by the faculties and the metrics inform budget allocations. The rankings return process is under the remit of the Office of the Dean of Research and the rankings are monitored by the Provost's Steering Group on Rankings. The review team is cognisant that taking rankings as proxies for quality or performance is an ill-conceived way of understanding the true value of a university. Nevertheless, they are valued by stakeholders, despite their limitations. At Trinity, the review team heard during the interviews that rankings are imbued with significance by prospective students in determining which institution to apply to and by researchers in deciding the research group to join or collaborate with.

Trinity is the only Irish university ranked in the TOP 100 of REUTERS Europe's Most Innovative Universities 2019, at number 70. This is a list that identifies the educational institutions doing the most to advance science, invent new technologies and power industry in Europe. Trinity is also the only Irish university ranked in the 2021 PitchBook University Rankings: 'Top 50 colleges for founders.' It is ranked number 50 for undergraduate programmes, moving down one place since 2020. Trinity was ranked 28th in the world by The Times Education Impact Ranking in 2019 and Europe's leading university for producing entrepreneurs for five years in a row by Pitchbook, generating a fifth of all spin-out companies in Ireland. These are tremendous and impactful achievements.

However, the review team noted downward trends in Trinity's rankings. These are evident in Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), which is based on Reputation, Citations, and Internationality and the THE (Times Higher Education) World University rankings, which is based on Reputation, Citations, Income, and Internationality. This requires focused attention to ensure the decline is halted. Two other rankings were mentioned in the Institutional Profile, though associated data was not provided: the Academic Rankings of World Universities (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy)⁴ and the Leiden Ranking (CWTS Leiden)⁵. According to the CWTS Leiden Ranking 2021, Trinity ranked at number 126 for scientific impact and at number 133 for collaboration, compared to other universities in Europe.

The review team noted that there was also a downward trend for some key metrics over the period 2014-2018, in particular, Citations, Citations and Publications, Publications in Top Journal Percentiles and Citing-Patents Count. When the review team considered the data relating to Research Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), they noted that in 2018/19, four of the research KPIs established reached the KPI target set, which was an improvement on the previous year. In addition, in relation to impacts for 2018/19, the review team noted that only one of the five KPIs had an annual target set for it – industry cash awards greater than €25,000. This was positive compared to the annual target and the previous year value.

Across Trinity a diverse range of tools, such as SciVal and InCites, are used for research performance management, often leading to conflicting metrics being reported. The review team is aware of the change of perception of bibliometrics and rankings, e.g. via the acceptance of DORA but encourages Trinity, as a globally competitive research-intensive university, to review all aspects of metrics, including the principles behind metric selection and management, to

⁴ <https://www.mastersportal.com/rankings/2/academic-ranking-of-world-universities-shanghai-jiao-tong-university.html> [Accessed 30 September 2022]

⁵ <https://www.leidenranking.com/ranking/2021/list> [Accessed 30 September 2022]

ensure a coherent reporting process is in place. It was noted that with the establishment of new Data Analytics and Strategic Initiatives, will address this issue and set standard parameters for consistency in results and interpretation. Targets should be reviewed to ensure that they are challenging yet achievable and realistic. While it is argued that accessibility of research funding is a contributing factor to these rankings and trends, further scrutiny is warranted to fully understand the contributing factors to these indicators so that the trend can be reversed in line with Trinity's vision and aspirations. **The review team recommends that Trinity continue to review and update research KPIs, taking into account the ambitions of Trinity as a research-intensive university in an international setting.** The review team considers that the quality of research should be defined by international standards and not the ability to attract external funding. The review team notes that Trinity is already exploring a wider range of diverse metrics, such as Sustainable Development Goals and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion rankings, which is admirable and timely. The review team would encourage Trinity to explore a diverse range of European and international rankings to ensure challenging benchmarks are adopted and to further showcase Trinity's impacts with other comparators on the international stage.

Trinity has identified time, space and money as key challenges that impact the quality of their research and which they constantly analyse and confront. It is evident that Trinity has a high student to staff ratio; research space and facilities are constantly under pressure and funding is lacking. Issues with the allocation of research space were also identified as a concern in relation to postgraduate research students in some faculties, with the 2021 National Postgraduate Research Student Survey reflecting only 58% agreement from students that they had access to a suitable working space.

While researchers indicated they receive regular support from the schools and the research centres when applying for funding, and assistance in how to write, review and submit proposals, the review team heard that there was a lack of networking opportunities for postgraduate students. The 2021

National Postgraduate Research Student Survey indicated that fewer than 50% of postgraduate research students have opportunities to discuss research or become involved in the wider community. The same survey reflected a drop in indicators of wellbeing, particularly work life balance and life satisfaction. Mentorship support would be welcomed to enhance the quality of the student researcher experience. The review team heard concerns that postgraduates felt disconnected from other research colleagues and staff in the same school. Overall, there appeared to be inconsistency and variability in the postgraduate student experience across the university in terms of supports. In addition, internal consultative processes have highlighted specifically that more support is required for early career researchers and for researchers during the mobilisation phase after receiving research awards.

During the interviews, the review team heard how researchers were concerned about the existing Baseline Budgeting Model (BBM) and its impact on the ability to conduct research, with only 20% of each school's baseline budget being allocated based on its ability to maintain its level of research activity. However, the review team was also informed that the BBM is currently under review and a more favourable percentage is being considered for research. The review team considers this review essential to ensure that research can be strategically directed, and that research support and performance can be transparently managed.

c) Living Research Excellence Strategy

It was recommended that a research strategy, Trinity's first, should be developed following a 2015 research review. In late 2017, the process was initiated and, following extensive consultation, a Research Charter, which declared the seven key underpinning principles of Trinity's approach to research (Table 1 below), and the Living Research Excellence Strategy (LRES) were completed by 2019. The LRES is a coherent and aligned strategy comprised of six chapters along with associated actions. The review team notes that Trinity elaborates the underpinning principles in relation to research and acknowledges that the Research

Charter and the LRES have enriched the College Strategic Plan, 2020-25. In addition, the review team found that the Trinity research principles are embodied by the college community. Indeed, one principal was consistently expressed during interviews: "Cherish academic freedom, diversity of scholarship and pursuit of truth" is deeply embedded and tenaciously protected across the Trinity community. However, from the review team's observations certain principles did not appear to be operationalised/practised as effectively as one might expect given the time the Charter and LRES have been in existence, and two of these are explored in more detail below.

