EDUCATION COMMITTEE STANDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday 17 May 2022

4.00 p.m. – 4.50 p.m. via Zoom

Present:	Professor Mark Brown, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan (Secretary), Dr Anna Logan, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Colm O'Gorman, Professor Joseph Stokes, Ms Annabella Stover and Dr Blánaid White.
Apologies:	Dr Sarahjane Belton, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Ms Kate Goodman and Ms Aisling McKenna.
In attendance:	Ms Valerie Cooke

1.   **Adoption of the agenda**

   The agenda was adopted.

2.   **Faculty of Science and Health: proposal to change the mode of delivery for the Graduate Certificate in Sexuality Education and Sexual Wellbeing and the Graduate Certificate in Relationships and Sexuality Education for People with Intellectual Disability**

   The proposal was considered in detail by Education Committee members. A number of issues were discussed and it was agreed that a decision would be <u>deferred</u> until further information is provided in relation to the following items. It was agreed that a decision on a revised proposal could be taken by Chair's action, to allow planning for these programmes to be progressed in advance of 2022-23.

   - It was noted that it was not clear from the documentation that there was any meaningful consideration by the programme team as to whether this is the most appropriate mode of delivery for these programmes. A more detailed justification for the move to fully online, including how the student learning experience will be enhanced by the move, should be included in the proposal.

   - It was noted that there was insufficient detail in the proposal to indicate that anything additional has been planned beyond what was our best efforts during the emergency phase of the pandemic. In particular, the following points should be addressed:
     - The proposal does not provide detail of any pedagogical re-design to make these programmes suitable for online delivery. It was noted that plans to continue with a traditional lecture format (i.e. a 90-minute lecture followed by 30 minutes for discussion) do not follow good practice for online delivery.

- It was not clear from the proposal that there is a commitment and a plan to implement a re-design of the programme to align with DCU's Principles for Quality Assurance of DCU E-Learning and Blended Provision.
  - The proposal does not articulate what the programme team understands best digital practice to be, or how they intend to ensure it is embedded into these programmes.
  - It was suggested that the module learning descriptors should be revisited to ensure that the module workload is appropriate for online delivery. In particular, consideration should be given to the very large amount of independent learning time in each module.

- The future viability of these programmes as online offerings was not clear from the proposal. It was agreed that additional information would be useful in this regard, specifically:
  - What are the current and expected student numbers, what is the future growth potential and what non-EU fee structure is being considered? It was noted that online programmes are resource-intensive but that there are also benefits from economies of scale. This should be taken into account in setting target student numbers and fee structures.
  - It was noted in the proposal that reliance on goodwill for institutional support is not a sustainable model going forward. It was requested that the programme team sets ambitious targets for student numbers so as to ensure sufficient funding is generated to cover the additional costs of online delivery and to maintain a high-quality student experience. It was noted that a finance model for online programmes is in development to ensure appropriate structures to support quality design and student support are put in place, and there is an expectation that sufficient income is generated to cover such investment.

- Further consideration of how students from different time zones will be supported throughout the programme is required. It appears from the proposal that some students will have limited/no opportunity to actively engage in the programme and with their peers. These students may have particular needs and expectations in relation to engagement, out of hours support etc., and this needs to be taken into consideration when targeting international students. The programme team should engage with Student Support and Development to understand the format central student support will take for online learners, and consider any programme specific input needed.

- It was noted that this area of study requires significant cultural responsiveness that may necessitate nuanced engagement with the international cohort. It was also noted that there are benefits from cross-cultural perspectives that should be taken advantage of in the design and delivery of these programmes, and should be part of the academic justification of the move to online delivery.

- It is unclear if the on-campus versions of these programmes will continue to be offered. This should be clarified in the documentation, together with how the resources and approaches developed for online delivery and the existence of parallel cohorts may be leveraged to enhance the campus learner experience, and peer engagement for both groups.

3. **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: proposal to change the mode of delivery for the MSc in Public Policy**

Professor Hand introduced items 3 and 4 together. He informed members that the proposal to move these programmes fully online was made on foot of learnings during the pandemic, where it was identified that online delivery better suits the needs of target learners (civil servants, public officials, policy experts etc.).

Efforts to ensure that students are engaged in active and collaborative forms of online learning were noted and the ECSC encouraged further developments to adopt best practice in online delivery.

The MSc in Public Policy proposal was <u>approved</u> subject to the following items being addressed:

- It was noted that the exit award titles on page 2 of the proposal are incorrect. It should also be clarified that the Graduate Certificate is only available to students on the education policy pathway at present.

- It was noted that the proposal relates to the part-time offering of this programme. It should be clarified in the document that the full-time offering will continue as a fully on-campus programme.

- The proposal suggested that 20 students will be recruited for this programme. It was assumed that this excludes the intended intake for the new education policy pathway. The proposal should clarify the expected full intake for 2022-23.

- It was noted that online students returning to postgraduate study would have particular learning support and development needs. The programme team should engage with Student Support and Development to understand the format central student support will take for online learners, and consider any programme specific input needed.

- It was noted that online programmes are resource-intensive but can also benefit from economies of scale. It was requested that the programme team sets ambitious targets for student numbers and considers an appropriate non-EU fee level, so as to ensure the ongoing viability of the programme. It was noted that a finance model for online programmes is in development to ensure appropriate structures to support quality design and student support are put in place, and there is an expectation that sufficient income is generated to cover such investment.

- It was noted that there would be opportunities from delivering the same programme in two different modes (i.e. resources and approaches developed for online delivery enhancing the campus learner experience, and peer engagement for both groups) as well as challenges and learnings (i.e. how the coherence of the student experience across two delivery modes will be tracked, how consistency in learning and assessment will be managed, and the monitoring performance and completion rates across the two offerings). With this in mind, it was requested that the programme team continues to engage with Education Committee so that challenges and learnings might usefully be shared with other programme proposers in the future.

4. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: proposal to change the mode of delivery for the MA in European Law and Policy

The MA in European Law and Policy proposal was <u>approved</u> subject to the following items being addressed:

- It was noted that online programmes are resource-intensive but can also benefit from economies of scale. It was requested that the programme team sets ambitious targets for student numbers and considers an appropriate non-EU fee level, so as to ensure the ongoing viability of the programme. It was noted that a finance model for online programmes is in development to ensure appropriate structures to support quality design and student support are put in place, and there is an expectation that sufficient income is generated to cover such investment.

- It was suggested that the programme team consider the ECIU consortium as a potential promotion channel for this online programme.

- It was noted that online students returning to postgraduate study would have particular learning support and development needs. The programme team should engage with Student Support and Development to understand the format central student support will take for online learners, and consider any programme specific input needed.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
31 August 2022
at 2.00 pm
Location TBC