

ACADEMIC COUNCIL - STANDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, 6 May 1999

at 9:00 am in Executive Meeting Room

PRESENT: Prof J Carroll (Chairperson), Mr B Kehoe, Dr L MacMathúna, Mr D Ó Dúshláine, Prof E O'Halpin, Prof R O'Kennedy, Dr T Ryan.

APOLOGIES: Mr J Dowling, Dr C Long, Prof B MacCraith, Dr B McMullin.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/1)

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of two matters to be considered under 'any other business'.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 1 APRIL 1999

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/2)

The minutes of the meeting of 1 April 1999 were adopted and signed by the Chairperson.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/3)

a. FACULTY/COMMITTEE/PROGRAMME BOARD MINUTES

(ref. AC-SC99/M3/4)

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/M3/5)

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

c. PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF FORMER DCU LECTURER AS EXTERNAL EXAMINER

(ref. AC-SC99/M3/7.2.2)

Standing Committee received a request from the Head of the School of Computer Applications to re-consider its 1 April 1999 decision to reject the nomination of a former member of staff from the School, as the proposed External Examiner for a Master's thesis submitted by a student from the School of Computer Applications. Standing Committee recommended that the decision should stand in the interests of the student and on the basis that the proposed external examiner has been, until very recently, a member of the University staff and could therefore be deemed not to be sufficiently independent for the purposes of external examination.

d. **SPECIAL CASE ADMISSIONS PRO FORMA**

(ref. AC-SC99/M1/3.2)

The Chairperson advised that the new *pro forma* was now available electronically and would be placed on the appropriate University web page.

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

(ref. AC-SC99/M1/3.5)

Standing Committee approved an amendment to the regulations for postgraduate degrees by research and submission of a thesis relating to application and registration procedures which would require a summary of all postgraduate research applications to be noted by Standing Committee of Academic Council (on a periodic basis) and would only refer to the Research Committee those applications where questions are raised regarding the adequacy and/or good standing of applicant qualifications etc. The Chairperson agreed to return to a future meeting with some proposals addressing the concerns by members of Standing Committee regarding other aspects of research student administration.

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

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/4)

- a. Programme Board: GDiploma/MSc in Computer Applications for Education, 03/02/98

Noted.

- b. Programme Board: BEng/MEng in Electronic Systems, 18/03/98

Noted.

- c. Programme Board: European BEng/MEng in Electronic Systems, 16/09/98

Noted.

- d. Nursing Steering Committee of Academic Council, 12/11/98

Noted.

- e. Programme Board: MSc in the Management & Applications of Information Technology in Accounting, 12/01/99

Noted.

- f. Programme Board: MSc in the Management of Operations, 14/01/99

In noting the minutes, Standing Committee refused a request from the Course Team to amend its minutes by removing a comment regarding Standing Committee's perception of the status of the programme at the time of its commencement.

- g. Programme Board: Certificate in Further Education & Training, 03/03/99

Noted.

- h. Programme Board: MSc in Education & Training Management, 03/03/99

Standing Committee sought clarification from the Programme Board regarding its comments in the minutes on the appeals process, namely ``Students must talk with the lecturer in the first instance and if they are not happy a case can be made''. Concerns were expressed regarding a possible implication that a submission to the Appeals Board may not be the sole responsibility of the student, as intended in the regulations.

- i. Programme Board: BA in Applied Languages, 03/03/99

Standing Committee requested the Chairperson to advise the Programme Board that a proposal by Japanese staff to raise the pass mark for certain language modules on the programme from 40% to 50% requires prior approval from Academic Council. In addition, Standing Committee expressed its concerns as to why such a proposal should be made and questioned whether other and perhaps more effective measures might be instituted in response to the worrying levels of failure rates in the second and fourth years of the programme.

- j. Programme Board: MBS in Accounting, 03/03/99

Noted.

- k. Programme Board: MSc in Taxation, 04/03/99

Noted.

