

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES¹

Wednesday, 8 December 1999

at 2:00pm in AG 01

Minutes of the eleventh meeting of the sixth statutory Academic Council held on 8 December 1999.

PRESENT:

A Pratt (Director General)	J Carroll (Deputy Chairman)	D Bancroft
M Byrne	E Cassidy	E Cunningham
S Derby	K Devenney	M Egan
M Gannon	S Hashmi	J Hurley
J Kerrane	P Kinsella	B Leavy
C Long	L Looney	T McCluskey
S McGovern	K MacKeogh	L MacMathúna
B McNamara	M Molony	K Monks
R Morgan	A Morrissey	T Moynihan
C Nic Pháidín	C Ó Coigligh	C Ó hÓgartaigh
O O'Reilly	M O'Sullivan	P Preston
V Ruddy	H Ruskin	J Ryan
T Ryan	R Saunders	P Sheehan
M Shields	A Sinnott	A Smeaton
M Townson	B Trench	J Van Genabith
A Wickham	A D Wood	

APOLOGIES:

M Brady	E Buffet	P Burke
J Canavan	M Canning	M Clynes
F Corcoran	J Dowling	B Flood
M Henry	C McCorkell	G Murphy
J Murray	R O'Kennedy	

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Ref: AC99/M6/1)

The Agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one matter under 'any other business'. In opening the meeting, the Chairman welcomed Ms Rufina Morgan, Acting Principal Nurse Tutor in Beaumont Hospital, to her first meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE 13 OCTOBER 1999 MEETING OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M6/2)

The minutes of the meeting of 13 October 1999 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M6/3)

a. PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M3/13)

Academic Council approved in principle a proposal from the Dean of Research to establish a Research Ethics Committee to deal with ethical issues arising from research conducted within the University and research undertaken by individuals or groups associated with the University.

b. TIMING OF SUMMER & AUTUMN EXAMINATION MEETINGS

(Ref: AC99/M5/11)

A special Committee was convened to examine both the timing of examination meetings as well as the implications for a recommended change in external examining practice. With a planned reporting date of the 8 December 1999 meeting of Academic Council, it was agreed that the membership of the Committee would consist of a Head of School (Professor Richard O'Kennedy), a Programme Board Chairperson (Professor Tony Moynihan), a Senior Faculty Administrative Assistant (Ms Gillian Barry), the Education Officer of the Student Union (Mr Shane Derby), and the Registrar as Chairperson.

c. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE POSITION OF DEAN OF FACULTY

(Ref: AC99/M5/14)

Academic Council approved the proposal "that all full-time, permanent members of the teaching staff be eligible to serve as Deans of Faculty"

d. STUDENT UNION'S PROPOSED FRAMEWORK OF GOOD PRACTICE

(Ref: AC99/M5/15)

It was agreed that, with the support and assistance of the Dean of Teaching & Learning, through the Teaching & Learning Committee, the proposal could be further enhanced and made more complete through the inclusion of details relating to the responsibilities and obligations of individual students. A revised proposal will be brought back to a future meeting Academic Council.

e. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M5/16.1)

Academic Council approved a proposal that the student member of Standing Committee of Academic Council will in future be the Education Officer of the Students' Union.

4. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

a. MINUTES OF THE 7 OCTOBER 1999 MEETING

(Ref: AC99/M6/4.1)

Noted.

b. MINUTES OF THE 4 NOVEMBER 1999 MEETING

(Ref: AC99/M6/4.2)

Noted.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M6/5)

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/M9/4)

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/M9/5)

The Registrar reported that invitations had been issued to the various External Examiners recommended for appointment for Research Degrees and for Taught Programmes.

c. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL & EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

(ref. AC-SC99/M7/8 & AC-SC99/M8/8)

- Members of Standing Committee were requested to submit their views to the Registrar on his draft guidelines relating to internal examiners, the independent Chairperson and potential conflicts of interest in the appointment of External Examiners.
- With the assistance and cooperation of the Registrar and other members, Professor Brian MacCraith will introduce proposals for the establishment of a Graduate Studies Office for the University.

