<div align="center">

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 4 April 2012

2.00-4.30 p.m. in A204

</div>

Present:	Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Professor John Costello, Mr Jim Dowling, Dr John Doyle, Dr Sarah Ingle, Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Lisa Looney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh
Apologies:	Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Alan Harvey, Mr Martin Molony, Dr Anne Sinnott, Dr Sheelagh Wickham
In attendance:	Ms Aisling McKenna

The Chair welcomed Mr Billy Kelly to membership of the Education Committee in his new capacity as Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning and thanked him, on behalf of the EC, for his very considerable contribution in his previous capacity as representative of the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education. She noted that the new representative of the Associate Deans would be Dr Sheelagh Wickham, though Dr Wickham was unavoidably absent owing to a long-standing prior commitment.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1.   Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the deferral of Item 6 to the 2 May 2012 meeting of the Education Committee and the withdrawal of Item 8.

2.   **Minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2012**

          The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3.   **Matters arising from the minutes**

3.1   It was <u>noted</u> that a final meeting involving Dr Sinnott, Mr Kelly, Ms McDermott
          and members of Oscail staff would take place on 12 April 2012 to discuss issues
          relating to the proposed undergraduate programme in Procurement and Supply
          Management. (Item 3.2)

3.2   It was <u>noted</u> that work is in progress to ascertain both the proportion of deferred
          students who subsequently take up their places and the views of students who
          withdrew from the University some years ago. (Item 3.3)

3.3   It was <u>noted</u> that information and guidelines for Programme Chairs will shortly
          be updated and made available. (Item 3.4)

3.4   It was <u>noted</u> that the needs of staff in respect of Business Intelligence are being
          ascertained by Heads of School. (Item 3.5)

3.5   It was <u>noted</u> that the work in respect of DCU Online, including the ascertaining of
          the resources that would be available to support it, is ongoing.   (Item 3.6)

3.6   It was <u>noted</u> that a report on the possibilities for wider use of the METIS system
          would be made to the EC at the earliest opportunity. (Item 3.7)

3.7   A template for mapping Graduate Attributes on to learning outcomes for proposed
          undergraduate programmes has been included in the regulations and guidelines for
          validation proposals and accreditation proposals. Employer feedback on the
          Attributes will be analysed in detail in due course. Appropriate references to the
          Attributes will be made at Spring Programme Boards and in the course of annual
          reviews of programmes. (Item 3.8)

3.8   With respect to the proposed national student survey, the Chair <u>noted</u> that the first
          phase of work had largely been completed, though considerable further work would
          need to be undertaken in Summer 2012 with a view to rolling out a sectoral survey
          on a pilot basis in September/October 2012 followed by a full survey in Spring
          2013. Dr Jean Hughes will continue to represent DCU on the sectoral working
          group, and Mr Billy Kelly will join the group as an additional representative. The

sensitive nature of the issue is acknowledged, as is the fact that the established UK survey, with its marked consumerist focus, is proving significantly problematic and this has led to a need for careful consideration of the design, focus and content of an Irish Student Survey. The possibility of designing a completely new questionnaire or of developing a type of hybrid using element of the NSS (UK) and aspects of other systems, such as the NESSE, the US questionnaire with its emphasis on student engagement as well as student satisfaction is still being explored. Other questions that remain to be resolved include the ownership of the Irish national survey, how it will be used and the extent to which it will be possible to modify it over time. (Item 3.10)

3.9   It was <u>noted</u> that the working group on feedback to students would make recommendations to the University Standards Committee meeting of 12 April 2012 and that further work to situate feedback within the context of assessment policies and strategies would be undertaken as soon as possible after that (this may be informed by data on assessment which have been produced by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland). A LIU seminar on assessment, to take place on 18 April, may be found useful by EC members. (Item 3.11)

3.10   It was <u>noted</u> that the management of independent modules would need to be monitored on an ongoing basis. (Item 3.12)

3.11   It was <u>noted</u> that a recommendation about the approach to the next cycle of quality reviews would be made to Executive by the Quality Promotion Committee. (Item 3.14)

3.12   It was <u>noted</u> that the Working Group on Non-major Awards was in the process of considering an issue relating to the In-service Certificate and Diploma in St Patrick's College with a view to arriving at a satisfactory outcome. (Item 3.16)

3.13   On the issue of QuEST, the Chair <u>noted</u> that testing was nearing completion, with roll-out planned for the week beginning 9 April 2012. The Students' Union had undertaken to ask class representatives and Faculty convenors to encourage students to engage with the survey process. The possibility of providing incentives, such as a draw for prizes, was raised, though it was <u>agreed</u> that the most important consideration should be the maintenance of the confidentiality of the information provided by students. The possibility exists that QuEST may have an adverse effect on existing surveys carried out by academic staff, and it was <u>agreed</u> that this issue would need to be monitored carefully and that the views of staff who regularly survey their students would need to be obtained. The Chair is to e-mail all staff to notify them of the implementation of the QuEST pilot (with respect to all Semester 2 modules except those not amenable to survey, e.g. off-campus placements). (Item 3.17)

