Trinity Education Project (TEP) – Interim Report

Section 1
1.0 Introduction

Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan (2014-19) is focused on the renewal of the Trinity Education, and particularly on the renewal of the undergraduate curriculum. It begins with the acknowledgment of the strengths of our current programmes, noting in particular that the Trinity education is rooted in a curriculum inspired by current research and scholarship, taught by academics with international reputations in their respective fields, who work together with professional, technical, administrative and support staff to harness the excellence and diversity of the multidisciplinary university. It notes, however, that the curriculum must continue to evolve in light of new discoveries in disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, and also in the recognition that the context in which our graduates compete is ever-changing.

Transformational changes are occurring in the educational context, some are the effect of developments in technology and globalisation, others are a result of the changing needs and expectations of students, employers, and of society at large. Trinity has always made changes to its educational offering to ensure that we are at the frontiers of learning. The current plan to renew our education is part of that tradition.

It is against this backdrop and in this spirit that we have embarked on an ambitious project to rearticulate what a Trinity Education should be in the 21st century and to reemphasize our role as a leader in education. In doing so, the Trinity Education Project (TEP) aims:

- to put forward a set of institutional Trinity graduate attributes and, using these attributes, agree curriculum principles and a programme architecture which support the development of the graduate attributes;
- and to build on the strength and quality of our programmes, meet and seek to exceed the expectations of our current and future students at an institution-wide, programme and individual level;

We also recognise that there is a need to simplify and streamline the admissions procedures, progression, and the structures within which our programmes are offered, whilst maintaining an academically-driven and student focused approach. In doing so, we are responding to programme and School reviews which have suggested a 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.

Addressing these issues, alongside achievement of the strategic objectives which lie at the core of the TEP, will guide our work over the next years. There is widespread support from

staff and students that change is required at an institutional level to respond to the transformational changes occurring in education.

The successful delivery of the Trinity Education Project across the institution will be achieved by an explicit commitment to a programme-based approach to curriculum renewal and review. This change initiative seeks to build on the excellent work already done throughout the University in teaching and learning expertise, as evidenced for example through the Provost Teaching Awards, whilst looking to the future to meet new opportunities and challenges.

1.1 Executive Summary of what has been achieved to date

Through the combined elements of the project, the following key aspects have been achieved since the commencement of the formal project in March 2015;

Graduate Attributes

- articulation of graduate attributes that can be espoused through the Trinity curriculum (academic and co-curriculum), that students can identify with and a structure that can provide an opportunity for students to develop these graduate attributes through the Trinity curriculum (academic and co-curriculum)

Curriculum Principles and Programme Architecture

- approval of a common architecture that is programme focussed, underpinned by a robust set of curriculum principles, and informed by the graduate attributes which have evolved through an iterative process
- acknowledgement and strong support that having a programme focused approach to the curriculum is necessary
- approval of a common architecture that promotes balance between depth and breadth and demonstrates how this can be achieved
- approval of a common architecture that provides flexibility in pathway choice for the student and decouples the entry from the exit route
- approval of a common architecture that allows new subject combinations to emerge within a structured framework and can future proof the Trinity education and programme offerings
- promotion of the co-curriculum as an important component of the Trinity curriculum and approval to provide space in the curriculum for this activity
- approval that the capstone assessment will be a common feature across all programmes

Assessment Framework and related academic year structure

- an agreed assessment framework that reflects the curriculum principles, is coherent at programme level, introduces diversity into teaching, learning and assessment strategies and facilitates a move away from the strong focus on assessment *of* learning
- support for reviewing the academic year structure in the context of an agreed assessment framework

Internships and Study Abroad

- support for mobility and internships to strengthen the international experience and employability of our graduates. Provision to be made in the programme architecture as part of the core or elective curriculum

Technology Enhanced Learning

- support for enhancing the student learning experience through appropriate technology and for enabling cultural change and academic development through a competence based approach

Learning Spaces

- support for the principle that the entire campus should be viewed as a teaching and learning space and the development of a strategy for the provision of informal learning spaces

1.2 Establishment of the Trinity Education Project (TEP)

The first document relating to the project was circulated to Council on 7 May 2013 (CL/12-13/171). This discussion document was a first articulation of the core principles underpinning the undergraduate curriculum which subsequently informed the current strategic plan 2014-19. As part of the preparation of this document, the then Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies visited Schools to learn more about the delivery of undergraduate programmes and examples of best practice. The document built explicitly on the 2003 Final Report of the Working Group on Teaching and Learning. Discussion of issues such as "what are the kinds of generic skills that should define a Trinity education?", "What is the balance of academic with the extracurricular in achieving a Trinity education?" commenced at the Trinity Global Forum November 2013, at a town hall meeting for all staff on 9th December 2013 and assessment fora. The Trinity Global Graduate Forum, a two-day event hosting more than 100 of the university's most successful alumni, gathered views with the objective of formulating plans to tackle major challenges in modern higher education, including funding, reputation, growth, technology and education. The consensus at the Forum was that a Trinity Education was about educating active, global citizens, who have transferrable skills, prepared for contemporary and future challenges in life and work. The student body was also consulted. The Trinity Education project was discussed at the Students' Union Council during the academic year 2013/14, and a survey about some of the key issues was circulated to all undergraduates. 2,810 undergraduates completed that survey; the results were discussed at the Undergraduate Studies Committee in February 2014, following which a survey was sent in April 2014, to all academic members of staff. Summary results are available as part of the Trinity Education Project -Interim Report documentation http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/

Trinity Education Project was then established in February 2015 with the overall aim of embedding a distinctive education within the university, developing the curriculum such that it that combines disciplinary expertise and deep technical knowledge with career ready skills, and of reforming the structures to support these objectives. The project is developing in a phased manner as outlined in **section 1.3** below and runs in tandem with other relevant activities that have already been initiated in the context of the Strategic Plan, for example

