

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Wednesday, 13 September 2023

2.00 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.

AG01

**Present:** Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Michelle Butler, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Derek Hand, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr Jennifer McManis, Professor Joseph Stokes, Dr Monica Ward and Professor Blánaid White

**Apologies:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jennifer Bruton, Professor John Doyle, Dr Rachel Keegan, Ms Pauline Mooney, and Professor Dominic Elliott

**In attendance** Professor Michael Dowling, Item 9

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

The Chair opened the meeting welcoming colleagues to a new academic year. She noted the following with respect to membership of Education Committee:

- She welcomed Dr Rachel Keegan, *in absentia* to Education Committee in her role as Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research and expressed her gratitude to Ms Aisling McKenna for her valuable contributions to Education Committee to date.
- She noted that Dr Jennifer McManis was starting a second term representing the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning.
- She noted that Dr Sarahjane Belton's term as Academic Council nominee will be completed at the end of September 2023 and informed the Committee that a nominee for the next three-year term would be sought, following confirmation of Academic Council membership for 2023-2024.

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted. It was noted that item 8.1 was withdrawn.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 17 May 2023**

The minutes of the meeting of 17 May 2023 which had been electronically approved, were signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 17 May 2023**

3.1 It was noted that minor amendments to the Graduate Certificate in Climate Change proposal documentation were completed (Item 6.1).

3.2 It was noted that the clarification in relation to renaming of MSc i nGnó agus i dTeicneolaíocht *and* the extent of the changes to the MA in Social Media Communications was provided (Item 7.4).

3.3 It was noted that a report on University-level issues raised over the Annual Programme Review process was submitted to University Executive for its 19 September 2023 meeting (Item 7).

3.4 It was noted that consideration will be given to the structure and context of the Faculty APR summaries. The Chair indicated that this will dove-tail with the Quality Assurance Framework for curriculum and will be addressed in the longer-term (Item 7).

3.5 It was noted that an updated APR report from the Faculty of Engineering and Computing to be submitted for the record, was awaited (Item 7.3).

**4. Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 3 April 2023, 29 May 2023, and 27 June 2023**

The minutes were noted.

The Dean of Strategic Learning and Innovation drew the attention of Education Committee to the following items:

- A very detailed HCI3 audit of the DCU Futures project is currently being conducted by Mazars and the DCU Futures team, DCU Finance and DCU HR are engaging with the audit requests.
- It is anticipated that sign-off by DCU for the Transversal Skills Platform should take place this week (week of 11 September 2023). It is hoped that the current final year students on the BA in Climate and Environmental Sustainability and the BEng in Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering will graduate with the transversal skills transcript, as promised.

The Chair noted the very successful DCU Futures conference that took place on 5th September 2023 which was led by the DCU Futures team. She commended the team on the conference quality. She noted that being able to provide transversal skills transcripts was important to colleagues in industry and this was a very important dimension in differentiating our students.

#### **5. Minutes of the ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee of 29 May 2023**

The minutes, which are the first of this Committee, were noted. It was noted too that the Committee was maintaining oversight of DCU in ECIU as a whole.

Commenting on where she would see a connection between DCU Futures and ECIU the Dean of DCU Institute of Education noted she had recently met with Prof Mieke Boon, of Twente University, who was very interested in the continuing development of DCU Futures and its scalability, having participated in one of the DCU Futures accreditations. Professor Boon has a proposal for the ECIU on the 'Omega Teacher', the premise of which aligns closely with DCU Futures. She noted that Prof Boon is looking for another institutional partner.

There was a general discussion on ECIU and its focus and whether, in addition to working towards the development of the European University, that it might also have a function in connecting institutions and nurturing these kinds of initiatives and projects.

## SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

As part of the consideration of strategic matters the Chair noted that eighteen months of funding remained from the National Training Fund (NFT) for existing HCI projects. From recent soundings, the HEA is hoping that a new round of funding will be announced as part of the Budget on 10 October 2023.

The Dean of Strategic Learning and Innovation noted it was anticipated the next round of funding would place a greater focus on collaborative projects. She also anticipated that there would be two funds, one to continue with the development of current successful projects and a second to develop new collaborative projects.

