

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

Wednesday 6 April 2011

2.00-3.40 p.m. in A204

- Present:** Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Jim Dowling, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Dr Sarah Ingle, Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Richard O’Kennedy, Professor Bernard Pierce
- Apologies:** Dr Jean Hughes, Mr Martin Molony, Professor Malcolm Smyth
- In attendance:** Ms Aisling McKenna

#### **SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of two submissions under Item 5.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 2 March 2011**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to the substitution of the reference to ‘School of Chemical Sciences’ by a reference to ‘School of Physical Sciences’ in Item 3.4. Noted that the same change needed to be made to Item 3.4 of the minutes of the 2 February 2011 meeting.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes**

- 3.1** Noted that a part-time staffing resource had been identified to administer the system for dealing with applications for admission under the Recognition of Prior Learning policy (approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 9 February 2011) and that timescales and deadlines would shortly be agreed with a view to having the system ready to use by September 2011 for admission in 2012/13. (Item 3.1)

- 3.2** Noted that contact staff members in each Faculty and in Oscail had been identified to work with Ms McKenna on the management of the programme-level student survey 2010/11, and that the final completion date for the survey had been agreed as being 12 April 2011. Noted that, while there are only two institutional-level surveys (this one and the first-year student experience survey), a range of other surveys is conducted locally, and agreed that it would be important to ensure rational organisation of local surveys to avoid overloading students. Noted that, as the results of the first-year student experience survey had been made available to the majority of EC members by virtue of presentations in other fora, they would not form part of the discussion at the present meeting. They will, however, be presented to Academic Council at its meeting of 13 April 2011. (Items 3.2 and 3.13)
- 3.3** Noted that an application for Erasmus Mundus funding would be resubmitted by the School of Physical Sciences. (Item 3.4)
- 3.4** Noted that updated information for Programme Chairs would shortly be made available to the working group for comment. (Item 3.5)
- 3.5** Noted, in relation to programme review, that there was still some variation in approach at local level but that it was intended to have a more streamlined system in use, and integrated into Business Intelligence, in 2011/12, with a pilot, incorporated into BI, being undertaken by the Faculty of Science and Health in preparation for its forthcoming quality review. It is intended that external examiners' reports and recommendations, and the work relating to Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement, will also leverage BI; among the advantages of this approach will be a reduction in possible duplication of work. Noted that Dr Ingle would be holding meetings with the Deans, the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and representatives of Information Systems and Services in respect of five-year programme reviews. (Item 3.6)
- 3.6** Noted that BI had been approved for purchase by Executive at its meeting of 22 March 2011. (Item 3.7)
- 3.7** Noted that the membership of the working group on Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement had been established and that the group was continuing its deliberations. Agreed that Dr Joe O'Hara, Chair of the group, would be requested to make a progress report to the EC for its meeting of 4 May 2011. (Item 3.9)
- 3.8** The three options outlined by Mr Kelly, on behalf of the Working Group on Non-major Awards, were considered, and the second one (involving the development of a policy and procedures to facilitate the setting up of, potentially, a wide range of awards) was approved. Noted that 30 credits seemed very few to attribute to an undergraduate certificate, and agreed that the Working

- Group would ascertain international norms in this regard. The importance of maintaining the University's high standards in relation to programme approval while ensuring agility in terms of responses to requests for new awards, as well as responsiveness to the recommendations of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, was noted. Noted also that the Working Group would need to take account of the budgetary implications of new types of awards. (Item 3.11)
- 3.9** Noted that some issues with regard to the R27 (notification of withdrawal from a programme) form would be discussed between Ms McKenna and the Registry. (Item 3.13)
- 3.10** Noted that work was in progress to ascertain the proportion of deferred students who subsequently take up their places and to ascertain the views of students who withdrew from the University some years ago. (Item 3.14)
- 3.11** Dr Bohan outlined progress to date on the part of the Working Group on Graduate Attributes. In the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:
- the mapping of graduate attributes must be undertaken in close conjunction with the mapping of programme learning outcomes
  - the mapping must be rigorous and have substance (these points, in particular, had been made by Executive)
  - there must be close co-ordination with other quality-related initiatives in the University, especially programme review
  - further discussion needs to take place to establish how the effectiveness of a programme in terms of supporting the development of the attributes can be measured
  - it will be important to ensure that any suggestion that graduates will be a homogenous group is avoided
  - consideration may need to be given to establishing threshold levels of skills and competences.
- Noted that the mapping undertaken to date on a pilot basis would benefit from a reduction in the number of sub-components of programme learning outcomes that had been identified. Agreed that the proposed survey of employers should involve a relatively wide group; noted that the questionnaire for the employers would be made available on line and the location notified to the EC, for information, in due course. (Item 3.15)
- 3.12** The terms of reference of the Working Group on Learning in Online and Virtual Environments were noted. Noted too that the Working Group intended to produce an interim report in early Summer and that it would be made available on line to the EC. (Item 3.16)