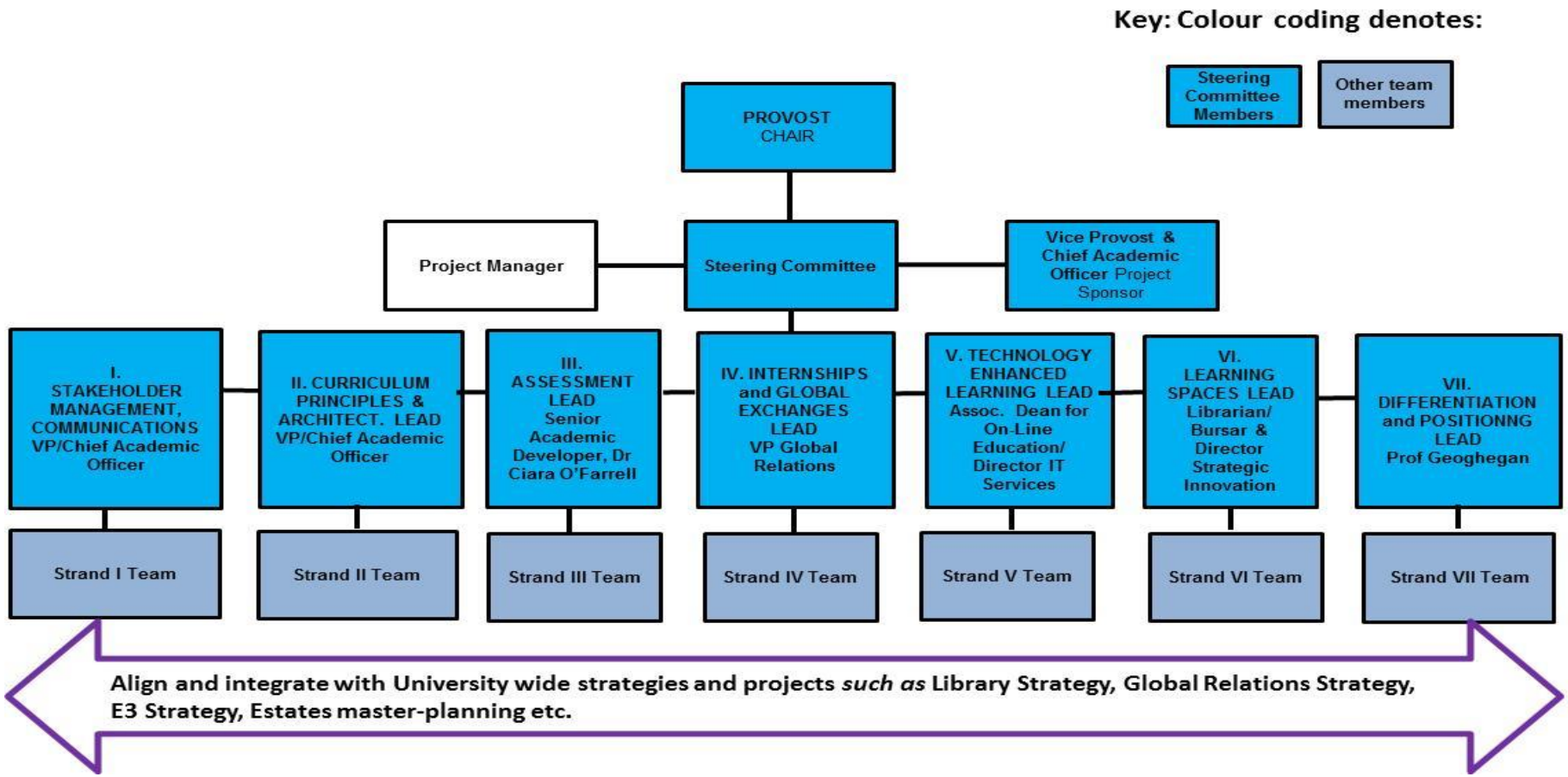
the Global Relations Strategy (GRS2) , the Online Education Project (OEP2) and Engineering, Energy, and the Environment – the E3 Project.

The Steering Committee for the *Trinity Education Project* was established in accordance with approved College governance procedures and has a Chair (Provost), Sponsor (Vice Provost), a Project Manager, and a team.

1.3 TEP Structure

A Steering Committee was established in March 2015 chaired by the Provost and met regularly during 2014/15 and 15/16. It is responsible and accountable for the sponsorship, planning and delivery of the programme and monitors and checks the progress of the streams/strands through regular reports. The overall project is organised in seven strands (Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, Curriculum Principles and Architecture, Assessment, Internships and Study Abroad, Learning Spaces, Technology Enhanced Learning, Differentiation and Positioning) as outlined in **Figure 1**. The leads of the seven strands and other representatives are members of the Steering Committee. Strand Leads work with their teams to ensure the objectives of the strand are achieved and bring proposals in relation to the strand focus of work and responsibility to the Steering Committee within the agreed timeframe.

Figure 1: Trinity Education Project - Governance Structure



The overall objective for each strand is outlined below in **Table 1.** Membership and terms of reference are detailed as part of the Trinity Education Project - Interim Report documentation http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/

As its first task, the Steering Committee determined what the attributes of a Trinity graduate should be in 10 years' time; what curriculum principles would be required to deliver those attributes; and what structures/processes would embed the principles.

Strands 2-7 met on a regular basis; the work of Strand 2 on the development of graduate attributes, curriculum principles and curriculum architecture informed the work of all other strands. Joint meetings of strands, regular updates and the attendance of the project manager at each of the strand meetings ensured that Interdependencies were identified. The Deans and Director of Public Affairs and Communications are members of Strand 1; they met twice to receive an update on the communications and engagement plan for stakeholders and to guide the process. This strand will have an important role in 2016/17 in relation to the communications plan for the next phase of the project.

Table 1: Strand, Lead and Overall Objective

Strand	Name	Lead	Overall objective
Strand 1	**Stakeholder management, communication**	VP/CAO	Communications and engagement plan for internal and external stakeholders
Strand 2	**Curriculum Principles and Architecture**	VP/CAO	Proposed principles to underpin undergraduate curriculum and proposals for an architecture for undergraduate programmes
Strand 3	**Assessment**	Ciara O'Farrell	Proposed assessment framework for UG programmes and proposals on how to support academic staff
Strand 4	**Internships and Study Abroad**	VP Global Relations	Proposed policies in relation to development of experiential learning through internship and study abroad as part of UG programme
Strand 5	**Technology Enhanced Learning**	Assoc. Dean On-line Education & Director IT Services Director	Proposals to utilise current technologies in place and develop range of new technology-enhanced learning environments that are programme appropriate
Strand 6	**Learning Spaces**	Librarian & Bursar & Director Strategic Innovation	Proposals for learning and teaching spaces informed by best international practice
Strand 7	**Differentiation and positioning**	Patrick Geoghegan	Articulate and communicate the distinctiveness of a Trinity undergraduate education and benefits of such an education for graduates and the global economy

