

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday, 7 April 1999

at 2:00pm in AG 01

Minutes of the eighth meeting of the sixth statutory Academic Council held on 7 April 1999.

PRESENT:

D O'Hare (Chairman)	J Carroll (Deputy Chairman)	P Barker
A Brady	F Buckley	E Buffet
P Burke	J Canavan	M Clynes
F Corcoran	E Cunningham (SU)	C Curran
K Devenney	M Egan	A N Glynn
D Gray	G Hamilton	M Henry
J Horgan	J Hurley	B Kehoe
E Kennedy	B Leavy	M MacConmara
L MacMathúna	B McMullin	S Marlow
M Marsh	A Meade	K Monks
A Morrissey	T Moynihan	H O'Brien-Gately
E O'Halpin	R O'Kennedy	C Ó'hÓgartaigh
O O'Reilly	C O'Riordan	A Pratt
V Ruddy	A-M Ryan	J Ryan
T Ryan	R Saunders	M Scott
A Sinnott	A Smeaton	M Townson
P Travers	A Wickham	J Williams

APOLOGIES:

M Byrne	S Clyne	L Davis
J Dunne	B Flood	S Hashmi
C Long	B MacCraith	A MacDougall
B Pierce	H Ruskin	M Smyth
B Trench	J Van Genabith	D Walls

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Ref: AC99/M2/1)

The Agenda was adopted subject to confirmation by the Chairman that item 15 of the agenda would be concerned with a proposal for institutional linkage.

2. MINUTES OF THE 10 FEBRUARY 1999 MEETING OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M2/2)

Subject to an amendment to the date in item 2 and the elimination of the phrase "e.g. concurrent with that of Academic Council" in item 3.2, the minutes of the meeting of 10 February 1999 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M2/3)

a. THE UNIVERSITY'S SEMESTER CALENDAR:

(Ref: AC99/M1/6)

It was agreed that the views of staff and students would first be sought on the proposed calendar changes, that Academic Council would then consider the proposal in the light of these consultations at the 7 April 1999 meeting when the matter would be treated as a priority agenda item immediately following items of routine business, including minutes, matters arising from minutes, and reports from Validation Committee and Accreditation Boards.

b. MARKS & STANDARDS 1999:

(Ref: AC99/M1/12)

It was agreed that the views of staff and students would first be sought on the consolidated proposal "Marks & Standards for University Awards 1999" and, in particular, on the issues raised in the accompanying note, entitled "Introduction to the Revised Document", and that a revised proposal would then be presented to the 7 April 1999 meeting for final consideration.

c. **``PASS DEGREE" AWARDS:**

(Ref: AC99/M1/13)

Academic Council approved a proposal to facilitate the provision of ``pass degree" awards where deemed appropriate by Programme Boards for students who successfully complete 180 credits of a four-year (240 credit) undergraduate degree programme. The availability of a ``Pass Degree" in the case of a 180-credit, three-year undergraduate degree programme will be a matter for relevant Programme Boards to consider.

It was agreed that Programme Boards who wish to avail of the ``pass degree" mechanism would be facilitated by Standing Committee in bringing forward proposals at the appropriate time (details of module combinations, re-structuring where required, coherence, degree title, etc) to enable such awards.

4. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

- a. Minutes of the meeting of Standing Committee on 4 February 1999 (Ref: AC99/M2/4.1)

Noted.

- b. Minutes of the special meeting of Standing Committee on 4 March 1999 (Ref: AC99/M2/4.2)

Noted. Academic Council also noted amendments to dates in item 2 (page 1) and item 6.1 (page 4).

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M2/5)

Members of Academic Council are reminded that the endorsement of Academic Council is required in respect of recommendations and decisions made by Standing Committee. While this is normally achieved by adoption of the relevant minutes, it is important for Academic Council to note items of special significance contained within these minutes.

a. FACULTY/COMMITTEE/PROGRAMME BOARD MINUTES

(ref. AC-SC99/M2/4)

The Chairpersons of the relevant Programme Boards have been advised of the decisions of Standing Committee of Academic

Council in respect of the specific issues raised in the minutes for consideration.

b. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

(ref. AC-SC99/M2/5)

The Registrar reported that invitations had been issued to the various External Examiners recommended for appointment for Research Degrees and for Taught Programmes. *Research supervisors will be requested to give special care in Section C of the PGR4 form to ensure that cogent reasons for the appointment of external examiners are clearly articulated.*

c. SPECIAL CASE ADMISSIONS PRO FORMA

(ref. AC-SC99/M1/3.2)

