

## **ACADEMIC COUNCIL - STANDING COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

Thursday, 4 November 1999

at 9:00 am in Executive Meeting Room

**PRESENT:** Prof J Carroll (Chairperson), Mr J Dowling, Dr A N Glynn, Mr B Kehoe, Dr C Long, Dr L MacMathúna, Dr B McMullin, Prof E O'Halpin, Prof R O'Kennedy, Dr T Ryan.

**APOLOGIES:** Mr S Darby, Dr J Murray, Dr K Monks.

#### **1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/1)**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of five matters to be considered under 'any other business'. The Chairperson advised the meeting that Mr Shane Darby, Education Officer of the Student Union, had become the new student member of Standing Committee on foot of a proposal adopted by the 13 October 1999 meeting of Academic Council. In welcoming Shane (who, through illness, was unable to attend the meeting), the Chairperson also expressed his thanks to the outgoing student member, Mr Diarmuid Ó'Dúshláine, and wished him well in his studies.

#### **2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 7 OCTOBER 1999**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/2)**

The minutes of the meeting of 7 October 1999 were adopted and signed by the Chairperson.

#### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/3)**

##### **a. FACULTY/COMMITTEE/PROGRAMME BOARD MINUTES**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M8/4)**

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/M8/5)**

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. REGISTRATION OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

**(ref. AC-SC99/8/9.2)**

The Chairperson undertook to investigate concerns raised by Professor Richard O'Kennedy regarding the number, nature, versions and dissemination of financial registration forms required to be completed by postgraduate research students.

**e. 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 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.

**4. FACULTY/COMMITTEE/PROGRAMME BOARD MINUTES**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/4)**

- a. Programme Board: Bachelor of Business Studies, 10/03/99
  - In noting the Programme Board's discussions on the scheduling of Semester 1 examinations in the same week, Standing Committee considered that students should not, of necessity, have to take terminal written examinations for each module. However, it acknowledged that greater support and incentives should be afforded

to lecturing staff to shift the balance move towards continuous assessment.

- Standing Committee also acknowledged that Programme Boards will require advice and guidance in the use of group projects as an assessment instrument. Members pointed to a vast literature on the subject and also to experiences and best practices elsewhere, for example, in the area of project-based learning.
  - The Programme Board, on a minor procedural matter, is to be advised to use student ID numbers (rather than names) when recording student issues such as exemptions in the minutes.
- b. Programme Board: Graduate Programme in the Management & Applications of Information Technology in Accounting, 23/04/99

Noted.

- c. Programme Board: BEng in Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering, BEng in Computer Aided Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering, BEng in Manufacturing Engineering with Business Studies, BEng in Medical Mechanical Engineering, 08/09/99

Noted.

- d. Programme Board: BSc in Analytical Science, BSc in Pure & Applied Chemistry, BSc in Chemistry with French/German, GDiploma/MSc in Instrumental Analysis, 15/09/99

Noted.

- e. Programme Board: MA in International Relations, 22/09/99

In response to a query regarding the appropriateness of procedures to deal with admissions applications and related financial matters, the Chairperson advised that this area had been the subject of a business process re-engineering exercise which, pending the appointment of the new Admissions Officer, will facilitate the better utilisation of IT and other enabling mechanisms to significantly enhance the admissions process.

- f. Programme Board: Bachelor of Business Studies, 29/09/99

Noted.

- g. Examinations Regulations: BA in Accounting & Finance, 29/09/99

Standing Committee approved the proposed Examination Regulations 1999/2000 for the BA in Accounting & Finance programme.

- h. Programme Board: BSc in Applied Computational Linguistics, 01/10/99

In noting the Programme Board's comments about "unfair treatment to foreign students", the Chairperson agreed to investigate the matter further and to hold discussions with the Programme Board.

- i. Programme Board: MBS in Accounting, 06/10/99

Noted.

- j. Programme Board: Graduate Diploma in Information Technology, 08/10/99

Noted.

- k. Programme Board: Graduate Diploma/MSc in Computer Applications for Education, 12/10/99

Standing Committee noted the concerns expressed by the second-year class representative regarding the application of penalties for late registration of part-time students. In its wish to resolve the matter, it requested further information from the Programme Board on the difficulties experienced by part-time students and its views on the merits of a timely but flexible registration system (including web-based facilities).

**ACTION: REGISTRAR**

**5. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

**a. APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS: POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/5.1)**

Standing Committee approved the underlisted nominations for appointment as external examiners for the indicated postgraduate research students:

- i. Dr G T M Henehan, DIT

Student No. 96970111, PhD, School of Biotechnology

- ii. Professor G P McQuillan, University of Aberdeen

Student No. 95970789, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences

- iii. Professor D J Schiffrin, University of Liverpool

Student No. 95971068, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences

- iv. Professor R Hudson, University of Durham

Student No. 94970564, PhD, School of Communications

Subject to the submission of the summary CV and abstract, as stipulated on the *pro forma*.