1.4 Trinity Education Project Timeline

TEP has been structured and developed in a phased manner as outlined in **Figure 2** as follows;

Phase 1 Research and Analysis (April 2013 – March 2015)

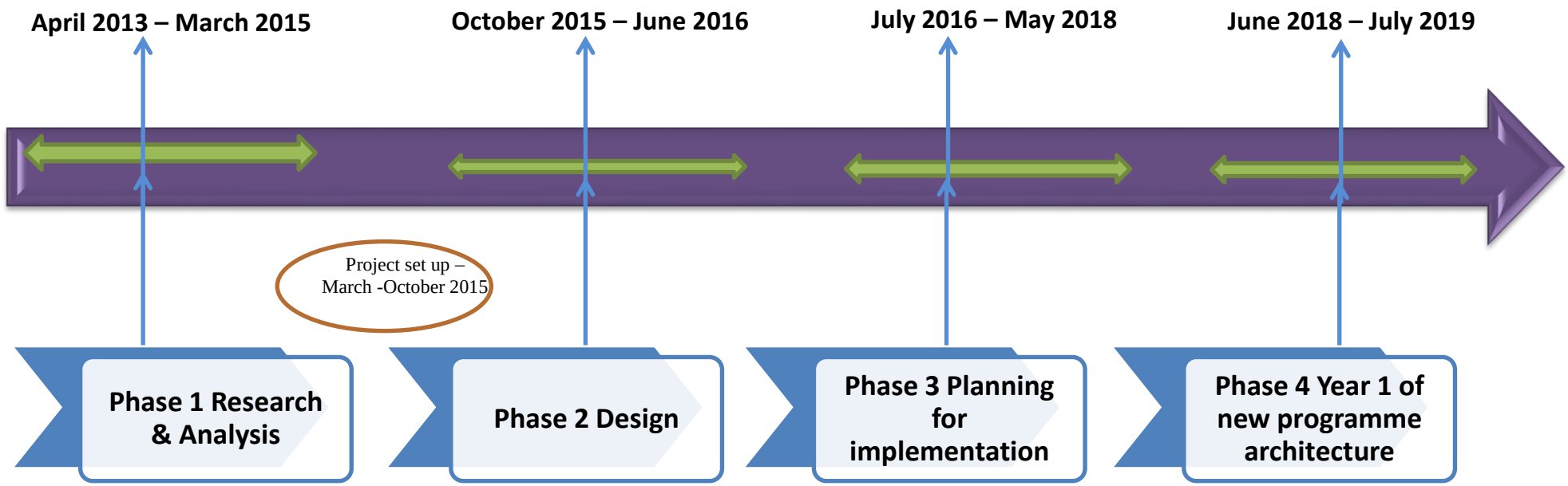
Project set up took place between March (first meeting of Steering Committee and October 2015 (appointment of Project Manager and population of TEP structure)

Phase 2 Design including (October 2015 – June 2016),

Phase 3 Planning for implementation (July 2016 – May 2018) and

Phase 4 Year 1 of the new programme architecture (first intake of students 2018/19)

Figure 2: Trinity Education Project – Phased timeline



1.5 Phase 1: Research and analysis April 2013- March 2015

In phase 1 a review of the following was conducted: current range of programme offerings, the international and national context, curriculum reform projects internationally. There was also consultation on the graduate attributes and a benchmarking exercise was completed to provide the evidence base for further discussion and inform the project scope subsequently approved by Council. All of these activities involved engagement with the college community and beyond. A brief outline of the research and benchmarking are outlined below.

- Benchmarking and its application to curricular reform was the subject of a report and subsequent presentation to the Steering Committee. This exercise identified a number of institutions "similar" to TCD in terms of size which have recently engaged in curriculum reform, identified best practice from case studies including the UK HEA Study 2013 and elicited lessons learned from institutions such as King's College London, University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, University of Aberdeen. This information is available as part of the Trinity Education Project - Interim Report documentation http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/

- 'Exploring Other Curricula' - a report on the overall research into different degree structures. It covers curricula across different faculties in a selection of top ranking universities from different countries including: the UK, North America, Canada, the Netherlands, China, Singapore and Australia.

- 'Science Curricula' – a presentation based on options for Science degrees only

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SECTION 2

2.0 Design Phase

The design phase followed the structure agreed at the Steering Committee and involved Strand 2 (Curriculum Principles and Architecture) working with the graduate attributes as they evolved, developing proposals in relation to the curriculum architecture/structure informed by the curriculum principles. Consideration has been given to the following: entry streams, flexibility, progression, academic year structure. In conjunction with Strand 2, Strand 3 (Assessment) developed an assessment framework which informs the academic year structure options brought forward to Council via Strand 2 for consideration. The design phase also examined how technology can enhance pedagogy (Strand 5 – Technology enhanced learning), how we can create more opportunities for student engagement with industry, business, cultural, and social institutions through internships, placements and study abroad (Strand 4 – Internships and Study Abroad), and how our physical infrastructure can best faciliate our teaching and learning (Strand 6 – Learning spaces). Strand 7 (Differentiation and positioning) conducted an initital review of how Trinity might differentiate its offering, considering our unique selling points and what success might look like in five years time and how to market TCD's offerings. Further work will be done when the various items arising from the project are approved by Council.

For more detail on the work as part of the design phase, see **sections 2.2 – 2.8 below.**

2.1 Consultation – Design Phase

The design phase has involved extensive consultation as outlined. A series of themed fora was run from December 2015 as part of the project's six month College-wide consultation on specific critical themes. A successful employers' forum also took place November 2015. These sessions generated much discussion and valuable feedback. Presentations, discussion outcomes and video clips on some of the specific critical themes (Graduate attributes, assessment, technology enhanced learning, internships and study abroad, assessment framework and academic year structure) may be viewed here. In addition, the Senior Lecturer, Dr Gillian Martin together with the Project Manager, Fedelma McNamara and/or TEP Team member, Mary McMahon, visited all of the Schools as part of the consultation process. A table outlining the consultation process is available as part of the Trinity Education Project - Interim Report documentation http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/

2.2 Graduate Attributes

The Steering committee focused its attention initially on the formulation of graduate attributes. A paper was brought to Council June 2015 to stimulate discussion around the range and number of identified attributes and also the implications for their achievement. This followed an exercise to conceptualise the characteristics which a Trinity graduate should display and the values they might hold, ten years post-graduation. These were categorised into three overarching or enabling attributes:

- Academic excellence
- Lifelong learning
- Global citizenship

Lying underneath these, a number of translational attributes were distinguished, such as:
• Breadth and depth of scholarship
• Independent reflective thinkers
• Intellectually and professionally agile and adaptable
• Capacity for creativity, innovation and transformation
• Social, ethical and cultural understanding/awareness
• Global outlook
• Effective communicator

The importance of embedding and contextualising these translational attributes using a programme based approach, rather than simply bolting them on to the curriculum was noted.

