

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 4 March 2009

2.00-3.45 p.m. in A204

- Present:** Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin, Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Jim Dowling, Ms Susan Hurley, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Kay MacKeogh, Professor Bernard Pierce, Dr Mary Shine Thompson, Professor Malcolm Smyth
- Apologies:** Mr Gordon McConnell
- In attendance:** Dr Heinz Lechleiter (for Item 5)

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one submission under Item 8 and a decision to defer detailed discussion of Item 6 to the 6 May 2009 meeting of the Education Committee.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 4 February 2009

The minutes were confirmed, subject to replacement, in line 5 of Item 5.3, of the reference to 'recommendations on the evaluation of teaching quality' by a reference to 'recommendations on the evaluation of some aspects of teaching quality', and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that it had been reported to the 11 February 2009 meeting of Academic Council that revisions to an accreditation proposal had been completed. (Item 3.1)
- 3.2** Noted that a proposed policy on credit transfer from other institutions would be submitted to the 2 April 2009 meeting of the University Standards Committee by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and the Academic Director of the Academic Framework for Innovation. Noted that it had yet to be established whether or not the issue of inter-institutional credit transfer was on the agenda for the March 2009 meeting of the IUA Registrars' Group. (Items 3.2 and 4.3)
- 3.3** Noted that the response sent to the HEA on the proposals for changing the RGAM weightings for students on work placement had been circulated to the members of the EC. (Item 3.3)
- 3.4** Noted that the validation proposal for a BSc (Hons) in Aviation Management had been approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 11 February 2009 and that preparations for accreditation were in train. (Item 3.4)
- 3.5** Noted that the procedures relating to the operation of the Validation Subgroup are being monitored with a view to establishing the extent to which they are fit for purpose and to making changes if necessary. (Item 3.5)
- 3.6** Noted that Ms McDermott had made a presentation to the Heads' meeting of 26 February 2009 on the new validation arrangements, including the operation of the Validation Subgroup. (Item 3.5)
- 3.7** Noted that the Enhancement of Learning strategic plan would be on the agenda of the 1 April 2009 meeting of the EC. (Item 3.6)
- 3.8** Noted that the Ms Aisling McKenna, the Institutional Research and Analysis Officer, had made available to the EC members documentation outlining numbers of students registered for each module together with module weightings and that Dr MacKeogh had undertaken to conduct an analysis of this information with a view to making a submission to the 6 May 2009 meeting of the EC on issues emerging from the information including the correlation between class size and pass rates. (Item 3.7)
- 3.9** Agreed that a proposal on the procedures for approving stand-alone modules, and changes to programmes that are substantial but none the less fall short of necessitating revalidation and/or reaccreditation, would be submitted for

consideration to the EC and thence to Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees. Noted that the possibility of involving external examiners in these procedures should be considered in the preparation of the proposal. (Item 6.1)

- 3.10** Noted that the revised membership and terms of reference of the EC are now available on line. (Item 6.2)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Outline consideration of the following validation proposals:

4.1 BSc in Counselling and Psychotherapy (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

Agreed that this proposal should not be referred to the Validation Subgroup for further discussion at this time and that, instead, the proposers should be requested to submit a revised proposal. The issues to be addressed in the revised proposal include: the importance of ensuring that a proposed partner organisation is of appropriate academic standing (noted, in this connection, that a university policy on due diligence in this regard is being prepared – see Item 7 below); the importance of dialogue between the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (School of Education Studies) and the Faculty of Science and Health (School of Nursing) so as to ensure coherence and optimum use of resources and expertise across the university's programmes in the field of counselling and psychotherapy; the relationship between the proposed programme and the seven-year training framework agreed by the European Association for Psychotherapy; the need to clarify in documentation whether the intention is to seek approval for university accreditation for the entire three-year programme or the final (bridging) year; some clarification with regard to the financial details and the teaching resources to be provided by the university (noted, in this connection, that the financial model now in use in validation proposals might benefit from some revision – see Item 4.3.2 below); the importance of articulating programme learning outcomes.

4.2 BA in Theology and Lifelong Education (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences/Mater Dei Institute of Education)

Agreed that this proposal should be recommended for further development towards accreditation, subject to the recommendation which is included in the validation report which accompanies these minutes, and that it would not be necessary to refer it to the Validation Subgroup for detailed discussion.

4.3 BSc in Psychology (Faculty of Science and Health & others; St Patrick's College)

4.3.1 Agreed (subject to confirmation from St Patrick's College that their Academic Council approves the proposal in principle) to refer this proposal to the Validation Subgroup for further discussion. Agreed that the proposal is likely to be of strategic importance and to encourage inter-Faculty and inter-institutional collaboration, notwithstanding the logistical difficulties of implementing it and the challenge posed by meeting all the accreditation requirements of the Psychological Society of Ireland. The intention to involve Oscail in ongoing dialogue with respect to the proposal was noted with approval and strongly encouraged. Agreed that the issues to be raised with the programme proposers should include: the need to confirm the appropriateness of the inclusion of one of the proposed members of the Accreditation Board; the viability of some of the option modules and the extent to which this might impinge on their availability to students and, consequently, on the students' ability to pursue their chosen area of speciality; the extent to which the proposed programme would be likely to be financially advantageous both for the School of Nursing and for the other areas involved in its delivery.