In anticipation of a call, but with the caveat that she has not had sight of it, the Dean of Strategic Learning and Innovation asked that Faculties would begin to consider what they might want to do, which would be aligned with the skills agenda. She suggested that Faculty colleagues would send a high-level project outline to the DCU Futures team, so that when the call is eventually made, DCU has already initiated its process. The Dean of Strategic Learning and Innovation also offered to meet with colleagues in preparation for a call. The Chair noted that the University would have to decide on projects to put forward based on alignment to our strategic goals, and which would build on our current initiatives.

A discussion was held on the possible earliest timelines of a call and outcome.

### 6. Strategic Academic Initiatives

#### 6.1. *Artificial Intelligence and DCU's response*

The Chair introduced this item noting the significance of Generative Artificial Intelligence and its fast-moving impacts on the sector. She noted that it had been the subject of a discussion at Senior Management over the summer.

The Dean of Teaching and Learning provided a briefing on the overview paper which had been circulated to the Committee. She highlighted the following items:

- The publication of the National Academic Integrity Network GenAI Guidelines for Educators has taken place since this paper was produced but we appear to be aligned with it.

- The assessment of every module in the University needs to be reviewed in the context of Generative AI.
- TEU, in consultation with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning are asking staff to have GenAI tools designed into assessment(design-in) or (re-)designed to avoid possible breaches of academic integrity with the use of GenAI tools.

The Chair noted the third element of the paper entitled *Programme analysis for AI-world readiness*, the aim of which is to conduct a review of our current portfolio of programmes to ensure that our offerings to students remain relevant and prepare them to be successful once they graduate. She indicated that she hoped that there would be initial work done before the end of the academic year and noted it was important for Education Committee which has strategic leadership in education responsibility, to have oversight on an institutional level.

It was noted that the overview was already on the website, to ensure that student-facing information is available. She asked colleagues for feedback and any changes that they would like to see in this regard.

In the discussion which followed on Generative AI the following was noted:

- From a student viewpoint it was felt the ‘design-in’ was a preferable approach;
- The paper as circulated considered the issue from a Teaching and Learning point of view rather than using a research lens;
- It was noted that generative AI requires an institutionally led response, in terms of ensuring academic staff address the issues and participate in what TEU has to offer in this regard. This also needs to be aligned with faculty support and priorities.
- It was noted that the DCU Institute of Education is leading on a Horizon project on Generative AI and initial teacher education.
- It was noted that the DCU Institute of Education has agreed a set of principles to inform the use of Generative AI for teaching placement and these will be published in the placement handbooks. The use of Generative AI will also change the focus on assessment of lesson plans toward ability to critique and enhance AI generated plans and assess how effective those used were for student learning. It was noted too that a related research project would be funded through the DCU Institute of Education.

The Chair noted that she thought it important that we map DCU's journey and decisions related to Generative AI over the next twelve to eighteen months and establish concrete examples of how it has impacted within the University. It was noted that a position paper would be prepared with respect to Programme review for AI-world readiness. It was agreed that Generative AI would be a standing item on the Education Committee agenda under the heading of 'strategic items'.

Referring to the paper as circulated, and its reference to the Russell Group and QQI, the Chair highlighted to Committee members there were such good examples of principles on the use of generative AI tools in education already in existence, that as an institution, we have not developed our own specifically. She asked Committee members if they felt it sufficient to point to the principles with which we will align. This was agreed. It was agreed too that we will align with the NAIN principles in the first instance and would also point to the Russell Group as another good example.

#### 6.2 *Update on ECIU curricula development*

The Dean of Teaching and Learning provided an update on ECIU curricula development. For the first semester, we are implementing ECIU students completing one module at DCU, and ten DCU students taking a module from an ECIU partner (Ethics in Artificial Intelligence).

The Chair expressed her thanks to colleagues in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing for overcoming the various hurdles to bring this first roll-out to fruition.

The Chair noted that the participation of two more Faculties would be needed for next September, and two further Faculties after that. She noted too in terms of the mobility element of ECIU, and ambitions for mobility more generally, as part of the strategy the DCU Placement team would be contacting each of the Faculties to discuss their priorities.

#### 6.3 *Teaching and Learning Strategy 2023 - 2028 (late draft)*

The Chair provided an update as follows:

The launch of the strategy will take place on Thursday 5 October 2023. The focus for the launch will be on the overarching university strategy and key aspects of the constituent strategies. She noted that she had circulated a late draft of the Teaching and Learning

Strategy to the Deans at the end of July 2023 noting that a Generative AI reference would be added under *Excellence*.

