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

STRATEGIC DIALOGUE CYCLE 3

SELF EVALUATION REPORT, June 2016

Vision and Mission

The Strategic Plan 2014-2019 of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin articulates Trinity's Vision that

> *As a university of global consequence, we will be known for realizing student potential and for research and scholarship that benefits Ireland and the world.*

With a mission to

> *provide a liberal environment where independence of thought is highly valued and where all are encouraged to achieve their full potential.*

We will:

- *Encompass an ever more diverse student community, providing a distinctive education based on academic excellence and a transformative student experience;*
- *Undertake research at the frontiers of disciplines, spurring on the development of new interdisciplinary fields and making a catalysing impact on local innovation and on addressing global challenges*
- *Fearlessly engage in actions that advance the cause of a pluralistic, just, and sustainable society.*

The Strategic Plan 2014-2019 is structured around nine goals which identify our priorities in education, research and innovation and engagement. The nine goals of the Strategic Plan are to:

1. Strengthen Community
2. Promote Student Life
3. Renew the Trinity Education
4. Activate Talents
5. Build Valuable Partnerships
6. Research for Impact
7. Engage Wider Society
8. Demonstrate Institutional Leadership
9. Secure Trinty's Future

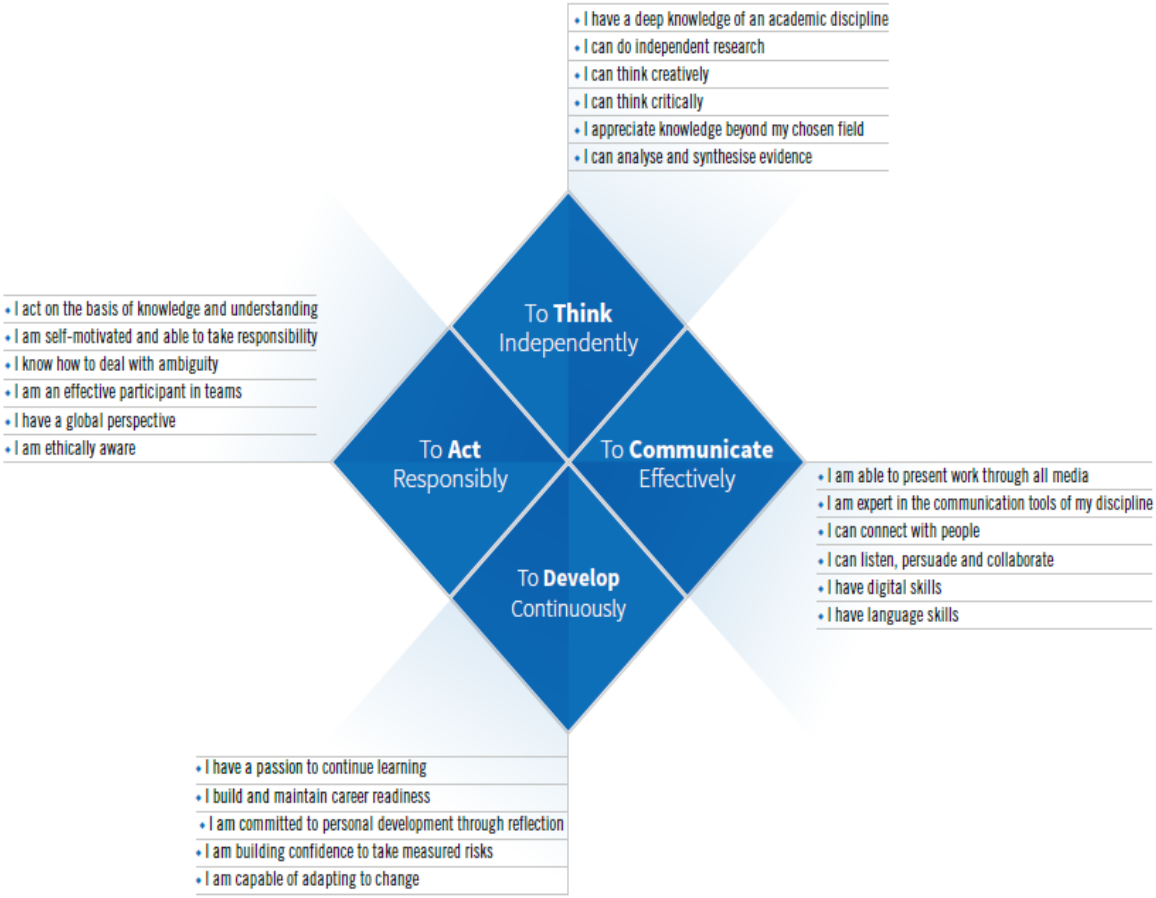
Trinity's mission, expressed through these nine goals has a clear resonance with national priorities and has been developed in the context of the significant reductions in funding that have dominated our planning. A key objective has been to incorporate the national priorities of participation and access, teaching and learning, research and innovation, regional engagement and internationalisation, while also ensuring that Trinity maintains its position as a leading international research-led university.

