MINUTES

Wednesday 9 March 2022

2.00 p.m. – 4.15 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Professor Mark Brown, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Derek Hand, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Anna Logan, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Colm O'Gorman, Professor Joseph Stokes and Dr Blánaid White

Apologies: Dr Sarahjane Belton and Dr Claire Bohan

In attendance   Dr Jing Burgi-Tian and Dr Rachel Keegan

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chair noted that this was Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon's last meeting of Education Committee after seven years in the secretariat role and that Dr Rachel Keegan would be taking up the role from April 2022. She thanked Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon for her long service to the Committee and for her professional approach. She thanked her, not only for the provision of service to the Committee itself, but in the wider aspects of the role in engaging with the wider University community and its interaction with Education Committee.

1.   Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was <u>adopted</u>.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 9 February 2022

The minutes of 9 February 2022 were <u>approved</u> and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes of 9 February 2022

3.1   It was <u>noted</u> that work on Employability Statements is continuing. The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching of Learning reported that he had consulted with the Executive Deans with respect to the Employability Statement template and after discussion, it was agreed that as much information as possible will be populated centrally and Programme Chairs will then be asked to validate the information sent to them and to provide appropriate additional information, as

relevant. It was clarified that this exercise would be completed over the coming weeks (Item 3.6).

3.2   It was underlined noted that consideration of an additional nominee for the BSc in Athletic Therapy and Training/MSc in Athletic Therapy and Strength and Conditioning Accreditation Board is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 8).

3.3   It was noted that the proposal with respect to exit awards from BEng programmes, a decision on which was deferred at the meeting of 9 February 2022, is on the agenda of this meeting (Items 11.1 – 11.5).

3.4   It was noted that a discussion on the future of online and blended learning at undergraduate level is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 12.1).

3.5   It was noted that a policy paper on Collaborative Provision and Joint, Double (multiple) and Dual Awards would be prepared over the coming months (Item 3.7).

3.6   It was noted that a section of questions reflecting the *Principles of Quality Assurance of DCU E-Learning and Blended Provision* for programmes changing to online or blended from traditional delivery and those undergoing validation has been completed (Item 3.8).

        A discussion took place on online and blended future provision and the following points were noted:

        ● The Chair highlighted that the context of the development of the principles for e-learning and the development of an approval process were part of an evolving process and would be subject to ongoing review;
        ● In the context of the current sectoral agenda with respect to online and blended learning, it was noted that QQI had recently made a call for a tender for the development of online delivery guidelines and that it was important that DCU would be involved in shaping this future agenda;
        ● It was highlighted that a consideration for Education Committee with respect to any change from traditional to online or blended delivery would be the overall strategic direction of the University and the balance of traditional and online and blended delivery in the portfolio of taught programmes. It was noted this would be given further consideration in the next Teaching and Learning Strategy;
        ● With respect to undergraduate programmes and full-time taught postgraduate programmes any online activity should be designed to enhance the learning experience, rather than set out to deliver the programme remotely by substituting activities.

        The following criteria were agreed by Education Committee with respect to the type of programmes that may be considered in the short-term for a change of delivery mode from traditional delivery to online or blended delivery. Each programme making this change will be required to seek approval from Education Committee.
        o The programme must be part-time taught postgraduate;
        o Students will be predominately off campus (more than half of the programme will be delivered online).

Following agreement of the decision above with respect to online and blended delivery some further discussion took place. The following were <u>noted</u>:

- It was confirmed that the University is not considering online or blended provision for undergraduate taught programmes, (other than those currently in Open Education), nor for existing postgraduate taught full-time programmes. It was noted that this decision will be revisited and the University will look at the broader picture in the context of an evolving strategy, and in the context of the experience with part-time postgraduate programmes;
- There may be some taught post-graduate programmes where the rationale for not making the change to online may be about its context relative to its competitors and its unique selling point;
- It would be important to adopt the ENQA compliant definitions of online and blended delivery;
- It was suggested that the communication to Faculties would be contexualised, and be reflective of the recently agreed quality standards;
- It was suggested, if there was a volume of submissions from part-time taught postgraduate programmes to move to online and blended delivery, that a sub-group of Education Committee would review them in advance of a formal meeting of Education Committee.

3.7   It was <u>noted</u> that work with respect to the provision of an overview of Education Committee/Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar commitments and activities, and a proposed cycle for reporting to Education Committee is ongoing (Item 7).

Ongoing matters arising related to Education Committee Standing Committee of 13 December 2021

3.8   It was <u>noted</u> that the finalised accreditation documentation for the BSc in Global Challenges had been reviewed by a sub-committee of Education Committee and the programme was <u>approved to advance</u> to accreditation stage (Item 1).

3.9   It was <u>noted</u> that issues related to the organisation and finance of the delivery of the module, Leadership, Governance and Management in Modern Healthcare have been resolved for the programme MSc in Specialist Nursing for Future Healthcare (Item 2).