- 3.13** Noted that Faculty-specific reports on problematic modules, and contact details for ‘at-risk’ students, had been made available to the Deans. Noted that information would be made available to Academic Council, at its meeting of 13 April 2011, on problematic modules and ‘at-risk’ students and that, in addition, work was in progress to analyse further the reasons for low performance in Level 8 programmes, particularly in Year 1. (Items 4.1.1, 4.1.3 and 4.1.5)
- 3.14** Noted that Ms Morag Munro had undertaken to research the impact of assessment methodologies on failure rates and that she would be requested to make her findings available to the EC at its meeting of 4 May 2011. (Item 4.1.4)
- 3.15** Noted that information on positive trends in respect of students previously termed ‘at risk’ had been made available to Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees. (Item 4.1.5)
- 3.16** Noted that the working group on INTRA was continuing its deliberations with a view to making recommendations to the EC at its meeting of 4 May 2011. (Item 4.2)
- 3.17** Noted that work in relation to the University Readiness Module was being progressed and that further recommendations would be made to the EC at its meeting of 4 May 2011. (Item 4.3.2)
- 3.18** Noted that the validation proposal for the Certificate in Nurse/Midwife Prescribing had been recommended for accreditation by the Validation Subgroup at its meeting of 10 March 2011, subject to recommendations. (Item 6)
- 3.19** Noted that the validation proposal for the BA in Procurement and Supply Management had been recommended for accreditation by the Validation Subgroup at its meeting of 10 March 2011, subject to recommendations. (Item 7)

## **SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **4. Presentation on AFI re-visioning**

- 4.1** Professor O’Kennedy summarised the outcome of the discussions to date aimed at facilitating the revisioning and noted the key issues to be addressed: timetabling, the IT system, flexibility in its various modes and funding implications. He stressed the importance of a cohesive approach. He noted too that recent problems encountered with Coursebuilder were being addressed.

- 4.2** In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that DCU Business School intends to offer modules in Enterprise and Business Ethics, deploying students on taught postgraduate programmes to mentor first-year undergraduate students. It is intended that enhanced social integration will be an outcome of this work. The postgraduate students are not paid, but are undertaking the work as part of their exposure to New Generation Management.
- 4.3** It was also noted that Oscail intends to make available to final-year students on the Bachelor of Business Studies a five-credit module on Sustainability, to be taken as an option and on a distance-learning basis.
- 4.4** It was noted that, in developing online modules, it is always essential to factor in the costs of preparation and of managing the teaching process.
- 4.5** It was agreed that, at its meeting of 4 May 2011, the EC would take a decision as to what initiatives it would be feasible to implement in respect of flexible learning from September 2011. The issue is also under discussion in the Senior Management Group.

## **SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **5. Any other business**

#### **5.1 Proposals on awards for BEng/MEng programmes**

Noted that the new BEng/MEng structure for a range of Engineering programmes (approved by the EC in 2009/10 and implemented in 2010/11) had led to a request that relevant students be awarded first the BEng and then, following successful completion of 90 credits at Level 9, the MEng. Agreed to refer this matter for the consideration of the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 7 April 2011.

#### **5.2 New system for distribution of agendas and papers**

EC members are requested to submit feedback to Ms McDermott on the fitness for purpose of the use of Google Docs for the distribution of agendas and papers.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 4 May 2011, 2.00 p.m. in A204**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_