- l. Programme Board: BA in Accounting & Finance, 09/03/99

Standing Committee offered its congratulations: (a) to the recipients of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers scholarships in 1999 and (b) to the Programme Board for its timely amendments of module CA333 including the introduction of the new title of *Electronic Commerce for Business*.

- m. Programme Board: BEng in Electronic Engineering & Telecommunication Engineering, 10/03/99

Noted.

- n. Programme Board: Professional Diploma in Accounting, 10/03/99

Noted.

- o. Programme Board: MSc in Science Communication, 10/03/99

Noted.

- p. Programme Board: MA in Communication & Cultural Studies, 10/03/99

Noted.

- q. Programme Board: MA in Film & Television Studies, 10/03/99

Noted.

- r. Programme Board: BA in Journalism, 10/03/99

Noted.

- s. Programme Board: MA in Journalism, 10/03/99

Noted.

- t. Programme Board: BA in Communication Studies, 10/03/99

Noted.

- u. Programme Board: BA in Journalism, 10/03/99

- Standing Committee expressed serious concerns regarding the timetable for year 2 whereby students were scheduled for 7 class contact hours on Thursdays with relatively fewer contact hours for the other days of the week. The Chairperson was requested to seek clarification from the Director of Education Services regarding any measures that are being proposed to ensure that the quality of the student learning experience is not degraded as a result of such unreasonable and unacceptable class scheduling. Standing Committee sought assurances that the timetable for the following academic year would be scrutinised and any unacceptable provision eliminated.
- Standing Committee requested clarification from the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee regarding the role of the Standing Committee of the Programme Board in dealing with "a serious problem of plagiarism in the Radio Journalism module" for BAJ2 students. Concerns were raised regarding the rationale of the Programme Board in proposing a "restoration of the marks if performance was deemed to be satisfactory in Year 3". Standing Committee especially sought advice from the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee on the Programme Board's comment that "Another matter which needs to be clarified is how the University Disciplinary Committee escaped responsibility in this matter".

- v. Programme Board: BSc in Analytical Science, BSc in Pure & Applied Chemistry, BSc in Chemistry with French/German, MSc in Instrumental Analysis, 10/03/99

Noted.

- w. Programme Board: BSc in Applied Computational Linguistics, 15/03/99

Noted.

- x. Programme Board: BSc in Biotechnology, 18/03/99

Noted.

- y. Programme Board: Graduate Diploma/MA in Translation Studies, 19/03/99

Noted.

- z. Programme Board: MBS in Marketing, MBS in Strategic International Marketing, 24/03/99

Standing Committee noted the decision of the MBS in Strategic International Marketing Programme Board to introduce an optional language element for the next intake of the programme.

- aa. Programme Board: BSc in Applied Physics, BSc in Physics with a Language, 24/03/99

Noted.

- bb. Programme Board: MSc in Science Communication, 24/03/99

Noted.

ACTION: REGISTRAR

5. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

a. Appointment of Examiners: Taught Programmes

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/5.1)

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

- i. Professor D Irvine, NUI Galway
Certificate/Diploma in Further Education & Training
- ii. Professor P Ribbons, Birmingham University
Graduate Diploma/MSc in Education & Training Management
- iii. Professor E Steiner, University of the Saarland
Graduate Diploma/MA in Translation Studies

b. Appointment of Examiners: Postgraduate Research Students

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/5.2)

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

- . Professor K Bartle, University of Leeds

Student No. 95970681, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences

- i. Dr K Whelan, Director, Keough Notre Dame Centre

Student No. 93701535, PhD, School of Communications

- ii. Dr K Whelan, Director, Keough Notre Dame Centre

Student No. 96970910, PhD, School of Communications

- iii. Professor W Binchy, TCD

Student No. 93700636, PhD, DCUBS

- iv. Dr A Hegarty, University of Limerick

Student No. 97970751, MSc, School of Mathematical Sciences

In the context of its current deliberations on the appointment of research external examiners, Standing Committee requested that the Research Committee also consider the appropriateness of appointing the same external examiner to two or more PhD theses in the same period of time.

