

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 31 August 2022

2.00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. in A204, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan (Secretary), Dr Anna Logan, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Professor Joseph Stokes, Ms Annabella Stover and Dr Blánaid White.

Apologies: Dr Sarahjane Belton, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Professor Michelle Butler and Professor John Doyle.

The Chair welcomed members to the first in-person meeting of the Education Committee since March 2020. She noted that this would be Dr Anna Logan’s last meeting as the representative for the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and she thanked Dr Logan for her valuable input and contributions. She also welcomed Mr Eoin Crossen, DCU Students’ Union Vice President for Academic Life, to his first meeting.

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 11 May 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 11 May 2022 were approved.

3. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee Standing Committee of 17 May 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 17 May 2022 were approved.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of 11 May 2022 and 17 May 2022

- 4.1 It was noted that a report on the university-level issues raised in the 2021-22 APR reports had been submitted for consideration to the next meeting of DCU Executive (item 5).

- 4.2 It was noted that the proposed changes to the BSc in Science Education, which were initially discussed at the meeting of the Education Committee on 11 May 2022, were approved by Chair's action on 29 June 2022 (item 6.5).
- 4.3 It was noted that feedback from the Education Committee in relation to the BEng/MEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering had been addressed (item 7).
- 4.4 It was noted that feedback from the Education Committee in relation to the BEng/MEng in Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering had been addressed (item 8).
- 4.5 It was noted that a revised proposal in relation to the Graduate Certificate in Sexuality Education and Sexual Wellbeing and the Graduate Certificate in Relationships and Sexuality Education for People with Intellectual Disability was approved by Chair's action on 5 July 2022 (item 2, ECSC).
- 4.6 It was noted that a proposal for a new Graduate Certificate in Aviation Sustainability, Leadership, and Innovation was approved by Chair's action on 25 July 2022.
- 4.7 It was noted that, following the meeting of the Education Committee on 11 May 2022, it was clarified that the award title for the collaborative programme with Wuhan University would be MEng in Electronic Engineering and that the specialism in IoT would be referenced on the transcript (item 9).
- 4.8 It was noted that work on the provision of an overview of the strategic commitments of the OVPAA and the Education Committee had been subsumed into work on the new Strategy (item 3.7).
- 4.9 It was noted that work on a review of the APR templates had been subsumed into the curriculum design work as part of the SIS project (item 5).
- 4.10 The Chair provided a brief update on the work on employability statements, as provided by the Head of Careers Service. She noted that an approach to writing the statements had been mapped and that one faculty to date had agreed to the proposed approach. She highlighted the importance of this work and asked the Executive Deans to ensure this work is closed off promptly (item 3.5).
- 4.11 It was noted that work on a policy paper on collaborative provision is ongoing (item 3.6).
- 4.12 It was noted that the provision of a revised financial statement for the MSc in Strategic Learning and Development is ongoing (item 3.8).
- 4.13 It was noted that the provision of a revised financial statement for the Graduate Certificate in Financial Intelligence and Technology is ongoing (item 3.9).
- 4.14 It was noted that work on parchment titles is ongoing and would be progressed by the incoming Dean for Teaching and Learning (item 15).
- 4.15 It was noted that a response to feedback from the Education Committee Standing Committee in relation to the MSc in Public Policy had not yet been received (item 3, ECSC).
- 4.16 It was noted that a response to feedback from Education Committee Standing Committee in relation to the MA in European Law and Policy had not yet been received (item 4, ECSC).

5. Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 4 April 2022

The minutes of 4 April 2022 were approved.

6. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference, Membership and Standing Orders of Education Committee

The Terms of Reference, Membership and Standing orders of the Education Committee were approved. It was noted that these would be forwarded to the next meeting of the Academic Council for consideration.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

7. Strategic Academic Initiatives

7.1 Planning for the next strategy

The Chair presented to members on the development of the new DCU Strategy, as it relates to teaching and learning. She highlighted the remit of the Education Committee in strategic planning as regards to academic affairs and she advised that members would be active participants in the evolution of the Strategy over the coming weeks. The following points were noted:

- A number of Senior Management Group strategy workshops have taken place, led by the Deputy President.
- In parallel, the Chair has had several meetings with colleagues across the OVPAA to get a sense of what we are already committed to, and what external factors need to be taken into account in planning for the new Strategy.
- In recent days the Executive Deans and other key colleagues met to explore the Faculties' established priorities related to teaching and learning over the next five years.
- The Chair has also commenced work on a review of key National policies to ensure that the Strategy does not evolve in the absence of any consideration of these.
- The Chair noted the importance of student input in this process and she advised members that this engagement would deepen over the coming weeks.
- The Chair drew attention to the timeline for finalising the Strategy. She noted that the September to November period would be focused on shaping the Strategy and this would involve engagement across the University. She advised members that the President and Deputy President would be leading out on this process.

