

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 12 May 2022

9.30 a.m. – 11.35 a.m. via Zoom

Present: Dr Brad Anderson, Dr Lorraine Delaney, Ms Kate Goodman, Ms Liza Gieroń, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Dr Anna Logan (Chair), Dr Ruth McManus, Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Niamh O’Sullivan and Professor Joseph Stokes

Apologies: Dr Mark Glynn, Mr Peter McGorman and Professor Sharon O’Brien

SECTION A: MINUTES RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 7 April 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 7 April 2022 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 7 April 2022

3.1 It was noted that the document detailing a revised process for the conduct of Progression and Awards Boards had been circulated (Item 3.1).

3.2 It was noted that a revised nomination submission for an external examiner for the BSc in Computer Science and BSc in Computer Applications has been submitted for this meeting. It was noted that arrangements for the external examination of the programmes for 2021-2022 had been arranged through the extension of the duties of an existing examiner, which is also under consideration at this meeting. (Item 3.2).

3.3 It was noted that work with respect to the revision of the DCU Academic Integrity policy is ongoing (item 3.3).

- 3.4 It was noted that proposed updates to Marks and Standards are on the agenda of this meeting (Item 6).
- 3.5 It was noted that the document *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate degrees by Research and Thesis, 2022-2023*, which was deferred from the April meeting of USC, is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 6).
- 3.6 It was noted that additional information had been provided relating to the legacy re-admission of a student on to the Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education and the item was resolved (Item 5.1.2).
- 3.7 It was noted that continuation of an arrangement for additional duties for an existing DCU appointed examiner (FIM) to act as the independent examiner for the Institute of Actuaries was approved by Chair's Action, 4 May 2022.
- 3.8 It was noted that a review of the Faculty of Science and Health framework for consideration of students taking category 2 modules with outstanding assessment material was due for consideration early in the new academic year.

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES

4. External examiners for taught programmes

4.1 Nominations

- 4.1.1 Maynooth University
Modules in Theology, Philosophy, and Music
Approved
- 4.1.2 Edge Hill University
BEd in Technology, Engineering and Graphics
Approved
- 4.1.3 NUI Galway
Modules in STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
Approved
- 4.1.4 Price Waterhouse Cooper
Modules in DCU Business School
Approved
- 4.1.5 Pontifical University, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth University
MA in Theology and World Religions
Approved

- 4.1.6 University of Sheffield
MEd in Early Childhood Education
Approved
- 4.1.7 King's College London
BA in Communication Studies
Approved
- 4.1.8 University of Twente
BSc in Computer Science, BSc in Computer Applications (Software Engineering)
Approved
- 4.1.9 Queen's University Belfast
MA in Creative Writing
Approved
- 4.1.10 Edinburgh Napier University
MSc in Child and Family Health and Wellbeing
Approved
- 4.1.11 Queen's University Belfast
MSc in Specialist Nursing for Future Healthcare
Approved, it was confirmed that the average number of modules would be 17
- 4.1.12 Trinity College Dublin (from June 2022)
Certificate in Homeless Prevention
Approved
- 4.1.13 University of Sheffield
BSc in Data Science
Approved
- 4.1.14 NUI Galway
BSc in Information Technology
BSc in Management Information Technology/Information Systems
Certificate in Computing Programming
Certificate in User Experience
Higher Diploma in Interaction Design
Higher Diploma in Software Development
Approved
- 4.1.15 NUI Galway
BEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering
Approved

4.2 Renewal of appointment/changes to duties

- 4.2.1 Technological University Dublin
Approved

5. Other issues: Faculty

5.1 DCU Business School

- 5.1.1 Legacy readmission request: MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology/Behaviour

Approved, it was recommended that the student registration would be extended to two academic years to take account of the volume of credits to be completed.

- 5.1.2 Legacy readmission request: Bachelor of Business Studies International

Approved, it was confirmed that 5 credits had been completed by the student in 2016 for HR101.

5.2 DCU Institute of Education

- 5.2.1 Legacy readmission request: Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education

Approved

5.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

- 5.3.1 Legacy readmission request: Bachelor of Arts in Humanities

Approved, it was recommended that the Programme Board give consideration to applying to the Registrar for retrospective deferral of failed modules on behalf of the student.

- 5.3.2 Joint Programme Regulations: European Master in Law, Data and Artificial Intelligence

Approved, subject to the addition of the Conversion Table as an appendix to the programme regulations which will be considered at 25 August 2022 meeting of USC.

- 5.3.3 Legacy readmission request: BA in International Relations

Approved, it was recommended that the Programme Board apply to the Registrar for retrospective deferral of failed modules on behalf of the student.