Implementation of the Transition Agenda

As indicated in our 2015 Strategic Dialogue Goal 3 of the Plan affirms our commitment to renewing the Trinity undergraduate curriculum. This has been a substantial university-wide project during 2015/16 and the interim report is attached as an Appendix. During the year the programme of work has focussed on (i) developing graduate attributes, (ii) agreeing curriculum principles which deliver those attributes and (iii) an agreed undergraduate programme architecture based on the curriculum principles. Extensive consultation, both internally and externally, has been carried out at each stage.

Graduate Attributes

University Council has agreed an articulation of the characteristics which a Trinity graduate should display and the values they might hold at graduation and long after.



The Graduate Attributes were the result of extensive consultation with programme committees and other stakeholders. Engagement with employers highlighted the importance for career-readiness of graduates, not only with deep knowledge of an academic discipline, but with the capacity to work independently and to adapt to change rapidly and resiliently. It is recognised that achievement of the graduate attributes happens both through the curriculum and co-curricular activities.

Curriculum Principles

University Council has agreed that the Trinity undergraduate curriculum:

- provides structured but flexible pathways that support the achievement of the programme level outcomes and the development of the graduate attributes
- is programme-focussed
- is research centred

It employs a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies and is supported by appropriate technology-enhanced approaches. As well as depth in the discipline each programme enables students to engage in learning opportunities and experiences beyond and outside of the core programme. In this way, students are able to engage in learning beyond their discipline and/or in inter-professional learning. The programme architecture provides time and space for students to engage in co-curricular learning; in internships and/or international study experience.

Programme Architecture

University Council has agreed a common programme architecture into which all undergraduate programmes will fit. A departure from existing programme design is the commitment to provide students with the opportunity to engage in learning outside the discipline. Our current structures and regulations make transfer from the programme chosen at entry difficult. Agreement of the common architecture has allowed the decoupling of entry routes and exit awards. Students will now have the opportunity to change programme paths over the four years as displayed in Table 1. pathways

Table 1: Possible exit routes for each entry route

Entry route	Exit route
Single Subject	➢ Single Honors ➢ Major with minor ➢ Single Honors with minor
Two subjects	➢ Single Honors ➢ Major with minor ➢ Single Honors with minor ➢ Joint Honors
Three subjects	➢ Single Honors ➢ Major with minor ➢ Single Honors with minor ➢ Joint Honors
Common Entry	➢ Single Honors ➢ Major with minor ➢ Single Honors with minor ➢ Joint Honors
Multi-discipline	➢ Single Honors ➢ Major with minor ➢ Single Honors with minor ➢ Joint Honors ➢ Multi-disciplinary
Professional (non-clinical)	➢ Single Honors (Professional)

So, for example, a student entering a single honors programme will take modules outside that core discipline [perhaps in an unrelated one] and may then decide, as a result of that exposure, to transfer to a joint honors programme or, indeed, to remain on a single honors path but with continued exposure to learning outside the discipline.

Trinity is engaging fully with the work of TGRUSE and has committed to some reduction in entry routes in 2017 and more significant changes in entry routes to joint honors programmes in Arts and Humanities to take effect in 2018/19 with implementation of the new programme architecture.

Retention Rates

Trinity has a commitment to maintain a transition rate from first to second year courses to 90% [Goal A1.1 Strategic Plan 2014-2019]. Of the new entrant first year students in 2013/14, 95%[1] were retained - 90% of the cohort progressed to the second year of their programme; 2% repeated their first year and 3% transferred to another course in Trinity. *The Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education 2012/13 to 2013/14* notes the average of all universities of level 8 non-progression for 2012/13 entrants was 11% with Trinity's level recorded as 7%. According to the most recent institutional profile (2013/14), Trinity is at the maximum university level for progression from 1st to 2nd year at level 8. However, maintaining this level of retention requires a concentrated and continued effort. Recognising the importance of a positive first year experience the Dean of Students leads a Transition to Trinity programme which is designed to support and develop activities that promote engagement of new students with both academic and co-curricular activities. This programme of work will be accelerated by the appointment of a new Transition to Trinity Officer in July 2016. The support services available to support non-traditional entrants have played a significant part in delivering a retention rate of 2013/14 new entrants in this cohort of 92%.

