Institutional Review Implementation Plan
Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin
March 2023

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SECTION 1: Governance and Management of Quality Assurance (Recommendations 1-5, 11 and 13)

The Institutional Review Report (IRR) makes seven recommendations that fall under 'Governance and Management of Quality Assurance', which dovetail in part with recommendations from Trinity's Board Review Working Group (BRWG), 2021, and other governance reforms we are in the process of making. Trinity has established a Programme of Work to deliver the governance changes needed to comply with Trinity's Supplemental Charter of 2022 and with the HEA Act, 2022. The College Board and the University Council constitute the key elements of Trinity's governance: Board covers the 'organisational' aspect of Trinity and Council covers matters of teaching, research, and other academic aspects of Trinity life. The Programme of Work on reforming governance (herein referred to as 'governance reform') is conducting a root and branch review of the committees of Board, assessing how they can best serve the needs of Board; comply with changes in legislation; address, where relevant, the IRR recommendations; and align with societal, economic, and global changes in recent years.

This work involves retiring, merging, and /or adding committees as appropriate; revising terms of references and membership; developing training procedures for committee members, chairs and secretaries on responsibilities and accountabilities; and developing mechanisms for communicating decisions and outcomes from committees and implementing and reviewing performance periodically.

This work is informed by issues of importance to Trinity and guided by a wide-ranging analysis of the governance structures in other institutions and universities as well as discussions with colleagues; it acknowledges constraints that are obligatory, our own experiences to date, a desire to not change for change's sake, and a desire to not add unnecessary complexity.

Core funding deficit, the costs imposed in preparation for Brexit, and the drop in revenue generation from the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic have had a significant impact on the University's revenue. We will prioritise and address those IRR recommendations that accord with our priorities in the medium term and are in line with the phased implementation of the necessary governance changes underway.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
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.	In progress as part of governance reform.	*Phased implementation September 2023 the new Board composition and terms of reference will be in place* *2023/24 continue the work of principal committee reform* *2024/25 -full implementation*
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	In progress as part of governance reform. Board and Council do focus on strategy, principle, and policy. Agendas for Board and Council have been further reformatted as was recommended in our BRWG Report. In response to this, the Board has put in place an annual work programme in line with these recommendations. This work programme is	*ditto*

| | | thematic (e.g., Strategy and Risk, Financial Matters, Strategic Capital Projects, Legislation and Governance) and these themes are reflected in the work of the principal committees of Board. An Annual Work Programme for Council was adopted in 2022.

A Policy Management Framework to update the review process for policies was approved by Board in April 2022 , see: https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/Policy-Management-Framework-April2022.pdf | |
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| 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. | In progress as part of governance reform.

The committees of Council and Board have devolved responsibility for quality assurance within the remit of individual committees. A root and branch review of these committees is part of the governance reform Programme of Work. Currently the Quality Committee is a compliance committee of both Board and Council and reports and makes recommendations to Board and Council. The Programme of Work is considering how best to place within the new governance structures the compliance function of quality and the on-going enhancement and management of quality. | *ditto* |

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.	The governance reform programme is complemented with a programme of culture transformation, which includes an implementation roadmap. Defining, promoting, and embedding our values in our activities and behaviours is a key feature of this programme. Our values include accountability, and in addition to existing leadership programmes, HR is creating a development programme to build capability, both skills and behaviour competence, to support leaders and managers across the university in delivering their roles. This programme will be cognisant of staff development needs to implement effectively the changes arising from the governance reform programme. Culture transformation has commenced with a roadmap that includes our values and builds supporting programmes for these to be understood and incorporated into lived behaviours. HR will create a development programme, in conjunction with the community, to build capability, both skills and behaviour competence, to support leaders and managers in delivering their roles, subject to a budget being available. Alongside offerings for existing leaders, development programmes will focus on key stages of career path	Phased implementation and resource depended 2023-2026

		(i.e., new managers induction, stepping into leadership roles) across both professional and academic employees. This is encompassed in our HR strategy through our 'building people capability' pillar.	
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.	In progress as part of governance reform. A Policy Hub is under development to augment the Policy Management Framework and to increase awareness of academic policies, ownership, responsibilities and accountability for implementation. A fulltime senior member of staff is dedicated to developing the Policy Hub and oversee the implementation of policy and procedures.	*See 1 above*

