

ACADEMIC COUNCIL**MINUTES****30 November 2022****2.00 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.****Zoom Meeting****Present:**

J. Appleby	A. Bourke	Martin Brown
D. Burke	P. Cahill	A. Castillo Villaneuva
M. Coulter	E. Crossen	S. Cullen
D. Fahy	P. Flynn	P. Gallagher
S. Giordani	S. Hegarty	A. Intizar
M. Irwin-Bannon (Secretary)	D. Keogh (Chairperson)	A. Kilroy
D. Kinahan	M. Kirwan	P. Landais
A. Looney	L. Looney	C. Mac an Bhaird
C. McArdle	J. McDonough	E. McGlynn
P. McGorman	S. McGovern	A. McKenna
E. McLoughlin	J. McMackin	P. McMorrow
P. Mooney	A. Morrissey	M. Mubashar Saeed
G.M. Muntean	B. Murphy	N. Murphy
M O'Brien	S. O'Brien	K. O'Sullivan
N. O'Sullivan	M. Pryce	P. Robbins
M. Rocchi	A. Sinnott	J. Stokes
T. Szecei	G. Uí Laighléis	L. Van der Werff
M. Ward	B. White	P. Young

Apologies:

L. Boran	A. Brennan	Mark Brown
M. Butler	E. Clinton	J. Doyle
G. French	D. Hand	J. Kearney
V. Lambert	A. Logan	A. McAuley
U. McCabe	D. McCarthy	R. McManus

In Attendance:

V. Cooke	C. Gormley (Item 8.2)	
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The President welcomed members to the meeting of Academic Council.

1. Adoption of agenda

It was noted that item 16, Section C would be discussed briefly.

A. Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 5 October 2022

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

It was noted that at its meeting of 5 October 2022 Academic Council approved its revised Terms of Reference, subject to the approval by Governing Authority of Statute 6 at its 19 October 2022 meeting. It was confirmed that the approval was granted at Governing Authority and the Academic Council Terms of Reference are finalised and aligned with the statute.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 31 August 2022 and 12 October 2022, and Minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 30 May 2022

The minutes were approved. It was noted that a minor error in the minutes of the Education Committee meeting of 31 August 2022, paragraph 4.14 had been corrected.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs (Registrar) noted that University meetings commenced earlier in 2022/23, which was a consequence of the amended Academic Calendar.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 25 August 2022

The minutes were approved.

6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 18 August 2022

The minutes were approved.

B. Policy and strategy issues**7. President's report (oral report)**

7.1 In the context of approaching the end of the first semester of 2022/23, the President thanked colleagues for their immense contribution over the last year particularly in the opening up of the University at the start of the calendar year, following pandemic restrictions.

He noted that the University has had some recent external affirmation in the global rankings in that DCU has returned to the THE top 500 and its subject rankings have been the best for five years. He acknowledged the contribution of the Quality Promotion Office in providing the data to enable the University to demonstrate its strengths.

7.2 The President commended the nominations in three areas of DCU for the Times Higher Awards. He noted them as follows:

- Outstanding support for Students: Student Support and Development for DCU Orientation;
- Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year: The Access Office and DCU Trust;
- Outstanding Estates Team: The Estates Office.

He congratulated the Access Office, DCU Trust, and the Estates team for winning in their nominated categories.

He noted that the Colm Delves virtual reality leadership lab was a hugely significant development for DCU. It has been short-listed for the QS Reimagine Education Awards, which acknowledges education innovation.

7.3 The President noted that he and Prof Joseph Stokes had attended the recent Dundalk Institute of Technology graduation for research degrees awarded by DCU, and colleagues in DkIT appreciated their presence. He informed Council that DCU has given an assurance, in the context of DkIT's ambition to achieve Technological University status, that it will extend the current arrangements of the Graduate School on a short-term basis to facilitate their transition.

7.4 The President reported that the Senior Management Team is continuing its engagement with the wider University community on the new University strategy. To date, all Faculties have been visited and there has been very constructive engagement. The next step will be to consult with professional units to continue discussions, with a view to the finalised strategy being considered by the Governing Authority in spring 2023.