5.3.4 Approval of external experts for Periodic Programme Reviews

- 5.3.4.1 BA in Jazz and Contemporary Music Performance
Approved

5.3.4.2 Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours – Philosophy stream
Approved

5.3.4.3 BA in Theology and Religious Studies
Approved

5.3.4.4 MA in Ethics and MA in Ethics (Corporate Responsibility)
Approved

5.3.4.5 Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours - Theology and World Religions
Approved

5.3.4.6 Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours – Music
Approved

5.3.5 Current external examiner as Periodic Programme Reviewer: MA in Theology and World Religions
Noted

SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY-SPECIFIC)

6. Marks and Standards 2022-2023 (2022.1)

The Chair outlined the context to the changes proposed to Marks and Standards, noting that a review of a Marks and Standards had been undertaken to assess the impact of micro-credential module offerings. A sub-group of University Standards Committee comprising Ms Gillian Barry, Mr Billy Kelly, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon, Dr Anna Logan and Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl met on two occasions in April and May 2022 to review the implications of micro-credential modules and to propose changes to Marks and Standards.

A decision was made, in the context of an evolving landscape to insert a separate section for Micro-credential Modules (MCM), alongside the section for Stand-alone modules (SAM). The section identifies items where micro-credential modules are not directly aligned with Marks and Standards, e.g. ECTS credits, timing of academic year, repeats etc.

All other sections of Marks and Standards were reviewed in light of the introduction of micro-credential modules and necessary amendments identified and made. In addition, other revisions were made in response to sectoral and University developments.

The revised version of Marks and Standards, as presented, incorporates changes as summarised below.

1. Re-classification of DCU Higher Diploma from Special Purpose Awards to Major Awards (Section 1) (Please see Item 10 of the agenda);
2. Reduction of minimum number of credits for the Professional Certificate at level 9 from 20 to 10 credits;
3. Amendments to reflect the new academic calendar (Section 2 and Section 7)—Please see note below with respect to Section 2;
4. Introduction of a new section on Micro-credential Modules (definition, credits etc.) and relocation of the Stand-alone Module section, to Section 3 (from Section 8);
5. Other changes to ‘module’ sections to accommodate Micro-credential Modules and DCU Futures (Section 3 and Section 6); Please see note below with respect to Section 3;
6. Introduction of new section for Micro-credential Modules and change of location of Stand Alone Module Section (Section 3.3 and Section 3.4);
7. More overt mention of module ‘carry-forward’ (Section 7) (approved by USC, 6 Jan 2022);
8. Related amendments to the Glossary;
9. Minor edits and renumbering, table of contents etc.

Section 2.1.1: Regulations pertaining to ECTS and ECTS credits

USC did not agree to the proposed changes with respect to paragraphs 2.2.5, 2.2.8 and 2.2.9 and it was agreed that future consideration should be given to the introduction of a section on workload for part-time students to distinguish it from full-time workload.

Section 3: Modules

It was noted that the definition of ‘module’ may not fully reflect the intended separation of assessment from teaching planned in DCU Futures programmes, specifically the BSc in Global Challenges. The amended definition was agreed subject to future review in the new context.

The changes as proposed, with the exception of the items mentioned above were approved for submission to Academic Council at its 23 May 2022 meeting.

7. Paperless Assessment Submissions

Ms Kate Goodman, Vice President for Academic Life, introduced a draft paper which proposed moving towards a greater level of electronic submission of assessment as we exit pandemic related arrangements. She indicated that she was seeking feedback from USC colleagues with a view to a more formal proposal being submitted to USC at its next meeting in August 2022.

Ms Goodman indicated that she had already sought some feedback from the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning. She also noted that she had received positive feedback from the Director of the TEU who had indicated that electronic submission provided more flexibility to students in terms of the requirement to travel to campus for specific submission days. In addition, it was his view that in making assessment submissions paperless, there would be greater engagement with Loop functionality which could facilitate greater awareness of clusters of assignment deadlines and assist in the management of student assessment workload.

In the discussion which followed the following points were noted:

- In general colleagues were very supportive of the draft proposal from a sustainability point of view, and the experience during Covid in the context of online assessment submission had been broadly positive. However, there were some concerns expressed about taking such a universal approach to paperless submission. It was noted that some academic colleagues have genuine issues in completing all their assessment work on screen. In addition, it can be too difficult to assess and provide feedback for large documents on screen. The proposal for the exceptions of paperless submission to be within the remit of a Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee would also place academic colleagues in a difficult position and would have the potential to cause a large amount of unnecessary work.
- It was noted too that there were some disciplines where it was easier for students to submit in hard-copy, e.g. Maths, Chemistry etc.

