

**EQUALITY STEERING GROUP**  
**Minutes of the Twelfth Meeting of the Equality Steering Group**  
**5 March 2003**

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Present: Albert Pratt (Chair)  
Mary Ainscough (Equality Director)  
Patricia Barker  
Claire Byrne  
Martin Conry  
Padraig MacNeela  
Sean Marlow

1. Apologies: Xiaojun Wang  
Ellen Breen  
Marian Burns  
Lisa Looney

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 12 February 2003 were approved

**3. Matters Arising**

Item 5.2 Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities: since the previous meeting, the Chairman and HR Director had discussed briefly the issue of consistency between the provisions in the draft *Code* in relation to people who acquire a disability while in employment and the provisions in the *University Statute No3* relating to *Incapability*, and agreed that the HR Director would insert a sentence into the *Statute* to cover this concern.

It was agreed that the draft *Code* would now go forward for adoption to the next meeting of Governing Authority.

**4. Chairman's Business**

There were no topics for the Meeting under this item.

**5. Terms of Reference of ESG**

The Equality Director had circulated a set of terms of reference for the DCU Equality Committee. It was agreed to adopt the following Terms of Reference:

“Function of the Equality Committee at DCU:

- To act as a conduit for equality and positive action issues communicated from the University community
- To assist in the formulation of an initial action plan to conduct an equality audit and address inequalities identified
- To provide support and advice to the Equality Director
- To act as an interface between the Equality Director and the University
- To consider draft policies proposed by the Equality Director before wider consultative exposure
- To make recommendations to the Executive and the Governing Authority on matters of policy and procedure
- To monitor progress on equality across the University”

## **6. Composition of the Equality Steering Group**

The Equality Director proposed two co-options to the Steering Group: the University's Access Officer (*ex officio*), and a representative of the SIPTU Section Committee (*ex officio*) (to be nominated by the Section Committee).

The co-options were agreed.

Following discussion on the composition of the Group, it was agreed to review the composition of the Equality Steering Group at a future meeting.

## **7. Policy Review and Development:**

Following the completion of work on the policy to promote Respect and Dignity, and the Code for the Employment of People with Disabilities, the Equality Director proposed proceeding with the review of policies under the *DCU Equality and Access Policy*. It was proposed that the next policy for review be the *DCU Staff Development Policy*. Other policies to be reviewed will include those related to work/life balance, access, etc.

The Chairman expressed concern in relation to the workload such a review might impose on University departments involved in the review of these policies.

Following discussion on this issue, it was agreed that policies would be reviewed one-by-one, starting with the Staff Development Policy.

### **7.1 Guidelines for the Appointment of External Examiners:**

The Group noted that Academic Council Standing Committee had approved changes to the Guidelines ensure gender balance in the examining team and particularly in relation to the appointment of external examiners. These changes were ratified by Academic Council at its February (2003) meeting.

## **8. Equality Review and Action Plan**

The Equality Director informed the meeting that work was in progress on the design of the equality review questionnaire. The Group considered a draft of the questionnaire and made comment and recommendations for changes. It was agreed that the survey questionnaire would be conducted online.

### **8.1 Equality Review Task Group**

The Equality Director requested that an *Equality Review Task Group* be formed to assist in the equality review process. Equality Steering Group members Pat Barker and Padraig MacNeela volunteered to participate and the Group further agreed to the inclusion of two members of DCU staff in the Task Group: Margaret O'Flanagan and Victor Fagg.

It was further agreed to arrange a date for the equality auditors to meet with the Equality Steering Group and present the proposed structure of the Equality Audit to the Group.

## **7. Any Other Business**

The Equality Director informed the Group that the HEA proposed to conduct an equality audit of DCU on Wednesday, 19 March 2003.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Equality Steering Group was scheduled for Wednesday, 5 March 2003, venue: DG 11 (Oscail).