**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday, 17 April 2024

2.00 p.m. – 4.45 p.m.

AG01, Glasnevin Campus

Present:	Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Dr Rachel Keegan, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Sharon O'Brien, Dr Monica Ward and Professor Blánaid White
Apologies:	Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jennifer Bruton, Professor John Doyle, Professor Anne Looney and Dr Paul Young
In attendance:	Dr Jin Burgi-Tian

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 20 March 2024**

   The minutes of the meeting of 20 March 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes of 20 March 2024

3.1   It was <u>noted</u> that a presentation on the quantitative outcomes from the staff survey on Artificial Intelligence is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.1).

3.2   It was <u>noted</u> that the resubmitted Revised Academic Offering for the MA in Refugee Integration is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.5).

3.3   It was <u>noted</u> that the Student Feedback on Teaching Working Group proposal is on the agenda of this meeting (Item. 3.6).

3.4   It was <u>noted</u> that the exit awards for the new pathway on the MSc in Management (Operations and Supply Chain) were confirmed as follows (Item 5.1, 21 Feb 2024):

- Graduate Certificate in Management in Operations and Supply Chain
- Graduate Diploma in Management in Operations and Supply Chain

3.5   It was <u>noted</u> that the updated validation forms and accreditation template will be made available for the new academic year (Item 3.4).

3.6   It was <u>noted</u> that the consideration of the finalisation of the accreditation process for the DCU Future programmes accreditation and its implementation will take place in autumn 2024 (Item 5.1).

3.7   It was <u>noted</u> that the matter of the design and use of teaching spaces is ongoing. The Chair indicated that she had updated the Director of ISS with respect to the discussions held at Education Committee. She indicated to him that the priority would be to look at the use of computer facilities for assessment and the support that would be needed in this regard (item 5.2).

3.8   It was <u>noted</u> that revisions to the MA in Gender and Sexuality Studies programme (new title, MA in Gender Studies) have been submitted (Item 6.1).

4.   Minutes of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group, 23 August 2023

The minutes of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 23 August 2023 were <u>noted</u>.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.   Strategic academic initiatives

5.1   Student Feedback on Teaching Working Group proposal

It was <u>noted</u> that the revised Student Feedback on Teaching Working Group proposal has been reviewed by the Executive Deans and will be circulated to the working group over the coming weeks. It is intended that it would be submitted for the consideration of the 15 May 2024 meeting of Education Committee. The Chair noted that it would be important that the proposal is considered by Education Committee in May 2024 in order to initiate the next phase, with a view to prompt implementation thereafter.

5.2   Artificial Intelligence Staff Survey, quantitative outcomes

The Director of Quality and Institutional Insights and the Institutional Research and Analysis Officer presented on the initial outcomes of the Artificial Intelligence survey which had been completed at the end of March 2024. The aim of the survey was to ascertain attitudes to and knowledge of Artificial Intelligence. She highlighted the following:

- There were 610 responses out of 1831 which represented a 33% response rate.
- There was good representation across Faculties and also a good response from both academic (254) and professional staff (356).
- It was noted that 35% of academic staff indicated that they had a good or expert understanding of AI as did 16% of professional staff.
- Respondents indicated a strong awareness of the potential applications of AI in higher education and their discipline/profession.
- 90% of respondents indicated that training, guidelines and other supports would be important (90% agree or somewhat agree), and in the open-text responses, the need for training was strongly emphasised.

- 47% of respondents have not incorporated AI into their work at all and 37% have used AI in work 'a little bit'.
- The majority of respondents believe that the benefits of adopting AI outweigh the negatives (66%) and the majority of respondents agreed that the university had an important societal role to play in navigating AI and an important role in supporting staff and students.
- Respondents showed high levels of concern about security, ethical and accessibility issues. Ethical issues were of particular concern to academic staff (85% agreed or somewhat agreed that it is a concern).
- It was noted that there was divergence of opinions between Faculties on the impact of AI in Teaching and Learning, which warrants further exploration.