Systems and Workload Management

As reported in December 2013 Trinity operates a de-centralised model of workload allocation. It is College policy, implemented first in 2012/13, that all Schools should have a workload model and these are designed around the three elements of teaching and learning, research and engagement with the discipline and society. The detailed application is determined at School level reflecting the size of the School, discipline norms and complexity of the School's activity and the Faculty Dean has oversight of implementation of the models at School level. Using the categorisations of the 2014 report[2] Trinity could be described as having a full workload management model but not integrated. As the report identifies there are challenges in implementing workload management where norms and existing practices differ across disciplines. While aligning workload within the institution would be desirable it is unlikely that meaningful progress could be made without first addressing the differing staff:student ratios across disciplines and an investment in systems to collect consistent data. As the institutional profile (2013/14) shows Trinity has an above average student FTE/Academic Staff ratio.

In terms of integrating workload management with other processes, there will be scope to review workloads of the incoming Ussher II lecturers appointed to a tenure-track system. Under this system

[1] Source: Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2013/14 (including admissions data for 2014/15)
[2] HEA, Review of Workload Allocation Models in Higher Education Institutions, June 2014

continuation beyond the initial five-year fixed-term, through the issuing of a permanent contract, will be based on the completion of three annual reviews and a Tenure/Conversion Interview in the fourth year. Progress will be dependent on achievement of discipline-specific objectives for teaching, research and engagement agreed at regular intervals with the Head of School and assessed at particular points by a Review Panel and finally by a Tenure Panel. Management of workload will be an important aspect of the conversation between the Head of School and Ussher Lecturer both in setting annual targets and reviewing performance. In the future, workload management will be one of the components in implementing the recommendations of the National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions.

1. Regional Cluster

Collaboration on the research agenda continues to bring benefit within the Regional Cluster. Most significantly Trinity and UCD jointly collaborated on the lead of the University Bridge Fund which provides €60m to accelerate the commercialisation of ground breaking research generated at Trinity, UCD and all third level research institutions. The €60 million now in place will provide investment and expertise at the commercialisation stage for companies focusing on software, hardware, engineering, physical sciences, life sciences and agri-food. As articulated in Goal 6 of our Strategic Plan Trinity is committed to developing close links between industry and academic to ensure that the economic return of research is fully realised. Trinity researchers are working with partners, both within and beyond the regional cluster, to deliver world-class research through the SFI funded centres: ADAPT, AMBER, CONNECT, CÚRAM, ICRAG, Insight and Lero.

Initial Teacher Education

Work in Initial Teacher Education and continued and this past year has resulted in focused and deep engagement by dedicated working groups in aligning programme outcomes and learning objectives of the PME School placement protocols. Professional studies modules and observation schedules across the four institutions have also been reviewed, resulting in significant alignment in practices across primary, second level and art education PME programmes. A significant component in each programme is research methods and dissertation. There is potential for dissemination of findings and sharing of experience in this area, in consultation with the Teaching Council.

A structure for the overall Joint PME to include separate strands for distinct practice and subject methods requirements for arts based, primary and post primary PME has been proposed. The administrative requirements for registration of students on separate pathways in a joint PME have been explored and full documentation for joint PME programme approval (UCD) and summary documentation for Teaching Council Review has been prepared subject to agreement of partner institutions. Teaching Council Approval remains outstanding.

There is an ongoing dialogue regarding the value of introducing this programme to students. While the nature and structure of PME with streams has been agreed in principle, the benefit to students, institutions and programmes is unclear. It may be more beneficial, at this point, to explore the possibility of a joint PME delivered by Trinity and its associated college Marino Institute of Education.

Marino Institute of Education

Much work has been done to bring together the collective strengths of Trinity and Marino Institute of Education by developing an Academic Strategy for MIE that leverages the strengths of both institutions, looking at opportunities for collaboration. The objective of the strategy is to enable MIE maintain a distinctive position within the Irish teacher education landscape and facilitate its development as an institution that can recruit international students. Utilising existing expertise in Trinity, through, for example, the Trinity Access Programme, Bridge 21, the National Institute for Intellectual Disability, and research groups in the School of Education MIE will undertake research in the areas of access, social disadvantage and inclusion within education. Links are developing between MIE and the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology. In April 2016 a co-hosted conference on the theme 'Cultural and Religious Pluralism in Education' was well attended by teachers and educators.

