

**UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Thursday 11 January 2024

10:00 am – 11:20 am

Via Zoom

Present: Dr Martina Crehan, Mr Eoin Crossen, Dr Seline Keating, Dr Theo Lynn, Dr Ruth McManus, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Mark O'Brien, Dr Niamh O'Sullivan, Professor Joseph Stokes, Dr Monica Ward (Chair) and Ms Aedín Whelan (Secretary)

Apologies: Professor Yseult Freeney, Dr Jennifer McManis and Ms Jennifer Yore

In attendance: Ms Valerie Cooke and Ms Georgina Roberts (Item 8)

The Chair welcomed Professor Yseult Freeney in her capacity as Associate Dean for the DCU Business School. The Chair noted Professor Joseph Stokes' term as Dean of Graduate Studies will come to an end before the next meeting of USC therefore this will be his last meeting. The Chair conveyed sincere thanks to Professor Stokes for his dedication and engagement as a member of USC for the last ten years.

A. Minutes and related issues

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 2 November 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 2 November 2023 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 2 November 2023

- 3.1 It was noted that an updated nomination of an External Examiner for the PME Programme is Item 4.1.2 on the agenda for today's meeting (item 4.1.7).
- 3.2 It was noted that the issue of carry forward modules was raised at the last meeting of Academic Council on 29 November, as part of closing comments of the current Chair of the Examination Appeals Board whose term has now ended. The wording within Programme Regulations should be clear and transparent to students and align with its implementation by the relevant School/ Faculty.
- 3.3 It was noted that the specific entry requirements by programme regarding the Unihaven pathway are pending confirmation by one Faculty. Confirmation is expected at the end of this week (Item 11).
- 3.4 It was noted that a review of the composition of the Progression and Awards Board within DCU Business School is ongoing (Item 3.2).
- 3.5 It was noted that an Exceptional Readmission Request for the BSc in Computer Applications is ongoing pending submission of documentation from the relevant student (Item 5.4.1).

B. Faculty issues**4. External examiners for taught programmes****4.1 Nominations**

- 4.1.1 Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
BSc in Bioprocessing
Approved, subject to confirmation that the nominee will have the support of a more experienced External Examiner on some of the shared modules allocated to them.
- 4.1.2 University of Galway
Professional Master of Education
Approved

- 4.1.3 University of Toronto
Graduate Diploma in Social Personal and Health Education / Relationships and Sexuality Education
Approved
- 4.1.4 University of Limerick
Modules in DCU Business School
Approved
- 4.1.5 Technological University of the Shannon
BSc in Sport Science and Health
Approved. It was noted that the title of the nominees Department and Home Institution should be updated to reflect the newly formed Technological University of the Shannon. An amendment to the title of the Institute of Technology Tallaght (now TU Dublin) is also required under the heading of the nominees previous external examining experience.
- 4.1.6 University of Liverpool
MA in Political Communication
Approved
- 4.1.7 University College Dublin
Modules in DCU Business School
Approved
- 4.1.8 Edge Hill University
Modules in the School of Policy and Practice
Approved, subject to confirmation that the nominee will have the support of a more experienced External Examiner on some of the shared modules allocated to them.
- 4.1.9 University College Cork
Module in the School of Computing
Approved
- 4.1.10 University College Cork
BSc in Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Approved.

The appointment of External Examiners beyond the national, UK and European landscape was raised in relation to items 4.1.1 and 4.1.3. It was acknowledged that it can prove difficult to source willing nominees with the required expertise and experience for some subjects from within Ireland, the UK and Europe. It was noted that should this be the case, at the time of making an international nomination, the proposer should confirm they have exhausted these avenues before looking to the wider international community. It was suggested that the nomination form is updated to reflect this. It was observed that international nominees that are approved may have difficulty travelling to the University during their term due to the distance. Additionally, travel costs for international nominees could be significant and this may impact on the overall budget allowed for payment of external examiners.

4.2 Renewal of appointment/changes to duties

No items.

5. Other issues: Faculty

5.1 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

5.1.1 Confirmation of current external examiner as Periodic Programme Reviewer
Noted.

C: Other issues (not Faculty-specific)

6. Recognition of Prior Learning Update (RPL)

It was noted that the RPL Committee has continued to make progress on its objectives. Undergraduate and Postgraduate flow charts have now been devised and work is underway to collate programme specific data. An updated website is currently being developed by the RPLTeam.

7. Faculty Periodic Programme Review Report: Activities undertaken in 2022/23 and planned for 2023/24

Noted

8. A Level Equivalencies – Recommendations from National Working Group

Ms Georgina Roberts, Student Enrolment and Admissions Manager, introduced proposed recommendations that have been made by a National Working Group seeking to review A Level Equivalencies. The recommendations have been made in an attempt to lessen admission related barriers in the Republic of Ireland for students applying via the CAO system with A Level results.

There are two principal changes being recommended. Firstly, the fourth A Level subject will now be scored equally regardless of whether the grade was achieved by completing a fourth subject, AS subject or Extended Project. Secondly, there is a recommended adjustment to the scoring rubric. It was noted that as the scoring rubric has not been amended in a number of years the changes appear to be more significant than if they had been made incrementally on an annual basis. It was observed that the changes at the lower end of the grading rubric are more substantial than the proposed changes to the higher grades.

Ms Roberts observed that the rate of admission to DCU for A Level students to date has been modest and when modelled, these changes are not expected to have a considerable impact on admission rates. It was advised that if there is a national consensus that the proposed recommendations are accepted, implementation will take place for the September 2024 or September 2025 intake, but no later than 2025.

The proposed changes were approved, this will be referred to the Academic Council meeting on 7 February 2024 for final approval.

9. Aegrotat Award: Posthumous BSc in Computer Applications

Approved, will be referred to the Academic Council meeting on 7 February 2024 for final approval.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 22 February 2024 10:00am Room A204, Glasnevin Campus
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