It was agreed to implement the new approach and to make the *pro forma* available on the appropriate University web page.

d. PROGRAMME BOARDS REPORTING TO STANDING COMMITTEE

(ref. AC-SC99/M1/3.3)

It was agreed that the tabular summary of the 1998 reporting pattern of Programme Board minutes to Standing Committee, as reported by the Registrar, would be shared with Programme Board Chairpersons and that their views be sought as a matter of urgency.

e. ROLES OF STANDING COMMITTEE & RESEARCH COMMITTEE

(ref. AC-SC99/M1/3.5)

(Ref: AC99/M2/4.2)

The Registrar agreed to provide clarification on the respective roles of Standing Committee and the Research Committee in postgraduate research student affairs. He requested the assistance of Dr Glynn, Secretary to the Research Committee, in providing relevant documentation about the respective responsibilities of the two Committees.

f. TAUGHT MASTER'S PROGRAMMES:

SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION COMPONENT

(ref. AC-SC99/M1/8.1)

Prior to making a formal decision on a proposal from the Graduate Diploma/MSc in Computer Applications for Education Programme Board relating to the timing of submission of project dissertations, Standing Committee requested that the views of all taught postgraduate Programme Boards be sought regarding experiences and practices in this area.

g. THE UNIVERSITY'S APPEALS PROCESS

(ref. AC-SC99/M2/6)

Standing Committee has recommended a number of amendments to the University's appeals regulations which will be presented for approval to the 7 April 1999 meeting of Academic Council.

6. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ACCREDITATION BOARDS

(Ref: AC99/M2/6)

Academic Council approved the following reports from the University's Accreditation Boards

a. MSc IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

proposed by DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

(Ref: AC99/M2/6.1)

b. GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CONFERENCE INTERPRETING

proposed by the SCHOOL OF APPLIED LANGUAGE & INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

(Ref: AC99/M2/6.2)

c. MA IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

proposed by the SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS

(Ref: AC99/M2/6.3)

7. MA IN HUMANITIES (HISTORY)

(Ref: AC99/M2/7)

Academic Council noted the decision of the MA Programme Board in St Patrick's College to offer the MA in Humanities (History) in full-time mode over one year. The new mode would be offered in addition to the existing part-time programme for the MA in Humanities (English, French, Gaelige, History) and both modes will be offered on a two-year cyclical basis.

8. **STUDENT ELECTIONS TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE:**

(Ref: AC99/M2/8)

Academic Council noted the election of student member of Academic Council, Mr Diarmuid Ó Dúshláine, Fiontar, to be the student member of Academic Council Standing Committee and also the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee.

9. **ELECTIONS TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL OF ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE:**

(Ref: AC99/M2/9)

Academic Council noted the outcome of the 1999 elections to the Academic Council and its Standing Committee of St Patrick's College:

- Academic Council of St Patrick's College:
 - **Dr Gerry McNamara**, elected by the Joint Faculty of Education's University staff;
 - **Professor Michael Townson**, elected by the Joint Faculty of Humanities' University staff;
 - **Professor Martin Henry, Dr Conor Long and Professor Eunan O'Halpin**, elected by the University staff members of Academic Council;
 - **Aidan Brady (ME2)**, elected by the University student members of Academic Council;
- Academic Council Standing Committee of St Patrick's College:
 - **Professor Martin Henry, Dr Conor Long and Professor Eunan O'Halpin**, elected by the University staff members of Academic Council;
 - **Aidan Brady (ME2)**, elected by the University student members of Academic Council.

10. **REPORT ON RACISM & INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN IRELAND (ICOS)**

(Ref: AC99/M2/10)

Academic Council noted a summary of the report "The Irish are Friendly ¼ A Report on Racism and International Students in Ireland" compiled by Gerard W Boucher for the Irish Council for International

Students (ICOS). A covering letter from the HEA drew attention to two of its findings, namely that (a) "the overall experience enjoyed by international students in Ireland in recent years has been of high quality"; and (b) 75% of the overseas students surveyed for the report had recounted instances of discrimination, prejudice or hostility by Irish people (by far the majority of these events occurred off campus).