Governance - Supports for Learners (recommendation 11)

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
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.	In progress as part of governance reform. See recommendation 5 above and 9 below.	*See 1 above*

Governance of Information and Data Management (recommendation 13)

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
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.	The most recently appointed external member of the Board has expertise in IT and Data Management. Reshaping of the Board composition and governance code in response to the HEA Act 2020 and the necessary statutory changes will need be to be implemented and the new information requirements will then need to be agreed upon before we can progress with this item.	*September 2022* *Academic year 2023-24*

SECTION 2: Access **(Recommendation 6)**

The review team recommends that 'enhanced resources and staffing be introduced to the Academic Registry at Trinity College'. As outlined in our Self-Assessment Report (SAR), Academic Registry staffing increased by six FTE in 2019 and by a further three in 2021. In a financially constrained environment, the University must prioritise needs to ensure day-to-day delivery of services across all functions. Notwithstanding the necessity for additional staffing resources, our identified priority in the medium term is to further invest in increased automation across Academic Registry functions to support and enhance services in this area.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
6	The review team recommends that enhanced resources and staffing be introduced to the Academic Registry at Trinity.	A university wide Digital Transformation programme is being scoped currently which, among other things, will aim to increase automation in SITS (student information system). Increased automation is likely to enhance services, however, we will continue to identify sources of additional funding to enhance staffing in the Academic Registry.	2023 onwards

SECTION 3: Performance Management (recommendation 7) and Learning and Development (recommendation 8)

The IRR recommendations under this heading partly mirror the strategic objectives under the 'People Capability' pillar of the HR Strategy, 2014-19, which are currently in development. Trinity's Human Resource Strategy, 2019-24, identifies the need to build the infrastructure to empower and enable our staff to flourish. The full implementation of key strategic initiatives that commit to performance management and continuing learning and development has been delayed due to the urgency of pivoting HR online and developing associated resources to support staff during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pivot to saw a significant increase online also in staff participation in digital pedagogy development courses, delivered by the Centre for Academic Practice, Trinity Teaching and Learning. Trinity is not in favour of enforcing 'compulsory' participation by staff 'in professional development in teaching and learning', rather we encourage active engagement, either as a learner or a mentor, in digital pedagogy courses provided by the Academic Practice, Teaching and Learning Unit. We are focusing attention on achieving a balance of staff engagement across disciplines and staff grades and on monitoring trends and developments.

Full implementation of our strategic objectives and related IRR recommendations in this section requires further investment. Trinity is hopeful that additional core funding will be made available in 2023-24 for staff development and training to enable all staff to flourish, and to support academic staff keep apace of changes in teaching and learning, including digitalisation and blended learning.

	Recommendation	Status		Timeline	
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.	(i)	A review of academic promotions commenced in 2023 and recommendations arising from the review will be implemented through an agreed action plan.	*(i)*	*Commenced 2023 with a view to full implementation of revised procedures by 2025*
		(ii)	A consultative process across our community is in train to co-create a career development framework for professional and support employees that will build solutions to best serve the Trinity community into the future. An action plan will be delivered over a two-year timeframe.	*(ii)*	*Commenced 2023 with a view to full implementation of a career development framework in 2025*
		(iii)	Central to both is the development and delivery of Performance Management, which will be piloted in 2023, with rollout to be agreed following assessment of the pilot outcomes.	*(iii)*	*2023 - 20256*

	Recommendation	Status		Timeline	
8	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	(i)	HR is developing a Learning and Development Strategy in consultation with university management and the wider college community. The strategy, once approved by Council and Board, will be deployed encouraging participation for all employees at relevant career stages and in line with best practice.	*(i)* *(ii)* *(iii)*	*2024* *2023-2026* *2023-2025*

the National Professional Development Framework for all staff who teach in Irish higher education.	(ii) A suite of learning and development interventions complimentary to our existing offerings will be developed to enhance management, leadership, and professional competencies. (iii) We will continue to offer formal and non-formal courses on pedagogy and assessment for all teaching staff (see also 9 below)	

SETION 4: Assessment practices (recommendation 9)

A process of assessment renewal as part of the Trinity Education Project commenced in 2016 to facilitate Schools in better aligning assessment approaches with programme learning outcomes, and to drive change in assessment practices with a focus on fewer assessments, a programme/subject-view of assessment, and a reduction in high stakes summative end-of-semester examinations.