TABLE 1: RESEARCH CHARTER PRINCIPLES

- Cherish academic freedom, diversity of scholarship and pursuit of truth
- Position research at the heart of Trinity
- Foster and grow research talent
- Harness our collective expertise for the greater good
- Broaden our local and global impact
- Engage profoundly with our publics
- Stand up for research

(Source: [The Living Research Excellence Strategy](#), Trinity ISER, p. 74)

Position Research at the Heart of Trinity: The review team notes the importance of work undertaken in this area to achieve the high-level goal, "to fully reflect the research intensity of the institution in our governance, structures, and operational practices". One aspect related to attainment of this goal came to the fore during interviews with a range of stakeholder groups involved in research. A common theme emerged that reflected a sense of not being listened to or a sense of disempowerment. The review team heard that members of the research community did not feel that their views were fully reflected in the governance processes. Some of the comments

the review team heard on this theme are outlined below:

- 'Voice not heard'
- 'There is a feeling that the schools exist for the College not the other way around'
- 'There is no two-way conversation'
- 'The impact on decision-making is unclear'
- 'Decision-making should be more transparent'
- 'Treading in Treacle – complete responsibility but minimal influence'
- 'Ambiguous as to whether we are being consulted about something or being informed'
- 'Research staff don't have much say'
- 'A key issue is the sense of where we sit within governance – we are in a liminal space – sort of there but not a full seat at the table'

Foster and Grow Research Talent: Enablers of high performance and research excellence are the existence of robust and supportive operational structures and practices. A variety of contributing factors lead to a productive research environment, such as research facilities, research space, research time, libraries, support services that have a strong commitment towards research, development opportunities and funding. Some of these features were mentioned during the review team interviews as aspects that require attention and improvement. Some sentiments expressed by interviewees are outlined below:

- 'Research instruments are not maintained' [i.e. laboratory equipment]
- 'Poor working environment'
- 'Difficulty in accessing research space'
- 'Issues with getting IT help'
- 'The researchers are the lifeblood of Trinity College, they deserve better supports, lab working time, mental health support'

The review team encourages Trinity to pay more attention to, as one interviewee put it, 'the technical

nuts and bolts side of things' that are often 'under the radar', such as routine maintenance of standard laboratory equipment which impacts the quality of research output, space allocation to ensure researchers have space to do their research, ensuring that supports that engage with researchers are effective in allowing them sufficient time to focus on their research and that networking for post-doctoral graduates is facilitated. The review team considers that Trinity needs to attend to research enablers such as routine maintenance of equipment, space allocation and the facilitation of networking to drive a nurturing environment, high performance, and research excellence.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Trinity's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 commits to fostering an effective and flexible university with a strong appreciation of academic self-governance with collegiate and devolved decision-making. Throughout this report, the review team has commended numerous dimensions of quality enhancement activity at Trinity.

In relation to the enhancement of governance, the review team has endorsed the findings of the College Board's own review of its effectiveness. The review team is confident that implementing the recommendations of the working group will lead to significant enhancements at this level. As discussed in the section of this report pertaining to the governance of quality assurance, the review team notes the importance of improved management of the Board's agenda and encourages a significant increase in the number of external members.

The review team heard that recent enhancements have been made to the operation of the University Council, which has been delegated responsibility by the College Board for all academic matters. By appropriately applying the principle of subsidiarity, the work of the Council has become more efficient through better use of its sub-committees. The review team has commended this step in this report and is confident that this will continue to

facilitate a rebalancing of the Council's agenda toward strategic and enhancement items, e.g. the discussion of institutional issues surrounding academic integrity.

As noted in the ISER, various work units at Trinity prepared case studies in quality from across the institution to augment the documentation provided by the Quality Office and ISET team. These were illustrative of a commitment to quality enhancement across multiple and diverse work areas. Many of those case studies and the achievements they showcase have been referred to and commended throughout this report. The review team considers these case studies to be reflective of a broad commitment to and culture of quality enhancement at Trinity.

ALIGNMENT OF INSTITUTION'S MISSION AND TARGETS FOR QUALITY

It has been noted previously in this report that to succeed, a university requires an effective strategic plan emerging from a process of full stakeholder engagement. Trinity implements strategies with a five-year validity period; the current strategy 'Community and Connection' being valid from 2020 to 2025. The development of the strategy followed a predefined process and featured the involvement of various layers of governance, working groups and external stakeholders. In this report, the review team has emphasised the value that adjustments to the current composition of the Board, including an increase in the externality present at Board level, will bring to Trinity's strategic planning processes in the future.

Trinity uses a robust monitoring scheme to assess the state of achievement of the strategic aims on a half-yearly basis, which is complemented by a mid-term and final analysis. Trinity stated in the ISER that the lack of a dedicated planning unit was considered a weakness. This was confirmed during the main review visit and the review team was of the view that such a unit would greatly enhance the drafting process. The review team encourages Trinity to allocate resources to support the establishment of a strategic planning unit. This unit

could usefully work in an active mode, adjusting intermediate strategies for the achievement of KPIs and not being limited to the more passive position of reporting on their achievement or otherwise.

The current strategic plan was drafted and published prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and launched by Trinity's previous Provost and leadership team. Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across the sector, it is inevitable that some of the ambitious targets in the strategy will need to be re-evaluated. During the main review visit, the review team heard from Trinity's leadership that the viability of some aspects of the strategy were being reconsidered in relation to the altered context of operations and impact of the pandemic throughout 2020-2021. The review team endorses the revisiting of the strategy by Trinity's leadership team, which must work at this critical juncture in an agile and contextually responsive manner.

The review team notes that targets pertaining to teaching and learning in the existing strategy include bringing the overall student to staff ratio down to 16:1. Such an achievement would certainly bring Trinity closer to European standards but may to some extent depend on increased funding to the higher education sector. The strategy also sets out targets pertaining to the composition of the student body, which include increasing the percentage of students from non-traditional backgrounds in undergraduate programmes to 25% and enrolling more than 30% of students from outside the EU. The review team encourages Trinity to reflect on the recommendations and associated discussion in this report in relation to these targets. The Trinity community as a whole will gain much from working to ensure that the college's processes, supports and resources are well-placed to facilitate a consistently positive and equitable learning experience for these cohorts. Finally, the strategic plan also encompasses goals related to development of the Trinity East campus in the Grand Canal innovation district. This is a significant development, but one that will require careful oversight and management in the years ahead. The review team considers the recommendations

made in this report in relation to the governance and management of quality at Trinity to be vital in relation to this.