11. THE UNIVERSITY'S SEMESTER CALENDAR:

(Ref: AC99/M2/11)

Mr Chris O'Malley, Strategic Planning Executive, was in attendance to introduce this item. He advised the meeting that the requested consultation process in response to the proposal for a revised semester calendar had indicated a very strong opposition to change and the matter should now be closed for the moment. However, other suggestions relating to modularisation and semesterisation were being put forward and the Chairman requested Mr O'Malley to consult with the Impact Assessment Working Group on Modularisation & Semesterisation on these suggestions and also, when completed, the survey conducted by the Class Representatives Group within the Student Union. If, in the opinion of the Working Group, worthwhile proposals were emerging, then they should be formulated and presented to Academic Council at the 9 June 1999 meeting.

12. MARKS & STANDARDS 1999:

(Ref: AC99/M2/12)

- The Registrar briefly summarised the background to this item, starting from the 9 December 1998 meeting when Academic Council approved a number of changes to the 1990 *Marks & Standards* and the 1995 Modular Regulations.
- Following discussions at the 10 February 1999 meeting of Academic Council and consultations both before and after this meeting, a consolidated document entitled "Marks & Standards for University Awards 1999" was being submitted to the meeting for formal adoption. For completeness, the responses received from Programme Boards and individual members of Academic Council were included with the documentation for the meeting.
- In the light of comments received prior to the meeting and on a further reading of the documentation, the Registrar proposed two further changes, namely:
 - the removal of Regulation 52(g) in view of (1) the *pro rata* provision in 52(a) and (2) the new arrangements dealing with exemptions, as stipulated in Regulation 53.
 - minor grammatical amendments to Regulations 65, 71 and 79.

- o Subject to both changes, Academic Council approved the *Marks & Standards* for University Awards 1999 (Part A: General Regulations).

13. THE UNIVERSITY'S APPEALS PROCESS

(Ref: AC99/M2/13)

. REPORT FROM THE SPRING APPEALS BOARD MEETING

(Ref: AC99/M2/13.1)

Academic Council noted a report on a special meeting of the Appeals Board which was convened on 10 February 1999 to consider appeals arising from of the Winter 1998 diet of examinations for the BSc in Information distance education programme. The Appeals Board considered a total of 14 appeals, of which 3 were upheld and 11 were rejected. The breakdown of appeals against grounds for appeal is summarised as follows:

	Grounds for Appeal					Total
	12.6 (a)	12.6 (b)	12.6 (c)	12.6 (d)	Other/Re- Check	
Appeal Upheld	1	0	1	0	1	3
Appeal Rejected	1	0	2	1	7	11
Total	2	0	3	1	8	14

a. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE REGULATIONS

(Ref: AC99/M2/13.2)

- The Registrar reminded members that, at the 9 December 1998 meeting, Academic Council had requested legal advice on the various issues relating to the appeals process which were raised when considering a report from the Autumn 1998 Appeals Board. The issues included the timing of submission of extenuating circumstances, the need for some form of screening mechanism, possible attendance by appellants where requested, the merits of facilitating inspection of examination scripts by students during a limited period after publication of examination results, etc. It was

recommended that, on receipt of legal advice, the matter be then referred to Standing Committee which can make recommendations for consideration by Academic Council.

- A report was presented to Academic Council which contained the relevant extracts of the current Examination Regulations (Section 2); a summary of the issues raised during the 9 December 1998 meeting of Academic Council; a summary of the legal advice received; the recommendations from Standing Committee of Academic Council, following its meeting on 4 March 1999; and a proposal for the revision of certain sections of the Examination Regulations.
- The Registrar advised the meeting that, subsequent to his interpretation of the legal advice and the advice of Standing Committee of Academic Council, he had submitted the proposed amendments to Arthur Cox & Company for final checking. One further change was now necessary, namely the removal of the final clause in 12.6 (d), ``*In no case shall examination answer papers be made available to candidates for the purposes of an appeal*'' since it was regarded by the legal advisers to be overly restrictive and against the principle of informal advising clearly practised across the campus.
- Following Academic Council's agreement to this amendment, the following revised sections were approved:
 - In respect of his or her performance in any examination or part of an examination (including referred examinations), each candidate shall bring any *extenuating circumstances* which may have affected his or her performance to the attention of the Office for Academic Affairs. That Office shall inform the Progression & Award Board which shall consider them in arriving at a decision on that candidate.

Candidates should note that failure to notify the Board of extenuating circumstances which could have been brought to the attention of the Board prior to the Board reaching its decision may prejudice any subsequent appeal (see paragraph 12.5(b)).

