

# **ACADEMIC COUNCIL - STANDING COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

Thursday, 4 March 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 L MacMathúna, Dr K Monks, Mr D Ó Dúshláine, Prof E O'Halpin, Prof R O'Kennedy, Dr T Ryan.

**APOLOGIES:** Dr C Long, Prof B MacCraith.

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

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/1)**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of four matters to be considered under 'any other business'. On behalf of all the members, the Chairman welcomed Diarmuid Ó Dúshláine, as the newly elected student member of Standing Committee, to his first meeting.

### **2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 4 FEBRUARY 1999**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/2)**

The minutes of the meeting of 4 February 1999 were adopted and signed by the Chairperson.

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

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/3)**

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

**(ref. AC-SC99/M1/4)**

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/M1/5)**

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

**c. 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)**

The tabular summary of the 1998 reporting pattern of Programme Board minutes to Standing Committee, as reported by the Registrar, has been shared with Programme Board Chairpersons and their views have been sought as a matter of urgency.

**e. ROLES OF STANDING COMMITTEE & RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M1/3.5)**

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 has requested that the views of all taught postgraduate Programme Boards be sought regarding experiences and practices in this area.

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

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/4)**

a. BEng in Telecommunications Engineering, 12/03/97

Noted.

b. BEng in Electronic Engineering, 12/03/97

Noted.

c. BEng in Electronic Engineering, 11/06/97

Noted.

d. BEng in Telecommunications Engineering, 11/06/97

Noted.

e. BEng in Electronic Engineering, 11/03/98

Noted.

f. BEng in Telecommunications Engineering, 11/03/98

Noted.

g. Programme Board: BA in Journalism, 08/04/98

Noted.

h. MA in Journalism, 27/05/98

It was agreed that the Programme Board should be advised to use student ID numbers (rather than student names) when recording student decisions in the minutes.

i. Programme Board: GDiploma/MA in Translation Studies, 08/09/98

Noted.

j. Programme Board: BSc in Applied Computational Linguistics, 21/09/98

Noted.

k. BEng in Electronic Engineering & BEng in Telecommunications Engineering, 23/09/98

Noted.

l. Programme Board: BSc in Biotechnology, 21/10/98

Standing Committee approved the proposed new entry requirements for Mathematics from Grade C at Ordinary Level or Grade D at Higher Level to *Grade B at Ordinary Level or Grade D at Higher Level*. The revised entry requirements would be effective for the proposed Autumn 2001 intake to the programme.

- m. Programme Board: GDiploma/MSc in Biological Sciences, 21/10/98

The Programme Board will be advised that all proposed module changes (e.g. that proposed for module BE506) should be communicated to the Modular Officer on or before 23 March 1999.

- n. Programme Board: MBS in Accounting, 02/12/98

Noted.

- o. Programme Board: MA in Communication & Cultural Studies, 02/12/98

The Chairperson advised the meeting that removing module credit ratings from University publications, as suggested in the minutes, was not an option for the Programme Board.

- p. Programme Board: BA in Accounting & Finance, 04/02/99

The Chairperson agreed to seek clarification on the intentions of the Programme Board in its proposal to link a range of modules, especially where it relates to student choice of language modules.

**ACTION: REGISTRAR**

**5. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

**a. Appointment of Examiners: Taught Programmes**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/5.1)**

Standing Committee approved the underlisted nominations for appointment as the external examiners for the indicated taught programmes:

- i. Ms Anne Tucker, European Parliament

BA Applied Languages, BSc Applied Computational Linguistics,

Graduate Diploma/MA Translation Studies.