6. EXAMINATION REGULATIONS - SCREENING PROCESS FOR APPEALS

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/6)

The Chairperson requested the views of Standing Committee in specifying the date by which decisions to reject manifestly unfounded appeals shall be notified to candidates, i.e. to specify 'N' in the current draft version of Regulation 12.11(b):

The Appeals Board shall ensure that all appeals shall be screened to ensure that any appeal which is manifestly unfounded and discloses no valid ground of appeal under section 12.6 shall be rejected forthwith. Decisions to reject manifestly unfounded appeals shall be notified to candidates by the Secretary to Academic Council within N days of the relevant closing date for the submission of appeals.

It was agreed that 2 working days would be an appropriate period of time in this situation.

7. REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE DEGREES BY RESEARCH & THESIS

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/7)

The Chairperson reminded the meeting of the amendment to the regulations agreed at the 1 April 1999 meeting of Standing Committee of Academic Council which would require a summary of all postgraduate research applications to be noted by Standing Committee (on a periodic basis) and would only refer to the Research Committee those applications where questions are raised regarding the adequacy and/or good standing of applicant qualifications etc.

Prior to submitting a revised document to Academic Council for formal approval, Standing Committee noted the amended regulations, including those relating to the role of Faculty Research Boards in dealing with annual progress reports.

8. YEAR 1 CHANGES FOR THE BSc IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS 1999/2000

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/8)

- Standing Committee was requested to approve a proposal to modify the academic structure of the first year of the BSc in Computer Applications programme for the academic year 1999/2000. The School of Computer Applications is currently reviewing the Computer Applications degree programme to reflect changes in the discipline of computing, employment opportunities etc and to allow for a significant increase in the number of students taking computing degrees.
- In due course, the School of Computer applications will be bringing forward proposals to offer three degree programmes with a common first year and a significant number of common courses in subsequent years. These programmes will cover three main areas: Computer Science, Software Engineering and Information Systems.
- The common first year for the new degree programmes will consist of three core modules (mathematics, computer programming and computer architecture) and as a wide a range as possible of optional subjects. The optional modules would include (but not be limited to) subjects such as natural languages, physics, electronics, accounting, business and communication skills.
- In planning for the increase in student numbers for the academic year 1999/2000, the School is anxious to allow the 1999/2000 intake to move to the second year of the new structure for the academic year 2000/2001. Originally, it had hoped that this transition would not have required any changes to first-year courses during the academic year 1999/2000. However, it now appears that the transition will only be possible if there are some changes in the academic year 1999/2000. Therefore, the School of Computer Applications sought permission to make changes to a number of first year courses in the academic year 1999/2000.
- With the current Computer Applications degree programme, all first year modules are compulsory, but the overall structure is very similar to that proposed for the additional intake. Therefore, for the academic year 1999/2000 it is proposed to teach the core modules (mathematics, computer programming and computer architecture) using new syllabi but not offer options.

Standing Committee approved the School's proposal to modify the academic structure of the first year of the BSc in Computer Applications programme for the academic year 1999/2000.

9. MSc IN THE MANAGEMENT & APPLICATIONS OF IT IN ACCOUNTING

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/9)

Standing Committee was requested to approve structural changes to the Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MSc in the Management and Applications of IT in Accounting programme provided by the National Distance Education Centre. Although the programme content remains essentially the same, the Course Team is seeking to present the material in a more streamlined and logical format.

Standing Committee approved the following changes:

- The amalgamation of the first three modules of the current Graduate Certificate programme into a non-credited Induction Module. The fourth module on Advanced PC Applications in Accounting, which is a practical module only, with no theory and no examination, will be incorporated into the

assignments of the revised programme. The remaining two modules of the current Graduate Certificate Programme and the six modules of the Graduate Diploma programme will be re-organised and enhanced into nine modules, with a new module on research methodology and a Case Study.