- The views of the members of Standing Committee were requested in bringing forward proposals for more realistic fee remuneration levels for the various categories of external examiners.

d. **GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(ref. AC-SC99/9/6.2)

The Graduate Diploma in Information Technology Programme Board has been requested to apply directly to Academic Council for a derogation from Regulation 65a of the University's *Marks & Standards* and to provide further details on how the proposal would be implemented.

e. **MSc IN THE MANAGEMENT & APPLICATIONS OF IT IN ACCOUNTING**

(ref. AC-SC99/9/7)

Standing Committee has requested the assistance of the Course Team in formulating a proposal which would address the issues of eligibility for the exit awards of Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma and the recognition, in terms of credit transfer, to be provided for students wishing to return to the programme having earlier received one or both of these awards.

f. **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BEng MEBS PROGRAMME**

(ref. AC-SC99/9/8.1)

Standing Committee recommended that the proposal be considered, in the first instance, by the Programme Board and, in recognition of the significant changes being proposed at the start of the first year of implementation, not least the new entry requirements in Mathematics, the new award title, and an amended set of core and option modules in all four years of the programme, that the issue of programme re-accreditation be given serious consideration.

g. **REVISED CREDIT ALLOCATION FOR I-MBA DISSERTATION ELEMENT**

(ref. AC-SC99/9/8.4)

The Chairperson was requested to seek clarification as to whether or not such a significant change to the dissertation element of the programme had been discussed and agreed by the International MBA Programme Board. Subject to such discussion and agreement, Standing Committee approved the proposal but recommended that, on adoption of the revised arrangements, a full review be conducted and a report submitted at the end of the academic year.

h. **DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE MATTERS**

- **DISCIPLINARY APPEALS COMMITTEE**

(ref. AC-SC99/8/8.1)

It was agreed that the proposed terms of reference be revised in the light of a number of suggestions and that the document be then submitted for legal advice prior to its submission for formal approval by Academic Council.

- **CONSTITUTION OF DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

(ref. AC-SC99/8/8.2)

The Chairperson was requested to communicate Standing Committee's recommendations for a review of the Disciplinary Committee's constitution and terms of reference to the Heads & Professors Group.

The 4 November 1999 meeting was advised of the concerns expressed by the Disciplinary Committee regarding the outcome of Standing Committee's consideration of the issues at its meeting on 7 October 1999. As the matter was due to be taken for general discussion to Executive by the Director General, Standing Committee decided that no further consideration was necessary at this point.

6. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VALIDATION COMMITTEE

Academic Council approved the following reports from Validation Committee:

a. BSc IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS (SOFTWARE ENGINEERING)

BSc IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS (COMPUTER SCIENCE)

BSc IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS (INFORMATION SYSTEMS)

(Ref: AC99/M6/6.1)

b. MSc IN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE (BUSINESS/TECHNICAL)

(Ref: AC99/M6/6.2)

7. APPOINTMENT OF AN ACCREDITATION BOARD

(Ref: AC99/M6/7)

In the spirit of its approval of the original recommendations from Validation Committee on 10 December 1997, Academic Council approved a request from the Programme Board for the MSc in Strategies in Information Technology for:

- the alternative award title of MSc in Internet Systems which more accurately reflects programme content and would also be more readily identifiable to potential applicants;
- amendment to module titles as follows:
 - ``Emerging Technology Architectures" to ``Internet Systems Architectures", and
 - ``The Information Technology Environment" to ``Internet Systems Environment";
- the appointment of the following members of the Accreditation Board:
 - Professor Neville Harris, Department of Computer Science, TCD

(Internet Systems Architectures)

- Professor Colin Cowan, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, QUB

(Communications Systems)

- Yaman Akdeniz LLB, MA, Centre for Criminal Justice Studies, University of Leeds

(Internet Systems Environment)

- Ms Marie Redmond, XCommunications, Dublin

(Industry - Multimedia)

- Professor Dr Andreas Kunze FERN Universiteit, Germany

(Distance Education)

or

- Dr Friedrich Hesse, DIFF, Tubingen, Germany

(Distance Education)

- Note: The Accreditation Board will be chaired by a Dean of the University and will also include the Registrar.

8. REPORT FROM THE APPEALS BOARD (AUTUMN 1999)

(Ref: AC99/M6/8)

Academic Council was advised, through a report from the Registrar, that a meeting of the Appeals Board was convened on Friday, 8 October 1999, to consider appeals arising from the Autumn Summer 1999 diet of examinations. The Appeals Board considered a total of 55 appeals, of which 15 were upheld and 40 were rejected. The breakdown of appeals against grounds for appeal was summarised in the report as follows:

	Grounds for Appeal						Total
	12.6 (a)	12.6 (b)	12.6 (c)	12.6 (d)	12.6 (e)	Other/Re-Check	
Appeal Upheld	9	2	0	2	1	1	15
Appeal Rejected	19	6	0	9	3	3	40
Total	28	8	0	11	4	4	55

In the context of a query from a member of Academic Council relating to the provision of sufficiently detailed documentation for appeals, the Chairman agreed to return to the 9 February 2000 meeting of Academic Council with some indication of the likely implementation date for the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1997 whose scope was recently extended (July 1999) to include universities.