- ii. Professor Stephen G Mayhew, UCD

Graduate Diploma/MSc in Biological Sciences

**b. Appointment of Examiners: Postgraduate Research Students**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/5.2)**

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

- i. Dr C Richards, University of Cardiff

Student No. 95970657, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences

- ii. Dr Stephanie O'Donohue, University of Edinburgh

Student No. 96970308, MBS, DCUBS

*Standing Committee requested that proposers should take special care in Section C of the PGR4 form to ensure that cogent reasons for the appointment of external examiners are clearly articulated.*

**6. THE UNIVERSITY'S APPEALS PROCESS (ref. AC-SC99/M2/6)**

**a. SENIOR COUNSEL'S OPINION (REFERRAL FROM ARTHUR COX)**

Standing Committee noted the full text of the advice provided by Senior Counsel (Patrick Dillon-Moore) for Arthur Cox, in response to questions raised by the Registrar following a discussion on various aspects of the appeals process during the 9 December 1998 meeting of Academic Council.

**b. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE**

In providing a background to this item, the Registrar presented a report to Standing Committee which detailed the relevant extracts of the current Examination Regulations; a summary of the issues raised during the 9 December 1998 meeting of Academic Council; the major recommendations from the legal advisers; and a proposal for the revision of certain sections of the Examination Regulations. The following recommendations were agreed:

- Regarding the timeliness of submission of extenuating circumstances, paragraph 7.2 and 12.5(b) should be

amended to advise candidates that failure to notify the Progression & Award 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.

- Given that the screening of applicants is lawful and, if combined with appropriate counselling and management, is capable of greatly improving the appeals process to the advantage of all concerned, an "Appeals Officer" should be appointed to meet with and advise all appellants on the appeals process and on the validity or otherwise of their respective appeals.
- There is no need to formally amend the Examination Regulations to allow for a personal right of appearance before the Appeals Board. To meet exceptional cases, the Appeals Board has an inherent and adequate power to invite the appellant's attendance if needs be.
- It would be impractical to institute a formal process to facilitate access to examination scripts by students during a limited period after publication of examination results. The current informal practice of student advising should continue.
- Certain elements of the Examination Regulations should be revised and one serious defect in the application form and notes for guidance for appeals must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The changes relate to 7.2, 12.5(b), 12.6 with 12.7, and 12.12.
- The revised Examination Regulations (and appeals *pro forma*) which incorporate such changes should be cleared by the University's Solicitors as a matter of form.
- The revised Examination Regulations and Appeals *pro forma* should be published in hard-copy and on the University's web pages and distributed widely (a copy of the new regulations should be mailed to each student) as soon as possible thereafter.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/7)**

### **a. STUDENT ELECTION TO STANDING COMMITTEE**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/7.1)**

The meeting noted the election of An tUasal Diarmuid Ó Dúshláine as the new student member of Standing Committee of Academic Council.

### **b. APPOINTMENT OF AN ACCREDITATION BOARD**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/7.2)**

The Registrar advised the meeting that, owing to the unavailability of a number of members of the original Accreditation Board for the proposed programme of studies leading to the award of MA in Political Communication (due to meet on 12 March 1999), it was necessary for Standing Committee to approve the revised composition. The following external membership was approved:

- Professor Jay Blumler, Leeds;
  - Professor Tom Garvin, University College Dublin;
  - Professor Peter Golding, University of Loughborough.
- c. **SIGNING OF PGR4 FORM BY NOMINEE OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/7.3)**

Standing Committee noted the nomination of Dr David Sinclair by Professor Alan Smeaton, Head of the School of Computer Applications, as the appropriate member from the School to sign Section C (and, where relevant, Section D) of the PGR4 form for the appointment of External Examiners for postgraduate research students.

- d. **REQUEST FOR CONCESSIONARY EXAMINATION ATTEMPT**

**(ref. AC-SC99/M2/7.4)**

Standing Committee approved a request from the MBS in Accounting Programme Board to grant a student one further attempt in the Business Taxation examination. In noting that the recommendation from the Programme Board was based solely on compassionate grounds even though the student had already received a fourth attempt (also concessionary), Standing Committee recommended that the student should be advised that this will be the final attempt and that no further special consideration will be considered. It was further advised that the student be requested to indicate in writing his agreement to these terms.