Attributes are defined as qualities, skills, understandings that students develop during their time at university, and that shape the contribution they make to their profession and to society. Throughout their time at Trinity, our students will be provided with opportunities to develop and evidence achievement of a **range of graduate attributes** that support their academic growth. Graduate attributes can be achieved in academic and co- and extra-curricular activities

Further work developed a revised set of graduate attributes and these were presented to Council, January 2016. It was proposed that throughout their time at Trinity College Dublin, drawing on curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, undergraduates should have the opportunity to acquire key attributes in **4 distinctive and inter-related dimensions:**

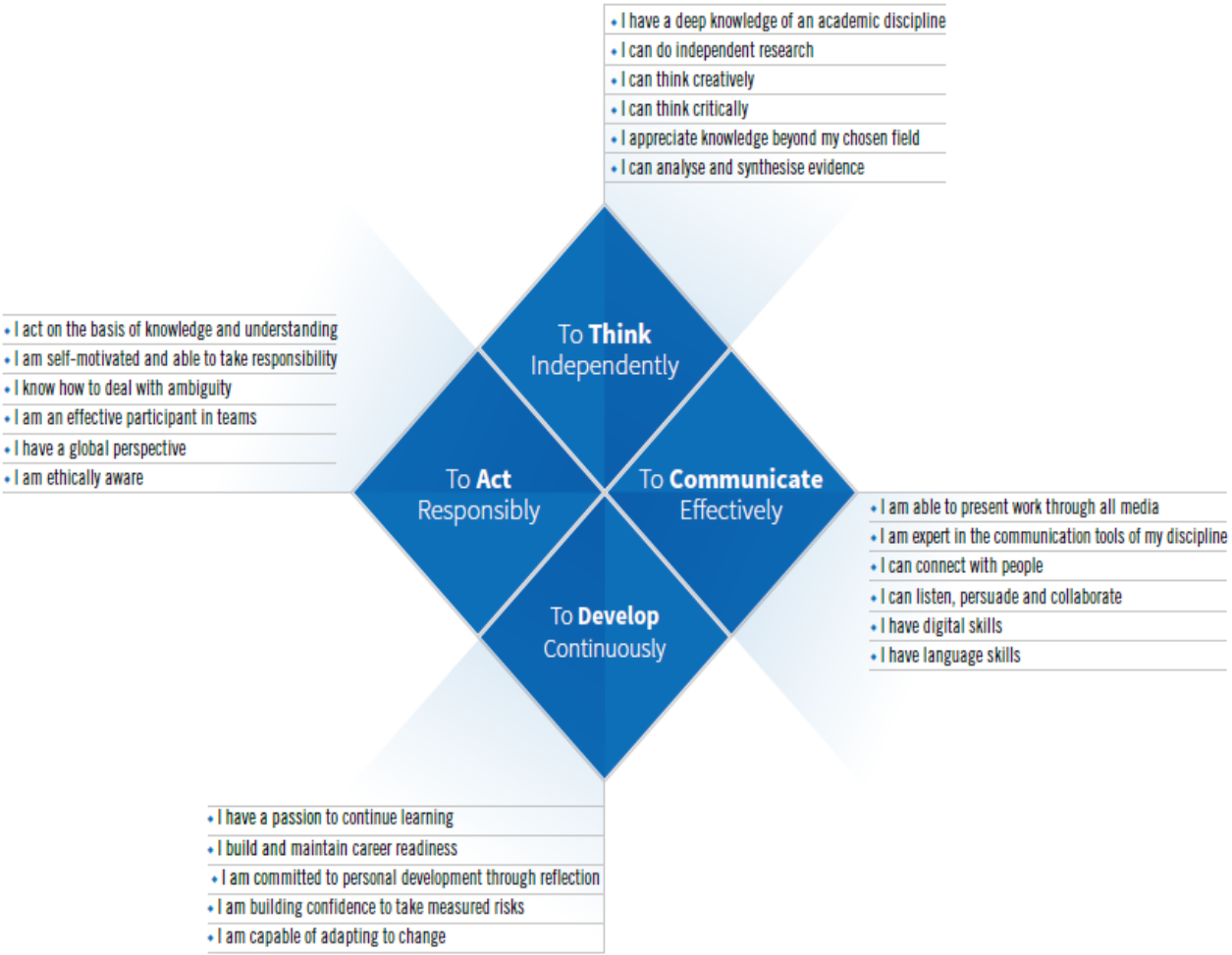
- academic excellence;
- critical thinking and effective communication;
- life-long learning;
- global citizenship;

The most recent version of the Trinity Graduate Attributes was presented to the June 2016 Council meeting. It was noted that for the most part, graduate attributes have been widely supported, conceptually and, specifically, in relation to their formulation. The version presented reflects the discussions at Course/Curriculum committee level, along with previous consultations with Council and other discussion fora which noted that the attributes as previously articulated were too generic, not distinctive enough and did not capture the true essence of a Trinity Graduate.

The June 8 Council meeting approved the following formulation of the graduate attributes **(Figure 3)**:

- to think independently
- to act responsibly
- to develop continuously
- to communicate effectively

Figure 3: Trinity Graduate Attributes



These broad institutional attributes have provided the basis on which we have developed the curriculum principles **(2.3)** that underpin the programme architecture **(2.4)** and have enabled the development of the assessment framework **(2.5)** and linked academic year structure option(s). A revised option is being presented to the Council meeting on 29 June 2016.

Current status Graduate Attributes and next steps

Council at its meeting 8 June 2016 approved the following articulation **to think independently, to act responsibly, to develop continuously and to communicate effectively.**

Further work will be completed in relation to the descriptors and Strand 7 of the project will integrate these Trinity Graduate Attributes into any promotional materials to be developed as part of the marketing campaign. A webpage is currently in development and will be used as a tool for both staff and students. Planning for implementation is outlined in the next section.