Section 4

Conclusions

Conclusions

CONCLUSION

The review team would like to thank and acknowledge the significant work undertaken by Trinity in preparing for and facilitating the review process. In particular, the review team acknowledges the efforts of the Quality Office and ISET, as well as the work units at Trinity responsible for preparing the 35 case studies of quality in action that augmented the ISER. The review team has commented in this report on the well-structured and comprehensive nature of the documentation prepared by Trinity. The achievement this represents should be especially highlighted, given the work was undertaken as Trinity pivoted online and continued its operations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. In this report, the review team has also drawn attention to the value of engaged discussions with and contributions from Trinity's staff, students and stakeholders throughout the review process. These discussions augmented the high-quality documentation provided by Trinity and enabled the review team to conduct a constructive, collegial and well-informed review.

This report provides context for the review team's many commendations to Trinity, as well as a set of carefully considered recommendations. Those recommendations endorse and encourage many aspects of the new leadership team's stated agenda for quality. They also frequently confirm the findings of previous internal and external quality reviews. Notably, several recommendations in this 2022 report echo those set out in the report of a 2012 institutional review team. One of those highlighted the need for Trinity to systematically monitor the implementation of quality assurance processes and outcomes. A decade on, this review team is again urging Trinity to ensure that policies and procedures are consistently put into practice 'on the ground.' This recommendation should be treated as a matter of urgency. The Trinity community as a whole is encouraged to work to

ensure the institution achieves this. The review team considers this essential if Trinity is to assure itself that it is providing a transparent, equitable and inclusive environment for all of its learners and staff moving forward.

The review team highlights that Trinity, like all publicly funded Irish higher education institutions, has been restricted by significantly reduced levels of public funding and the national public sector Employment Control Framework. These constraints are causing significant stress across the sector and pose a real threat to the capacity of Irish higher education institutions to maintain their international reputations and hold their position on various rankings. Trinity's leadership faces very real challenges in overcoming these obstacles. However, the review team emphasises that many of the recommendations in this report do not require major budgetary reallocations to be actioned. The top 5 recommendations (listed below) in particular will significantly enhance quality at Trinity. Recommendations 1 and 2 will facilitate Trinity to govern and manage quality with enhanced effectiveness and accountability. Recommendation 3 will ensure that Trinity's values are reflected throughout the procedures that most impact its staff, by providing clarity in relation to career development and opportunities for progression. Recommendations 4 and 5 will provide for a student experience at Trinity that meets the contemporary expectations of students and stakeholders entering a world class, inclusive and dynamic higher education institution. The review team is of the view that the achievement of these outcomes is very much 'within the gift' of Trinity.

The review team concludes this report by reflecting on the energy, dynamism and commitment reflected in their discussions with Trinity's leadership, staff, students and stakeholders. Despite the many and varied challenges of the past

decade, and in particular the past two years, this is an exciting time to be at Trinity.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The review team commends Trinity for taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to the quality framework which acknowledges and supports the interrelationship between internal quality assurance activities and external reviews.
2. The review team commends Trinity for undertaking a sound and comprehensive self-evaluation of the Board, and in a frank and constructive report laying out deficiencies and making recommendations to address these.
3. The review team commends Trinity for placing emphasis on dialogue, consultation and engaged discussion in the institution's participatory systems of governance, and the appreciation of consensus in decision-making throughout the college.
4. The review team commends Trinity for involving two linked providers, the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) and the Marino Institute of Education (MIE), in the main review visit.
5. The review team commends all of those at Trinity who have been involved in initiating, promoting and implementing the Trinity Education Project (TEP). The achievements of the TEP are significant and provide enhanced opportunities for Trinity learners.
6. The review team commends Trinity on achieving significant outcomes thus far through both the TAP and TA21, noting the importance and impact of the work undertaken in this area.
7. The review team commends Trinity for implementing a wide-ranging and sustained response to supporting international students during the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, pre-orientation programme, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year activity programmes.
8. The review team commends the delivery of varied and well-received learning and development activities at Trinity and the resourcefulness demonstrated by the team involved in delivering this with minimal resources.
9. The review team commends all involved in teaching and learning at Trinity (inclusive of teaching, research, administration, technical, support and professional staff) on successfully executing a pivot to fully online programme delivery in highly adverse circumstances.
10. The review team commends Trinity's support services for working to maximise limited resources, coordinate service provision where appropriate, and deliver continuity of care and support to Trinity's community of learners throughout the pandemic.
11. The review team commends Trinity for developing the Global Room as a support hub and social space for international students at Trinity.
12. The review team commends all involved at Trinity for collaborating effectively to upgrade the Virtual Learning Environment, SITS and associated remote learning and working IT systems and for responding agilely to the rapid pivot to online delivery.
13. The review team commends Trinity for developing an International Partnership Toolkit, easing the process of establishing global partnerships at school level.
14. The review team commends Trinity for establishing a research impact pilot in 2020, aimed at advancing a culture of strategic engagement and impact assessment.

15. The review team commends Trinity Research and Innovation for delivering significant grant funding (Trinity Research and Innovation) from SFI and Horizon2020 and consistently demonstrating national leadership in this endeavour.
16. The review team commends Trinity's innovative efforts in aligning the philanthropic campaign Inspiring Generations, which has raised €400 million, to the advancement of research-related projects (TSJCI, E3RI, redevelopment of the Old Library). Such initiatives are invaluable in securing financial security so that Trinity can realise its vision.
4. The review team recommends that Trinity hold the schools both responsible and accountable for implementing policies and procedures consistently, thus empowering their role in the process and applying the principle of subsidiarity, as appropriate. To facilitate this, the review team recommends that Trinity immediately progress plans for building leadership and management capability across the university, as this will impact positively on the management and governance of quality assurance at all levels.
5. The review team recommends that Trinity focus the management of quality assurance on enhanced monitoring of the implementation of academic policies and ensuring understanding by end-users (students and staff members), with consistent implementation and overall compliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Governance and Management of Quality Assurance

1. The review team strongly recommends that Trinity, without delay, implement tangible and formal improvements to its current structures for the governance and management of quality assurance, appropriately devolving decision-making to its principal and compliance committees and other substructures for managerial and operational matters to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and agility of Trinity at a pivotal time for the institution.
2. The review team recommends that Trinity ensure that the Board and Council focus their agendas appropriately and exclusively on matters of strategy, principle and policy as required by the Code of Governance of Irish Universities 2019. Within this, clarify unambiguously the remit and responsibilities of Board and Council for the governance of quality assurance for all members, including incumbents.
3. The review team recommends that Trinity act to provide clarity in relation to specific accountabilities for the management of quality assurance and formalise professional communication pertaining to all aspects of quality assurance in the college.

Access

6. The review team recommends that enhanced resources and staffing be introduced to the Academic Registry at Trinity.

Performance Management

7. The review team recommends that Trinity develop and implement explicit, well-documented and clearly communicated employment, tenure and promotion criteria for academic staff at all levels. Concurrently, implement and communicate a career development framework for non-academic staff. Within this, implement annual appraisals as part of a Performance Management and Development System for all staff members at all levels.

