

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday, 19 April 2023

2.00 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.

- Present:** Dr Claire Bohan, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Brian Corcoran, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan (Secretary), Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Joseph Stokes, Dr Monica Ward and Professor Blánaid White.
- Apologies:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Professor John Doyle, Professor Anne Looney and Ms Aisling McKenna.
- In attendance:** Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl [item 4.1] and Ms Valerie Cooke.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 22 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2022 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 22 March 2022

- 3.1** It was noted that feedback in respect of the Graduate Certificate in Aviation Leadership, Sustainability and Innovation had been addressed (item 6.1).

- 3.2** It was noted that feedback in respect of the MSc in Aviation Leadership had been addressed (item 6.2)
- 3.3** It was noted that feedback in respect of the new Major in Natural Language Processing on the MSc in Computing had been addressed (item 7.1).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

4. Strategic Academic Initiatives

4.1 Short form learning and micro-credentials, update from Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl

Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Director of Micro-credential Strategy and Innovation, provided an overview of the progress made in DCU with respect to micro-credentials, recent developments at the national and international level, and the expected future trajectory in this area. The following points were noted:

- DCU short-form learning ecology remains focused on the verification of learning through non-accredited digital badges and certificates, and validation of assessed learning that is credit-bearing.
- There has been an acceleration of activity at the national and European levels in the past twelve months, driven by employability agendas focused on upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning. Funding is also driving activity, including funding calls from the National Training Fund and European Commission.
- In March 2023 a UN treaty on qualifications recognition came into force, placing further emphasis on recognition of learning, lifelong learning and access to higher education, and micro-credentials are recognised as having the potential to address these priorities.
- In DCU the focus is currently on the mainstreaming of operational and implementation aspects of micro-credentials, the strategic alignment and demand for future micro-credential subjects, and the embedding of micro-credentials into existing academic QA structures.

- Capacity to support the development of micro-credentials, the lead-in time to market, and securing funding to stimulate growth in this area are current challenges also being addressed through the work of Dr M. Nic Giolla Mhichíl and DCU Studio colleagues.
- Dr M. Nic Giolla Mhichíl also provided details of DCU's planned portfolio for 2023/24, and she drew attention to the microcreds.ie website which would shortly be launched.

4.2 Teaching and Learning Strategy

The Chair provided a brief update on progress in respect of the Teaching and Learning Strategy, noting that the presentation on micro-credentials gave a good sense of what is being proposed under the flexibility pillar. She informed members that the overarching DCU Strategy would be considered by Governing Authority at its next meeting.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

5. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

5.1 Proposed extension of the Memorandum of Agreement with Ballyfermot College of Further Education

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences summarised the request to further extend the current agreement with Ballyfermot College of Further Education to September 2024, to allow additional time to review the relationship and progress the re-accreditation process for the existing BA in Media Production Management.

The extension was approved. It was agreed that no further extension to the current arrangement would be approved beyond September 2024.

5.2 New micro-credentials to be offered by the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies [for noting]

Noted. The Chair noted that micro-credentials approved by the Faculties should be recorded on the report of devolved decisions. She clarified that micro-credentials are approved by the relevant Faculty and not DCU Studio as suggested in the circulated memo, and that DCU Studio's role is to ensure that the characteristics of a micro-credential are in place.

6. Faculty of Science and Health

6.1 Revised Academic Offering: MSc in Specialist Nursing for Future Healthcare

Professor M. Butler, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health, summarised the changes to the programme which were being proposed in response to student feedback and following discussions with the external examiner. She noted that the streamlined offering would also better support workload planning and she indicated that if approved, the changes would be applied from 2023/24.

The Chair commented that it was not typical that the Education Committee would consider revisions to a programme before its first full cycle had been completed, and she noted that reservations concerning sustainability had been raised at the point of validation. She noted that this illustrates some of the reasons why it takes significant time to develop a programme from conception to accreditation, and that the value of Education Committee oversight and input should not be underestimated.

Education Committee members considered the merits of the proposal, noting that the revisions should enable the programme to be marketed to a wider audience. Members also commended the commitment to develop a number of micro-credential modules.

Education Committee approved the proposed changes subject to the following clarifications:

- The programme proposer should clarify that the amendments have been reflected in Course Builder.
- The programme proposed should clarify if the final projects will be aligned with the student's chosen specialism.

The new title, to be implemented from 2023/24, was noted as follows:

- MSc in Specialist Nursing

The two new pathway titles, which would be reflected on the transcripts, were noted as follows:

- Women's Health
- Population Health Practice

SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

7. Any other business

The Chair advised members that the schedule of university meetings for 2023/24 was now available on the OVPAA website.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
Wednesday, 17 May 2023
at 2.00 pm
Glasnevin Campus
Room AG01