2.3 Curriculum Principles

Strand 2 of the Trinity Education Project brought forward curriculum principles that sought to underpin the undergraduate curriculum, to support the achievement of the graduate attributes, and to form the basis on which the new programme architecture will be built. These curriculum principles, which were supported by Council, are outlined below;

The **Trinity Curriculum** is structured around five principles. The curriculum for all undergraduate programmes:

- 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.

Adherence to these curriculum principles provides opportunities for the development of the graduate attributes due to the following;

- 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 curriculum architecture provides time and space for students to engage in co-curricular learning;
- The curriculum provides opportunities for students to integrate knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through the taught curriculum with what they have learned through internships and/or international study experience and co-curricular activities;

2.4 Programme Architecture

On a number of occasions Council considered possible models of programme architecture. The architecture brought forward to Council at its June 8 2016 meeting, responded to feedback received by Council and had been informed by the various consultations and submissions. Of particular note is the work of both the Arts Humanities and Social Science Ad-hoc working group led by Dr Sarah Smyth and the Undergraduate Science Education Working group led by Professor Kevin Devine. This work formed the basis of the programme architecture presented for approval and is included as part of the Interim Report documentation http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/

2.4.1 Principles of the common architecture

The principles of the common architecture were identified as follows:

- **Entry routes:** Students enter into a one-, two- or three-subject first year, or into a common entry programme (e.g., BESS, PPES) or into a multi-disciplinary programme (e.g., European Studies).

- **Exit routes:** Degree awards are a function of the number and level of credits accumulated in one or more subjects in the last two years of study. *Not all programmes may currently be able to offer all exit pathways.*
- **Foundation level and degree level:** Freshman years provide the foundations for more specialist study in the Sophister years.
- **Capstone:** Common element across all programmes

2.4.2 Architecture elements -Structured but flexible pathways

One of the key curriculum principles is that the curriculum will provide structured but flexible pathways that support the achievement of the programme-level outcomes and the development of the graduate attributes:

- Programmes will encompass of core, approved and elective modules (Trinity electives) further explained under the Trinity Curriculum;
- Each programme will enable students to engage in learning opportunities and experiences beyond and outside of the core programme within parameters that respect the coherence of the programme. In this way, students will be able to engage in learning beyond their discipline and/or in inter-professional learning;
- The curriculum architecture will provide time and space for students to engage in **co-curricular** learning;
- The curriculum will provide opportunities for students to integrate knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through the taught curriculum with what they have learned through internships and/or international study experience and co-curricular activities;
- Teaching and learning will draw on a range of pedagogies and assessment paradigms that are responsive to different learning styles.

2.4.3 Architecture elements – Trinity Curriculum

Trinity Curriculum

Programmes will encompass core, approved and elective modules. The Core Programme refers to the prescribed curriculum for the programme. It includes mandatory and optional credit-bearing modules which can be taught and/or experience-based.

The Elective Programme refers to Trinity electives and approved modules. The description, aims **(Table 2)** and principles which apply to them are described below.

The importance of promoting breadth as well as depth of learning has been noted and the core, approved and Trinity elective modules will be utilised to achieve both types of learning.

Table 2: Trinity Electives and Approved Modules

Trinity Electives and Approved Modules provide students with opportunities to develop the graduate attributes by: • adding breadth to their learning through engaging in learning opportunities outside of their core subject area/s; • gaining a strong foundation knowledge in a wider range of subjects that they may not otherwise have encountered; • broadening their knowledge of key contemporary and historical issues; • engaging in learning opportunities in diverse/heterogeneous student groups; • experiencing innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to learning; • experiencing a range of teaching, learning and assessment methods; • taking an active, self-directed approach to their own learning; • enhancing the range and depth of their transferable skills.	
Trinity Electives	**Approved Modules**
Stand-alone, institution-wide modules	New or existing modules, within defined groups (eg. AHSS, STEM, HS)
Available to students from all disciplines across the university	Modules in fields related or complementary to the student's core subject area
Not available within a core programme of study	May be core modules for other subject/s, but are not in the student's core subject/s
Student chooses which modules to take	Programme determines the range of approved modules from which students may choose

The following principles apply in relation to Trinity elective modules and approved modules:

- The programme releases sufficient credits from the core programme to enable students to select Trinity elective modules and approved modules;
- Student choice drives their selection of Trinity elective/s;
- The programme of study determines the range of approved modules, from which students may choose. Students then select their 20 ECTS approved modules from the defined list of modules;
- Places on Trinity electives and approved modules are subject to module size limits and timetable constraints.

Co-curriculum and Extra-Curriculum

The **co-curriculum** refers to specific types of activity which are formally recognised by the university. **Extra-curricular** activities are not formally recognised by the university.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

- Provide an extension to a student's university studies and complement the academic curriculum
- promote the student's academic, personal and professional development

Examples include involvement with clubs and societies, volunteering, peer mentoring, and summer work placements.

2.4.4 Architecture elements - Capstone

Council at its meeting of 07 May 2014 approved the recommendation that all undergraduate students should complete an independent project or dissertation in one of their final two years. This recommendation was further developed through the Trinity Education Project. Following feedback received in the various consultation fora, it was agreed to give further consideration to the capstone, to review current practice and bring greater clarity to what is understood by a capstone project within the context of the Trinity Education Project. The paper circulated to Council at its meeting of 11 May 2016 outlined the purpose of a capstone and set out a number of principles to guide how the scope of such a project should be defined.

2.4.5 Programme Architecture

The programme architecture approved at Council June 8, 2016, provides for the following;

- The architecture ensures depth in the core programme of study through specialist modules and breadth outside the core programme of study through approved modules, Trinity elective modules or additional subject(s);
- The architecture provides for a capstone – an independent project or dissertation in one of their final two years (further outlined below);
- The architecture provides students with the opportunity to change pathway during their degree programme within clearly defined parameters;
- The architecture is a common, shared architecture which will allow new subject combinations to emerge within a structured framework;
- It is envisaged that progress through the structure will be governed by one set of shared/agreed regulations.

Current Status: Curriculum Principles and Programme Architecture and next steps

Council at its meeting of 8 June 2016 was asked to consider the revised common architecture together with the rationale for the underlying principles. The revised common architecture responded to feedback received in various consultations and submissions. The curriculum principles and common architecture as presented were approved on the basis that detailed planning for implementation will take place over the next two academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18 with first intake of students to the new programme architecture from 2018/19. This has been factored into the next phase of the project outlined in **Section 3.**

Capstone

Council in May 2014 approved the provision of a capstone assessment with some flexibility. This independent project or dissertation has been integrated into the new programme architecture approved by Council, June 2016.