In 2016/17 MIE will deliver a new International Foundation Programme to equip future students intending to undertake full-time study at Trinity with appropriate English language, Mathematics and discipline specific [Engineering and Science related discipline and Business, Economics and Social Sciences] academic and learning skills.

Shared Academic Planning

At the time of setting our institutional objectives for Cycle 1 of the Strategic Dialogue Trinity expressed its commitment to implementation of the national strategy in the area of academic planning. As a first step some work was done on a comparison on postgraduate provision with UCD. While, on the face of it, there may appear to be some duplication of programme offering, it soon became apparent that both institutions offer a diverse range of programmes responding to national and international demand. Trinity is continually extending its portfolio of postgraduate taught programmes based on disciplinary expertise and responding to increasing demand from this cohort of students. The number of EU registered students in this cohort has risen by 15% between 2011/12 and 2015/16. Part of the programme approval process includes an assessment of similar programmes on offer in the region so as to avoid duplication and ensure the diversity of institutional provision. Given the size of the undergraduate student cohort catered for in the Dublin/Leinster Pillar 1 cluster, the likelihood that demographic changes will only increase this demand and the high entry requirements at undergraduate level it could be argued that there is already a 'coherent regional offering which avoids any costly or non-strategic duplication of provision and yet serves the needs of students, employers and the region.'[3]

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning

Since 1993, the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) have formed a central part of Trinity's plan to encourage groups under-represented in higher education, to go to university and it is now recognised as a leader across the sector. It has worked nationally with the HEA on the nationwide College Awareness Week campaign demonstrating the effectiveness of a cross-community, multi-sectoral approach. In 2015 over 650 events took place in 27 counties. The campaign achieved a reach of 3.5 million people and received a silver Digital Media Award under the Best in Public Service category. TAP was worked with the QQI in a sectoral development of the Maths for Access to STEM

[3] HEA, *Discussion Document Regional Clusters: Maximising Collective Impact Strategy 2015-2020*, p.16.

module for FE colleges. Internationally, TAP, Bridge 21 and the Schools of Education and Compuater Sciences and Statistics work with the US educational non-profit programme 'College for Every Student 'on the Trinity Access 21 project.

In 2016 a delegation led by the Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University, came to Trinity to meet with TAP staff, students, alumni and the academic community to get a sense of the impact of the Foundation Year run by TAP in Trinity. This led to an invitation to work with Lady Margaret Hall and others in Oxford University to build a proposal and framework for a Foundation Year. It is expected that the LMH Foundation Year, approved as a four-year pilot, will develop as a partnership between LMH and TAP, sharing good practice developed in Trinity with the objective of building a strong base in LMH, in order to build a case for a wider entry route to the University.

Trinity Access 21

The Trinity Access 21 projects were established in 2014 as part of a three-year partnership with Google with the aim of supporting the development of innovative approaches to teaching and learning and a strong college going culture in DEIS schools (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). The projects involve collaboration between TAP, Bridge21 and the Schools of Education and Computer Science & Statistics in Trinity and the US educational non-profit programme 'College For Every Student' (CFES). In its inaugural year, 16 schools and almost 200 teachers were involved in the new Postgraduate Cert in 21st Century Teaching and Learning. In its second year in 2015/16, an additional 80 schools from 16 Dublin postcodes and 19 counties took part in either completing or taking modules within the newly developed course. There was an 89% satisfaction rating of those who completed all modules on the Postgraduate Cert and c.98% of the cohort completed. Thirteen TAP-linked schools, as well five additional schools with other HEI links, are now implementing the CFES model with huge engagement by teachers in its development. The difference between this and some earlier examples of university 'outreach' with schools is that it is built from the school and community up, rather than done 'to' the schools by the university. This year over 1,100 third year Scholars were involved in four TA21-CFES 'core practices': 'Mentoring', 'Leadership', 'Pathways to College', and '21st Century Learning'. These 'core practices' were also implemented in many of the schools with a cohort of 1,000+ students second year students. Trinity and CFES also co-organised an annual Global Summit. This year's theme was 'New Dimensions of College and Career Readiness '. The outcome of last year's summit was a White Paper 'The Skills Gap and the New Economy', which commits CFES and Trinity to working together to close the skills gap.

