

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 6 May 2009

2.00-4.00 p.m. in A204

Present: Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Pat Brereton, Mr Jim Dowling, Ms Jean Hughes¹, Ms Susan Hurley, Mr Gordon McConnell, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Kay MacKeogh, Professor Richard O’Kennedy, Professor Bernard Pierce, Professor Malcolm Smyth

Apologies: Dr Françoise Blin, Dr Mary Shine Thompson

In attendance: Mr Eamonn Cuggy (for Item 4)
Ms Jennifer Bruton (for Item 8)
Ms Morag Munro (for Item 9)

The Chair welcomed Professor Richard O’Kennedy to his first meeting of the Education Committee in his capacity as Vice-President for Learning Innovation and Ms Jean Hughes to her first meeting in her capacity as Interim Deputy Director – OSCAIL and LIU and Director of SIF Programmes.¹ She thanked Ms Hurley, outgoing Deputy President – Education and Welfare of the Students’ Union, for her contribution to the work of the EC during her term of office.

On behalf of the EC, the Chair expressed sympathy to Dr Blin on the death of her father.

¹ Professor O’Kennedy joined the meeting after the inclusion of the Vice-President for Learning Innovation had been formally agreed at the beginning of the meeting. Ms Hughes joined the meeting from Item 7 onwards.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to an agreement to discuss part of Item 6 at the beginning of the meeting and the inclusion of two submissions under Item 11.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 April 2009

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that a revised version of the draft proposals on credit transfer from other institutions had been circulated to the University Standards Committee and that this issue was of relevance to the developing policy on APL and APEL (see Item 7 below). (Item 3.1)
- 3.2** Noted that NFQ Level 9 issues and credit transfer from other institutions would be on the agenda for the June 2009 meeting of the IUA Registrars' Group. (Item 3.2)
- 3.3** Noted that the proposed BSc in Aviation Management had been successful at the Accreditation Board meeting held on 29 April 2009 and that the accreditation recommendations would be submitted to Academic Council for its meeting of 10 June 2009. (Item 3.3)
- 3.4** Noted that the proposed BSc in Counselling and Psychotherapy would now be resubmitted for consideration for validation in 2009/10. (Item 3.6)
- 3.5** Noted that the Accreditation Board meetings for the proposed BSc in Psychology and the proposed BA in Theology with Lifelong Education had been scheduled for 14 and 19 May 2009 respectively. (Items 3.7 and 3.8)
- 3.6** Noted that the proposed BSc in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing would be considered by the Validation Subgroup at its meeting of 12 May 2009. (Item 3.10)
- 3.7** Noted that the working group to discuss issues relating to access to student data by academic staff would be in a position to make recommendations to Executive at its meeting of 12 May 2009 and that these recommendations were likely to cover implementation issues. (Item 3.11)

- 3.8** Noted that Executive had discussed the proposals recently drafted in relation to the Government's upskilling initiative. (Item 3.14)
- 3.9** Noted that, while the Education Committee would be kept informed on an ongoing basis of developments in relation to the implementation of AFI, the Chair had advised that it would be preferable not to make a presentation on this to the present meeting since the Vice-President for Learning Innovation had only very recently taken up his post. (Item 4.2)
- 3.10** Noted that feedback from the 1 April 2009 meeting on the Enhancement of Learning component strategy, as well as feedback from a recent meeting of the Internal Advisory Board for the strategy, was being incorporated into a revised implementation plan to accompany the strategy. (Item 5)
- 3.11** Noted that Dr MacKeogh would keep the EC informed about mechanisms for publicising stand-alone modules. (Item 6.2)
- 3.12** Noted that a revised proposal on programme titles and designatory letters would be submitted to the 9 September 2009 meeting of the EC. (Item 7.1)
- 3.13** Noted that the possibility of including on graduation parchments information about grades and specialisms/pathways had been discussed with the Registry. The following points had been raised in the discussion: there would not be a problem in terms of technical feasibility, though additional work would be involved; it would be important to ensure that parchments did not become difficult to read as a result of including additional information; student and staff demand for the inclusion of grades and specialisms/pathways appeared low (though Ms Hurley undertook to conduct a more extensive survey of student opinion on the issue). Agreed that consistency across the university in terms of treatment of specialisms/pathways was essential. Agreed that the desirability or otherwise of including specialisms/pathways would be raised with the Faculties through the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, on the basis of a wording to be drafted by Ms McDermott and agreed initially with the Deans. (Item 7.2)
- 3.14** Noted that the revised draft proposal on due diligence (in respect of institutions with which the university proposes to establish a relationship) had addressed the issues raised by the EC at its meeting of 1 April 2009. Agreed that – as had also been emphasised on 1 April – the due diligence process should take place at an early stage in the development of any proposal and, in the case of proposals involving a programme to be offered in conjunction with another institution, should precede validation and accreditation. The Chair thanked Dr Bohan and Mr McConnell for their work to date on this issue and also expressed her appreciation to Dr MacKeogh for her work in identifying, for the benefit of the EC, the references to issues relating to due diligence in the Internationalisation component strategy.