Professional Development for Staff who Teach

8. The review team recommends that Trinity develop an overarching strategy for learning and development that aligns to Trinity's developmental needs and strategic objectives for the decade ahead. As a central pillar of this strategy, the review team recommends that Trinity implements compulsory participation for all staff involved in teaching in some form

of professional development in teaching and learning, in line with the National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education.

Assessment Practices

9. Trinity is recommended to commence a process of programme-level reviews of its assessment and feedback strategies. Within this, the teaching and learning community at Trinity should draw upon learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic regarding alternatives to invigilated exams and work toward the implementation of renewed assessment and feedback strategies that offer authentic, inclusive and (where feasible) integrated experiences that take account of the growing diversity of learners. Academic Policy in this area could be usefully expanded.

Supports for International Students

10. The review team recommends that Trinity draw upon its significant experience of recruiting, hosting and supporting international students over the past decade to formulate a more sustainable strategy for international student recruitment in the post-Covid-19 era. That strategy should continue to facilitate and promote diversity and a global orientation across the student body, while safeguarding the quality of the experience and the timely and appropriate availability of supports for all students.

Supports for Learners

11. The review team recommends that Trinity provide all cohorts and subgroups of students with timely, clear and consistent information about key policies, including (but not limited to) those that relate to access, transfer and progression, learner supports, assessment and feedback. Within this, Trinity should pay particular attention to the needs of international students and students entering the college via access routes.

Learner Information Systems

12. The review team recommends that Trinity undertake a comprehensive review of systems, projects and staffing requirements in IT services and Academic Registry to ensure that the works planned will enable Trinity to achieve its stated vision and goals and accommodate expected growth in student and staff numbers. The review should consider system-level supports for quality processes, e.g. automation of reporting on quality metrics and development of self-service analytical tools to support data interrogation and reporting.

Governance of Information and Data Management

13. The review team recommends that Trinity explore how executive-level expertise in IDM can be resourced and facilitated to contribute across the college and be represented on the College Board.

Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

14. The review team recommends that Trinity formulate and implement initiatives to increase survey response rates and improve the consistency of feedback mechanisms across the student population in line with international best practice.

Performance, metrics and rankings

15. The review team recommends that Trinity continue to review and update research KPIs, taking into account the ambitions of Trinity as a research-intensive university in an international setting.





Section 5

Top 5 Commendations and Recommendations

Top 5 Commendations and Recommendations

TOP FIVE COMMENDATIONS

1. The review team commends Trinity for placing emphasis on dialogue, consultation and engaged discussion in the institution's participatory systems of governance, and the appreciation of consensus in decision-making throughout the college.
2. The review team commends all of those at Trinity who have been involved in initiating, promoting and implementing the Trinity Education Project (TEP). The achievements of the TEP are significant and provide enhanced opportunities for Trinity learners.
3. The review team commends all involved in teaching and learning at Trinity (inclusive of teaching, research, administration, technical, support and professional staff) on successfully executing a pivot to fully online programme delivery in highly adverse circumstances.
4. The review team commends Trinity on delivering significant grant funding (Trinity Research and Innovation) from SFI and Horizon2020 and consistently demonstrating national leadership in this endeavour.
5. The review team commends Trinity's innovative efforts in aligning the philanthropic campaign Inspiring Generations, which has



raised €400 million, to the advancement of research-related projects (TSJCI, E3RI, redevelopment of the Old Library). Such initiatives are invaluable in securing financial security so that Trinity can realise its vision.

5. Provide all cohorts and subgroups of students with timely, clear and consistent information about key policies, including (but not limited to) those that relate to access, transfer and progression, learner supports, assessment and feedback. Within this, pay particular attention to the needs of international students and students entering the college via access routes.

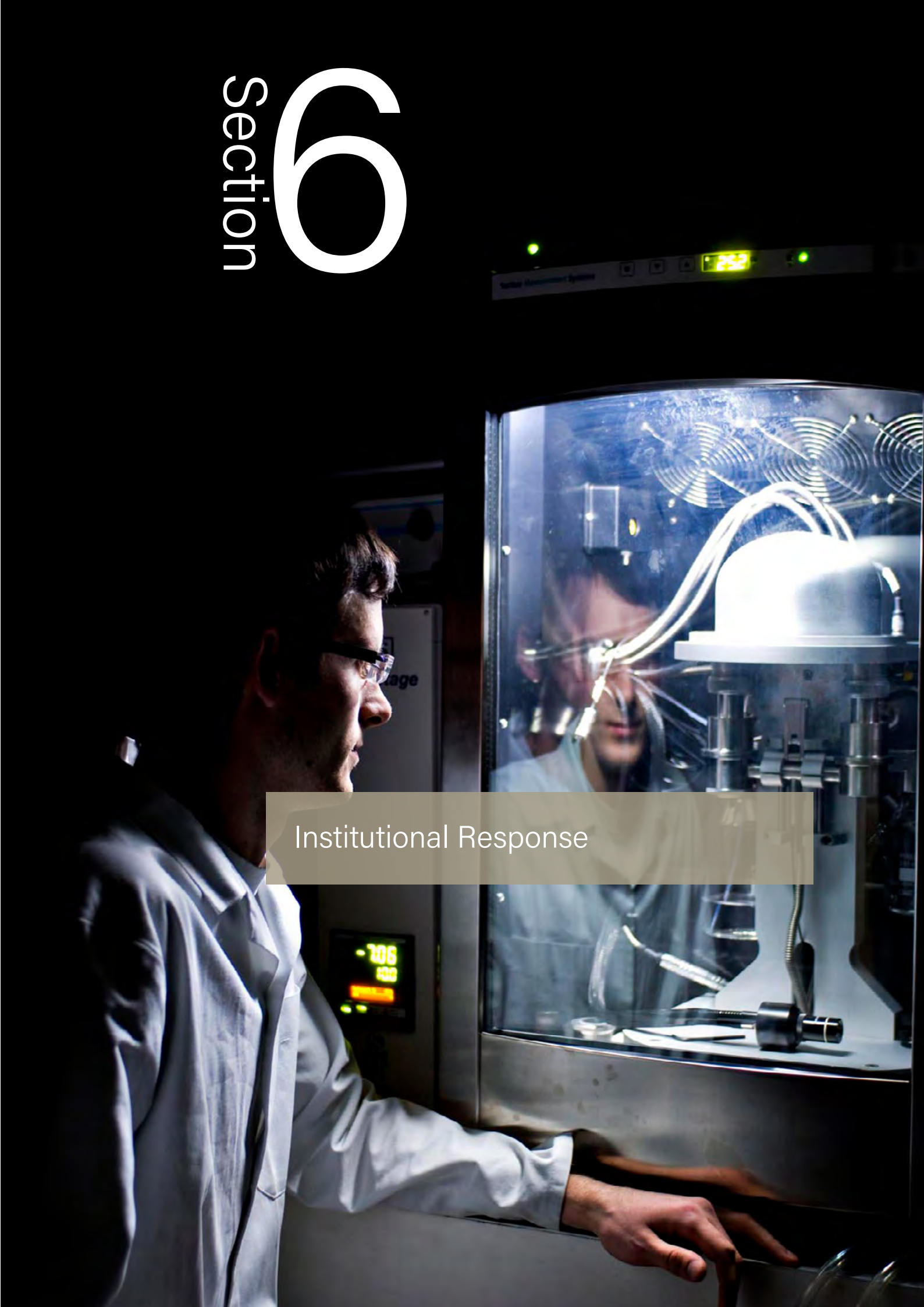
TOP FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Without delay, implement tangible and formal improvements to the current governance and management structures that will increase the effectiveness, efficiency and agility of Trinity at a pivotal time for the institution.
2. Focus the management of quality assurance on enhanced monitoring of the implementation of academic policies; ensure understanding by end-users (students and staff members), consistent implementation and overall compliance.
3. Develop and implement explicit, well-documented and clearly communicated employment, tenure and promotion criteria for academic staff at all levels. Concurrently, implement and communicate a career development framework for non-academic staff. Within this, implement annual appraisals as part of a Performance Management and Development System for all staff members at all levels.
4. Develop an overarching strategy for Learning and Development that aligns to Trinity's developmental needs and strategic objectives for the decade ahead. As a central pillar of this strategy, the review team recommends that Trinity implement compulsory participation for all staff involved in teaching in some form of professional development in teaching and learning, in line with the National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Irish Higher Education.