4.3.2 Agreed that it might be necessary to re-examine the new financial model in use for validation proposals to ensure that it enables transparent information about SCRs to be provided and encourages cross-Faculty collaboration. Agreed that Ms McDermott would mention this matter to Mr Eamonn Cuggy, Finance Officer, and would also seek the view of the Faculty Manager in the Faculty of Science and Health. Noted that arrangements are to be made for Mr Cuggy to make a presentation on the model to Executive.

4.4 (Revised) BSc in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing (Faculty of Science and Health)

Noted that, as agreed by the EC at its meeting of 4 February 2009, this proposal is due for discussion at the meeting of the Validation Subgroup on 10 March 2009. Agreed that the issues to be raised with the programme proposers should include: the broad strategic reasons for undertaking a relationship with Stenberg College, British Columbia; the understanding that has been reached to date with relevant staff members in Stenberg College about the university's proprietary rights in respect of teaching and related materials pertaining to the proposed programme; the qualifications of these staff members (and the definition of the term 'Associate Dean' in this context); the cost associated with the expenditure of DCU staff time; the possibility that institutions other than Stenberg College might wish to make the proposed programme available to their graduates; the extent to which it is intended to teach and critique a range of philosophical approaches.

5. Proposals from Faculties on programme review

5.1 The availability of the proposals was welcomed. The following issues arose in discussion:

- considerable review of programmes already takes place, but it is not always formalised and made visible to the optimum extent
- programme review should become embedded into routine practices with respect to programmes, and be seen to be so; external enquirers should have ready access to the procedures
- programme review should be as simple as possible to operate
- programme review is a good example of an issue which can be used to create synergy between, on the one hand, Faculty-specific and, on the other, university-wide quality assurance/promotion policies and procedures
- consideration might be given to referring to 'reporting on' programmes rather than 'reviewing'
- consideration should be given to examining current good practice nationally and internationally; in this connection, Dr Lechleiter is to make available to the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education relevant documentation from University College Dublin and the University of Warwick
- the relationship with other ongoing issues, such as the piloting of the proposed new report form for external examiners, was noted
- the issue of rights of access to student data will be discussed by Executive at its meeting of 10 March 2009
- the existence of definitions of 'programme' and 'award', and the distinctions to be made between them, were noted as useful and necessary, in view of the fact that many staff members may not yet be fully aware of these distinctions; consideration may need to be given to using different vocabulary to explain the distinctions so as to provide further clarity; noted that this kind of definition issue is germane to the ongoing discussions on the Academic Framework for Innovation, that an integrated AFI schema, including a revised implementation timeframe, is to be submitted to the 8 April 2009 meeting of Academic Council and that it would be desirable for this also to be submitted to the EC at its 1 April 2009 meeting.

5.2 The following were agreed:

- a member of Oscail is to be invited to participate in the further discussions on programme review
- the EC members are to be invited to submit any further comments they may have to Dr Blin cc Ms McDermott
- all Faculties are to be requested to give further consideration to programme review

- contact is to be maintained with the working group of the EC which met twice in January to discuss programme review, as well as with Dr Lechleiter in his capacity as Director of Quality Promotion
- revised proposals on programme review, including proposals for moving from the current to the desired future procedures, are to be made available to the EC for its meeting of 6 May 2009.

6. Report on teaching quality evaluation

- 6.1** As noted in Item 1 above, it was agreed to defer detailed discussion of this issue to the 6 May 2009 meeting of the EC. This is to facilitate the development of a pilot project on teaching quality evaluation in DCU Business School and the incorporation of the outcomes of this into a revised report. Noted that Dr MacKeogh is to hold a meeting with Dr Anne Sinnott, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Business School, Ms Jean Hughes, Director of SIF Programmes and Ms Morag Munro, Acting Director of the Learning Innovation Unit, on 5 March 2009 to further the preparations for this pilot project and that the proposed procedures would be submitted electronically to the EC, with a request for approval, before being implemented. Noted that student feedback was one element of teaching quality evaluation but that there was also a range of other elements.

7. Draft policy on due diligence

Agreed that the members of the EC would give further consideration to this draft policy and would provide comments to the Chair and Ms McDermott with a view to having a revised policy submitted to the 1 April 2009 meeting of the EC. Noted that the references to Memoranda of Understanding should make it clear that such memoranda are drawn up between the university and the external organisation rather than between a particular School/Faculty/Centre and the external organisation.

8. Any other business

The Chair noted that the HEA, via the IUA, had requested a response from the university to the Government initiative on upskilling, and she thanked the Deans for the contributions that had been made by the Faculties to preparing the material which will be incorporated into this response. She emphasised the importance of making the university's commitment to flexible programme provision clear while also bearing in mind the resource issues associated with such provision. The Institutional Research and Analysis Officer is surveying current final-year student

intentions with regard to further study, and this exercise will be mentioned in the response. In view of the importance of ensuring that there is a transparent and structured procedure for evaluating prior experiential learning, it may be necessary to review and update, at the 6 May 2009 meeting of the EC, recommendations on APEL which were approved by Academic Council in February 2003.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 1 April 2009, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____