The Chair also provided an overview of a preliminary teaching and learning framework that could be used to help structure discussions with colleagues. She described the four key themes under this framework, namely: excellent, distinctive teaching and learning; flexibility; student experience; and student-focused academic services. The following points were raised by members:

- Some of the items listed under the theme of excellent, distinctive teaching and learning and not in themselves distinctive (i.e. a focus on academic integrity, quality assurance, etc.) but rather they underpin some of the distinctive features of DCU.
- It may be useful to look at the 'density' of DCU's distinctiveness as a gauge for where we are and where we want to strengthen distinctiveness in certain areas.
- It was noted the DCU's focus on employability, graduate impact in the workplace, and industry engagement have been cited by external accreditors as distinctive features of the DCU degree.
- It was noted that at programme and school level, colleagues rarely have the opportunity to have higher-level discussions as the focus is on operational and immediate considerations. It was suggested that there is an appetite amongst staff to have more opportunities to discuss and input into strategic considerations.
- Input from professional and technical staff should also be included in discussions, given the role of all colleagues in achieving the strategy.

The Chair summarised some next steps for the OVPAA, noting some areas where additional input would be useful including briefings on DCU Placements, micro-credentials, and the ECIU. She advised members that she is liaising with relevant colleagues to ensure that the Senior Management Group is briefed on these areas. She also indicated that further input is required on clarifying central supports for online and blended learning.

7.2 ECIU update

The planned presentation was deferred until the next meeting of the Education Committee.

The Chair informed members that European Commission funding for the next phase of the ECIU University project was awarded.

8. Challenge Based Learning, proposed definition

Dr B. White briefed members on the proposed short and long DCU definitions for Challenge Based Learning (CBL). She informed members that the draft definitions had been developed by the newly established Challenge Based Learnings Working Group.

Members considered the definitions as presented in the circulated memo. The following points were noted:

- These are working definitions and are intended to initiate further conversations on CBL across the University.
- It is important that we explore how CBL is applied in practice, in particular, how you develop students through the stages of skills needed for a CBL approach, and at what level is it most usefully introduced into a programme.
- While the definitions are useful for initiating further conversation, we must develop language to describe CLB in a student-friendly, accessible way. Providing examples of students involved in CBL activities would be helpful in this regard.
- It is important that we articulate what assessment looks like in CBL. The emphasis should be on working towards a solution rather than solving a challenge.
- The long definition does not read as a definition on its own and requires further elaboration as provided in the short definition.
- The definitions suggest that learners have free choice in the selection of a challenge. It was noted that the intention is rather that a learner would have autonomy within

the boundaries of a particular challenge. It would be useful to qualify the amount of learner freedom.

Education Committee approved the working definitions subject to the points above being addressed where relevant. It was agreed that feedback would be communicated to the CBL Working Group.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

9. DCU Institute of Education: Validation Proposal: Graduate Diploma in SPHE/RSE for Post-Primary Teachers

Professor A. Looney briefed members on the proposal which comes on foot of a successful competitive tender with the Department of Education. She advised members that the intention is for an initial intake of 30 students in January 2023 with a second intake in September 2023. She noted that learners would be required to be registered and employed as teachers at the time of commencing the programme. She also noted that the Institute of Education is well placed to deliver on this programme and that the programme proposer is the leading academic expert in this subject in Ireland.

The Chair informed members that this proposal would require speedy progress to the accreditation process but noted that the OVPAA had an early sight of this proposal which makes the launch date feasible.

The Education Committee granted the proposed programme approval for further development towards accreditation, subject to the following recommendations/considerations being addressed:

- It was requested that the programme title be changed:
 - It was noted that it would not be typical to include the target learner in an award title.
 - It was noted that it might be appropriate to name the subject area (SPHE/RSE) fully in the parchment title.
- It was requested that the entry requirements be amended to include reference to DCU's minimum entry requirements.
- It was recommended that programme learning outcome number 7 (learning to learn) be amended to include a reference to learning to learn online.
- Clarity was sought on the assessment schedule presented in the proposal. It was understood that the schedule relates to the proposed January intake. It was requested that an assessment schedule for the proposed September intake also be included, to show use of the majority of the year. It was noted that this is of particular importance in the context of the proposed one-year, part-time delivery of a 60 ECTS programme.
- It was noted that a revised funding model may be required following subsequent discussions with the Department of Education regarding contractual arrangements.

10. DCU Business School: faculty-led teaching quality process for the 2022/23 academic year

Professor C. O’Gorman notified Education Committee members of the plans by DCU Business School to adopt a modified teaching assessment approach for 2022/23, following Faculty Management Board discussion and consideration in September.

The Chair noted the importance of implementing a fit-for-purpose, university-wide system of evaluation of teaching quality, as highlighted in the CINNTE review in 2019. She noted that the initiative is timely, as the university will be progressing work in this area as an important aspect of the Strategy, and it would help inform that work.

11. Any other business

There was no other business.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

<p style="text-align: center;">Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 12 October 2022 at 2.00 pm Location A204, Glasnevin Campus</p>