Note from the Registrar: The Act establishes three new statutory rights, namely for each person (1) to access information held by public bodies; (2) to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, inaccurate or misleading; and (3) to obtain reasons for decisions affecting him/herself.

9. DISCIPLINARY APPEALS COMMITTEE: OUTCOME OF RECENT APPEAL

(Ref: AC99/M6/9)

- The Registrar advised Academic Council that a meeting of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee was held on Wednesday, 27 October 1999, to consider an appeal against a decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The meeting was convened in the context of the University's Code of Discipline, whereby decisions of the Disciplinary Committee on major offences may be appealed by the accused person to Academic Council which may, in turn and if it deems fit, appoint a Disciplinary Appeals Committee to hear the appeal on its behalf.
- The Disciplinary Appeals Committee decided to uphold the decision of the Disciplinary Committee and decided to confirm two of the three sanctions as originally imposed but, on the basis of some new evidence adduced since the original hearing, to reduce the level of the financial penalty from £200 to £100.
- The Disciplinary Appeals Committee has informed the student of the reasons for its decision on the appeal and, in accordance with current regulations, it is now reporting the result of the appeal to the meeting of Academic Council immediately following the appeal hearing.

10. TIMING OF EXAMINATION MEETINGS/ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS
. TIMING OF SUMMER & AUTUMN EXAMINATION MEETINGS

(Ref: AC99/M6/10.1)

- A paper was presented to the meeting which represented the response of a special Committee, established by the 13 October 1999 meeting of Academic Council, to the concerns raised by academic and administrative staff regarding the timing of the Progression & Award Board (PAB) meetings for the Summer and, most especially, the Autumn diet of examinations. The membership of the Committee consisted of a Head of School (Professor Richard O'Kennedy), a Programme Board Chairperson (Professor Tony Moynihan), a Senior Faculty Administrative Assistant (Ms Gillian Barry), the Education Officer of the Student Union (Mr Shane Derby), and the Registrar as Chairperson.
- The paper had been prepared following the Committee's consideration of the issues involved (each committee member had, in turn, sought the views of his/her constituency, namely Faculty Administrative Assistants, Programme Board Chairpersons, Heads of School, Registrar's Office as appropriate) and recommended that the timing of the different examinations board meetings be resolved as a matter of urgency (and according to a proposal described in the paper and illustrated in an accompanying chart).
- Following a detailed and very wide-ranging discussions when members expressed their concerns and dissatisfaction with the constraints which modularisation, the current system of examinations, and the semester calendar appeared to be imposing on academic life, it was agreed to amend the schedule proposed to the meeting to provide for a greater elapsed time between the Summer and Autumn examination periods. The following was agreed for all taught programmes other than taught Master's programmes:
 - For the Summer diet of examinations, the Programme Board Examination Review Committee meetings should be held 2 weeks after the 2-week examination period; the order of the Progression and Award Board meetings should correspond to that for the Programme Board Examination Review Committee meetings and be held exactly one week later; and the examination results should be issued in the post exactly one week after the final Progression and Award

Board meeting and on the web as soon as it is practicable to do so.

- The Autumn diet of examinations should be scheduled during the last 2 weeks of August; there will be a single Autumn examination board meeting for each programme (merging the Programme Board Examination Review Committee and Progression and Award Board meetings) and this should be held 1 week after the 2-week examination period; these examination board meetings will be scheduled during a period of 3 to 4 days as appropriate; and the examination results should be issued in the post and on the web as soon as it is practicable to do so during the following (first-year registration) week.

Note: It was agreed to consider the timing of Autumn examination boards for taught Master's programmes as a separate matter.

a. ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

(Ref: AC99/M6/10.2)

The Committee was also requested to consider the merits of restricting the involvement of external examiners to the award years of programmes as it was considered that such a change of practice would lead to a reduction in the volume of work and time pressures experienced by staff. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that:

External Examiners must be involved with the final (i.e. award) years of programmes and, at the discretion of individual Programme Boards, may be involved with other (i.e. non-award) years of programmes.

11. ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2000/01

(Ref: AC99/M6/11)

Academic Council deferred approval of the proposed Academic Calendar for 2000/01 pending its amendment as a result of decisions reached during consideration of the previous agenda item on the timing of Progression & Award Boards. In response to a query from a member regarding the necessity of commencing Semester 1 on the final Monday of September, the Chairman requested the Registrar to present a 3-year window of Semester 1 dates to the next meeting of Academic Council.