Section 6

Institutional Response



Institutional Response



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Response to the QQI CINNTE Institutional Review Report 2022 of Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin Trinity College Dublin is committed to quality assurance and welcomes opportunities to continuously improve in this area. The Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) CINNTE Institutional Review Report 2022 provides clear recommendations, including ones which we identified ourselves before the review process, and we look forward to acting on these. On behalf of Trinity, I would like to thank the review team and QQI for their hard work throughout this process.

In the decade since the last Institutional Review there has been far reaching change in the Irish higher education sector. Increased legislative and regulatory requirements as well as the world-wide pandemic and intensified global challenges have coincided with a decade of continued decreased state funding to universities in Ireland. During this decade, however, Trinity has, among other things, significantly increased the diversity of the student population (25% of students now come through non-traditional routes); reformed its undergraduate curriculum; further enhanced its research reputation; increased its research, philanthropic and non-government income; became hugely internationalised; engaged in significant and strategic capital projects; invested significantly in information and data management systems; successfully negotiated the pandemic and the demands of online teaching; and, as of 2022, regained its QS ranking position in the top 100 and retained its long-standing position as the highest-ranked university in Ireland across all rankings. It is reassuring to know that in this decade of considerable internal and external change and upheaval that the review team found Trinity's "documented quality assurance procedures constitute a robust integrated system that addresses the learning experience of students and notably covers teaching and assessment."

Trinity will engage now in a consultative process with staff and students, through its governance structures, on the CINNTE Institutional Review Report with a view to submitting a comprehensive institutional plan to address the fifteen recommendations raised, many of which will help further improve quality assurance in Trinity.

While this response cannot address all fifteen recommendations, we note that two themes run through several of the recommendations; namely, concerns raised by the review team in relation to aspects of our governance systems, and concerns relating to the consistency in the implementation of academic policies across the College. Our own reflections through our Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) also highlighted some of these issues, and we welcome the review team's observations and recommendations to address the same.

Trinity College Dublin is an autonomous institution with academic self-governance and collegiate and devolved decision making. In any governance system there is always room to continuously improve and we ourselves recognise that and are proactive on that front. However, we do feel that the overall sentiment of the recommendations in the report in relation to the composition and function of the Board do not take this into account, nor fully reflect the legal landscape. The Trinity Board Review Working Group



made substantial recommendations, approved by the Board in 2021 and endorsed by the international Review Team, for reform of the Board. We have already implemented some of those recommendations. It is important to note that implementing further recommendations in relation to the composition of the Board itself necessitates an Act of the Oireachtas (legislature) and then revision to the College Statutes. In fact, we have already created and approved a Supplemental Charter that is another necessary step in this process, should the HEA Bill 2022 be passed in the Autumn.

The review team commend Trinity for “placing emphasis on dialogue, consultation and engaged discussion in the institution’s participatory systems of governance, and the appreciation of consensus in decision-making throughout the College.” This system of governance is highly valued by Trinity; however, we are aware that there can sometimes be a perception of “significant tension between the high value placed on participation and consensus in decision-making on the one hand, and the widely acknowledged ineffectiveness of this in progressing issues of substantial importance on the other.” The ability of Trinity’s governance and management structures to respond agilely and successfully to the crisis arising from the pandemic and lockdown demonstrates its capacity to quickly embrace change, and the gains achieved from this experience will be embedded to increase “effectiveness, efficiency, and agility” in progressing issues of strategic and substantial importance.

We continuously strive to improve communication of decisions and policies that impact the on-going business of the College. We recognise, however, instances of ‘disconnect’ in some decision-making processes and in the communication of those policies and procedures. A Policy Management Framework, developed in 2021/22 and approved by Council and Board in April 2022, strengthens processes for developing, approving, and monitoring the implementation of policies. We recognise, however, the importance of formalising communication pertaining to all aspects of quality assurance in the College. Further investment in upgrading and maintaining our information management and digital systems will assist in the effective monitoring and implementation of policies and procedures.

We are delighted that the review team found “a diverse, talented and motivated student population and a dedicated staff... and that the Trinity community as a whole is highly focused on making a positive societal impact.” The review process afforded Trinity staff and students the opportunity to reflect on individual and collective responsibility for creating a quality culture in an environment that advances scholarship and supports a transformative student experience.

In conclusion, I wish to sincerely thank all involved in the review process; Trinity staff and students; collaborative education partners; the international review team; and the QQI staff who guided us throughout the process with professional impartiality and support.