This will be a common feature across all exit routes, providing an integrative exercise which allows students to showcase the skills and knowledge they have developed across a range of subject areas and across their four years of study.

Trinity Electives and Approved Modules
These were considered as part of a paper presented to Council on 8 June 2016 and approved as part of the programme architecture.

Planning for all of the above elements will be integrated into the planning for implementation phase of the project outlined in **Section 3.**

2.5 Assessment Framework and related Academic Year Structure

Rationale for change

Assessment defines the curriculum and drives student learning[1]. Whilst protecting academic standards and being valid and reliable, assessment should also play a key role in engaging students and stimulating learning. A range of meaningful assessment practices across the programme can engage students in their learning and ensure that graduate attributes are assessed.

Assessment has different purposes including:

- measuring achievement (summative assessment/ assessment *of* learning);
- engendering learning (formative assessment/ assessment *for* learning);
- enabling learners become aware of how they learn (assessment *as* learning).

In Trinity, as in many universities, summative assessment dominates. While exams are a necessary form of assessment, the traditional concept that assessment consists mostly of examinations and essays has been challenged over the last decade internationally. From an institutional perspective, external examiner reports have regularly referred to over-assessment in some programmes. It is acknowledged that the increased complexity of learning needed for the 21st Century graduate cannot be adequately assessed through examinations.[2] High-stakes, summative examinations have been shown to act as an incentive for students to study 'to the test' and engage in shallow or strategic learning. Yet, the heavy reliance on summative assessment in our undergraduate programmes does not necessarily lead to greater differentiation in student achievement.

The framework presented does not advocate replacing exams with a similar amount of continuous assessment. Rather, it advocates fewer, more meaningful assessments across the academic curriculum.

Assessment Tenets

Assessment in Trinity will:

1. Support the acquisition of graduate attributes;
2. Support learning;
3. Be programme-focused;

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[1] See Ramsden, P. (1992), *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge; Brown, S and Knight, P. (1994), *Assessing Learners in Higher Education*. London: Kogan Page.

[2] OECD, High level group on modernization of higher education. Report to the European Commission on new modes of learning and teaching in higher education.

4. Support meta-learning;
5. Actively engage students and staff.

In order to support the implementation of the assessment framework, the academic year structure needs to be able to facilitate a move away from what is currently a very heavy focus on assessment *of* learning to one of assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning. At the centre of the proposed framework is the principle that there should be fewer, but more meaningful assessments and that these should be distributed more effectively across the academic year/s.

Proposals in relation to a new academic year structure are informed by the need to:

- encourage broader range of formative and summative assessments spread across the academic year/s;
- encourage more meaningful approaches to assessment;
- create space for:
    - reflection on learning;
    - independent project work, group work, field trips and other forms of individual and collaborative learning
    - reduce the intensity of teaching.

Current Status Assessment Framework and Academic Year Structure and next steps

Council at its meeting of 11 May 2016 was asked to consider the assessment framework and academic year structure in the context of the assessment framework. The framework was noted and will be taken forward as part of the planning for implementation phase outlined in **Section 3.**

Consideration was also given to marking the Junior Freshman year as pass/fail, but it was agreed that further consideration needs to be given to this item, together with a review of the roles of external examiners and courts of examiners. This will be included as part of the next phase of the project.

Various iterations of the academic year structure in the context of the assessment framework were considered by Council at the meetings of 11 May and 8 June. Council supported the direction of the two variations of the academic year structure presented but subject to further analysis and clarification in relation to:

- The management and achievement of the cultural change necessary to successfully implement one week of formal examinations at the end of each semester
- The possibility of reducing the results/marking period by one week in Trinity term
- The practicalities of introducing a “free” afternoon each week free from timetabled classes.

Council will be invited to review the response from Strand 2 at its meeting of 29 June and to consider and approve the recommendation in relation to the academic year structure as contained in the report.

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Strand 4-6

The following **sections 2.6 – 2.8** highlight an outline of the rationale for change, key recommendations and enablers arising from the work of Strands 4, 5 & 6. **Full reports are included as part of the Trinity Education Project -Interim Report documentation** http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/

2.6 Internships and Study Abroad (Strand 4)

Overarching Term of Reference

To bring forward to the Steering Committee a draft policy, informed by the Curriculum Principles (Strand 2) and best international practice, which supports current activities and facilitates the development of experiential learning through internships and that facilitates the development of study abroad as part of an undergraduate programme

Rationale for change

Trinity's Strategic Plan 2014-19 emphasises the importance of providing an education that strengthens the international experience and employability of our graduates. The significance of this is supported by the findings of the ERASMUS Impact Study, 2014[3], which shows that 85% of Erasmus students go abroad in part to improve their chances of employment. The report found that students who study abroad and/or gain work experience are in better position to find their first job and to enhance their career development. The 2016 Erasmus Impact Study – Regional Analysis[4] reports that mobility also fosters an entrepreneurial spirit, and 38% of Erasmus alumni in Eastern Europe plan to create a start-up.

Study abroad and work experience develop many of the Trinity Graduate Attributes including resilience, independence, adaptability, and global awareness. An increasing number of students are guided on university choice by the opportunities for study abroad and internship opportunities. Employers are increasingly looking for graduates who can navigate a globalised marketplace, and the report *2020 Outlook: The future of Employer Branding*[5] shows that what is taking precedence in the way companies recruit is an increasing emphasis on the 'cultural fit' of new hires.

In a global survey[6] by Universum of more than 2,000 CEOs and HR professionals on their view of the 2020 talent market, 58% of respondents listed "work experience" as the most important qualification for hires, followed by a student's personality at 48%. Informal

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2016/erasmus-impact_en.pdf
[5] http://universumglobal.com/2020outlook/
[6] http://universumglobal.com/articles/2015/03/view-2020-talent-market/

research by Grad Ireland has identified 'relevant work experience or any other work experience' as one of the most important attributes that employers look for in recent graduates, and this is supported by the findings of the IBEC National Survey of Employers' View of Irish Higher Education Outcomes, 2012[7]. An internship or work placement also broadens the student experience and provides an environment where they can "fail safely". Globally, there is an increase in work placements as part of undergraduate degrees and a recent survey of the student body by the Trinity Students' Union found that 77% of the 699 respondents expressed a high interest in an internship as part of their programme, while 115/699 (17%) reported having had completed an internship.
These and numerous other survey findings on graduate employment, suggest the growing importance of internships and international experience as part of the university curriculum.

