

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Wednesday 22 March 2023

2.00 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

**Present:** Ms Jennifer Bruton, Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Brian Corcoran, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan (Secretary), Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Joseph Stokes, Dr Monica Ward and Professor Blánaid White.

**Apologies:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Professor John Doyle and Professor Anne Looney.

**SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 22 February 2023**

The minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2023 were approved.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 22 February 2023**

**3.1** It was noted that the revised academic offering proposals for the Graduate Certificate in Aviation Leadership, Sustainability and Innovation and the MSc in Aviation Leadership were on the agenda (item 3.1).

- 3.2** It was noted that the Teaching and Learning Strategy was on the agenda (item 4.1).
- 3.3** The Chair provided a brief update on item 6, QQI analysis of degree classifications. She informed members that Dr J. Burgi-Tian had completed an initial exercise looking at patterns across DCU programmes. A more detailed look at a small sample of programmes is now planned, to explore some of the contexts behind the data. One programme per Faculty has been identified and the Chair will follow up with Executive Deans on the next steps in this process.

The Chair noted that this exercise would help establish some context in advance of a more detailed study proposed by QQI. Ms A. McKenna informed members that DCU had provided feedback on the suggested approach for this study.

#### **4. Minutes of Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 12 December 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of 12 December 2022 were noted.

### **SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS**

#### **5. Strategic Academic Initiatives**

##### **5.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy**

The Chair informed members that Units within the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs met recently to consider the draft Teaching and Learning (T&L) Strategy. Each Unit is currently preparing unit-specific alignment statements for each of the areas of focus. In addition, the following points were noted:

- Terms of Reference for a Teaching Evaluation Subcommittee have been drafted by Ms P. Mooney and are currently being reviewed by Professor D. Elliott. The draft Terms of Reference will be considered at a subsequent meeting of the Education Committee.
- Dr M. Nic Giolla Mhichíl will present an update on short-form learning and micro-credentials at the next meeting of the Education Committee.

The Executive Deans in attendance provided input into the draft T&L Strategy following the most recent discussions at faculty level. The following points were noted:

- The draft alignment statements have generated much discussion in particular about how the Faculties can reach some of the indicated targets. Some concerns were raised with respect to the target of 75% of full-time teaching staff having a formal award or fellowship, and the amount of time required to achieve these awards.
- Discussions also took place on what resources would be needed for Challenge Based Learning (CBL) and it was suggested some templates and guidance would be useful. Professor B. White informed members that the CBL Working Group had done significant work in recent months and that there were plans to produce a number of resources for colleagues. She noted these resources would help colleagues determine what makes sense for their own modules.
- It was commented that Faculties are challenged to deliver on both the T&L and Research Strategies.

The Chair noted that the draft alignment statements were intended to generate awareness of and discussion about how each of the areas of focus can be progressed in Faculties and professional support units, and that specific targets would be further refined as a result of that consideration. She noted too, that the priority areas of focus were determined following a significant number of engagements and are reflective of the current HE environment. She acknowledged that the T&L-related outcomes, by their nature, are much more nuanced than some research metrics. She noted that the Faculties have strengths in different areas and that there are different starting points, contexts and disciplinary practices, and that the T&L Strategy should bring individual strengths together in a coherent way.

## **SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS**

### **6. DCU Business School**

#### **6.1 Revised Academic Offering: Graduate Certificate in Aviation Leadership, Sustainability and Innovation**

The Secretary summarised the proposal which was initially submitted in 2021/22, after the last meeting of the Education Committee. She informed members that an expedited review

of the earlier proposal was necessary at that time due to funding being contingent on a September 2022 launch. The proposal for a fully online graduate certificate was reviewed by a subgroup of the Education Committee and a number of issues were raised in respect of the online delivery components. The proposal was approved by Chair's action for on-campus delivery in the first instance with a request that the proposal be resubmitted once online delivery plans had been advanced.

Professor D. Elliott informed members that aviation is a growing aspect of DCU Business School's portfolio and that the School has established strong relationships with key industry partners. The Education Committee considered the documentation and the merits of the updated proposal were noted. The proposal was approved subject to the following minor corrections and clarifications:

- It is indicated that the modules may be delivered separately to micro-credential learners and those on the Graduate Certificate programme. It is assumed that the default is that these two cohorts will learn together as a single cohort and that modules will only be delivered twice if numbers exceed capacity.
- It is recommended that Programme Learning Outcome number two be revisited to ensure the language used is consistent with other learning outcomes.
- The external examiner feedback is limited in this proposal. The programme proposer should clarify if the feedback on the second MSc in Aviation Leadership proposal relates to both.

## **6.2 Revised Academic Offering: MSc in Aviation Leadership**

The Education Committee gave due consideration to the proposal noting, in particular, the inclusion of sustainability and digitalisation modules as positive and timely updates to the existing programme. It was noted that the inclusion of the Graduate Certificate provides both an entry and exit route for learners. The proposal was approved subject to the following minor corrections:

- The proposal makes reference to entry through an equivalent relevant qualification. It is requested that DCU's RPL policy be referenced here as the appropriate mechanism through which such applicants can apply.
- The equivalent English language attainment pilot referenced in the proposal concludes at the end of the current academic year. It is recommended that references to this be removed from the paperwork.

## **7. Faculty of Engineering and Computing**

### **7.1 Revised Academic Offering: MSc in Computing, major in Natural Language Processing**

Dr. J. McManis briefed the Education Committee on the proposal to introduce a new major in Natural Language Processing, noting the timeliness of the proposal in light of recent AI developments. She informed members that there is significant expertise within the School of Computing to deliver this new major.

The Education Committee considered the documentation and the merits and timeliness of this proposal were noted. It was confirmed that the award title would be MSc in Computing and that the major would be named on the transcript. The proposal was approved subject to the following minor correction:

- It was noted that there are some small differences in the programme learning outcomes (PLOs) for this major and the other existing majors on the MSc in Computing. It is requested that this be reviewed to ensure there is one single set of PLOs.

## **SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS**

### **8. Any other business**

#### **8.1 Leaving Certificate update**

The Chair advised members that since the last meeting of the Education Committee, it had become clear that the Leaving Certificate publication date would be late again this year. She informed members that, given the need to start planning for 2023/24, clarity had been provided that first-year students would start Semester 1 two weeks later than other cohorts. She informed members that it remains unclear if the State Examinations Commission is planning to return to pre-Covid timelines and that colleagues should start to consider the implications of this.

Education Committee members expressed serious concern that the sector would accept this, highlighting that the late start is detrimental to the experience and welfare of our students.

## 8.2 Online assessment

The Chair informed members that, in the context of the new Strategy, the University would need to consider approaches to assessment for predominantly remote students. She noted two significant challenges with online assessment including the significant costs associated with running a stable and secure system and the challenges of new AI technologies and tools to upholding academic integrity for all assessments. While these may, in the short term, impact on previously used online assessments, in the longer term a robust approach will be needed to support completion of programmes by remote learners.

Dr M. Ward advised members that QQI would be running a series of lunchtime seminars in the coming days, focusing on various academic integrity topics.

- 8.3 The Chair informed members that this was Dr J. Burgi-Tian's last meeting before she goes on leave and that she looked forward to working with her on her return.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next meeting:**  
Wednesday, 19 April 2023  
at 2.00 pm  
Glasnevin Campus  
Room AG01