

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 15 November 2023

2.00 p.m. – 4.25 p.m.

AG01, Glasnevin Campus

- Present:** Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jennifer Bruton, Professor John Doyle, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Charlotte Holland, Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Dr Rachel Keegan, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Pauline Mooney, Dr Monica Ward, Professor Blánaid White and Dr Paul Young
- Apologies:** Professor Michelle Butler, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Anne Looney and Professor Joseph Stokes
- In attendance** Dr Jing Burgi-Tian

The Chair opened the meeting. She formally welcomed Dr Rachel Keegan, in her role as Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research and Dr Paul Young, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, as Academic Council representative for a three-year term. She noted that Dr Charlotte Holland was acting in place of Professor Anne Looney for the coming months and would temporarily take her seat at Education Committee. In addition, she welcomed back Dr Jing Burgi-Tian.

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 13 September 2023 (*meeting of 11 October 2023 cancelled*)

The minutes of the meeting of 13 September 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Minutes of the ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee of 23 August 2023

The minutes were noted.

It was noted that the Chair would be presenting to Governing Authority on ECIU engagement at its December 2023 meeting.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of 13 September 2023

- 4.1 It was noted that a report on University-level issues raised during the Annual Programme Review process had been escalated to University Executive and the various issues raised were discussed at the 19 September 2023 meeting (Item 3.3).
- 4.2 It was noted that an updated APR report from the Faculty of Engineering and Computing was submitted for the record (Item 3.5).
- 4.3 It was noted that the Academic Secretariat was amending validation forms and accreditation templates to include questions that relate to specific aspects of Teaching and Learning strategic priorities.
- 4.4 It was noted that the Chair had met with all the Executive Deans to discuss Faculty strategic plan alignment with the Teaching and Learning strategy (Item 6.3).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

5. Strategic academic initiatives

5.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy

The Chair introduced this item indicating that the document as circulated had been reviewed extensively and presented in various formats over the course of its development. The copy circulated represented the final narrative version.

She noted the following feedback which she had received in advance of Education Committee:

- In the section which refers to DCU Futures (page 6) it was requested that the document includes that ‘graduates will have access to a personalised transversal skill transcript which will enhance their employability’
- Throughout the document, and where sensible to do so, to amend ‘pedagogy’ to ‘Teaching and Learning approaches/modalities.’

The following suggestions were provided by members of Education Committee:

- to replace ‘remote learners’ with ‘geographically dispersed learners,’ where feasible and where it makes sense within a context
- to include a highlighted ‘key actions’ summary for each objective
- some minor formatting changes.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy was approved, subject to the amendments noted above being completed. It was agreed that the finalised document would be submitted to Academic Council for its meeting of 29 November 2023. The Chair noted that the approved Teaching and Learning Strategy would be published on the DCU Strategic Plan website.

The Chair thanked all colleagues who had been involved in the planning and development phase of the Teaching and Learning Strategy noting that there has been very good

engagement and contribution from the outset of its development, which commenced in September 2022.

5.2 *Generative Artificial Intelligence: University Response*

The Chair noted that the University response to generative AI would be a standing item on the Education Committee agenda for the foreseeable future. She reminded members that it had been agreed at the 13 September 2023 meeting that there would be a review of DCU programmes for their relevance in the context of the fast-moving generative AI world, however she was finding it challenging to find a meaningful and consistent approach to this process and was seeking the Committee's input on a possible approach. She noted that she felt the focus should be on curriculum development and it was important from an employer's viewpoint that the future use of and impact of generative AI was being considered in the context of DCU programmes and its future graduates.

There was a general discussion on the far-reaching impacts of generative AI and the relevance of our future graduates in the workplace.

The following points/questions raised were noted:

- What is the role of the University at such a critical juncture in modern societal development?
- What critical skills and knowledge do we need to equip students with to navigate this new reality? These skills need to include the ethical use of generative AI.
- In the context of a broader view of generative AI and learning from others, there has been engagement with senior colleagues in the University of Essex on their approach.
- It was noted that one SATLE funded project was engaged in a survey of students and staff around generative AI and would inform current practice.
- There is also a need to encompass research in any consideration of the impact of generative AI.
- Final year capstone projects should be considered as a priority for review in the context of generative AI as they represent a high volume of credits in the final year of degree programmes.
- The early career of a new graduate is at risk as AI may assume the responsibilities traditionally undertaken by this cohort within the workplace. It may also have an impact on INTRA, and roles traditionally allocated by employers to students on placement. This shift in skills links to the importance of our graduates' transversal skills and their employability for a new workplace.