As well as the benefits noted above for graduates, closer institutional and school-level engagement with national and international industry will raise Trinity's profile and enhance opportunities to strengthen strategic partnerships and increase research opportunities, policy development and the potential for industry affiliate programmes.

There are also considerable benefits for Trinity in having student exchanges with Universities globally. Student exchanges are often the first step in identifying and developing other partnership opportunities including research collaborations, joint degree programmes. Increased internationalisation of a university can improve its reputation (often symbolised by rankings), visibility and competitiveness; improves competitiveness in the market for talented students and scholars; enhances employability and social engagement.

Key Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- All undergraduate programmes make provision for study abroad opportunities as part of the core or elective curriculum;
- All undergraduate programmes make provision for academic internship opportunities as part of the core or elective curriculum;
- The credit-value of the study abroad and the internship modules is programme specific and the learning experience supports the programme learning outcomes;
- Specific institutional targets over a five year period to achieve programme compliance with the policy be agreed and academic and infrastructure supports put in place to enable success;
- Study abroad and internships foster the Trinity Graduate Attributes and students are supported in their articulation of the attributes specifically attained by participation in study abroad and/or internship module.

[7] http://www.hea.ie/sites/default/files/national_employers_survey_pilot_report.pdf

2.7 Technology-enhanced Learning (Strand 5)

Overarching Term of Reference

To bring forward to the Steering Committee proposals, informed by the Curriculum Principles (Strand 2) and best international practice, which enable

a. Development of technology-enhanced learning to enhance the student learning experience and development of graduate attributes
b. Embedding of innovative forms of assessment (Strand 3)
c. Delivery of the graduate attributes

Rationale for change

The potential of technology enhanced learning has been well documented; however, within many higher level institutions it has not fulfilled its promise to transform learning and teaching practice[8]. 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[9]. Digital learning can provide students with a rich, seamless learning experience from before application to beyond graduation by providing systems which are personalized, easy to use and feature rich and all accessible via mobile technologies.

The shift within student, societal, policy, economic and technological landscapes is driving the need for change within technology enhanced learning. Institutional drivers such as financial situation, ranking position shifts, teaching reputation, improving academic administration processes, and an increased focus on teaching quality are driving this rationale for change. Student drivers such as changing student characteristics, feedback, demand for flexible learning opportunities, increased access to course materials, and increasing expectations of technology enhanced learning are all significant considerations.

The renewed Trinity education should have a reputation for innovation in its teaching and learning experience based on the appropriate use of digital technologies and evidence led best practice. Technologies, present and future, are tools that can enhance teaching and learning. They cannot, however, implement innovation in teaching. Technology enhanced learning is both an *enabler* and a *driver* for this renewal.

[8] http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjet.12425/full
[9] https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/handle/2134/11037

Key Recommendations

- **Enable cultural change and academic development in TEL through a competence based approach**
  - Adopt a competency based approach to support academic development in technology enhanced learning
  - Identify a core competency set for TEL in collaboration with academic staff
  - Establish a project working with Schools to co-identify core TEL competencies within their discipline recognizing the diversity of teaching practice within the academic community and between disciplines
  - Align staff support and training with the competency sets
  - Evaluate the impact of a competency based approach within each School

- **Enhance the student learning experience through appropriate technology**
  - Evaluate the existing learning technologies available and competencies required
  - Investigate and evaluate a range of appropriate learning technologies to address key learning challenges within Trinity
  - Utilize technology enhanced learning as an enabler for other strands within the Trinity Education Project, in particular Learning Spaces and Assessment
  - Expand student support structures for technology enhanced learning

- **Organizational change**
  - Implement, enhance and evaluate College policies towards technology enhanced learning (in areas such as use of the virtual learning environment and blended learning)
  - Ensure the development of individual TEL competencies and innovations are recognized within the current promotion process
  - Improve the provision and support for staff training and use of technology enhanced learning
  - Create a clear structure for TEL activities with strong academic leadership
  - Ensure the activities are research led and informed and evaluated to ensure optimal impact
  - Enable engagement and commitment from College services

2.8 Learning spaces (Strand 6)

Overarching Term of Reference

To bring forward to the Steering Committee proposals for learning and teaching spaces, informed by best international practice, which

- enable delivery of the graduate attributes
- enable small-group teaching, collaborative working and experiential learning
- enable innovative teaching and assessment
- support technological change in the delivery of education
- make best use of existing spaces for teaching and learning
- will inform the plans for new buildings

Rationale for change

Higher education is being transformed by innovations in technology and novel forms of pedagogy. Such transformation is changing the methods and means of teaching and learning and is challenging conventional notions of *place* within the campus setting. The renewed curriculum twill offer new opportunities for creativity, team work, novel forms of assessment and uses of technology, so Trinity must address the challenge of providing optimal learning spaces to underpin these innovative education initiatives.

Key Recommendations

1. Adopt the principle that the entire campus is a teaching and learning space.
2. Develop a strategy for the provision of informal learning and break-out spaces and prioritise a programme of projects to enhance existing learning spaces and create new learning spaces.
3. Facilitate students with the ability to book rooms for their learning activities, including activities associated with learning outside of the classroom.
4. Consider the appointment of a learning spaces officer, as an additional resource, to assist with annual College-wide space utilisation surveys and the design of fit-for-purpose teaching and learning spaces. This was identified as best international practice.
5. Devise an academic development programme on the effective use of flexible learning spaces.
6. Use creative furniture solutions to provide flexible and adaptable spaces
7. Ensure that the input of students is sought for the design/refurbishment of teaching and learning spaces
8. Revise existing space policies to ensure that the use of learning spaces can be shared across the College in an efficient manner
9. Change the culture of space territorialism in order to minimise under-utilisation and thereby ensure that all teaching and learning spaces can be used for maximum benefit of the College

10. Instigate a student design competition to refurbish a break-out zone is a selected building.
11. New buildings and refurbishments should incorporate a portion of space to informal learning spaces for use across the Trinity community
12. Identify funding from a variety of sources, such as incorporation into new projects, and as part of the Trinity Campaign

Next steps: Strands 4-6

Policy documents arising from the work of Strands 4 (Internships and Study Abroad), 5 (Technology Enhanced Learning) and 6 (Learning spaces) will be presented to Council for approval in the academic year 2016/17.