- An additional requirement for entry to the programme:

Applicants must have a basic knowledge of Hardware and Software, as the content of the course material will assume a knowledge in these areas. If applicants feel they do not have sufficient knowledge in these areas, a module covering the relevant material may be purchased from the National Distance Education Centre.

- A reduction in the standard required for progression from the taught stage of the programme to the dissertation stage from 60% to 55%.
- Allowing students four years of registration to complete the programme.
- A change in the weighting between the assignment and examination from 30/70 to 50/50.

However, Standing Committee sought clarification on the mechanisms by which the Graduate Certificate would be awarded and, in particular, a justification as to how the denomination of "Management and Applications of IT in Accounting" could be used irrespective of the combination of modules (earning a total of 30 credits) which are successfully completed by individual students.

10. ACADEMIC STRUCTURES 1999/2000

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/10)

Standing Committee noted a tabular summary of the incremental changes to existing modules and programmes for the 1999/2000 academic year which was prepared by the Modular Officer. In a general discussion on the mechanisms by which module and programme changes are approved, namely through noting Programme Board minutes and the end-of-March submission by Programme Boards, it was agreed that the Registrar's Office would tabulate the changes approved through Programme Board minutes on an ongoing basis during the year and that these would then be incorporated into the the end-of-March submission to Standing Committee to ensure, as far as possible, that this latter presentation represented the totality of module and programme changes for the academic year in question.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/11)

- **REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VALIDATION COMMITTEE**

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/11.1)

Standing Committee of Academic Council approved a report from Validation Committee for the proposed **BSc in Science Education** from the Schools of Chemical Sciences, Education Studies and Physical Sciences and, in particular, the appointment of an Accreditation Board with membership as indicated below:

Accreditation Board Member	School/Unit/Institution
Professor Alan Smeaton, Chairperson	Dublin City University

Professor Patrick Bailey	Heriot-Watt University
Dr Ray Greer	Queen's University Belfast
Professor Declan Irvine	NUI Galway

with 1 from the following 2:

Dr Carl O'Dálaigh	Department of Education & Science
Mr George Porter	Department of Education & Science

and

Professor John Carroll	Registrar, Dublin City University
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- **PROGRESSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR IBL/IML2 JAPANESE STUDENTS**

(ref. AC-SC99/M4/11.2)

In presenting a summary of the special progression regulations for those IBL/IML2 students taking Japanese:

Students of Japanese who fail IML2 or IBL2 examinations in Autumn must, as is the case with all students, repeat year two (i.e. any student failing both the semester and Autumn examinations cannot graduate within the minimum four-year period). However, given the importance of honouring commitments to Japanese companies which are promised students on placement, a student who fails repeat examinations in Autumn will be permitted to go to Japan for their IML3 or IBL3 studies. Such students WILL NOT be permitted to sit repeat examinations in the summer or autumn of their third year. Following completion of IML3 or IBL3 in Japan, they will be required to re-register for IML2 or IBL2 and pass the outstanding subject(s) in order to progress to IML4 or IBL4.

Standing Committee considered it unfair that students who were available to re-sit failed IBL2 or IML2 modules at the Autumn sitting immediately following the Japanese placement were prevented to do so on the basis that they should not be allowed to complete the programme within 4 calendar years. It therefore requested that the Programme Board revise its progression arrangements accordingly.

Standing Committee further requested the Programme Board to re-consider its attendance regulation whereby students of IBL Japanese and IML Japanese are required to attend at least 80% of their classes in order to be eligible to sit for their end-of-semester module examinations. It requested the Programme Board to ascertain the reasons why students might not be attending as well as expected, especially in the light of concerns raised in Programme Board minutes regarding high failure rates in certain years of the programme. Standing Committee had also sought an evaluation of the impact of changing the pass mark from 40% to 50% in certain language modules.