She noted that she hoped to have a final draft of the Teaching and Learning Strategy submitted to the November 2023 meeting of Education Committee, at the very latest.

She noted that what was lacking at this point was the crosscheck with Faculty's individual plans to ensure that themes in the Teaching and Learning Strategy align with Faculty plans and plans can be delivered.

The Executive Deans present informed Education Committee of their stage in development of individual plans. The Chair noted that it was important that the alignment exercise was closed off at a point in time and it was agreed she would meet with each of the Executive Deans and their Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning to establish the alignment of their plans at a high level with the overall Teaching and Learning Strategy.

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

### **7. DCU Institute of Education**

#### *7.1 Validation proposal: Bachelor of Education in Home Economics and Technology*

The Dean of the DCU Institute of Education introduced this item, noting that the proposal replicated a model already developed with Technological University Shannon (TUS). She drew the attention of Education Committee to the combination of subjects and explained the rationale for that subject combination.

The Education Committee granted approval to the proposed programme for further development towards accreditation subject to the following recommendations being addressed in the Accreditation proposal:

- Provide clarification on the number of academic staff being recruited in the context of one new module being run;
- To change the phrasing on the exit award to make clearer that accreditation is also sought for it in the context of this specific programme;

- It was noted that the answer to the question 'Will any recognition of prior learning/ transfer/ exemption procedure apply' (page 12 of submission) should be 'yes' and it should be indicated that it is in line with DCU policy. The example discussed was that of mature students' entry using RPL;
- With respect to Section 16 of the proposal, Student Experience (Student supports), it was advised that the legislation has changed in this regard and the following amendment should be made: Replace '*Self-declaration of a disability without independent confirmation will not be accepted by either of the partner institutions*' **with** '*Should a student wish to avail of disability supports, they will need to provide evidence confirming their disability*'. This also applies to the Memorandum of Agreement wording.

## **8. Faculty of Science and Health**

### *8.1 Validation proposal: BSc in Biomedical Science*

This item was withdrawn.

## **9. DCU Business School (Professor Michael Dowling attended for this item)**

### *9.1 Validation proposal: Graduate Diploma in Financial Technology and Innovation/MSc in Financial Technology and Innovation*

It was noted that the feedback the Education Committee had provided at its 17 May 2023 meeting had been addressed in the proposal provided. It was noted too that since its consideration by Education Committee the proposal included an MSc offering, in addition to the Graduate Diploma.

The Education Committee granted approval to the proposed programme for further development towards accreditation subject to the following recommendations being addressed in the Accreditation proposal:

- To make more explicit in the documentation the link to the micro-credential content with their equivalent modules on the proposed Grad Dip/MSc programme, i.e., that the micro-credentials are embedded within the programme;



- To articulate the teaching weeks, as ‘nine weeks of the University twelve-week semester’, rather than naming it a ‘nine-week semester’;
- To provide more detail in the proposal at accreditation stage how the taught elements and industry projects will operate and the relationship between the industry projects and the internship;
- It was noted that there had been initial discussion with the DCU Placement team on the proposed internships and it was required that further detailed discussions should take place;
- An explicit set of selection criteria must be included in the entry requirement section. It was noted that a cover letter in and of itself is not sufficient in the selection process and vulnerable to Gen-AI;
- To complete Section 7, Graduate Attributes/Transversal Skills development using the DCU Business School Graduate Competency Framework, noting that this is aligned with the institutional approach;
- To plan for an accreditation in early November to ensure that the Accreditation report can be approved through Academic Council in late November 2023.

## **SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS**

### **10. Undergraduate accreditation process**

The Chair noted that an adapted accreditation process had been introduced for the approval of the initial DCU Futures programmes. As new programmes are developed it will be important that the direction of travel of the university (in terms of incorporating the signature of DCU Futures (including dimensions of DCU’s transversal skills framework), enabling ECIU offerings etc), is captured at validation and accreditation stage and for Schools to be more explicit about their commitment to those new aspects of programmes.

She asked Education Committee permission for the Academic Secretariat to review the validation and accreditation forms and to include additional questions that would provide information on strategic elements within programme design.

**11. AOB**

The Chair welcomed Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon as Secretary of Education Committee and thanked Dr Rachel Keegan for her work as Secretary.

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

**Date of next meeting:**  
Wednesday, 15 November 2023  
at 2.00 pm  
AG01, Glasnevin Campus