

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 28 September 2016

2.00 – 3.50. in A204

Present: Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Professor John Costello, Professor John Doyle, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Lisa Looney, Ms Aisling McKenna, Professor Barry McMullin, Professor Anne Sinnott

Apologies: Professor Mark Brown, Mr James Donoghue, Professor Greg Hughes, Dr Garrett McGuinness, Dr Pádraig Ó Duibhir

In attendance: Ms Karen Johnston, Institutional Research and Analysis Officer

The Chair opened the meeting and noted new members of Education Committee as follows: Professor Greg Hughes, Dr Pádraig Ó Duibhir and Dr Garrett McGuinness. She also extended her sincere thanks to Professor John Costello who has completed his term as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 June 2016

The minutes were noted and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 1 June 2016

- 3.1** It was noted that with the introduction of the Guru interface for external examiners, issues identified previously relating to report submission, communication, assessment review etc., had been addressed somewhat by their engagement with the new system. It was noted that once examiners had been given sufficient opportunity to engage fully with the system that a review could take place to assess if any outstanding issues remained. (Item 3.1).

It was noted too that the Guru system provides a facility to enable a review of all external examiner reports across the university. The Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar indicated that it was intended to bring a proposal to Education Committee on the most appropriate way to analyse and use the information available to enhance quality.

- 3.2** It was noted that a report on feedback drawn from the Faculty Annual Progress Review Reports was being collated for submission to University Senior Management (Item 8).
- 3.3** It was noted that a second meeting to draft a set of rules in relation to publication of First Destination Survey outcomes on the university website was due to take place shortly (Item 3.3).
- 3.4** It was noted that the amended title of the merged Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs (SPD) and the Graduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs (CICE) was confirmed as *Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education, Learning Support and Special Education*.
- 3.5** It was noted that the list of standard undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme titles had been noted by University Standards Committee and it had also been agreed that they would be included for publication in Marks and Standards for 2016-2017.
- 3.6** It was noted that the International Masters in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (MA) IMSISS approved for further development towards accreditation by Education Committee at its 1 June 2016 meeting, had secured Erasmus Mundus funding. Professor Lisa Looney indicated that arising from the experience of the validation of the IMSISS she would revert to Education Committee with a revised validation process for joint taught programmes at a later date.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING**4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA**

The Chair noted that the next meeting of the IUA Registrar's Group would take place on 10 October 2016. She outlined the areas which were due for discussion as follows:

- The transitioning of the HEAR and DARE schemes to the CAO. A decision on where the policy element of HEAR and DARE would reside has yet to be made.
- Garda Vetting issues—changes to regulations and their potential impact on the universities
- Impact of Brexit—the IUA is preparing a paper on the potential impact of Brexit
- HEA Strategic Dialogue
- Transparency of HEA top slicing

Ms Aisling McKenna raised a concern arising from recent correspondence from QQI to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar indicating that DCU and Maynooth University were due to undergo a QQI Institutional review in 2017. She asked that the timing for the DCU institutional review would be raised at the IUA Registrar's Group and requested that those institutions which had been undergoing mergers would not be reviewed until a later date. She proposed that for DCU either 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 would be a more appropriate timeframe.

5. Update of 3U Protocol

The updates to the Protocol for Initiation, Approval, Management and Implementation of 3U Joint Academic Programmes were noted.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**6. Irish Survey of Student Engagement**

It was noted that the proposed dates for the Irish Survey of Student Engagement for 2017 are Monday 6 March 2017 – Friday 24 March 2017.

The Institutional Research and Analysis Officer indicated that a programme level report, which includes data from St. Patrick's College and Mater Dei Institute of Education, has now been developed and encompasses the last three years' of ISSE data. The report will be made available to Heads of School, Programme Chairs and Education Committee.

The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning reported that the ISSE National Report will be published by the end of October and officially launched in December 2016. He advised Education Committee that the data gathered through ISSE is not protected and emphasised the importance of ensuring the active management of the kind of data which is gathered through the survey.

7. Education Committee Goals 2016-2017

A discussion took place with respect to the approach to Education Committee Goals and planning for the future. The following was noted:

- It is proposed that once the university strategy has been developed that Education Committee Goals will be reviewed to align with it.
- It was requested that, when reviewing its goals, Education Committee, keep in mind alignment with the recommendations of the DCU 2010 Institutional Review, the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 and the QQI Core Guidelines 2016.
- It was agreed after a brief discussion of EC goals and their associated priority actions that further clarification be provided with respect to the progress achieved on specific tasks, and where possible close off some of the actions listed.

It was agreed that updates would be provided to the Secretary for update of the documentation.

8. Summary of Periodic Programme Review (PPR) activities completed in 2015-2016 and planned activities for 2016-2017

The planned PPR schedule per Faculty, with the exception of the DCU Institute of Education, was noted.

It was noted too that a standing committee has been set up to streamline the PPR process for programmes which also have to undergo an accreditation process for professional external accreditation.

9. Report on Examination Results 2015-2016

Ms Karen Johnston presented on examination results for 2015-2016 with a particular focus on first year undergraduate performance, and the following points made were noted:

- Average first year pass rates have remained similar to last year at 89%
- Although overall pass rates remain high, pass rates have fallen in three Faculties and are particularly significant in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing which has seen pass rates fall by 7% on last year
- For students who repeated their academic year in 2015-2016 pass rates have decreased to 66% overall compared to 68% in 2014-2015. However, the number of students repeating their academic year has dropped 27% on 2014-2015
- Precision grades remain at the high 2.2 end (increased 5% over the five year analysis).