- 7.5 As noted at the last meeting, the President informed Council that the Higher Education Authority Act 2022 has been signed into law and DCU is proceeding with the implementation of the Act. The Chancellor intends to update the Governing Authority in this regard at its next meeting and to establish a nominations committee to advance to the next stage of the formation of the newly constituted Governing Authority. It was noted that membership of the Governing Authority will be reduced from 28 to 19, including the Chair. The President noted that he would provide regular updates in this regard.
- 7.6 The President noted the event, which took place recently in the Helix for DCU entrants who had achieved high CAO points based on their Leaving Certificate. He noted that there were 104 schools represented at the event, which included students from all four provinces and included some mainland European students. He noted that whilst those from Leinster constituted the highest numbers amongst these students, he observed that DCU's strong programmes attract entrants from all over the country. Fiontar also presented an award for the highest achievement in Gaelige and McAleese scholarships were presented to two students from Northern Ireland.
- 7.7 The President noted that DCU and UCD are in ongoing discussions with the Department of Education on funding for the provision of accommodation for students. An allocation of €45 million has recently been granted to Maynooth University, NUI Galway and the University of Limerick. DCU had chosen not to avail of this fund, which was not of a scale sufficient to deliver affordable accommodation.

8 Strategic academic initiatives

8.1 ECIU: New approach for the start-up phase (please see accompanying presentation)

The Vice President for Academic Affairs (Registrar) (VPAA) introduced this item noting that the aim of this presentation was to provide a sense of how the next phase of the ECIU project is developing. The phase of the project will run from November 2022 to October 2026.

She noted that the report for the pilot phase project has just been submitted and the VPAA thanked colleagues for their contribution to this phase.

The VPAA provided a recap on the three key innovative concepts of the ECIU (Vision 2030) as follows:

- Challenged Based Learning
- Short-form learning in context of Micro-credentials
- Flexible learning pathway approach to awards

She outlined how the total budget of 25 million would be allocated and how DCU's proportion would be utilised. She noted the emphasis most recently was on the emerging roles of staff within DCU in this project on how DCU engages with the ECIU structures. She noted also that DCU was developing an overall structure, and oversight of that structure.

The VPAA noted that there was a commitment to deliver on the following within the ECIU:

- DCU learner target—60 students in 2023, growing to 600 over four years;
- Effective space within Bachelor or Master’s programmes to include ECIU offered modules for those learners;
- Challenges and micro-credentials to be offered as part of flexible learning pathway proposition;
- DCU as the lead on work package four related to micro-credentials.

A general discussion followed on the value of this initiative to DCU and its standing within the overall University community, and how it is benchmarked within this network. It was noted that this is a network of innovative universities and the value will be in enhancing our reputation in Europe for innovation. .

8.2 *Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) at DCU, presentation by Clare Gormley, DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit (please see accompanying presentation).*

Ms Clare Gormley presented on Challenge-Based Learning and its definition. She provided information on the supports available to academic staff and explored the value of this approach to student learning.

In the discussion, which followed, the following points were noted:

- Challenge based learning can be balanced with the more traditional direct instruction within a challenge based learning framework;
- Although more difficult to do, it is possible to employ CBL with larger classes;
- CBL presents challenges to academic staff, as they may not have a background in this form of learning themselves. The value is in the enhanced student engagement;
- Traditional forms of teaching have delivered progress in society, and the impact of CBL should be considered in this context. It was noted in the discussion that this form of learning will be evaluated as programmes progress and there will be learning and adaption as CBL is utilised;
- There are challenges associated with assessing this new form of learning which requires a different approach to much of current practice.

The President thanked Ms Gormley for her presentation and the work of the Teaching Enhancement Unit in supporting CBL, which is central to DCU Futures and ECIU University.

C. Items for formal approval/noting

9 Validation Report: MSc in Biotherapeutics

Approved

10 Accreditation Reports

10.1 MA in Documentary Practice

Approved

10.2 *Graduate Diploma in Social, Personal and Health Education – Relationships and Sexuality Education*

Approved

11 Report from Winter 2022 Examinations/Progression and Award Boards

The Report from winter 2022 Progression and Award Boards was approved. Academic Council conferred awards on those candidates who demonstrated the required standard and were duly approved for award by relevant Progression and Awards Boards.

12 Report from Examination Appeals Boards for Taught Programmes 2022

Noted

13 Report from the Disciplinary Committee 2022

Noted

14 DCU Outline Academic Calendar 2025-26

Approved

15 Report to Academic Council on the Accreditation of Programmes During the 2021/22 Academic Year

Approved

16 Reports from Sub-committees of Academic Council

The VPAA drew the attention of Council to the recent approval by University Standards Committee of the following at its meeting of 3 November 2022:

- An amendment to the Duolingo English test score for admission to postgraduate programmes, **from 110 to 120, with** subset scores of 110. This amendment was agreed to align DCU's requirements with the sector requirements for undergraduate entrants, agreed across CAO institutions. This will apply for applicants for entry in September 2023

The proposed change was approved.

17 Any other business

The Chair thanked colleagues for their contributions to the meeting, and as it was the last meeting before Christmas, he thanked Council for their work during the year and wished colleagues a Happy Christmas.

Date of next meeting

<p>6 February 2023 At 2.00 pm Via Zoom</p>

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____