

# ACADEMIC COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Wednesday 10 June 2009

2.00-3.45 p.m. in AG01

### PRESENT:

F Blin  
S Blott  
O Bree  
P Brereton  
E Buffet  
J Burzlaff  
J Carroll  
B Casey  
J Costello  
H Duncan  
B Flood  
N Gathergood  
M Henry  
L Hourihan  
G Hughes  
S Hurley  
M Irwin-Bannon

M Kelly  
S Knowlton  
B Le Juez  
T Leufer  
C Loscher  
C Mac an Bhaird  
B McConalogue  
L McDermott (Secretary)  
C McDonagh  
Á McGillicuddy  
C McGonagle  
A McGrady  
K MacKeogh  
J McManis  
C Mac Murchaidh  
P McNamara  
M Munro

G Murphy  
N Murphy  
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl  
P Ó Flatharta  
A-G Olabi  
M Parkinson  
D Raftery  
A Scott (Deputy President/Registrar – Chair)  
P Sheehan  
M Shine Thompson  
A Sinnott  
P Smith  
A Stover  
A Wickham  
S Wickham  
P Willis

### APOLOGIES:

S Anglim  
S-J Belton  
C Bohan  
J Bruton  
E Conway  
M Conway  
E Diskin  
P Donnelly  
J Dowling  
M Farren

P Flood  
S Fox  
C Holland  
L Horan  
J Hughes  
S Ingle  
E Kennedy  
B Leavy  
S McArdle

P McMorrow  
R Meehan  
P Meleady  
R Nic Dhonnacha  
P O'Byrne  
B Pierce  
D Sinclair  
R Tobin  
F von Prondzynski (President)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

G Barry  
J Murphy

The Chair welcomed Mr John Murphy, incoming Education and Welfare Officer of the Students' Union, to his first meeting of the Academic Council, and thanked Ms Hurley, outgoing Education and Welfare Officer, for her substantial contribution to the work of the Council during her term of office.

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one submission under Item 15.

**1A. Revisions to terms of reference: Academic Council and Education Committee**

Approved.

**A: Minutes and related issues****2. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 8 April 2009**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising**

**3.1** The Chair noted that Professor Richard O'Kennedy had taken up the post of Vice-President for Learning Innovation. (Item 3.1)

**3.2** It was noted that the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance had been launched on 13 May 2009. (Item 3.5)

**3.3** It was noted that ITS Version 14 was expected to go live in late 2009. (Item 3.6)

**3.4** It was noted that proposals on programme review had been discussed by the Education Committee and were now being considered by Professor Richard O'Kennedy in the broader context of quality review overall. (Item 3.7)

- 3.5** The Chair noted that the first meeting of the IUA working group set up to make recommendations on subject provision across the university sector had taken place and the second one was scheduled for 18 June 2009. (Item 5.2)
- 3.6** It was noted that the debate entitled ‘Academic Flexibility – Friend or Foe?’ was scheduled to take place on 22 June 2009. The Chair encouraged the members of the Council to attend. (Item 7.3)

**4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 4 March 2009 and 1 April 2009 and 6 May 2009**

Noted and approved.

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 5 February 2009**

Noted and approved.

**6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 8 January 2009**

Noted and approved. Professor Gary Murphy noted that discussions with other higher education institutions about arrangements for inter-institutional exchanges of research students were at an advanced stage.

**7. President’s report**

- 7.1** On behalf of the President, the Chair noted that it was hoped that the HEA’s response to the university’s proposals on an employment framework to take account of the current economic difficulties would be available soon. Deans and Heads will be notified as soon as it becomes available.
- 7.2** The university’s submission for funding under PRTL I Cycle 5 has succeeded at Level 1, and congratulations are due to the Professor Eugene Kennedy and all others involved. The submission deadline for the material to be considered at Level 2 is 16 July 2009. The process is likely to be particularly competitive this year. The university is involved in three of the six research clusters funded by Science Foundation Ireland. It has been awarded funding under two of the three, and is also expected to be awarded funding under the third.

This level of success is particularly significant in view of the current difficult economic climate.

- 7.3 The President's recent e-mail to all campuses was intended to inform staff about ongoing discussions between the university and NUI Maynooth and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. These discussions concern possible future collaboration which would build on collaboration recently undertaken in relation to a PRTLTI funding submission

**B: Policy and strategy issues**

**8. Strategic implementation**

The Chair noted that it was planned to launch the next university strategic plan in Autumn 2009 as part of a suite of events to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of DCU, and that the component strategies had by now been finalised.