The transition to online delivery of Teaching & Learning during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, 2019-2022, provided a significant opportunity for a culture-shift with respect to online/blended/hybrid education, virtual assessment and examination and a diversification of assessment more broadly.

Supported by SATLE22-23[1] funding, we are engaged in three inter-related initiatives that involve Digital Transformation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Academic Integrity and Misconduct; and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Our emphasis is on promoting a change in our teaching, learning and assessment culture by actively engaging with the academic and professional community – students and staff – and developing the necessary resources and expertise to enable our communities embrace and embed the necessary changes and practices that incorporate pedagogical

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[1] Strategic Alignment of Teaching and learning Enhancement (SATLE)

(including assessment) approaches to support digital transformation, to mitigate academic misconduct, and promote sustainable development in our education provision.

In 2022 Trinity commenced the consultative stages of developing an Admissions Strategy that will define, among other things, 'what a student is' in the context of a growing diversity of learners and their learning circumstances. The resulting definition(s) will shape our future education provision, pedagogy, and assessment practices.

These are large scale long-term strategic projects (3-5 years), and through their examination of best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment within specific contexts, we will adopt learnings to revise existing academic policies on assessment and feedback according to best practice and leaner needs.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
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.	Trinity has drawn, and continues to draw, upon our learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic regarding alternative assessment practices. We are continuing to develop courses (formal and non-formal) and resources to support the teaching and learning community. (i) Work has commenced on initiatives related to Digital Transformation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Academic Integrity and Misconduct; Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); and scoping exercises being undertaken at Heads of School level, all of which consider connected assessment practices. (ii) The Admissions Strategy is in the consultative stages.	*(i) and (ii) Present to 2027*

SECTION 5: Supports for International Students (recommendation 10)

Global Trinity is engaging in a consultative process with Trinity's 24 Schools on recruitment, partnership, and global mobility needs. A future recruitment strategy will continue to focus on expanding diversity according to the needs of individual programmes and student cohorts. Actions will be guided by current institutional conversations around the composition of the student body - Admissions Strategy - and individual Trinity School strategies. We will continue to build on student recruitment networks that now span the globe, and on the regional approach that has seen us expand our team presence on the ground to emerging territories such as the MENA region and Southeast Asia. We are aiming to develop engagement in other regions such as Africa and LATAM in a holistic way in all contexts of an internationalisation strategy and will revise our Global strategy accordingly.

Trinity is committed to addressing the challenge of achieving a sustainable and healthy planet, both for people, and for the natural systems we share our planet with and rely upon (strategic Pan, 2020-25: Goal 5). We will embed sustainability in a healthy and equitable way in everything we do. In 2022 an Office for Biodiversity and Climate Change was established, and the position of Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action was created. The latter is developing, in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, a Biodiversity and Climate Strategy and Action Plan. The Office of the Vice-President for Global Engagement is contributing to the development of the Strategy and Action Plan and this cross-sectional collaboration and expertise will support the formulation of a sustainable strategy for global engagement including international student recruitment and global mobility in the post-Covid-19 era.

While Trinity will continue efforts to improve the experience of all our students, including international students, there are many external factors that influence the student experience that cannot be addressed by Trinity alone, such as the accommodation crisis and the cost of living, both of which have far reaching adverse consequences for the student, the university, and the Irish economy.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
10	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	(i) Ongoing engagement with the Trinity Community and inputs into strategic objectives and new strategies to update the Global Strategy to ensure sustainable recruitment, diversity across the student body, and a positive student experience. (ii) We have and are continuing to grow our Trinity Global Experience team with the appointment of an Immigration Officer and the development of two new roles: University of Sanctuary support role and an Engagement and Accommodation Support officer. In addition, a Research Assistant has been appointed to investigate the usage of and need for College Health and Student Counselling Service by international students to develop evidence-informed services. We are building an online Social Community platform where incoming students can connect with each other and become aware of our range of student supports prior to arrival in Trinity and post-registration.	*(i) December 2022 and ongoing to 2025* *(ii) January – September 2023*

SECTION 6: Learner Information Systems (recommendation 12)

In the past decade Trinity has made a significant investment in information management systems – including a new Student and Course administration system (SITS); a new Financials management solution (Oracle Financials); an enhanced Human Resources and payroll management system (Core-HR); new PMO Systems; Cloud-based workplace productivity and collaboration solutions (Office 365, SharePoint, OneDrive, Teams, Power BI). Digital Trinity drives, within the limits of allocated funding from among competing institutional priorities, an evolution from system-centred processes to person-focused solutions thereby improving access to information and the end-user experience.

