

ACADEMIC COUNCIL – STANDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, 5 April 2001

At 9:00 am in Executive Meeting Room

Present: Dr Patricia Barker (Chairperson), Dr Tony Coulson, Mr Liam Doyle, Professor Martin Henry, Dr David Jacobson, Mr Micheal MacConmara, Dr Liam MacMathuna, Dr Barry McMullin, Dr Jim Murray, Dr Ronnie Saunders, Mr Paul Sheehan

Apologies: Dr Paraic James, Dr C Long, Dr Sean Marlow

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to the inclusion of two additional items tabled by Liam Doyle under AOB and two additional external examiner appointments tabled by the Chairperson.

2. Minutes of meeting of 2 March 2001

The minutes of the meeting of 2 March 2001 were confirmed and signed by the Chairperson.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Follow-up actions arising from the minutes per the attached schedule were reported, as were the following:

3.1 Sports Scholarship Places

John Kerrane's paper was considered by Standing Committee. The Committee agreed with his recommendation that two places on the BSc. In Sports Science and Health should be set aside each year for elite athletes or coaches. Selection will be dependent upon prospective applicants obtaining the University's minimum entry requirements, and their attainment of an extremely high level of achievement in the playing or coaching fields; and will involve the submission of a portfolio and an interview. It was agreed that the proposal should be tabled at Academic Council for approval.

3.2 Proposed amendments to DCU Marks and Standards for Summer and Autumn Exam Diets 2001

Barry McMullin spoke to this paper. He outlined a series of proposed revisions to the University's marks and standards to ameliorate the current difficulties concerning candidates who perform well across a range of modules but fail one or a small number at a level below the compensation threshold, and who are thus delayed in progressing or graduating. His proposals were:

- To amend the existing paragraphs on compensation to allow compensation in modules totalling 20 credits
- To introduce a sliding scale of compensation thresholds, depending on the total credits of the modules involved, ie, up to 5 Credits, 25%; up to 10 credits, 30%; up to 20 credits, 35%.
- To clarify the interpretation of the rule governing the carrying of a single failed module, so that the term 'exceptional circumstances' is supported by special case evidence when applied to individual students.

After some discussion, Standing Committee agreed that the proposals should be forwarded to Academic Council for further consideration and approval.

3.3 Faculty of Computing and Mathematical Sciences Minutes

The Faculty accepted that the minutes submitted did not supply all the necessary information and that they would be revised accordingly.

3.4 Graduate Diploma in Management of Operations

The Programme Board Chairperson has confirmed that the induction module is still credit bearing and will have a pass/fail mark.

3.5 Graduate Diploma in Information Technology

The Programme Board agreed that their existing rules are too open in regard to the time available for those who have successfully completed the diploma to proceed to the Masters. They will now put a time limit on the same.

4 Faculty/Committee/Programme Board Minutes

- 4.1 Programme Board: MA in International Relations, 11/09/00. Noted. Standing Committee expressed concern at the delay in forwarding the minutes.
- 4.2 Programme Board: BEng/MEng in Electronic Systems (European), 18/10/00. Noted. Standing Committee expressed concern at the delay in forwarding the minutes.
- 4.3 Programme Board: BSc in Biotechnology, 06/12/00. Noted.
- 4.4 Programme Board: Master of Business Administration, 25/01/01. Noted. Standing Committee expressed some concern about the quality of the minutes and seeks clarification on the meaning of the paragraph regarding the examination board.
- 4.5 Programme Board: GD/MA in Translation Studies, 01/02/01. Noted. Standing Committee noted the appearance in the minutes of a student number and will advise the Programme Board to omit them in future.
- 4.6 Programme Board: MSc in E-Commerce (Business & Technical), 15/02/01. Noted.
- 4.7 Programme Board: BSc in Computer Applications, 15/02/01. Noted. Standing Committee seeks clarification on the decision to set a separate and, by implication, less exacting paper for CAE1 students (*item 3*). It also noted the query regarding the number attempts allowed on Old Syllabus papers (*item 3*). Four attempts are allowed on all papers. Standing Committee also felt that the appearance in the minutes of the statement made in regard to the quality of 'the services' (*item 9*) was inappropriate.
- 4.8 Programme Board: Graduate Diploma in Information Technology, 19/02/01. Standing Committee questioned whether the meeting was quorate and whether the decisions made were valid. It was also agreed that the minutes were terse.
- 4.9 Programme Board: GD/MA in Conference Interpreting, 21/02/01. Noted. Standing Committee agreed that the issue raised in *item 7* requires a response and action from the Programme Board.
- 4.10 Programme Board: MA in Political Communication, 23/02/01. Noted.
- 4.11 Programme Board: MA in Journalism, 28/02/01. Noted.
- 4.12 Programme Board: BSc in Applied Computational Linguistics, 28/02/01. Noted.
- 4.13 Programme Board: BEng in Electronic Systems, BEng in Telecommunications Engineering, BEng in Digital Media Engineering, 07/03/01. Noted. *Items 5 and 6* were approved.
- 4.14 Programme Board: BEng/MEng in Electronic Systems (European), 07/03/01. Noted. *Items 5, 7 and 8* were approved.
- 4.15 Programme Board: BSc in Computer Applications, 08/03/01. Noted. Standing Committee will inform the Board that *item 2* is incorrect. Students have four (not two) attempts to pass Old Syllabus examinations. It was also agreed to inform the Board that they can institute a standing

committee to ensure that matters requiring a quick response are dealt with (*item 6*).