- v. Professor D Vernon, NUI Maynooth

Student No. 96970081, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering

- vi. Professor G O'Sullivan, NUI Dublin

Student No. 97970301, MSc, School of Physical Sciences

Subject to the submission of the summary CV, as stipulated on the *pro forma*.

**6. DEROGATIONS FROM THE MARKS & STANDARDS**

**a. BNS & ASSOCIATED ACCESS MODULES**

(ref. AC-SC99/9/6.1)

Standing Committee approved the proposed derogation for the Bachelor of Nursing Studies degree and related Access Modules, effective from February 2000.

b. **GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(ref. AC-SC99/9/6.2)

- The Graduate Diploma in Information Technology Programme Board requested a derogation from Regulation 65a of the University's *Marks & Standards*<sup>1</sup> by proposing that

*a student who fails up to 2 modules at their first attempt would still be eligible for an honours classification if all modules are passed by the Autumn repeats of the student's first year. Deferral with honours for students who fail more than 2 modules or who defer over a longer period would still be available for students with medical or other problems.*

Standing Committee recommended that, in view of the significance of such a change to the regulations, the Programme Board should be requested to make an enhanced proposal to Academic Council, augmenting the justification which it provided in the current proposal with details on, for example, how the overall average marks for repeat students would be ranked with non-repeat students within the Pass, Credit and Distinction classifications. It was considerable advisable also to clarify in the proposal whether there would be any change in the application of Regulation 65b, namely that the examination module marks to be used to determine the average mark and the grade of classification were those obtained at the candidate's first attempt at the relevant modules, except where final results have been deferred in accordance with paragraphs 54 and 55 (of the regulations).

- Standing Committee approved the recommendation of the 27 July 1999 meeting of the Programme Board to replace module CA584: "Information Technology and Society" with CA596: "Information Systems Framework", effective for the 1999/2000 academic year.

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

(ref. AC-SC99/9/7)

In recognition of the complexity of articulating a coherent and consistent framework for the exit awards and credit transfer arrangements for the Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MSc programme in the Management and Applications of Information Technology in Accounting, Standing Committee requested the assistance of the Course Team in formulating a proposal which would address the issues of eligibility for exit awards and the recognition, in terms of credit transfer, for students wishing to return to the programme having earlier received one or both of the two exit awards.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a. **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.

**b. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/8.2)**

Standing Committee approved the nomination of Professor Cyril Burkley, University of Limerick, for appointment as the external examiner for the Diploma/BSc in Information Technology programme.

**c. REVISED FEES FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS: PROPOSAL**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/8.3)**

In response to a draft proposal for an increase in the fees for the different categories of external examiners for modules, taught programmes and postgraduate research students, members of Standing Committee agreed to submit proposals to the Chairperson for a simplified payment scheme, e.g. a flat rate for all taught programme duties.

**d. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NATURE OF I-MBA DISSERTATION ELEMENT**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/8.4)**

Standing Committee considered a request from Mr Malcolm Brady, Chairperson of the International MBA Programme Board, to replace the 10,000-word, 10-credit research-based dissertation with a 5,000-word, 10-credit work-placement report, a company case study or project, or an extended essay on a theoretical concept related to their work placement. As with the existing dissertation, the new requirement must also be completed in the student's non-native language. The Chairperson was requested to seek clarification as to whether or not such a significant change to the programme had been discussed and agreed by the 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.

**e. MARKS & STANDARDS: USE OF SPECIAL PROGRESSION REGULATION**

**(ref. AC-SC99/9/8.5)**

The Chairperson advised the meeting of his concerns that regulation 57e of the University's *Marks & Standards*<sup>2</sup> appeared to have been applied on almost a routine basis by certain Programme Boards. He had been advised that some 30 students in one Faculty and 20 in another had benefitted from this regulation and such numbers will give rise to serious problems, for example in the timetabling of examinations. Once he was in possession of

the precise figures, the Chairperson undertook to report back to Standing Committee with a full report.

- **Date of Next Meeting:**

|                           |
|---------------------------|
|                           |
| Thursday, 2 December 1999 |
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Signed:                      Date:  
Chairman

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**Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> 65a: An award at Credit or Distinction classification may be considered provided that the candidate has passed the final examination, in the case of full-time candidates, at the first attempt, without compensation or exemption, and in one sitting; or in the case of part-time candidates, by virtue of passing in each required Examination Module at the first attempt.

<sup>2</sup> 57e: In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, a student who fails a single module at one level may be allowed to progress to the next level of study; the student will be required to pass the module during the next level of study, in line with paragraph 41b, or successfully pass an alternative module agreed by the Programme Board. The performance in the next examination level, by a candidate who has been admitted under this procedure, will not be considered by the relevant Progression & Award Board until the candidate has completed the requirements of the previous examination level.