**9. *Marks and Standards: proposed revised version***

- 9.1 Professor Martin Henry made a presentation on the proposed revised version of *Marks and Standards*, noting that they were intended to be used as an interim measure pending the final revised *Marks and Standards* which would be prepared when it became possible to implement the Academic Framework for Innovation fully.

- 9.2 In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- The stipulation that a module is passed if 40% of the available marks are obtained means that, in principle, it is not necessary to pass all elements of a module. The writing of learning outcomes, and the design of related assessment instruments, will be particularly important in ensuring that students achieve a minimum standard in all core aspects of each module. (In this connection, it was suggested that wording such as 'The student *should* ...' rather than 'The student *will* ...' be used for learning outcomes.).
- In the case of a resit, it is not necessary to use the same type of assessment as in the case of the original attempt. It is recognised, however, that some disciplines lend themselves more easily than others to variation in assessment type.
- A policy and procedures will be required for the new leave of absence system.

- 9.3 Clarification, as follows, was provided in response to queries:

- When a student fails one or more modules, resits them and passes them, the precision mark will be calculated using the original (failed) module mark(s).

- The regulations pertaining to credit transfer are sector wide, not specific to DCU.

**9.4** The revised *Marks and Standards* were approved for implementation, on an interim basis as noted above, from 2009/10, subject to amendments as follows:

- Table 1 should include a reference to the availability of a Special Purpose Award at Level 9.
- Table 1 should be consistent with Section 8.
- Section 2 and Section 8 should be fully consistent with each other.
- It will need to be made clear that the maximum number of attempts to pass a module in an academic session is two, and that there will be instances (e.g. in the case of a module that includes laboratory work) in which only one attempt can be allowed; in this connection, references to resit attempts should include a reference to feasibility.
- A classification to cater for year-long INTRA (where passed) needs to be introduced, as 'H3' is unsuitable.
- The precision rules in relation to (a) marks within one percentage point and (b) marks within half a percentage point of the next highest grade need to be specified.
- The distinction between leave of absence and deferral in terms of contribution to the overall registration period needs to be made clearer, and the reference to the fact that leave of absence will not contribute should include the word 'normally'.
- It should be made clear that a module may be discontinued and a student who re-registers for a new academic session following failure or deferral may have to register for a new module if a failed or deferred module becomes unavailable.

**9.5** Agreed that the revised document, with the changes tracked, would be circulated electronically to the members of the Council with a request for formal approval.

**9.6** Noted that the fact that research Master's degrees are unclassified whereas taught Master's degrees are classified can occasionally be problematic for holders of research degrees, especially those in the teaching profession; agreed that the possibility of classifying research Master's degrees would be explored by the Graduate Studies Board.

**9.7** The Chair thanked Professor Henry and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education for their very substantial work in revising *Marks and Standards*.

## **10. Graduands' headwear**

Approved.

**11. Proposed policy on plagiarism**

Approved subject to appropriate cross-referencing between Section 1 and Section 3 and the inclusion of a reference to the option available to distance learning students of discussing their situation with the relevant staff member. Agreed that the revised document, with the changes tracked, would be circulated electronically to the members of the Council with a request for formal approval. The Chair thanked the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education for their significant work on this issue.

**C: Items for formal approval/noting****12. Report from Research Committee**

Noted.

**13. Recommendations from the Validation Subgroup of the Education Committee:**

- **BSc (Hons) in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing**
- **Proposal to change the title of the Graduate Certificate in Actuarial Science to ‘Graduate Certificate in Actuarial Applications’**
- **Proposal to offer a MSc in Work and Organisational Behaviour alongside the existing MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology**

Approved.

**14. Accreditation recommendations:****14.1 BSc (Hons) in Aviation Management/BSc (Hons) in Aviation Management with Pilot Studies**

Approved.

**14.2 BSc (Hons) in Psychology**

Approved.

**14.3 BA (Hons) in Theology and Lifelong Education (with associated Certificate and Diploma awards)**

Approved.

**15. Any other business**

The Chair noted that the Progression and Awards Boards to be held later in June 2009 would be the first since the introduction of anonymous marking for all examinations across the university. Emphasising the shared responsibility of all staff to ensure the fair and equitable application of *Marks and Standards* in a spirit of co-operation, she urged all members of the Council to attend all Progression and Awards Boards scheduled for them and, if any difficulties or problems emerged, to highlight these to the relevant staff members at the earliest opportunity so as to facilitate timely resolution.

**Date of next meeting:**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Monday 29 June 2009</b> <b>2.00 p.m. in AG01</b></p>
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
President

Date: \_\_\_\_\_