- The Appeals Board shall in all cases consider the reasons for any failure by candidates to have brought extenuating circumstances to the attention of the Progression & Award Board prior to that Board reaching its decision. Where the Board considers that the extenuating circumstances should have been so notified, such a failure shall

be a relevant consideration justifying the rejection of the appeal.

- A candidate may appeal in writing against a decision of a Progression & Award Board on the following grounds only:
 - that his/her performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors which he/she was unable or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge before the Progression & Award Board reached its decision.
 - that the Progression & Award Board did not give sufficient weight to any extenuating circumstances previously notified to the Office for Academic Affairs prior to the holding of the meeting of the Progression & Award Board.
 - that the examinations were not conducted in accordance with the current regulations as prescribed by the Programme Board and as approved by Academic Council.
 - that there was a substantial error of judgement on the part of the Examiners with the result that the assessment given was totally at variance with previous assessment and performance levels.
 - that there was a material administrative error or a material irregularity in assessment procedures which have made a real and substantial difference to the candidate's result; appeals lodged in this category may be made by a third party on behalf of one or more candidates provided that such appeals are made with the full and written consent of all the candidates concerned.
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 - The Appeals Board shall meet **as required** after each diet of Examinations.
 - The Appeals Board shall ensure that all appeals shall be screened to ensure that any appeal which is manifestly unfounded and discloses no valid ground of appeal under section 12.6 above shall be rejected forthwith. Decisions to reject manifestly unfounded appeals shall be notified to candidates by the Secretary to Academic Council within N days of the relevant closing date for the submission of appeals.
 - The Appeals Board shall consider all other appeals on their merits and determine a

course of action pursuant to the information received.

- Decisions of the Appeals Board are final and binding.

Note: The specification of 'N days' (above) will be needed once the screening process is instituted.

- The Appeals *pro forma* will now be substantially revised to take account of the foregoing changes (especially in the section dealing with valid grounds for appeal).

14. INTRA 1998 REPORT TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M2/14)

Academic Council noted the INTRA 1998 Report from the Office for Innovation & Business Relations. Some minor amendments to the tabular presentation of the evaluation reports by degree were proposed by Mr Mike Egan and agreed by Dr A N Glynn. The Chairman expressed his thanks to the members of staff in IBR for its report and for the many successes which it contained.

15. PROPOSAL FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGE WITH MATER DEI

(Ref: AC99/M2/15)

- Professor Chris Curran introduced the background to the proposal. Since August 1997, a four-member team has been engaged in exploratory discussions with representatives of Mater Dei in response to a request for institutional linkage. The four members of the exploratory team were Professor Chris Curran, Dr Peter McKenna, Professor Tony Moynihan and Professor Anthony Walsh. Governing Authority was notified of the exploratory discussions at the 14 January 1999 meeting and discussed the proposal to conclude an agreement at its last meeting on 11 March 1999. Governing Authority requested that the Working Party (now comprising Professors Curran and Moynihan - Dr McKenna and Professor Walsh having since left the University) would continue its discussions with the representatives of Mater Dei with a view to exploring further the strategic issues involved and other points raised at the Governing Authority meeting.
- Documentation circulated in advance of the meeting included a draft *Agreement for Institutional Linkage* and a summary profile of Mater Dei. Some additional documentation was tabled during the meeting which provided further details on Mater Dei, its staff, students and programmes; the strategic and other benefits for DCU; the potential resource Implications for DCU; the ethos of DCU; and a positive recommendation with respect to the proposed Linkage Agreement.

- Following a wide-ranging discussions on the merits or otherwise of a proposed linkage, when members raised concerns surrounding institutional ethos and mission, academic freedom and academic standards, the Chairman sought and obtained agreement from Academic Council to:
 - convey to Mater Dei a generally positive and open disposition towards the proposed institutional linkage;
 - enhance the membership of the negotiating team to include representation from Humanities and Education and also from St Patrick's College; and
 - request the expanded team to consider the substantial issues raised during the wide-ranging discussions and to return to Academic Council with a revised proposal. The Chairman invited members of Academic Council to submit to him any ideas or concerns that they might have on the linkage agreement at the earliest opportunity.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(Ref: AC99/M2/16)

There were no matters considered under 'any other business'.

- **Date of Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, 9 June 1999
2:00 pm in AG 01