EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 9 September 2009

2.00-4.30 p.m. in A204

Present:	Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Pat Brereton, Mr Jim Dowling, Ms Jean Hughes, Professor Eugene Kennedy, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Kay MacKeogh, Mr John Murphy, Professor Richard O'Kennedy, Professor Bernard Pierce, Professor Malcolm Smyth
Apologies:	Dr Françoise Blin, Mr Gordon McConnell, Professor Mark Morgan, Dr Mary Shine Thompson

The Chair welcomed Mr John Murphy to his first meeting of the Education Committee in his capacity as Deputy President – Education and Welfare of the Students' Union.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1.   Adoption of the agenda

1.1   The agenda was adopted. It was <u>agreed</u> that a Section C would, from now on, be incorporated into the agenda and would include validation proposals and requests to approve formally related issues such *as curricula vitae* of nominated members of Accreditation Boards (where these are not included in validation proposals), summaries of stand-alone/continuing professional development modules previously approved by Faculties and (subject to agreement on procedures by Faculties) requests for changes to programmes that do not require full validation/accreditation. With the exception of validation proposals, items in Section C will be starred, i.e. will not be discussed unless a request is submitted by a member of the EC, by 5.00 p.m. on the Monday preceding a meeting, that an item be discussed.

1.2   <u>Noted</u> that, pending agreement in Faculties about procedures for approving requests for changes to programmes that do not require full validation/accreditation, such requests had been included in Section C on the agenda of the present meeting.

Noted that Item 8 would be discussed and that Item 11 incorporated a request for approval both of the content of the form and of the form *per se*. This form is a new short one, the purpose of which is to allow Faculties to summarise information on stand-alone/continuing professional development modules which they have previously scrutinised in detail and approved.

1.3   Noted that, since no validation proposals had been submitted for consideration at the present meeting, it would not be necessary to hold a meeting of the Validation Subgroup on the due date (15 September 2009).

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 6 May 2009

The minutes, which had previously been confirmed, were signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   Noted that revised draft proposals on credit transfer from other institutions had been incorporated into the proposals on AP(E)L (see Item 3.4 below). Ms Hughes noted that questionnaires had been sent to Faculties to ascertain current practices and that the results would be summarised to the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 1 October 2009. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland has just published the *Framework Implementation and Impact Study Report* (www.nqai.ie/framework_study.html), prepared by a team including national and international experts and chaired by Professor Tom Collins, Dean of Teaching and Learning and Professor of Education at NUI Maynooth, and this document covers issues relating to credit transfer.   (Items 3.1, 3.2 and 7)

3.2   Noted that it was intended to resubmit the proposed BSc in Counselling and Psychotherapy for consideration for validation in 2009/10. Agreed that the existence of the new policy on draft diligence (see Item 7 below) would be of assistance to the programme proposers and that it would be brought to their attention. (Item 3.4)

3.3   Noted that the working group set up to discuss issues relating to access to student data by academic staff had made recommendations to Executive and that Executive had approved these at its meeting of 30 June 2009. (Item 3.7)

3.4   Noted that the university had made programmes available under the HEA Labour Market Activisation Initiative and that details were available on the website. A number of related issues were noted in the ensuing discussion: because of the criteria laid down for inclusion of programmes in the initiative, the Institutes of

Technology may be in a better position than the universities to make the most of its potential; it will be helpful, in the context of the initiative, to develop a process for ensuring the timely approval of minor, special-purpose and supplemental awards, and this will be done; there are clear links with the ongoing work to develop general university policies on AP(E)L. The Chair thanked Ms Hughes, Mr Seamus Fox of Oscail, and all others involved in the Initiative for their significant work to date. The following were agreed: Ms Hughes will, following consultation with colleagues including Mr Dowling, report on developments in this area to the 7 October 2009 meeting of the EC, and the ensuing discussion will incorporate consideration of the wider strategic issues; details about the online location of information on stand-alone/professional development modules had been sought from Faculties and, if necessary, the Chair will mention this matter to the Heads' meeting of 24 September 2009, as a reminder; information on any existing non-Faculty-specific modules will be sought and made available to the EC. (Items 3.8 and 3.11)