Agreed that procedures in relation to due diligence which Dr MacKeogh had sourced from the University of Exeter would be made available to the EC. (Item 8.4)

- 3.15** Noted that a second request to proceed with an Erasmus Mundus II funding proposal, this time from the School of Communications in respect of a possible Master's programme in business journalism and entrepreneurship, had been approved by the EC (electronically, on 9 April 2009). (Item 10.1)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Presentation on financial model for use at validation

Mr Eamonn Cuggy, Finance Officer, made a presentation on the model. Following this, a detailed discussion took place about the importance of ensuring that the model was conducive, as far as possible, to allowing Schools/Faculties to benefit appropriately from the revenue generated by new programmes. The importance of recording projected expenditure fully and accurately, when the model was being used to plan such new programmes, was also emphasised. Agreed that a discussion would take place between Mr Cuggy and the Deans (or their nominees) with a view to determining the extent to which the model might need to be modified to ensure appropriate incentivisation for new programme development and to make recommendations in this regard. If at all possible, the Chair is to be present also at this discussion. The Chair thanked Mr Cuggy for his presentation and for the work he had undertaken in developing the model.

5. Proposals on validation/approval procedures

A discussion took place about the three templates submitted for consideration: one for use by Faculties in approving stand-alone modules; one for use by Faculties in approving changes to programmes; one for submission by Faculties to the EC with a formal request for approval of stand-alone modules and changes to programmes already approved by Faculties. Agreed that the template for proposed programme changes should be retitled and should incorporate a section to allow for an outline of the rationale for terminating a module and the approval of such termination. Agreed that the three templates, modified as required, would be circulated electronically to the EC membership with a request for further comment prior to being made available for consideration by the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 4 June 2009. Agreed that the Deputy President/Registrar would ascertain from the Director of Registry the procedure used to enable students to register on a stand-alone basis for modules already approved as part of an existing programme.

6. Proposed revisions to Education Committee terms of reference

- 6.1** Agreed that the EC membership would henceforth include the Vice-President for Learning Innovation and the Interim Deputy Director – OSCAIL and LIU and Director of SIF Programmes.
- 6.2** Agreed that the EC minutes, once approved by the EC membership, would be submitted to Academic Council not simply for noting but also for approval. This is to ensure Academic Council approval of any and all matters decided by the EC that require such approval.

7. Proposed policy on APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning)

- 7.1** Ms Hughes made a presentation on this proposed policy, noting that it was intended to provide the basis for an overarching framework and that the detailed work of scrutinising individual applications would need to be devolved to Faculties since that is where the discipline-specific knowledge resides. Agreed, in this connection, to accept the principle that decision-making would essentially take place at Faculty level and that the decision-making process would be underpinned by a standard university-wide procedure. The following were noted: the NQAI plans to prioritise APL and APEL in terms of forthcoming policy development; the current university proposals are of relevance to the upskilling agenda; they are also of relevance to ongoing work in the International Office in relation to the evaluation of overseas credentials, and it is possible that consideration may need to be given to raising the profile of this work, particularly in respect of credentials from outside the proposed European Higher Education Area.
- 7.2** Agreed that Ms Hughes would revise the proposals to incorporate the related proposals on credit transfer already circulated to the University Standards Committee (see Item 3.1 above) and that these revised proposals would be circulated for comment to the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education with a view to having a further revised version available for discussion at the USC meeting of 4 June 2009. The Chair thanked Ms Hughes for her work to date on this issue.

8. Revised proposals on programme review

- 8.1** Ms Bruton made a presentation on these revised proposals. The following points were made in the ensuing discussion:
- the proposal to hold the data yielded by annual programme review within the relevant Faculty/Faculties, but make it available to the Director of Quality

Promotion as and when appropriate, is likely to be helpful in preventing duplication of work as between Faculty and central quality assurance/review processes

- where an annual review indicates that there are problems to resolve, the option exists of seeking guidance from a relevant committee (e.g. the University Standards Committee or Academic Council) and/or of instituting the major review within a shorter timeframe than the proposed five years
- it is important to bear in mind that any review process uses resources
- consideration should be given to making a central resource available for data analysis, though it should also be ensured that access to and familiarity with data is adequately shared rather than residing only in a small office
- programme review should be conducted on a basis of transparency while also respecting individual staff concerns and sensitivities.

8.2 The Chair expressed appreciation to Ms Bruton for the work carried out by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education on this issue. It was agreed that revised, more detailed, proposals would be drawn up by the Associate Deans, in consultation with other staff members and student representatives as appropriate, and submitted for consideration to the EC meeting of 9 September 2009.

9. Proposals on teaching quality evaluation

Ms Morag Munro made a presentation on the current status of the work relating to the pilot programme under way in DCU Business School. The Chair expressed appreciation of this work and of Ms Munro's presentation. Agreed that a further presentation would be made to the EC at its meeting of 9 September 2009 and that it would reflect the updated status of the work in DCUBS as well as the parallel consultation process being undertaken by the committee chaired by Dr MacKeogh.

10. Analysis of module registration figures

Dr MacKeogh presented the analysis she had conducted of figures previously made available by Ms Aisling McKenna, Institutional Research and Analysis Officer. Agreed that it would be helpful to conduct a similar analysis slightly later in the academic year, taking into account the data yielded by the June Progression and Awards Boards (e.g. in terms of pass rates) and also the views of the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education as to what types of analysis Faculties might find most useful. Dr MacKeogh undertook to do this. The Chair thanked Dr MacKeogh for her work on this issue.

11. Any other business

11.1 Noted that, because the next meeting of the EC is not due to take place until 9 September 2009, the minutes of the present meeting would be circulated electronically for approval.

11.2 Noted that it was likely that *curricula vitae* for proposed members of two electronic Accreditation Boards in respect of proposed programmes in All Hallows College would be circulated electronically to the EC for consideration in the coming weeks.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday 9 September 2009, 2.00 p.m. in A204</p>

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____