With respect to the ‘at risk’¹ students the following were noted:

- 146 out of 221 students identified as ‘at risk’ in January 2016 received a fail grade at the end of the academic year
- At risk students represented 41% of all students who failed first year at their first attempt
- 2014-2015 ‘at risk’ students who repeated first year had a pass rate of 51%
- Of the 2010-2011 cohort identified as ‘at risk’, 3% of those students are still to complete

In the discussion which followed the following were noted:

- The pattern of pass and fail rates have been quite consistent over the period from 2010 to date
- Of those in the ‘at risk’ category, in general terms, approximately one third will progress, one third will repeat and one third will be withdrawn from the university
- That a more pro-active and earlier addressing of issues through offering focussed support and advice should take place (February rather than March).

¹‘At risk’ is defined as instances where an undergraduate entrant fails two or more modules in the January diet of exams, or where an undergraduate entrant completes two or less modules after Semester 1, that student fails one of these modules.

- It was agreed that the Director of Student Support and Development would explore the possibility of providing focused resources to assist ‘at risk’ students during the February period
- Results which merit further investigation were noted as follows:
 - Figure 2: Overall second year fail rates in Faculty of Engineering and Computing and the deferral rate in third year for DCUBS students
 - Figure 4: Specific programme fail rates, Faculty of Engineering and Computing
 - Figure 16: The increase in average first year precision marks at Faculty level.

10. Validation and Accreditation documentation 2016-2017

10.1 Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines

10.2 Information for Proposers of Programmes: Validation and Accreditation

It was noted that the documents listed above have been updated, to reflect the process post incorporation, and to add the recommended titles for taught undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. It was noted too to complete the accreditation cycle, a report will be made to Academic Council confirming that recommendations made by an Accreditation Board will be accommodated and are reflected in the final Accreditation documentation.

The documents were approved, subject to the signing of the legal agreements to complete Incorporation.

11. Proposed stand-alone module: Informatics in eHealth, School of Nursing and Human Sciences

The module was noted.

Discussions took place on whether the consideration of stand-alone modules should be delegated to Faculty or remain within the direct remit of Education Committee. The issues of resourcing and quality assurance mechanisms were noted as key to the decision-making in this regard. It was proposed that consideration would be given to devolving decision-making on stand-alone modules to Faculty and putting a process in place similar to that already in place for the quality assurance of Graduate Training Elements (GTE) modules. It was agreed that the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar and the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning would initiate discussions with the Associate

Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Science and Health, where most of the stand-alone modules reside.

12. Validation of BA in Jazz and Contemporary Performance

It was noted that the programme proposal was being made in the context of an agreement between DCU and Newpark Music Centre to transfer the current activities that support the delivery of these programmes to DCU with effect from September 2017. The proposed new programme will see the merging of previous programmes offered by Newpark Music Centre, the BA in Jazz Performance and the Higher Certificate in Contemporary Music (Berklee Track), into one four-year programme. The existing BA in Jazz Performance is QQI accredited.

It was noted that it was intended that the financial element of the proposed programme would be housed in a campus company and that it would be assigned an academic home within a DCU Faculty.

It was recommended by Education Committee that the proposed programme would be referred to a meeting of Education Committee Standing Committee to take place on Tuesday 4 October 2016 at 3.30, to which the programme proposer, a representative of the Finance Office and the Chief Operating Officer would be invited.

The following items of recommendations/feedback were noted:

Detailed feedback on the validation proposal has been received from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, specifically from the School of Theology, Philosophy and Music which, due to pressure of time, could not be provided in advance of the Education Committee meeting. The School was broadly positive about the programme offering and noted that there was potential for synergies with existing programmes offered by them. The following elements of the feedback from the School were noted at Education Committee:

- It was clarified that the academic home of the programme will be the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and that this should be reflected in further documentation
- It was requested that two staff from the School of Theology, Philosophy and Music would be involved on the programme development team
- It was recommended that musicology would be added to the structure of the programme

- It was recommended that a member of the Royal Irish Academy of Music or equivalent would be added to the proposed Accreditation Board
- It was noted that resourcing particularly with respect to the provision of space, and practice rooms in particular, was of major concern and would need to be factored into resource planning. Additional resources for the provision of such space would have to be provided to the School/Faculty for the programme to run.

Recommendations from Education Committee were noted as follows:

- It is recommended that the word ‘music’ would feature in the title
- It is recommended that the language of the proposal would reflect a level 8 programme e.g. less use of the word ‘training’.
- It is recommended that consideration be given to the possible constraints the (very positive) relationship with Berklee imposes on programme design and how that might impact on the DCU accreditation process.
- It is recommended that rather than including information on the specific relationship with the partner schools under the *Transfer entry and RPL* heading a separate section is included which clearly outlines and justifies these arrangements as articulation agreements. These agreements will need to be formalised by DCU with respect to the six partner schools and would be subject to due diligence being completed at level 3, as per the collaborative provision protocol. As well as learning outcome/curriculum mapping, matters such as how DCU retains current information as partners change their programmes, whether specific attainment levels are required etc. should be addressed.
- Some concern was expressed on the over reliance of part-time lecturers in the delivery of the programme in the context of the continuity and sustainability of the programme.
- The taking on of students of a QQI accredited programme rather than the norm of phasing out existing students by an awarding body is subject to agreement with QQI and students. It is recommended that the financial and reputational risk relating to this should be considered and addressed.
- The proposal document suggests that the programme enables graduates to be teachers. It is assumed in this context that this refers to private teaching, but it needs to be articulated clearly in the document, i.e. the programme will not have Teaching Council recognition.

- It is queried if the constitution of the Accreditation Board includes members from institutions which embody best practice, as mentioned in the validation proposal e.g. Paris Conservatoire. (Provision of CVs of the proposed Accreditation Board may provide the necessary information required in this regard).

13. AOB

There were no items of AOB.

Signed: _____ Date _____
Chair

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 26 October 2016
at 2.00 in A204