It was agreed that the Chair and the Dean of Teaching and Learning would give the review of programmes in the context of generative AI, some further consideration in terms of what is being asked of colleagues in conducting this review. It was noted that it was important not only to conduct the review, but also, as an institution, to have sight of the potential changes that will be made and to be able to track and evidence them. The Chair requested that colleagues provide her with any useful questions that could be included in a potential review.

6. Student Examination Performance 2017-2023

The Dean of Teaching and Learning and the Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research spoke about the student examination performance data from 2017 – 2023 which had been shared with members via the Power BI dashboard. Some of the limitations of the data were highlighted and it was noted that, in general, examination performance had reverted to pre-pandemic levels and seemed to be stabilising in that range. However, some distinctions were evident amongst Faculties. An ongoing gap in terms of precision marks between access and non-access students was noted.

While no trend requiring institutional level action was seen, it was recommended that each Faculty would consider its own data identifying possible outliers or areas which required further attention.

It was noted that it was not currently possible to include students with disability in this type of analysis, but that FE entrants' data would be available from next year.

The Chair indicated that she was satisfied that the data revealed, in the main, a return to pre-Covid result patterns.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

7. DCU Business School

7.1 Memo on the Student Feedback Survey 2022-2023

It was noted that the Student Feedback Survey (SFS) pilot was introduced in 2022-2023 in DCU Business School. The aim of the SFS was to provide feedback to teaching staff on student perceptions of the quality of teaching. The request to Education Committee is to extend it for one year. This would be until such time as the new system would be implemented. The extension of the SFS was being made for the following reasons: to build trust with academic staff around how the SFS data is used, in order to improve dissemination of the survey in lectures, and to improve the response rates and where necessary, to craft an individualised CPD plan as part of the PRD process.

The request to extend the pilot Student Feedback Survey (SFS) to 2023-2024 was approved.

8. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

8.1 Validation Proposal: MA in Music, Sound, Culture and Media

The Executive Dean introduced this programme noting it as a very positive development within the Faculty, highlighting its interdisciplinary nature and indicating that the proposal could form the basis of a future model of master's programmes.

The Education Committee granted approval to the proposed programme for further development towards accreditation subject to the recommendations/concerns outlined below being addressed in the accreditation proposal:

- In the proposal document it is presumed that standard international fees will apply, however the programme team is asked to clarify with Finance, when students are completing their programme predominately online, whether the policy is to apply a single fee, agnostic of location, and how that might relate to campus-based programme fees. It was noted that this may be the first programme for which such consideration applies.
- Linked to the predominantly online offering of the programme, and that summer school attendance is mandatory, the programme team was asked to consider challenges some students may face in acquiring necessary visas. In addition, there may be further challenges for students in achieving learning outcomes, if content is filtered or blocked in their location. It will be important to have a policy on how such eventualities are managed.
- It was noted that the application process included in the proposal involved 'written expressions of interest.' It was indicated by Education Committee that this method is an unreliable way to select students (being vulnerable to both generative AI and a high level of subjectivity) and is not sufficiently transparent, and the University could not stand over admission selections based on this approach. It was recommended that the programme team take one of the two admission approaches available: Either on a first-come, first-served basis for those who meet the academic criteria or devise a set of objective criteria that are transparent to all applicants for which there is a justifiable rationale for selecting one qualified applicant over another.
- It was recommended that the standard DCU RPL wording for admissions and exemptions would be used in the proposal.
- On the basis that there is no asynchronous delivery, the programme team was asked to consider how the possibility of students being in different time zones would be managed.
- Section 11: plans for implementation: It was requested that it is included when advertising the programme that it would be 'subject to accreditation'.

9. Faculty of Science and Health

9.1 *Validation Proposal: Graduate Certificate in Active Women's Health*

The incoming Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health, Professor Blanaid White introduced this programme noting that the award built on the offering of existing modules.