3.5   Noted that the comments of the EC members on the Enhancement of Learning component strategy had been incorporated into the implementation plan, as had those of the Internal Advisory Board. (Item 3.10)

3.6   Noted that some Faculties had indicated that they did not wish for specialisms within programmes to be indicated in any more detail on graduation parchments than is the case at present, and that responses were awaited from other Faculties. Agreed that, where it was necessary to indicate a particular professional route taken by a graduate, the names of specialisms would be retained. Agreed also that, where a Faculty did not require a specialism to be indicated, this fact should be clearly stated (this matter will be addressed by the EC once responses from all Faculties have been received) and that any subsequent change to this position would need to be the subject of a specific request to the EC. (Item 3.13)

3.7   Noted that neither of the two proposals submitted for funding under the Erasmus Mundus II programme had been successful, but that the Engineering proposal, having been commended, would be submitted for university validation and accreditation and then resubmitted for Erasmus Mundus II funding. (Item 3.15)

3.8   Noted, with regard to the new financial model for use with validation proposals, that Mr Eamonn Cuggy, Finance Officer, was seeking a time and date to meet with the Chair and the Deans of Faculty for further discussion. (Item 4)

3.9   Noted that procedures for Faculty approval of stand-alone/continuing professional development modules had been approved, with amendments, by the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 4 June 2009. A further short form for formal submission to the EC of the outcome of this approval has been drafted, and EC

approval of this form is requested (see Item 11 below). Procedures for amendments to programmes that do not require validation/accreditation are being discussed in Faculties, and feedback from these discussions will be submitted to the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 3 December 2009 (with a view to subsequent incorporation into a proposal for the EC). With regard to registration procedures for stand-alone/continuing professional development modules, it was noted that, in addition to standard registration, a student is required to complete a Non-award Visitor form, and this is approved by the relevant Faculty and copied to the Finance Office for fees purposes. (Item 5)

3.10   Noted that *curricula vitae* for proposed members of two electronic Accreditation Boards in respect of proposed programmes in All Hallows College would be on the agenda of a future meeting of the EC. (Item 11.2)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4.   Revised proposals on programme review

Noted that, following consultation with Dr Heinz Lechleiter, Director of Quality Promotion, the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education would prepare a proposal incorporating both programme review and the other, related, aspects of quality assurance specified in *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* as being due for implementation by 2010, and that this proposal would be submitted to the 7 October 2009 meeting of the Education Committee.

5.   Proposals on teaching quality evaluation

5.1   Dr MacKeogh reported on the work that had taken place to date to implement the pilot project on teaching quality evaluation in DCU Business School. She outlined some of the issues that had emerged: the tendency for the same staff members to volunteer consistently to take part in such projects, with others tending not become involved; the importance of providing support to staff in analysing the data; the difficulty inherent in using the same evaluation mechanism both to provide support for staff and to ensure, as far as possible, enhancement of the quality of teaching. Agreed that Dr MacKeogh would provide a copy of her report for circulation to the EC members and would also submit a full proposal on teaching quality evaluation, based on the outcomes of the pilot project, to the 7 October 2009 meeting of the EC.

5.2 Ms Hughes reported on the Teaching Enhancement Cycle process under development in the Learning Innovation Unit, <u>noting</u> the following: research indicates that the success of processes like this one depends heavily on the prevailing culture, and the importance of support at School level, including encouragement to staff to engage in self-evaluation as a matter of course, is therefore crucial; the availability of expertise and mentoring both locally and centrally within the university is likewise essential; it is necessary not only to provide excellent teaching but to be seen to do so and therefore to have appropriate and transparent evaluation mechanisms; a pilot TEC project will be implemented in DCU Business School in 2009/10. In the ensuing discussion, the following were <u>noted</u> the university has traditionally, from its inception as NIHE Dublin, had a strong reputation for quality of teaching; it is very important to provide simple and transparent quality assurance processes so as not to increase staff or student workloads unnecessarily; where students do not engage with quality assurance processes, consideration may need to be given to why this is and how the situation can be changed; it should be noted also, however, that students have a responsibility to engage; factors such as standard of facilities are also very important in influencing the quality of the student experience; it is important to take steps to publicise existing good practice; it is important to have early-warning systems with a view to remedying immediate problems rather than routinely awaiting the outcomes of quality assurance processes; the role of the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education in providing a link to programme review is crucial, as is the role of Academic Council in providing leadership in terms of teaching quality evaluation generally.