With respect to research theses it was noted that during the pandemic period external examiners requested hard-copies of theses and special arrangements had to be put in place to be able to provide them during that period. In addition, the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate degrees by Research and Thesis, 2022-2023 were amended to reflect that soft-bound printed copies of the thesis will only be required from students if this is requested by an examiner/examiners.

It was agreed that the feedback provided by USC would inform a new proposal which it was intended would be submitted for the August meeting of USC. It was suggested that some further investigation into the level of printing and of hard-copy submission would be a useful exercise in this context.

8. Programme Regulation approval

It was noted that USC was considering all those programme regulations that were submitted and available on the GDrive for today's meeting. All other submissions would be considered at the 25 August 2022 meeting.

8.1 DCU Business School

The programme regulations circulated in advance of University Standards Committee were approved. It was noted that the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning would be asked for his highlighted changes, which would be circulated once received.

8.2 DCU Institute of Education

The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning highlighted the following with respect to the programme regulations:

The majority of programmes remained as previously and changes were mainly focused in the initial teacher education programmes and in changes to dissertation modules on two master's programmes.

The programme regulations circulated in advance of University Standards Committee were approved.

8.3 *Faculty of Engineering and Computing*

The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning highlighted the following with respect to the programme regulations:

The most significant change for the Faculty was the adoption of a number of programme regulations for programmes which had moved from Open Education. The programme regulations for some recently approved programmes would be submitted for the August 2022 meeting of USC.

The programme regulations circulated in advance of University Standards Committee were approved.

8.4 *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences*

The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning highlighted the following amendments to the programme regulations.

One of the major changes is the reintroduction to Communication Studies, Journalism and Multimedia of the Previous Element Contribution (PEC) which was suspended during the Covid period. It was noted that the information on the PEC is included for information purposes in the relevant programme regulations, but will only apply when the incoming first year students reach their final year. There were some minor edits to programmes in the School of Law and Government and it was noted too that there will be a pilot of a small number of language modules for the MA in Refugee Integration.

The programme regulations circulated in advance of University Standards Committee were approved.

8.5 *Faculty of Science and Health*

The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning highlighted the following changes to the programme regulations:

There are new programme regulations for the programmes incorporating two new streams under DCU Futures and they are in-line with standard School programme regulations. There are also three new MSc awards in the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health for which programme regulations have been submitted.

Revisions were made to compulsory attendance, non-compensatable modules rules and the carrying of modules in a number of programme regulations, reversing measures introduced during the pandemic.

BSc Actuarial Mathematic: As a result of changes determined by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, sections 2 and 4 have been updated to reflect 'Pass Both Elements' and 'Non-compensatable' modules. Otherwise programme regulations were amended to reflect structure changes.

The programme regulations circulated in advance of University Standards Committee were approved with the exception of Biological Sciences General Entry which has been withdrawn and will be resubmitted for the August 2022 meeting.

9. Academic Regulations for Postgraduate degrees by Research and Thesis, 2022-2023

The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced the documentation noting that the academic regulations as presented have been approved by the Graduate Research Studies Board. He indicated that the memo submitted to USC summarised the main changes.

The Academic Regulations for Postgraduate degrees by Research and Thesis, 2022-2023 were approved.

10. Classification of Awards on the NFQ

The Director of Registry outlined the background and context to the proposal. In 2008 USC approved a document detailing the classification of all DCU awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in response to a call from the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). This approved inventory was returned to the NQAI in 2008. This inventory classified two DCU Higher Diplomas as Special Purpose Awards. Subsequently, a report was produced and published by the University Sector Framework Implementation Network (FIN) which classifies Higher Diplomas as major awards and Special Purpose as one of three categories of non-major awards. It was noted that DCU's decision to classify Higher Diplomas as Special Purpose Awards pre-dated the FIN report.

In advance of a full review of the inventory approved by DCU in 2008, USC is requested to approve the re-classification of DCU Higher Diplomas from Special Purpose Awards to Major Awards. On approval DCU will advise the QQI (as successor of NQAI) about this correction. DCU Marks and Standards will also be amended to reflect this re-classification.

The proposal was approved.

11. Any other business

The Chair noted that two colleagues would be stepping down from membership of University Standards Committee, Dr Lorraine Delaney and Ms Kate Goodman. She thanked them both for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

It was noted that the minutes of today's meeting were due for approval by Academic Council on 23 May 2022 and it was intended that the minutes of the meeting would be approved electronically by early next week to enable submission to Academic Council.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 25 August 2022
9.30 a.m.