Professor Linda Doyle

Provost & President

July 2022

APPENDICES

Appendices

A: Terms of Reference

B: Main Review Visit Schedule

Appendix A

Terms of Reference for the Review of Universities and other Designated Awarding Bodies

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

1.1 Context and Legislative Underpinning

These are the Terms of Reference for the Review of a Designated Awarding Body (DAB). The concept of a Designated Awarding Body is derived from the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act, 2012](#) (The 2012 Act) and is defined as ‘a previously established university, the National University of Ireland, an educational institution established as a university under Section 9 of the Act of 1997, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland’. The following institutions are Designated Awarding Bodies:

Dublin City University	National University of Ireland, Galway
Technological University Dublin	Maynooth University
University College Cork	The National University of Ireland
University College Dublin	The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
University of Limerick	Trinity College Dublin

In 2016, QQI adopted a [policy](#) on cyclical review in higher education which sets out in greater detail the scope, purposes, criteria, model and procedures for review. These are represented in the Terms of Reference and the Handbook for the Review of Designated Awarding Bodies. QQI has introduced an annual reporting process for institutions whereby institutions are required to submit an Annual Institutional Quality Report (AIQR). The aim of the AIQR is to provide a contemporary account of quality assurance (QA) within an institution. Information is provided through an online template, and it is published. Collated annual reports are provided to periodical review teams. Annual reporting allows institutions and QQI to engage on a regular basis. Published annual reports assist with documentation management for institutions in reviews and lessen the burden on institutions in the lead-up to a review.

This review cycle is being conducted in a very changed context for higher education. The landscape for higher education has been significantly reshaped since the last cycle of reviews commenced. Smaller colleges have been merged with universities and many institutes of technology are reorganising and preparing mergers as part of the Technological University process. New alliances and clusters, envisaged by [Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape](#) have commenced. A new approach to public funding

has been introduced and operated by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Initiatives for enhancement such as the *Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)* and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL) have been formalised at a national level. These developments mean that there are new sources of information and external benchmarks available to institutions that can be used to inform self-evaluation in this review cycle. Key measurements such as entry profiles, student retention, graduate profiles and staff and student satisfaction rates can provide some quantitative evidence of the quality of an institution's offer.

The 2012 Act states that QQI shall consult with the HEA in carrying out the review. QQI has agreed with HEA that this will take the form of engagement with QQI on the Terms of Reference and confirmation of the status of the institution within the higher education system, sharing individual institutional profiles and data with the team.

This is the third review round of Designated Awarding Bodies. Previous rounds took place in 2004-2005 and 2009-2012.

1.2 Purposes

The Policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions highlights four purposes for individual institutional reviews. These are set out in the table below.

Purpose	Achieved and measured through:
<p>1. To encourage a QA culture and the enhancement of the student learning environment and experience within institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasising the student and the student learning experience in reviews • providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them • exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures • exploring quality as well as quality assurance within the institution
<p>2. To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasising the ownership of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution • pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level • evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards • evaluating how the institution has identified and measured itself against its own benchmarks and metrics to support quality assurance governance and procedures • emphasising the improvement of quality assurance procedures
<p>3. To contribute to public confidence in the quality of institutions by promoting transparency and public awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent • publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences • evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible
<p>4. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution • ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence • facilitating institutions to identify measurement, comparison and analytic techniques, based on quantitative data relevant to their own mission and context, to support quality assurance • promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation

SECTION 2

OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA

2.1 Review Objectives

Objective 1

To review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the institution through consideration of the procedures set out, primarily, in the AIQR. Where necessary, the information provided by the AIQR is supplemented by additional information provided through documentation requests and interviews. The scope of this includes the procedures for reporting, governance and publication. This also incorporates an analysis of the ways in which the institution applies evidence-based approaches to support QA processes, including quantitative analysis, evidence gathering and comparison. Progress on the development of QA since the previous review of the institution will be evaluated. Consideration will also be given to the effectiveness of the AIQR and ISER procedures within the institution.

The scope of this objective also extends to the overarching procedures of the institution for assuring itself of the quality of its research degree programmes and research activities.

This objective also encompasses the effectiveness of the procedures established by the institution for the assurance of the quality of collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision, including the procedures for the approval and review of linked providers, joint awarding arrangements, joint provision and other collaborative arrangements such as clusters and mergers.

Objective 2

To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.

To review the congruency of QA procedures and enhancements with the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.

To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.

Objective 3

To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.

Objective 4

Following the introduction of a statutory international education QA scheme, to determine compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

2.2 REVIEW CRITERIA

Criteria for Objective 1

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the effectiveness of the QA procedures of the institution and the extent of their implementation. The report will also include a specific statement about the extent to which the QA procedures can be considered compliant with the ESG and as having regard to QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (G). These statements will be highlighted in the Review Report.

The statements may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements, recommendations and possibly recommendations for directions in reference to this objective.

The criteria to be used by the team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- ESG
- QQI *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core)*
- QQI *Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Universities and Other Designated Awarding Bodies*
- QQI *Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes*
- Section 28 of the 2012 Act
- The institution's own objectives and goals for quality assurance

Where appropriate and actioned by the institution, additional QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines will be incorporated.

The QQI *Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent/Private Providers* may be an appropriate reference document if they have been adopted as their linked provider(s).

Criteria for Objective 2

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.

The statements may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations in reference to this objective. If identified, innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement will be highlighted in the report.

The criteria to be used by the team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- The institution's own mission and vision
- The goals or targets for quality identified by the institution
- Additional sources of reference identified by the institution.

Criteria for Objective 3

The report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures are in keeping with QQI policy for Access, Transfer and Progression.

This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations and possibly recommendations for conditions in reference to this objective.

The criterion to be used by the team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

[*QQI Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression*](#)

Criteria for Objective 4

When the statutory international education quality assurance scheme is in place, the report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures are compliant with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations and possibly recommendations for conditions in reference to this objective.

The criterion to be used by the team in reaching conclusions for this objective is the *Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners*

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE REVIEW FOR EACH OBJECTIVE

- How have QA procedures and reviews been implemented within the institution?
- How effective are the internal QA procedures and reviews of the institution?
- Are the QA procedures in keeping with European Standards and Guidelines?
- Are the QA procedures in keeping with QQI policy and guidelines, or their equivalent?
- Who takes responsibility for quality and QA across the institution?
- How transparent, accessible and comprehensive is reporting on quality and QA?
- How is quality promoted and enhanced?
- Are there effective innovations in QA and quality enhancement?
- Is the student experience in keeping with the institution's own stated mission and strategy?
- Are achievements in QA and quality in keeping with the institution's own stated mission and strategy?
- How do achievements in QA and quality measure up against the institution's own goals or targets for quality?

SECTION 3

THE REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 Process

The primary basis for the review process is this handbook.