The Digital Trinity programme is a series of coordinated initiatives that aim to enhance the teaching and research experience, provide operational efficiencies, and improve digital engagement on and off campus. The programme recognises that meeting the expectations of a global research university requires continuing investment in new technologies, enhanced connectivity, and digital services to respond to shifts in education, research, and administrative operating models.

There has been significant investment in Trinity's Learner Information Systems, including the VLE, which has been upgraded extensively to facilitate teaching, enhance the student experience, and improve quality assurance processes. However, such investment has been incremental, and a step change is urgently needed in government investment in the physical and digital infrastructure in Trinity College that corresponds to the rapidly changing advancements in digital environments.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
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	(i) Subject to the availability of resources, it is planned to recruit two FTEs to review and scope work in the Academic Registry for automation/enhancement to SITS.	(i) June 2023 (ii) Digital Governance by mid-2024

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.	(ii) The University is developing a Digital Governance model to guide the alignment of IT Services' projects with the University's strategic goals. Internal IT Services reviews have identified the infrastructure and staffing and funding for the expected growth in student and staff numbers.	(iii) Data as a Service delivered on a phased / priority basis from 2024 – 2027
	(iii) A strategic project, suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic, will deliver data as a service to priority areas of the University, within available funding. This will improve data quality and availability and enable self-service for reporting and analysis.	

SECTION 7: Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review (recommendation 14)

Trinity continues to place considerable importance on improving the student experience and on proactively engaging students, through their representative bodies, in the governance structures. The survey tool is only one means to receive student feedback and Trinity, in consultation with our student representatives, has adopted other measures to receive student feedback, such as Staff Student Liaison Committees at School level, mid-module evaluations, and focus groups. In addition to local student evaluation mechanisms, Trinity participates in the annual *National Student Survey*, the biennial *Postgraduate Research Survey*, and the annual *International Student Barometer Survey*. Response rates to these surveys have been steadily increasing over the past five years, however, the questionnaires are too long and some of the survey questions are open to several interpretations, which consequently hinders analysis and 'closing the feedback' loop. Trinity is seeking an IUA review of these surveys to assess how they might better serve the needs of students and institutions.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
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.	Although our response rates to national student surveys are good and well above the national average, which testifies to our on-going initiatives to engage students and increase response rates, we are not convinced that increasing survey response rates alone will improve the 'consistency of feedback'. Following discussion on student evaluation at the University Council we will now (i) focus on working collaboratively with our IUA colleagues to improve the national survey tools, and (ii) investigate existing good practices in our LERU partner institutions that can be tested and, if appropriate, adopted by Trinity.	*(i) 2023-2025* *(ii) 2023-2026*

SECTION 8: Performance, metrics, and rankings (recommendation 15)

Trinity research outputs are diverse, reflecting the multi-faceted and multi-varied range of scholarly activity that takes place across the university. As part of understanding the measurable aspects of Trinity Research, Trinity utilises a range of quantitative tools, such as SciVal and InCites, to support and inform research performance and research performance management. The ground-breaking research of all members of our research community stretches across the full gambit of research activity, disciplinary and interdisciplinary, individual and collaborative, basic and applied, covering the whole spectrum of the innovation chain.

	Recommendation	Status	Timeline
14	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.	An oversight group, as a sub-group of the Research Committee, will be established to continue monitoring and defining research KPIs. The cross-institutional grouping will involve a representative of the data analytics team (DASI), will meet quarterly and report annually to the Research Committee and the University Council.	*October 2023 Oversight Group established* *2023-2024 review and refine KPIs*

Signed:

Provost & President
Trinity College Dublin

Date: 03 April 2023