5.3 The Chair thanked Dr MacKeogh and Ms Hughes for their significant work to date on the issues, <u>noting</u> that the work undertaken by Ms Hughes and her colleagues was being undertaken over a relatively long timeframe.

6. **Analysis of module registration figures**

6.1 Dr MacKeogh presented an analysis which incorporated outcomes from the June 2009 Progression and Awards Boards (e.g. in terms of pass rates). Related data from Ms Aisling McKenna, Institutional Research and Analysis Officer, were also made available to the meeting. Variations across years, modules and Faculties were noted. Some discussion took place about approaches that might be taken to maximise student retention rates. The close links between programme review and quality review more generally were <u>noted</u>. The importance of maximising the potential of the ITS system to yield relevant data, particularly following the imminent introduction of Version 14, was emphasised. The Chair stressed the usefulness of learning from the experience of other institutions and the necessity of

taking appropriate action where registration figures indicated that problems existed in terms of attracting and/or retaining students.

6.2   The Chair invited any Dean of Faculty who had a query about a particular issue relating to registration figures to contact her so that she could refer it to Dr MacKeogh and Ms McKenna for analysis.

6.3   It was <u>agreed</u> that a revised document on module registration figures, incorporating outcomes from the September 2009 Progression and Awards Boards, would be sent to the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education with a request that it be discussed by relevant Faculty committees, and that it would then be submitted (amended as appropriate) as a major discussion item at the 4 November 2009 meeting of the EC (or, potentially, at a specially-convened single-issue meeting).

6.4   It was <u>noted</u>, in relation to the consultation days following the publication of examination results, that in some instances, and contrary to expectations, staff have not been available to students. It was <u>agreed</u> that the Deans of Faculty would mention this matter to the Heads of School and that Mr Murphy and Dr Bohan would discuss it.

7.   Revised draft policy on due diligence

The policy was <u>approved</u>. It was <u>agreed</u> to send it to Academic Council and Executive for approval also. It was <u>noted</u> that experience gained on an ongoing basis in relation to dealing with external partner organisations would inform future revisions to the policy.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

8.   Proposal to offer a MSc in Translation Technology pathway on the MA in Translation Studies

<u>Approved</u> subject to consideration being given by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to the following alternative title for the pathway: MA in Translation Studies (Translation Technology).

9.   MA in Development: programme to be offered on a part-time basis

<u>Approved.</u>

10.   Language options on the BA in International Business and Languages: merging of these options for CAO application purposes

Approved.

11.   Proposed stand-alone modules (School of Nursing)

Approved. The proposed new form for use in summarising the details of such modules (see Item 1.2 above) was also approved.

12.   Any other business

12.1   The Chair noted some issues of concern arising from the recent CAO acceptance figures and their relationship with the issues raised under Item 6 above.

12.2   The Chair requested the Deans of Faculty to give consideration, in consultation with the Heads of School and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, to the establishment of staff-student liaison meetings, and to incorporate the personal tutor system into the discussions. It was noted that significant work had been undertaken by a former member of the Learning Innovation Unit on the establishment of student learning agreements and that this could be utilised in the context of staff-student liaison. Agreed that these matters should form part of the consultation process to be conducted in the Faculties by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education in the context of module registration figures, as noted under Item 6.3 above. The timing of a staff-student liaison meeting – neither too early nor too late in the semester – was noted as being very important, and it was agreed that the advice of the Students' Union should be sought in this matter.

12.3   It was noted that, at previous EC meetings (and also at meetings of the Academic Strategy Committee, which functioned from 2006 to 2008), a number of high-level strategic themes for discussion had been identified, and that it would be useful to give consideration to establishing these themes as platforms for discussion at future EC meetings.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 4 November 2009, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____   Date: _____
           Chair