12. 1999/2002 REGISTER OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS:

. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

(Ref: AC99/M6/12.1)

Academic Council noted nominations for the appointment of external examiners for the University's taught programmes across six Faculties and for a three-year period 1999/2000 to 2001/2002. It was noted that the Faculty of Distance Education will be making a separate submission to the 9 February 2000 meeting of Academic Council, following the conclusion of the 1999 diet of examinations.

a. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR MODULES

(Ref: AC99/M6/12.2)

Academic Council noted nominations for the appointment of module external examiners provided to programmes across all Faculties (excluding Distance Education) and for a three-year period 1999/2000 to 2001/2002.

13. *Note: Programme Boards were requested to advise the Registrar's Office as soon as possible of any amendments (additions or deletions) to the two lists of nominations which were presented to the meeting.*

14. **RESEARCH COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT**

(Ref: AC99/M6/13)

In presenting the 1998/99 annual report from the Research Committee to Academic Council, Dr Conor Long, Dean of Research, requested that Academic Council should record his appreciation of the valuable role and contribution of the School Research Convenors whose 3-year period of office was now coming to an end. Dr Long's report pointed to a very successful year, not least the very beneficial effects arising from the new budgetary system, which will see a doubling of the contribution to the Research Committee for direct support for researchers (2% of recurrent budget) and an effective quadrupling of University support in three years. The Research Committee was allocated approximately £235,000 in 1998/99 and the available funds were dispersed as follows:

Support Category	Amount (£)
Support for Research Students	166,300
Conference funding	10,132
Study visits	3,050
Special Project Funding	45,000
Network Seed funding	5,000

The report provided details of the outcome of the President's Research Awards, the results of State Funding Initiatives (including Measure 4 Schemes, the £22.446m granted under the Higher Education Authority's Programme for Research in Third-level Institutions 1999-2001, and research student bursaries from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Council), and the proposed construction of a £7.49m Postgraduate Centre to provide living accommodation for 99 postgraduate students.

15. **ACCREDITATION OF RESEARCH DEGREES: ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE**

(Ref: AC99/M6/14)

In the context of the accreditation arrangements with All Hallows College, as described in the Memorandum of Understanding approved by Academic Council on 9 June 1999, a proposal was presented to the meeting for the award by Dublin City University of research degrees to those students of All Hallows who successfully complete research programmes of study which are conducted and examined in accordance with the University's regulations, as provided in the publication "Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research & Thesis". A document was presented to the meeting in support of the proposal which provided details of the current process at All Hallows College. Academic Council approved the proposal with effect from the 2000/2001 academic year. It was agreed that, pending the outcome of deliberations by Standing Committee, Academic Council would consider the role of internal examiners for research degrees at a future meeting.

16. DCU & LIFELONG LEARNING OUTLINE STRATEGY PAPER

(Ref: AC99/M6/15)

Mr Mike Egan, Student Representative for the Joint Faculty of Education, advised the meeting that a strategy paper was being prepared by the Strategic Planning Executive, Mr Chris O'Malley, and other staff including Mr Egan, which would be presented to the 9 February 2000 meeting of Academic Council. In the interim, Mr Egan introduced a paper which outlined the University's need for a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy, building upon DCU's phenomenal development to date. To illustrate the progress achieved in the past decade, Mr Egan provided the following growth trends for full-time students and compared them with the next highest university, namely the University of Limerick:

Full-time Categories from 1992 to 1998	DCU	UL
Overall Student Numbers	90.6%	63.8%
Undergraduate Student Numbers	93.7%	65.0%
Postgraduate Student Numbers	68.8%	54.3%

In looking at the area of part-time provision, essential to the development of adult and continuing education, Mr Egan cited both long-term and recent trends in the University where the numbers of part-time postgraduate student numbers at DCU increased by 132.8% in the period 1992-98 and by only 23.3% in the period 1996-98; while the numbers of part-time undergraduate student numbers at DCU increased by 10.3% during 1992-98 but declined by 9.9% during 1996-98. However, the part-time student population during the same 1992-98 period grew by 183.7% at St Patrick's College, Maynooth; 26.5% at University College Dublin; 24.3% at Trinity College Dublin; and 46.0% at NUI Galway. While a positive comparison could be made between DCU's part-time postgraduate provision and that of other universities, the same could not be said of its part-time undergraduate provision and this was a cause for concern. A general discussion followed during which members expressed support for the need to develop a lifelong learning strategy for the University and it was agreed to consider this important issue at the 9 February 2000 meeting of Academic Council.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

. ACTIVATING SPANISH ON THE ACL DEGREE

(Ref: AC99/M6/16.1)

Academic Council noted the intention of the Applied Computation Linguistics Programme Board to activate Spanish on the ACL degree and, as a consequence, to increase the number of CAO places from 20 to 30. Academic Council was advised that the programme had been accredited to offer French, German, Spanish and Japanese as foreign language strands. The Chairman advised the meeting that the Programme Board will also require resource approval from Executive.