3.10   It was <u>noted</u> that a revised financial statement for the Graduate Certificate in Financial Intelligence and Technology to take account of the input of learning design development costs is awaited (Item 3).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4.   Strategic Academic Initiatives

4.1   Minutes of Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 6 December 2021

The minutes of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 6 December 2021 were <u>approved</u>.

5.   **ECIU University: Erasmus+ application update**

The Chair provided a brief update on the ECIU University Erasmus+ application. She indicated that the ECIU Erasmus+ funding call was focussed on education matters rather than on research and innovation and that there was a multi-strand approach to the funding of the different elements of the European University project. A proposal was drafted over the early months of 2022 which was quite complex due to the number of partners and DCU has been a very active partner in the exercise. There is €14.1 million funding available and the focus is on Challenge Based Learning, and it also includes funding for a digital platform. Key items in the proposal will be subject to the decision of the ECIU Board.

It was noted that the proposal is at signature stage and is due for submission prior to 23 March 2022. If funding is granted it would commence at the beginning of January 2023.

6.   **DCU Futures and online/blended delivery, presentation by the Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation**

The Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation presented reflections on incorporating 15% online learning into the DCU Futures programmes. She outlined the following: the rationale for the 15% online learning; how 15% online could translate in practical terms; the different learning modalities; the impact of a pedagogy-led approach; and the impact on pedagogy and assessment.

The key learnings to date from DCU Futures were listed as follows:

It is key to:
• Frame the dialogue around pedagogy, assessment, module design, and not modality;
• Have explicit clarity about boundary parameters;
• Design support for module re/design;

It is important to include:
• Scheduled synchronous components, where the teacher/academic presence is felt, at specific touchpoints (e.g. at start, before and after assessment) - either online or on campus;
• An optimal blend of on-campus and online activities. The sense is that the 1/6th is working well.

It was noted that:
• Student feedback is strongly towards modules containing both on-campus and online activities, and this is supported by staff;
• Spaces are needed for students to access online material between lectures.

The Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation also outlined that there are three critical elements when considering online-learning as follows:

1. Modules designed to include online/digital learning experiences that are pedagogically sound;
2. It fits within a rich, diverse student learning experience;

3. Where the student learning experience, and changes to that experience, is considered at programme level.

The Chair thanked the Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation for the very interesting presentation noting that it was being made in the context of consideration of our exit from pandemic online practices for undergraduate students, and the University's direction of travel in this regard.

In the discussion which followed the following points were noted:

● The presentation was very enlightening and it was important that Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning would be provided with the findings so far;
● The vital role that DCU Studio has played, and that further consideration will have to be given to its resourcing;
● Consideration should be given to the timetable and the change to the nature of how University space is utilised in this context.

There was a brief discussion on how the learnings from DCU Futures to date could impact on the future direction of undergraduate learning and it was agreed that the Chair and the Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation would distil the learnings to date with a view to elaborating further on DCU's current direction with respect to online and blended delivery at undergraduate level. This would then be discussed further at a future Education Committee meeting.

7. **Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the inclusion of qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications**

The Academic Secretary provided the context to the document as presented. She noted that the protocol is largely reflective of good practice in the sector as it stands, with the additional overhead associated with the routine and annualised update of the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRC). The Director of Quality Promotion supported this view, and noted that the update of the Irish Register of Qualification will place a significant burden on the University, but she was supportive of the endorsement of the protocol.

Education Committee approved the protocol as presented. It was noted that the version as circulated to Education Committee was subject to agreement by all Designated Awarding Bodies (DABs). The approval granted by Education Committee allowed that very minor changes could be made, however, if substantial changes were made it was noted that it would be re-submitted for its consideration. It was noted that once the final version has been signed off by all DABs and circulated by QQI, without substantial change, it will be submitted to Academic Council for approval.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

8.   Proposed Exit Awards from BEng Programmes

It was noted that this was a reconsideration of the proposal made on 9 February 2022. At the February meeting, it was agreed that the matter would be given further consideration in the context of the University as a whole.

The following concerns, which were raised at the 9 February 2022 meeting of Education Committee were addressed as follows:

● The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning reported on the review of data which he had undertaken and noted that the issue of non-completion of fourth year students was predominately in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and indicated that no other Faculty, with the exception of the relevant Education and Nursing programmes, required an exit award therefore there was less concern about precedent.
● The award of BTech had been suggested during the last meeting of Education Committee, however it was noted that the use of the award of BTech could lead to confusion due to its use internationally. In addition, the award title is not permitted under Marks and Standards.
● Addressing concerns about the use of a BSc for the award of 180 credits it was noted that DCU already has a number of BScs that relate to 3-year programmes. It was further clarified that the proposed titles (as set out below) would not be advertised, would be used in very limited circumstances and would be confined to the parchment and convocation booklet.

The following (8.1-8.5) are the outcome of the reconsideration of the proposal for BEng exit awards.

8.1   BEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering

The proposed exit award of BSc in Electronic and Computer Technology from the BEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering was <u>approved</u>.

8.2   BEng in Mechatronic Engineering

The proposed exit BSc in Mechatronic Technology from the BEng in Mechatronic Engineering was <u>approved</u>.