3.2 Review Team Profile

QQI will appoint the review team to conduct the institutional review. Review teams are composed of peer reviewers who are students and senior institutional leaders and staff from comparable institutions as well as external representatives. The size of the team and the duration of their visit will depend on the size and complexity of the institution but in general the review team for a Designated Awarding Body will consist of 6 persons. Each review team includes a Chairperson and Coordinating Reviewer, and may be supported by a rapporteur, who is not a member of the team, to take and collate notes of meetings. A single team may undertake the review of two different institutions.

Reviewers are not QQI employees, but rather peers of the institution. The institution will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their review team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, and QQI will ensure an appropriate and entirely independent team of reviewers is selected for the institution. QQI has final approval over the composition of each review team.

There will be appropriate gender representation on the review team. The team will consist of carefully selected and trained and briefed reviewers who have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their tasks. The team will operate under the leadership of the Review Chairperson.

The review team will be appointed in keeping with the following profile:

1. A Review Chairperson

The role of the Chairperson is to act as leader of the review team. This is an international reviewer who is a (serving or recently former) senior third-level institution leader – usually a head of institution or deputy head of institution or a senior policy advisor who:

- possesses a wide range of higher education experience;
- demonstrates a deep understanding of the complexities of the higher education system;
- understands often unique QA governance arrangements;

has proven experience in the management of innovation and change.

2. A Coordinating Reviewer

The role of the Coordinating Reviewer is to act as secretary to the team as well as to be a full review team member. This is usually a person with expertise in the higher education system and prior experience in participating in external reviews. As the coordinating reviewer is responsible for drafting the report, he or she will possess proven excellent writing abilities.

3. A Student Reviewer

The role of the student reviewer is to represent the student voice in the review team. The student reviewer will be typically a PhD student with significant experience of higher education or an undergraduate student who has completed a specific programme preparing them for the role or who has previously had a key role in other institutional reviews.

4. An External Representative

The role of the external representative is to bring a ‘third mission’ perspective to the review team.

In addition to the specific roles above, the full team complement will include a range of experts with the following knowledge and experience:

- International reviewer experience
- EQF and Bologna expertise
- Experience of higher education QA processes
- Experience of managing research within or across institutions
- Experience in governance

Experience and proven ability in the advancement of teaching and learning

Details of review team roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix B.

3.3 PROCEDURE AND TIMELINES

The outline set out in the policy (below) will be elaborated further and timelines will be set out to accompany it, through discussion and consultation.

Step	Action	Dates	Outcome
Terms of Reference (ToR)	Completion of an institutional information profile Confirmation of ToR with institution and HEA	9 months before the Main Review Visit (MRV)	Published Terms of Reference
Preparation	Appointment of an expert review team Consultation with the institution on any possible conflicts of interest	6-9 months before the MRV	Review team appointed
Self-evaluation	Forwarding to QQI of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)	12 weeks before the MRV	Published ISER (optional)
Desk Review	Desk review of the ISER by the team	Before the initial meeting	ISER initial response provided
Initial Meeting	An initial meeting of the review team, including reviewer training and briefing	5 weeks after the ISER, 7 weeks before the MRV	Team training and briefing is complete. Team identify key themes and additional documents required

Step	Action	Dates	Outcome
Planning Visit	A visit to the institution by the Chair and Coordinating Reviewer to receive information about the ISER process, discuss the schedule for the main review visit and discuss additional documentation requests	5 weeks after the ISER, 7 weeks before the MRV	An agreed note of the planning visit
Main Review Visit	To receive and consider evidence on the ways in which the institution has performed in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference	12 weeks after the receipt of ISER	A short preliminary oral report to the institution
Report	Preparation of a draft report by the team	6-8 weeks after the MRV	
	Draft report sent to the institution for a check of factual accuracy	12 weeks after the MRV	
	Institution responds with any factual accuracy corrections	2 weeks after receipt of draft report	
	Preparation of a final report	2 weeks after factual accuracy response	QQI Review Report
	Preparation of an institutional response	2 weeks after final report	Institutional response
Outcomes	Consideration of the Review Report and findings by QQI together with the institutional response and the plan for implementation	Next available meeting of QQI committee	Formal decision about the effectiveness of QA procedures In some cases, directions to the institution and a schedule for their implementation
	Preparation of QQI quality profile	2 weeks after decision	Quality profile published

Step	Action	Dates	Outcome
Follow-up	The form of follow-up will be determined by whether 'directions' are issued to the institution. In general, where directions are issued, the follow-up period will be sooner and more specific actions may be required as part of the direction.		
	Preparation of an institutional implementation plan	1 month after publication of review report	Publication of the implementation plan by the institution
	One-year follow-up report to QQI for noting. This and subsequent follow-up may be integrated into annual reports to QQI	1 year after publication of review report	Publication of the follow-up report by QQI and the institution
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through the annual institutional reporting and dialogue process	Continuous	Annual Institutional Quality Report Dialogue Meeting notes

Note: The total period from start to finish is approximately 15 months but will depend on QQI committee meeting dates.

Appendix B

Main Review Visit Schedule

Monday, 7 March 2022

Time	Meeting with	Purpose
08.30 - 09.15	Private Review Team Meeting	
09.00 - 09.30	Institutional Coordinator	Meeting with Institutional Coordinator
09.30 - 10.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
10.00 - 10.30	Provost	Private meeting with Provost
10.30 - 11.15	Senior Management Team	To discuss institutional mission, strategic plan, roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement.
11.15 - 11.45	Private Review Team Meeting	
11.45 - 12.30	College Board Representatives	To discuss the mechanisms employed by the governing body for monitoring quality assurance and enhancement and how it ensures effectiveness.
12.30 - 13.30	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch	
13.30 - 14.15	Faculty Deans, Heads of Academic Units and Education Support Areas	To discuss strategic management and quality assurance structures, including the roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and management between the centre, faculties, schools and departments.
14.15 - 15.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
15.00 - 15.45	Management and staff involved in staff development and human resources	To discuss staffing issues and constraints; and policies and procedures for staff promotion, diversity, recruitment and appraisal.
15.45 - 16.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
16.00 - 16.45	External Stakeholders	Meeting employers, local industry/sector representatives, community groups, including for example: stakeholders that are an integral element of higher education provision
16.45 - 17.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
17.00 - 17.45	TCD Students' Union and Graduate Students' Union Officers	To discuss student engagement and student role in quality assurance, strategic planning, and decision-making processes.
17.45 - 18.15	Private Review Team Meeting	