It is recognised that many of the **enablers** are common to all 3 strands and are summarised as follows:

- Develop academic and support infrastructure to facilitate successful implementation
- Deploy existing expertise and knowledge within the University to provide a platform to enable the implementation of a College policy
- Manage the cultural change
- Enhance collaboration and engagement with the college community
- Share best practice and build on the excellence already in place across the College

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Section 3.0:
Planning for Implementation

3.1 Planning for implementation 2016/17 and 2017/18 (Phase 3)

Detailed planning for implementation will take place over the next two academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18. This phase of the project will consider academic policy and operational aspects pertaining to entry routes, pathways and awards (including progression), the fixed timetable (including the shape and size of modules, which will link to the proposed assessment framework), the management of the transition process, and the systems and infrastructure (space, resources, administrative structures) to support the required changes. It will also work on the development of Trinity electives and approved modules and provide support for programmes in designing their curricula in line with the graduate attributes, curriculum principles and programme architecture. As part of this phase, work will also commence to develop academic policy around the recommendations arising from the work of Strand 4 (Internships and Study Abroad), Strand 5 (Technology Enhanced Learning and Strand 6 (Learning Spaces). Further work will take place in relation to Strand 7 (Differentiation and Positioning) as outlined in **Section 2.0.**

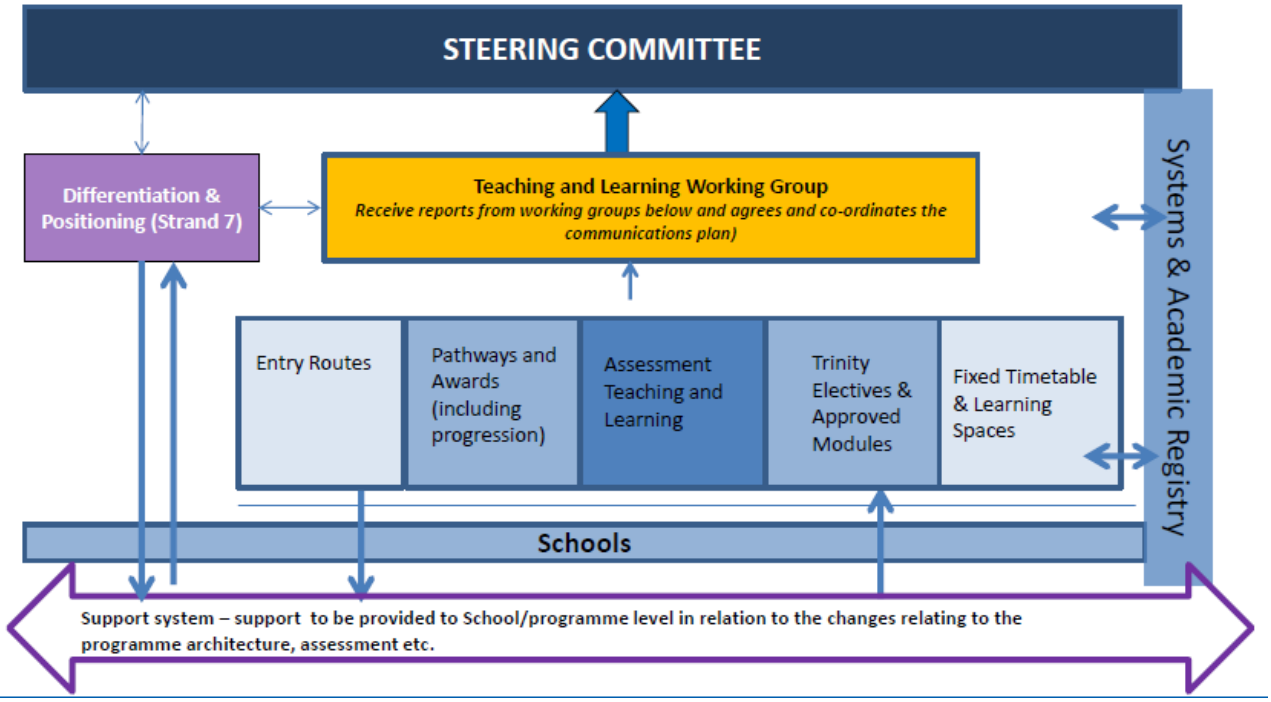
Following the final Council meeting, a communication will be circulated to the academic and student community in relation to the current status and next steps and this will be available on the website www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep. The next phase of the communications and stakeholder engagement plan will also be rolled out.

A number of working groups will be established to commence work immediately on the following priority areas. High level Terms of Reference have been included for information:

- **Entry routes**
    - Present proposals to Council on entry routes (e.g., honors; three subject entry) across all three Faculties
- **Pathways and Awards**
    - Present proposals to Council on standard rules and regulations that address
        - movement between pathways,
        - progression from year to year and from semester to semester
        - Consistency in regulations around end-year/degree awards
    - Pass/Fail in Year 1 (or distinction)
- **Assessment, Teaching and Learning**
    - To support Schools in taking a programme-based approach to curriculum renewal and developing an assessment framework at programme level
- **Trinity Electives and Approved Modules**
    - Develop a pool of Trinity electives
    - Work with programmes to identify approved modules
- **Fixed Timetable and Learning spaces**

- Present recommendations on the implementation of a "fixed" timetable which supports the achievement of the Trinity Education objectives and enables the delivery of all agreed teaching and learning activities
- Ensures best utilisation of space and resources
- Explores how systems might enable a fixed timetable

Figure 4- Planning for Implementation Structure (Phase 3)



The draft structure outlined above will be the subject of further discussion at a Planning Day chaired by the incoming Vice Provost on 5 July 2016. Generic questions to be considered as part of this away day will include:

1. What are the milestones over the next two years?
2. What are the steps in getting there?
3. Who are the stakeholders and how do we communicate with them?
4. What are the dependencies – resources/systems/cultural change?
5. How will we know we have succeeded at end 2016/17; end 2017/18; end 2018/19?
6. What do we need to think about during transition?

Successful completion of the planning for implementation phase is necessary in order to enable the new structures to be implemented in the academic year 2018-19. Council will be updated with progress throughout 2016/17.

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Full documentation including this Trinity Education Project – Interim Report is available via Trinity Education project webpage : http://www.tcd.ie/academic-services/tep/