8.3   BEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

The proposed exit award of BSc in Mechanical and Manufacturing Technology from the BEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering was <u>approved.</u>

8.4   BEng in Biomedical Engineering

The proposed exit award of BSc in Biomedical Technology from the BEng in Biomedical Engineering was <u>approved.</u>

8.5   *BEng in Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering*

The proposed exit award of BSc in Mechanical and Sustainability Technology from the BEng in Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering was <u>approved</u>.

It was agreed that the new exit awards could be applied by the Progression and Award Board in the academic year 2021-2022 and could be applied retrospectively to students who were withdrawn from the programme up to three years ago (from 2019-2020).

9.   DCU Futures: Bachelor of Business Studies, Business Analytics pathway

The Business Analytics pathway on the Bachelor of Business Studies programme was <u>approved</u> subject to the following items being addressed:

● It was recommended that the proposal applies the term 'Business Analytics' consistently (on occasion, 'Data Analytics' is used);
● The proposal contains a commitment to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), but it was questioned if it was appropriate for first year students, and whether the choice of different learning paths should only be offered at later points in the programme;
● On page 9 of the proposal there is a commitment to a deliverable of a *Career Visioning Portfolio* for students. Given that there are no credits attached, it was queried how the programme proposers would plan to ensure students engage;
● It was strongly recommended that the use of the term 'learning style' would be avoided in the proposal and noted that this would not be an acceptable term for those working in the discipline of education. It was suggested that the language used would should be about describing a differentiating approach to learning, and if the intention is to use the UDL then there are different phrases that should be used e.g. not to use 'weaker', 'stronger' and use phrases such as 'breadth of ability';
● It was noted that the transversal skills section does not align with the DCU Futures Transversal Skills work to date and it was requested that this would be addressed, so that it is consistent with DCU Futures.

10.   DCU Business School: Validation Proposal: MSc in Strategic Learning and Development

The Dean introduced this item noting that the proposal was in response to a Skillnet tender. The principal driver for this programme was the Irish Institute of Training and Development who had surveyed their members and indicated a demand for such a programme.

Education Committee members were complimentary of the programme and noted that it was an excellent and well-constructed programme.

The Education Committee <u>approved</u> the proposed MSc in Strategic Learning and Development for further development towards accreditation subject to the following recommendations and considerations being addressed in the accreditation proposal:

- It was noted that it is signalled in the documentation that this programme may have an impact on the MSc in Education and Training Management (Leadership) and this was also brought to the attention of the Committee as a potential negative impact, in that students may migrate from the existing programme to this new programme. It was suggested that it would be useful to contact colleagues who run the MSc in Education and Training Management (Leadership) to minimise the impact in terms of the programme marketing;
- There is a gap in the financial statement in terms of the resourcing of development costs for DCU Studio. It was noted that the structuring of the resources delivered by DCU Studio is currently being examined with the DCU Finance Office. It was recommended that amendment of the financial statement should take place once this funding model has been agreed;
- There is a reference to this being a 'QQI level 9 Master's award' (page 4) and this should be 'NFQ level 9 Master's award';
- The programme is aimed at professionals with 'significant' work experience and it was felt that this conflicted with the intention to accept graduates with less experience and a first class honours degree. Given the outline for the market for this programme it was felt that entry point offered to graduates with less experience and a first class honours degree requirement was not required;
- It was noted that for the ICT Skillnet programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing an alternative English language requirement was approved on a pilot basis. These applicants would be those for whom English is not their first language, with a number of years' relevant work experience in an English-speaking professional environment. It was suggested that the programme team could take this into consideration, if relevant;
- It was queried what the impact would be on the parent programmes of the existing modules being delivered online for this new programme, and if consideration has been given to the potential impact for those parent programmes?
- It was noted that the nominees of the Accreditation Board were very narrow in scope and most were connected through publications;
- While recognising that the request for information on the quality assurance of online delivery was late and the programme proposer was commended for its completion, it was felt that it was too aspirational and it required a more specific plan;
- There was a query on how the proposed programme-long year 1 and 2 10 ECTS module would operate;
- It was noted that the award classification for the Graduate Diploma exit award as reflected in the proposal was incorrect;
- It was noted that the book of modules has a reference to the MBA programme;
- It was noted that not all the learning outcomes were written using NFQ level 9 terminology, particularly existing modules. It was recommended that the programme team review the module specifications and make the necessary amendments.

11. **Accreditation Board nominee: BSc in Athletic Therapy and Training/MSc in Athletic Therapy and Strength and Conditioning**

The Accreditation Board nominee was underlined approved.

12.   **Any other business**

The Director of Quality Promotion reported that the StudentSurvey.ie is in field work from this week for the next three weeks. She noted that there has been very good engagement to date with over 1600 students having participated over the last three days, which represents about 15% of the population. The Quality Promotion Office has been working closely with the Students' Union and the incentives offered to complete the survey have been very effective. She noted that an email would be circulated to programme chairs shortly to request support in encouraging students to participate in the survey.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
Wednesday, 13 April 2022
at 2.00 pm via Zoom