The '21st Century Schools of Distinction Award' scheme encourages participants to draw on their own school and community resources and the resources of the Trinity Access 21 project in Trinity College Dublin (a partnership with educational NGO College for Every Student in the United States) to support educational innovation and change.

The aim of this award scheme is to support the development of core 'college-going' practices and a 21st century teaching and learning environment across schools nationwide, particularly within schools where there is a low progression rate to post-secondary education. In the first year, five schools were selected for the '21st Century School of Distinction Award and four schools received the 'Future Vision' award for their comprehensive school plans.

Feasiblity Study

The Trinity Feasibility Study in Admissions was launched in 2013 contributing to the objective to enrol high-performing students from diverse backgrounds who can benefit from the distinctive education that Trinity provides [2.4]. In 2015 there were 243 applications (270 in 2014) to the scheme which were assessed on the basis of LC results, Relative Performance Rank and personal/contextual data. In 2015 21 students were admitted through this scheme (22 in 2014) to programmes in Arts and Humanities including Law. An implementation group with two external members was responsible for approving the systems and processes for the Study and an Admissions Review Committee with an independent chair and an external expert oversaw the 2015 admissions. During 2016 the Cultures, Academic Values and Education (CAVE) research centre in the School of Education will address two research questions connected with the evaluation of the Study: is there evidence that students have been successfully matched to the right course; and to establish the value of the RRB as a means of assessing students.

3. Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience

In the last two years our review processes have been extended to programme level and the focus has been on programmes with large quotas. The findings from these reviews have informed the work of the Trinity Education Project. Common themes from external reviews have pointed to the need for change. Excellence has been highlighted in these reviews, together with the commitment of staff; however, there have been comments referring to the complexity of our programme structures, rules and regulations and diversity in relation to the application of these rules and regulations, absence of an institutional model which allows students to spend time abroad, complicated lecture and timetabling systems, limited flexibility in terms of routes and range of subject combinations, pathways and part-time study options, curriculum content (overlap in material taught by different Schools and lack of integration) and in some cases an over-reliance on traditional delivery and assessment of modules and programmes. The review of the BESS programme was carried out by academics from institutions against which the programme would wish to be benchmarked - Professor Ray Stokes, (University of Glasgow), Professor Mary O'Sullivan (University of Geneva); Professor Ettore Recchi (Sciences Po, Paris) and Professor Wouter van der Brug (University of Amsterdam).

The level of student evaluation (at module, programme and national level) currently being conducted has led to some concerns about student survey fatigue. A project will be undertaken during 2016 to examines approaches to student evaluation in higher education and evaluate different approaches with the objective to bring a policy on student evaluation forward for discussion.

Technology Enhanced Learning

The Trinity Education Project recognises the importance for enhancing the student learning experience through appropriate technology. Lessons learned from other higher level institutions note that the potential of technology enhanced learning has not always fulfilled its promise to transform learning and teaching practices. Tools such as VLE's, semi-automated assessment technologies, collaboration tools, etc. are integral to higher level institutions but are sometimes not used to their full potential. Hence recommendations from this strand of the Trinity Education Project will include adoption of a competency based approach to support academic development in

technology enhanced learning by identifying a core competency set for TEL. The next cycle of strategic objectives for inclusion in a revised Compact will address this area.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation, and
5. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange

The Strategic Plan 2014-2019 sets Trinity the objective of achieving greater research impact. While performing consistently well in the research metrics articulated in the institutional profile, Trinity, like other universities, is now engaged in global competition to be an internationally visible reference point, renowned for the excellence and impact of its research and scholarship. An objective was set to complete a comprehensive review of 21 research themes and this was conducted by a panel of assessors consisting of international experts the Academy of Finland, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, University of California, Davis, Babson University, National University of Singapore, Australian National University, King's College London, Imperial College, Cambridge and others. The panel was tasked with assessing each theme under mission and vision, leadership/team and capacity to engage with stakeholders. At the conclusion of their review the panel members congratulated Trinity on a radically collaborative two-year process. The panel's findings will be an important component in finalising Trinity's research strategy for the future.

At the 2015 Strategic Dialogue meeting Trinity was encouraged to share the diverse and impactful successes which we have achieved in the area of enterprise and knowledge exchange.