- 4.16 Programme Board: BSc in Airgeadas, Ríomhaireach & Fiontraíocht, 28/02/01. Noted. It was agreed that the Chairperson would raise the question of the numbers taking Spanish on this course with Caoilfhionn Nic Pháidín.
- 4.17 Programme Board: MSc/Diplóma do Chéimithe I nGnó & I dTeicneolaíocht & Eolais, 28/02/01. Noted and approved.

5 Appointment of external examiners

5.1. Appointment of Examiners: Taught Programmes

- 5.1.1. Prof N P Sheehy, Queen's University
Masters in Pastoral Leadership (All Hallows College). Approved.
- 5.1.2. Rev T Corbett, St Patrick's College Maynooth
Masters in Pastoral Leadership (All Hallows College). Approved.
- 5.1.3. Prof D O Hogain, UCD
Module LC305 (for exchange students). Approved.
- 5.1.4. Dr W F Walsh, Miami University (retired).
Exchange Students, Irish Studies Module EN336. Approved. It was agreed that Standing Committee would explore the issue of how long a retired academic might act as an external examiner.

5.2. Appointment of Examiners: Postgraduate Research Students

- 5.2.1. Dr E Prosser, Elan Pharmaceuticals
Student no. 97971332, PhD, NCTCC/School of Biotechnology. Approved.
- 5.2.2. Prof D Edwards, University of East Anglia
Student no. 97970115, PhD, School of Biotechnology. Approved.
- 5.2.3. Prof B Graham, Queen's University
Student no. 96971339, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering. Approved.
- 5.2.4. Dr C Comiskey, NUI Maynooth
Student no. 98970518, MSc, School of Mathematical Sciences. Approved
subject to production of first page of CV.
- 5.2.5. Dr D A Diver, Glasgow University
Student no. 97970549, PhD, School of Physical Sciences. Approved.
- 5.2.6. Dr D O'Mahony, TCD
Student no. 94426082, MEng, School of Electronic Engineering.
Approved.
- 5.2.7. Dr F Blaney, Beecham Pharmaceuticals
Student no. 95970665, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences. Approved.

6. Postgraduate Research Students

6.1 Applications to transfer to Phd register

- 6.1.1 Student no. 96970413, School of Biotechnology/NCTCC. Approved.
- 6.1.2 Student no. 97970425, School of Biotechnology/NCTCC. Approved.
- 6.1.3 Student no. 99145170, School of Physical Sciences. Approved.

6.2 Regulations for transfer to Phd register

The results of Jennifer Butler's survey regarding the question of whether an oral examination should be compulsory for students wishing to transfer to the PhD register were considered. The result, 8 to 1 in favour, led Standing Committee to conclude that the regulations should be changed to require that all candidates should undergo a satisfactory internal oral examination before transfer to the PhD Register. This recommendation will be forwarded to Academic Council for consideration.

6.3 Special case admission – masters by research

The case of an applicant who wishes to undertake a Masters degree in research in the School of Computer Applications, although he does not possess a primary degree in a cognate area, was considered. Standing Committee agreed that he should be required to undertake a Master's Qualifying examination, before admission on to the register.

6.4 Approval of appointment of supervisor

Standing Committee agreed that the approval of the appointment of supervisors does not form part of its brief.

6.5 Proposed addition to wording to academic regulations for postgraduate degrees by research and thesis

Standing Committee considered the proposed additional wording to Section 5 of the Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis, submitted by Jennifer Butler. It approved the wording with the following amendment: *Sentence 1 after 'to hold a PhD':*-'or hold an associate or full professorship'. The new wording was approved.

7. Teaching & Learning Committee plenary minutes

The minutes were noted.

8. Admission policy for students with disabilities

The Admissions Officer, Joachim Barnett, spoke to the paper, which he had prepared with Claire Byrne, the Disability Officer. The review of procedures has been necessitated by the introduction of the Equality Act 1999 and the Equal Status Act 2000. The new proposals involve changes to the existing direct entry scheme for disabled students for the 2001 entry, including changes to the application forms and the provision of guidelines for the interview process. From 2002 onwards, it is proposed that the direct entry scheme will no longer operate. All applicants will be processed through the CAO. Additionally the provisions relating to disabled students will apply to all students, including postgraduate taught and research students. The Disability Officer will assess the extent of the applicant's disability on the basis of information provided by him or her. Applicants for undergraduate programmes will be ranked on the basis of their Leaving Certificate results, though this will be done as a separate exercise to the ranking of non-disabled students, to allow DCU to operate special initiatives in the area. A Disability Committee will be appointed annually by Academic Council to make decisions on admission.

Standing Committee considered the paper in detail and congratulated Joachim and Claire for their excellent work. It was agreed that the paper should be recommended for adoption by Academic Council.

9. Consultation with Standing Committee re. acknowledgement of extra-curricular activity(to be discussed)

This item was deferred.

10. Proposal to give observer status to Assistant Registrar (Operations) on Academic Council

This item was agreed.

11. Any other business**11.1 Proposal re: Incoming Education Officer**

This item was tabled by Liam Doyle and proposed that the incoming SU Education Officer should automatically be given observer status on Academic Council and Standing Committee each year for the period between his/her election and taking up the post, in order to facilitate the handover process. The proposal was approved.

11.2 Proposal re: Exam Calendar

This item was tabled by Liam Doyle and proposed that the Exam Timetable for Semester 2 should be extended until the 30th May to accommodate the

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holding of IML4 and IBL4 oral and aural examinations, should all the parties concerned agree to the same. Standing Committee agreed to forward the proposal to Academic Council for consideration and approval at its meeting of 11 April 2001.

Date of Next Meeting: 3 May 2001

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____