3.14   It was <u>noted</u> that Dr Bohan is currently working on a specification for an e-portfolio system on the basis of discussions at EC meetings and the working group. Once this has been completed, a provider will be sought. (Item 3.18)

3.15   It was <u>noted</u> that work was ongoing to ensure that statistics for periodic programme review all relate to the same academic year, to the extent possible. (Item 4.2)

3.16   With regard to the 2011/2012 survey of student experience, Ms McKenna made a presentation in which she <u>noted</u> that the response rate had been quite good at 26%. The survey had included consideration of financial and socialisation issues. Results indicated, *inter alia*:

- there is a lack of preparedness for study styles in higher education (to this end, the Careers Office is preparing a new study skills workshop)
- the fact of having a sibling already in higher education impacts on the financial pressure experienced by students
- funding for students on postgraduate programmes is a growing concern (in this connection, it was <u>noted</u> that the Finance Office is giving consideration to methods of providing support for students and that sectoral approaches are also under discussion)
- applicants to undergraduate programmes still tend to rely on paper prospectuses, though by the time they are completing their programmes and in a position to consider postgraduate study they prefer online information; the same trend is apparent in the use of social media such as Twitter, which is relatively low in the case of applicants for undergraduate programmes and relatively high in the case of applicants for postgraduate study
- with regard to information for applicants, more generally, traditional advertisements are of very limited appeal though they continue to attract the attention of advisors such as parents
- the answers to the question 'What other things do you want to achieve during your studies?' are of significant relevance to the ongoing work on the Graduate Attributes.

The Chair thanked Ms McKenna for her presentation and requested that feedback be submitted to her by EC members with a view, if considered necessary and appropriate, to having a follow-up item on the agenda of the EC meeting of 2 May 2012. It was <u>noted</u> that detailed analysis of the results would be sent to Heads of School and a presentation made to the Heads' and Deans' meeting of 26 April 2012. (Item 5.1)

3.17   With regard to the issue of students having to withdraw from the University as distinct from withdrawing by choice, Ms McKenna <u>noted</u> that few students were in this position but that she wished to conduct further work on the issue and would report further to the EC as soon as possible. (Item 5.2)

3.18   With regard to students deemed at risk, Ms McKenna <u>noted</u> connections between the relevant factors identified by the University and student performance. It was <u>noted</u> that, notwithstanding the existence of research to demonstrate that achievement in English and, particularly, in Mathematics at second level is a good predictor of success in higher education, proposals to raise minimum and/or programme entry requirements in respect of these and/or other subjects would be likely to prove unpopular with school-leavers and their advisors. With respect to Mathematics, Ms McKenna undertook to analyse the performance of students in non-quantitative disciplines separately so as to see if, in the DCU context, prior performance in Mathematics is as useful a predictor of higher education performance for these students as it is for the student body generally; it was <u>noted</u> that there is a sense that it in fact is, but that the output of the work would be useful in the context of overall current discussions about entry requirements. The problems encountered by students repeating years, particularly in terms of social isolation, were <u>noted</u>. Per-Faculty data for 2011/12 have been made available to Deans. (Items 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5)

3.19   It was <u>noted</u> that discussions are under way in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing with a view to addressing the issues raised in respect of the validation proposal submitted for the proposed BSc in Problem-solving and Software Development. These issues were discussed by the Validation Subgroup at its meeting of 13 March 2012. (Item 7.1.2)

3.20   It was <u>noted</u> that the Validation Subgroup had, at its meeting of 13 March 2012, recommended that the proposed Major/Minor Master's programme, and associated pilot pathway, be submitted for formal approval by the EC at its meeting of 2 May 2012. (Item 7.2.2)

3.21   It was <u>noted</u> that the proposed MSc in Sustainable Energy Finance was proceeding to accreditation (on 10 May 2012). (Item 7.3)

3.22   It was <u>noted</u> that discussions are under way in the Faculty of Science and Health with a view to addressing the issues raised in respect of the validation proposal submitted for the proposed MSc in Strength and Conditioning for Athletic Performance and MSc in Sports Medicine (Injury and Rehabilitation). These issues were discussed by the Validation Subgroup at its meeting of 13 March 2012. (Items 7.4.2 and 7.5.2)

3.23   It was <u>noted</u> that an application for Erasmus Mundus funding would be made in respect of the proposed Joint European Master's programme in Advanced Telecommunications. (Item 7.6.1)

3.24   On the issue of joint and double awards, Dr Looney <u>noted</u> that very considerable and detailed discussion needs to be undertaken, including discussion about definitions. Other institutions vary in their approach, with some having introduced frameworks for managing such awards and one having decided not to countenance them. The general sectoral preference is for joint as distinct from double awards, notwithstanding the considerable resources required to manage these. The EACEA (the Educational, Cultural and Audiovisual Executive Agency which is responsible for the management of some parts of the European Union's programmes in relevant fields) has very clear definitions.   It will be important for DCU to determine its own stance on the issue, with quality assurance considerations factored in, the better to participate fruitfully in the sectoral discussion. (Item 7.6.2)