Research Agenda:

- Trinity was ranked 1st in Ireland for H2020 funding and 34th in Europe.
- Trinity is leading the way for Ireland in H2020 performance. Over the first two years of H2020 we have on average doubled funding compared to FP7. Average income per year in FP7 of €12.5M. €51M over first two years of H2020.
- Trinity achieved its largest Institutional H2020 award of €6M for a Marie Curie co-fund project (EDGE) which was a result of a partnership between our three SFI Centres: CONNECT, ADAPT, and AMBER.
- Trinity had significant ERC funding success; and accounted for approximately 50% of the national total of ERC awards. An exceptional achievement with about 15% of the faculty base.
- Trinity recorded significant growth in non-H2020 international funding with noteworthy awards from Wellcome Trust and NIH.
- Trinity obtained Irelands largest ever philanthropic donation to support establishment of the Global Brain Health Institute. €138.4M to Trinity and the University of California, San Francisco.

Innovation Agenda:

- In June 2016 the University Bridge Fund was launched. This fund will provide €60M of venture capital funding for investment in new companies formed from Ireland's higher education institutions. The establishment of the fund was led by Trinity and UCD and 50% of the fund has been designated for investment in these two institutions. This fund is a significant

disruption in how HEIs can support new companies and now enables Ireland to be benchmarked with leading international universities and regions for innovation and commercialisation. Importantly the fund includes a €30M investment from the European Investment Fund which is an important international validation for the quality of the research at Trinity.

- In 2015 Trinity was successful in winning a large grant from Blackstone to establish a Blackstone LaunchPad Programme. The BLP will provide a new central space on campus dedicated to entrepreneurship and which will focus on providing a front-door to all students around the theme of entrepreneurship.
- Trinity has continued with its innovative and internationally ranked student accelerator; LaunchBox. This year over 13 fledgling companies are going through an experiential accelerator building investable propositions which will transition to new companies.

Enterprise Agenda:

- Trinity continues to grow both the volume and absolute level of industry funding over 2012 baseline. In 2015 the industry funding was >60% above the 2012 levels. Importantly 60% of industry income is related to individual PIs and not SFI / EI centres. This level of engagement highlights the value of a diverse (but excellent) research base.
- Trinity signed a strategic partnership MOU with Intel which maps out programs for engagement across education, innovation and policy development. This was a first for Intel in Ireland.
- Trinity achieved record commercialisation income as a result of licensing and assignment deals with Google, Thomas Swan, Samsung and Spark therapeutics amongst others and the sale of equity in two campus companies IdentiGEN and Genable. In total these deals would have generated in excess of €4M income over this period with additional income back loaded for future periods.
- Swrve, a Trinity campus company, was ranked as one of the fastest growing technology companies globally. Swrve received $30M in investment in 2015 creating 45 new jobs. It currently has offices in Dublin, London and San Francisco, with over 120 employees and a value well in excess of $100M.
- Trinity won two Knowledge Transfer Ireland awards in 2015 – Knowledge Transfer Initiative and KT Individual Achievement award of the year.
- Trinity established a strategic partnership with the Dublin Business Innovation Centre (DBIC) in relation to the development of investment ready business plans for our campus companies. This is an example of innovative partnerships which enable Trinity to derive significant additional value from externals to support our commercialisation strategies.
- The quality of our patent portfolio and how it is managed is reflected in two external recognitions. The 2015 KTI Initiative of the Year Award for our new approach to patent management and the Reuters Ranking of the top 100 Innovative Universities. Trinity was the only Irish university ranked in the top 50 and was ranked 1st in Europe for the percentage of cited patents in our portfolio.[4]

[4] http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1N11K16Q20150915

6. Enhanced internationalisation

Internationalisation is one of the themes of our Strategic Plan and during this year, work to achieve internationalisation targets has concentrated on recruitment, reinforcing supports for the international student experience and on establishing an institutional Partnerships' Strategy.

Student satisfaction continues to be monitored and benchmarked against peer institutions via the International Student Barometer (ISB). The ISB is used to both track progress from year to year and to determine institutional priorities and activities to enhance student satisfaction.

The institutional profile (2013/14) shows Trinity performing well in international enrolment. In the past the number of students participating in student exchanges has been low. However, successful achievement of the target for participation in student exchanges in 2015 has been the result of a newly implemented internal marketing plan and an improved curriculum mapping process. There was a 200% increase in the number of students taking part in non-EU exchanges from 2011/12 to 2015/16; and a 28% increase in Erasmus exchange participation in the same period. Achieving the objectives of the Trinity Education Project, starting in 2018/19, will increase the opportunities for internships and study abroad within curricula.