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

- To clarify the programme title so that it aligns more directly with the programme content and with the intended recipients of the care of the practitioners graduating with this award. It is not clear whether those recipients (and therefore the content) are specifically tailored to women engaged in sports or to a broader demographic including various health-related aspects for women. In addition, Education Committee did not necessarily feel that the term 'active' was needed in the title.
- The assessment methods, including case studies and quizzes, were discussed and it was noted that the programme team should plan all assessment approaches with a view to generative AI capability and the protection of Academic Integrity.

- It was recommended that the language in the proposal, particularly in defining the 'delivery' of content, should be changed to better convey an engaging and interactive teaching approach, not just a passive transfer of information.
- There was a discussion about the clarity of admission selection criteria, the competitive nature of the programme and representation of different sports amongst the cohort. It was recommended that it is made clear what the admission selection criteria are so students know what they need for admission to the programme.
- It was requested that the programme proposer include the type of award in the proposal, which it was suggested should be a 'special purpose award.'

Education Committee commented positively on the initiative by proposers to capitalise on interest in specific micro-credentials and build towards an award for those learners.

9.2 *Validation Proposal: MSc in Physiotherapy*

The Education Committee granted approval to the proposed programme for further development towards accreditation subject to the recommendations listed below being addressed, in tandem with the development of the accreditation proposal.

It was acknowledged that this development is strategically important to the School of Health and Human Performance and to the University. Education Committee was supportive of the development of this programme and acknowledged student demand. It was noted that there are several key challenges that need to be addressed in its development, which include:

- Initiating contact and establishing working relationships with the professional accrediting bodies (CORU and ISCP) to establish their specific requirements and to align curriculum development to those requirements.
- Clarifying and obtaining financial resources to develop and run this programme. It was noted that two new posts would need to be in place at the earliest opportunity: one full-time academic post to develop the programme and another post (professional) to work on developing placement opportunities in order to meet the proposed September 2024 intake. Currently these posts are outside the annual faculty budget planning. With respect to staffing considerations, the need for 'technical post(s)' was also raised.

Other items that were raised were as follows:

- The programme team should plan all assessment approaches with a view to generative AI capability and the protection of Academic Integrity.
- Semesters should be described as '15-week' rather than '12-week'.
- Graduate Attributes should be considered for inclusion.
- The Accreditation Board should be constituted with at least one member at professorial level. It is recommended that at least one further nomination for membership of the Accreditation Board should be made.
- The Programme team are asked to consider inviting a member of an accrediting body to sit on the Accreditation Board as this is permitted under the University regulations.

SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

10. International Education Mark (IEM)–SAR and Timeline

The Academic Secretary introduced this item noting that the International Education Mark (IEM) is a statutory quality mark that is part of a suite of legislative measures provided for in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2019 that are designed to protect international learners. The mark will be awarded by QQI to public and private higher education and English language education providers who demonstrate that they meet stipulated, national standards to ensure a quality experience for international learners.

As a HE provider, DCU will make an application for the IEM HE. In doing so we must demonstrate compliance with *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners* (HE Code). The Academic Secretary noted that the process of application is similar to the Institutional Quality Review and DCU will have to produce a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and ensure compliance with the six principles of the HE Code.

It was noted that the QQI hopes to launch the Quality Mark in January 2023 and that it was anticipated that the application process for the IEM would open promptly following the launch. If the launch takes place in January 2024, then the SAR submission would take place within twenty-four weeks and following that, there would be a twenty-week assessment process. She noted it will be an onerous exercise, and as there is yet no information on the content of the assessment report, the process around this submission may evolve over time.

She noted that the SAR will be co-ordinated through the Academic Secretariat Office and will impact every Faculty which has international students and units which engage with them. She asked if Education Committee colleagues would flag this process and potential timeline to relevant Faculty colleagues and indicate that they should expect to hear from the Academic Secretariat in this regard.

She noted too that the SAR will be considered by Education Committee, the Quality Promotion Committee and Academic Council.

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

These were noted.

It was noted that some amendments to the DCU Institute of Education planned PPRs had taken place, since submission earlier in October. Prof Charlotte Holland indicated that she would provide an updated version.

It was noted too that in future, the planned PPR activities would be reviewed in the context of the overall PPR cycle for each programme.

12. Any other business

There were no items of business.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 13 December 2023
at 2.00 pm
Drumcondra Board Room, Drumcondra House