3.25   It was <u>noted</u> that endorsement by an external expert of proposals on programmes in the School of Communications had been sought. (Item 10)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4.   Periodic programme review: recommendations on oversight

4.1   It was <u>noted</u> that a number of technical issues with respect to Business Intelligence were in the course of being addressed and that funding obtained from the Quality Promotion Office on foot of a recent application under the QuID initiative would be used to enhance BI functionality with respect to the population of the annual programme report template with relevant statistics. A demonstration of this enhanced functionality is to be made to the EC at its September 2012 meeting. The Chair, on behalf of the EC, expressed appreciation to Dr Ingle and Ms McKenna for their work on this issue.

4.2   A discussion took place about the processes by which external examiner input could be factored into periodic programme review. It was <u>agreed</u> that Dr Ingle would formulate a question for the external examiner report form designed to elicit comment about the extent to which a programme might be at risk in terms of standards (not at all, somewhat, definitely); the need to liaise with relevant colleagues in Registry and ISS was <u>noted</u> in this context, as was the fact that this proposed question would most likely be used in 2012/13 rather than in 2011/12. The question arises as to whether, when module as distinct from programme external examiners are used, the potential level of fragmentation of response might lead to a risk that not all of the important issues relating to a programme would be captured. It was <u>agreed</u> that Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees should be in a position to devise mechanisms at local level to prevent this from happening.

4.3   It was <u>agreed</u> that, while periodic programme review is the responsibility of Schools and Faculties and the ownership of the process remains with them, it will be very important for the EC to be satisfied that there is an agreed policy and process and to get an annual update indicating appropriate activity in terms of periodic programme review per Faculty. The EC will in turn report to Academic Council that such activity has taken place, and reference to the activity will also form part of the annual reports by the Director of Quality Promotion to Academic Council and Governing Authority.

4.4   It was <u>noted</u> that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, together with Dr Ingle and Mr Seamus Fox, Director of Oscail, are currently modelling the operationalisation of the proposed policy on periodic programme review and that final proposals will be submitted to the EC meeting of 2 May 2012 and thence to the meeting of Academic Council of 6 June 2012. A pilot review process will be carried out in all Faculties in 2012/13.

5.   Teaching and Learning strategy

5.1   The Chair outlined the background to current University strategic planning, <u>noting</u> that it was based on the four key principles articulated by the President, i.e. transformation, engagement, translation and enterprise, with the Teaching and Learning strategy relating most particularly to the transformation principle though it will need to demonstrate clear links with the other principles also. The intention is that the University strategic plan will be articulated in terms of action-based statements, each with an associated key performance indicator against which performance will be benchmarked on a regular basis. All elements of the strategic plan will be in place by the beginning of the academic year 2012/13.

5.2   With regard to the draft guiding principles for the Teaching and Learning strategy, the following points were made:
- detailed consideration will need to be given to the target audiences for the strategy document, and it may be helpful to have a more detailed and specific document for internal university use with a higher-level document for external stakeholders (and the needs of the latter need to be taken into account in terms of avoiding specific terms with which they might not be familiar)
- it will be important to find a balance between statements that might indicate that there is no need for change because the current situation is satisfactory and statements that might indicate that nothing is currently satisfactory; in this connection, the use of the word 'shall' might be helpful
- there is potentially some overlap between the top-line statements under each principle, and it might be helpful to attempt to articulate each statement by means of one single word with a view to eliminating such overlap

- the principles could helpfully be articulated through the definition of mission, vision, values and strategy
- it will be important for the document to be as short and succinct as is appropriate with its function.

5.3   The Chair requested the members of the EC to submit further comments to her by 10 April 2012, after which she would circulate a revised document with a request for comments on it, from Faculty Management Board/Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee members, by the end of April, in time for the 2 May 2012 meeting of the EC.

6.   Recommendations on the role of the Research Ethics Committee vis-à-vis undergraduate research

Deferred to the 2 May 2012 meeting of the EC.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

7.   Proposal on exit awards: Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma

Approved.

8.   Proposed change to the title of the BA in European Business

Approved. Noted that any and all students affected by the change would need to be informed of it in writing.

9.   MSc in Finance and Capital Markets: proposed restructuring, title change and introduction of pathways

Approved.

10.   Proposed creation of umbrella programme: MSc in Management

Approved.

11.   Proposal to restructure and retitle the MSc in Software Engineering

Approved. Noted that any and all students affected by the change would need to be informed of it in writing.

12.   Updated terms of reference of the Education Committee

Approved.

13.   Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

> **Wednesday 2 May 2012, 2.00 p.m. in A204**

Signed: _____   Date: _____
           Chair