Tuesday, 8 March 2022

Time	Meeting with	Indicative Purpose
08.30 - 08.45	Private Review Team Meeting	
08.45 - 09.00	Institutional Coordinator	Meeting with Institutional Coordinator to clarify issues from previous day and review today.
09.00 - 09.45	Members of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Team (ISET), ISET Subgroups and Quality Committee	To discuss experience of implementing quality assurance throughout the College.
09.45-10.10	Private Review Team Meeting	
10.10 - 10.55	Student Representatives: Undergraduate and Postgraduate (Taught and Research)	To discuss student engagement in Trinity, particularly the student learning experience.
10.55 - 11.20	Private Review Team Meeting	
11.20 - 12.05	Representatives of University Council and the Academic Committees of Council	Discussions on strategic management and quality assurance structures, including the roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and management between the centre, faculties and schools/departments
12.05 - 12.30	Private Review Team Meeting	
12.30-13.15	Heads of School: STEM and AHSS	To discuss quality management processes at the academic department level, implementation and how their effectiveness is ensured.
13.15-14.15	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch	
14.15 - 15.00	Postdoctoral Fellows and Assistant Professor Research Staff	To discuss supports available for the development of researchers/teaching staff (including training and provision of information) and perspectives on career pathways available.
15.00 - 15.15	Private Review Team Meeting	
15.15 - 16.00	Academic Staff (Research)	To discuss staff experience of research management and supervision, the relationship between teaching, research and innovation, quality assurance and enhancements and the impacts on the research student experience.
16.00 - 16.15	Private Review Team Meeting	
16.15-17.00	Dean and Heads of Research	To discuss how the quality of research output is supported and monitored.
17.00 - 17.15	Private Review Team Meeting	

Wednesday, 9 March 2022

Time	Meeting with	Indicative Purpose
08.30 - 09.15	Private Review Team Meeting	
09.15 - 09.30	Institutional Coordinator	Meeting with Institutional Coordinator to clarify issues from previous day and review today.
09.30 - 10.15	Meeting with Academic Staff Representatives from Schools: AHSS, STEM, HS	To discuss involvement in quality assurance and enhancement.
10.15-10.45	Private Review Team Meeting	
10.45 - 11.15	Management and staff representatives from Linked Providers	To discuss the arrangements in place with Trinity for ensuring the quality of provision and enhancement in the linked provider.
11.15-12.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
12.00 - 12.45	Management and Staff involved in Collaborative Delivery and Collaborative Monitoring	To discuss arrangements for ensuring the quality of provision for staff and students for programmes offered with collaborative partners.
12.45-13.45	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch	
13.45 - 14.30	International Students	To discuss international student engagement in the institution, particularly the student learning experience.
14.30-15.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
15.00 - 15.45	Management and Staff involved in Academic Practice / Curriculum Development, Library and Information Services	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
15.45-16.15	Private Review Team Meeting	
16.15 - 17.00	Managers and Staff with responsibility for Student Support Services	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
17.00 – 17.30	Private Review Team Meeting	

Thursday, 10 March 2022

Time	Meeting with	Indicative Purpose
08.30 - 09.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
09:00-09:30	Institutional Coordinator	Meeting with Institutional Coordinator to clarify issues from previous day and review today.
09.30-10.15	Management and Staff involved in Internationalisation	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced. To discuss international student engagement in the institution, particularly the student learning experience.
10.15-10.45	Private Review Team Meeting	
10.45-11.15	Staff Representatives: Professional and Student Services	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
11.15 - 11.30	Private Review Team Meeting	
11.30-12.10	Staff Representatives: Accreditation and Placements, Technical Staff	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
12.10-12.30	Private Review Team Meeting	
12.30 - 13.10	Staff Representatives: Professional and Administration, Systems Managers	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
13.10 - 14.00	Private Review Team Meeting and Lunch	
14.00 - 14.40	Staff Representatives: Curriculum Renewal and Innovation	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
14.40 - 15.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
15.00 - 15.35	Staff Representatives: Access and Widening Participation	To discuss how quality of processes is monitored and enhanced.
15.45 - 16.20	Student Representatives: Access and Widening Participation	To discuss student engagement and the student role in quality assurance and decision-making processes with regard to access and progression routes
16.20 - 17.30	Private Review Team Meeting	

Friday, 11 March 2022

Time	Meeting with	Indicative Purpose
08.30 - 09.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
09.00 - 09.30	Review Team and QQI	To discuss the review team's main findings and alignment with the terms of reference.
09:30 - 10.00	Review Team with Provost and Vice-Provost	
10.00-12.00	Private Review Team Meeting	
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Parallel meeting of QQI and Institutional Coordinator</i>	To gather feedback on the review process.
12.00-12.30	Oral Report	

Glossary

Glossary of terms, acronyms and abbreviations from this report

Term	Definition
AQR/AIQRs	Annual Quality Reports/ Annual Institutional Quality Reports
AR	Academic Registry
BBM	Baseline Budgeting Model
CAO	Central Applications Office
CHARM-EU	Challenge-Driven, Accessible, Research-based and Mobile European University Alliance
CINNTE	The name given to QQI's first higher education review cycle
CMIS	Central Management Information System (timetabling system)
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DAB	Designated Awarding Body
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education
DDPO	Deputy Data Protection Officer
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
Digital Trinity	Digital Transformation Initiatives
DORA	(San Francisco) Declaration on Research Assessment
E3RI	Engineering, Environment and Emerging Technologies
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – facilitating the movement of students with recognised credits between institutions and across national borders
EOG	Executive Officers Group
Erasmus+	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ESG (2015)	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FindAMasters	An online directory of Masters degrees and postgraduate qualifications at universities around the world
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
GRS/GRS3	Global Relations Strategy
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IDM	Information and Data Management
InCites	Research performance profiles (comprehensive publication & citation reports)
IRC	Irish Research Council

ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
ISSET	Institutional Self-Evaluation Team
ISSE	Irish Survey of Student Engagement
IT	Information Technology
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
IUA	Irish Universities Association
LENS	Learning Educational Needs Summary
LERU	League of European Research Universities
LRES	Living Research Excellence Strategy
MIE	Marino Institute of Education
NFETL	National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
PAC	Public Affairs and Communications
PDCA	Plan, Do, Check, Act
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Provost	The chief officer of the University and the Chair of the Board
QA/E	Quality Assurance/Enhancement
QAG	QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds (World university rankings)
RIAM	Royal Irish Academy of Music
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSS	Research Support Systems
SciVal	Web-based tool used for research performance management
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SITS	Student Information System
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TA21	Trinity Access 21
TC	Trinity Communications
TEP	Trinity Education Project
THE	Times Higher Education (World university rankings)
Trinity	Trinity College Dublin
Trinity INC	Inclusive Curriculum
TSJCI	Trinity St James's Cancer Institute
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VP Global	Vice President for Global Engagement
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WPG	Widening Participation Group