The Chair noted how useful the survey outcomes will be and that it had been a beneficial decision to broaden out the survey beyond teaching and learning. The survey outcomes would be helpful across the University and would inform the Learning and Development Office and other key professional units. She noted from the Education Committee perspective, the emphasis is on approaches to teaching and the renewal of curricula in terms of future graduate careers and relevance to an AI context. The University aims to meet an October 2024 deadline so it can be in a position to tell prospective students that DCU has reviewed all of its programmes in an AI context.

It was agreed that the dashboard would be shared with Education Committee members. A decision as to what would happen more broadly with the survey would be made outside of this forum.

There was a general discussion on the impact of AI on the feeling of the self-worth of the individual in a work environment and that awareness and the ability to adapt to this changing environment were important.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

6.   Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

6.1   Revised academic offering: MA in Refugee Integration

- The programme was <u>approved</u> as a flexible part-time offering, as proposed.
- With respect to the full-time offering, Education Committee, requested clarity on whether it would be a blended offering or if full online delivery is envisaged. It was noted that it was not clear from the proposal which of the campus elements would be compulsory. It was asked in developing the programme for a September 2025 intake that the student experience for a fully online programme would be given due consideration.

The Chair noted that as we came out of the Covid-19 pandemic it had been agreed to allow a process whereby the delivery of existing part-time programmes could be changed to fully online or blended. It was not agreed at the time to consider changes to full time on-campus programmes however it is not the general view that it would be prohibited. If a programme becomes fully online for full-time students, then the considerations were different e.g. student supports, student experience, pedagogy etc.

It was acknowledged by Education Committee that further work will have to be done at an institutional level in terms of the considerations for full-time online programmes and additional guidance would be provided in the future, which will be relevant to the programme in question.

7.   DCU Business School

7.1   Exit Awards from MSc in Management (Insights and Innovation)

The following exit awards from this existing programme were <u>approved</u> as follows:

- Graduate Certificate in Management (Insights and Innovation) (30 credits)
- Graduate Diploma in Management (Insights and Innovation) (60 credits).

8. **Report of Devolved Programme Decisions (All Faculties) 2023-2024**

Devolved programme decisions, as circulated, were <u>noted</u>.

SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

9. **QQI Classification Project**

The Academic Secretary presented an overview of the work completed to date on this project. She noted that the final submission would contain specific programme case studies, spanning the period from 2012 to 2022, responses to QQI posed questions (Faculty specific and institutional) and the output of the internal focus groups. She noted that these latter elements of the submission would be shared with Education Committee colleagues and through this presentation would draw their attention to specific elements of the project.

The Academic Secretary highlighted the conclusions drawn by programme teams who had worked on individual programme case studies, acknowledging the enormmous amount of work that the completed studies represented. She noted that a huge volume of data was analysed in order to draw the conclusions made but that relatively little data would be included in the case studies themselves.

Among the factors contributing to degree classification profiles were:

- Student motivation, engagement and ambition, driven by a combination of factors;
- Quality of learning supports including individualised supports for particular cohorts of students and enhanced learning supports e.g. Loop, impact of the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU);
- Improvements in the quality of teaching;
- Shift in assessment emphasis from terminal examination to continuous assessment, accompanied by increasingly innovative modes of assessment that perhaps better enable students to demonstrate their learning;
- Improvement of student engagement with feedback and improved and varied ways of providing that feedback.

With respect to the focus group findings and the institutional questions, the detail of these can be found in the presentation as circulated. However, there were two institutional questions, the answers to which the Academic Secretary wanted to highlight to Education Committee as follows:

Question 8: Impact of Covid-19 on HBD classifications – It was felt that insufficient time has passed since Covid-19 to be able to judge whether or not the impact of Covid-19 might be enduring. The evidence suggests that Covid and a variety of other factors had an impact on student performance and attainment, across all years over the relevant period.

Question 9: The reasons for any patterns of change over the entire period 2011-2012 to 2018-2019 – It was noted that in the case of the 6 programme case studies in respect of which data for the entire period of analysis was available, when combined and analysed as a whole, no overall upward trend was evident. Variability between individual programmes was noted.

The Academic Secretary indicated that the submission to QQI would be finalised over the coming week and she proposed that she would share the focus group analysis and the institutional question responses to Committee members for information, once finalised. She asked those Executive Deans who had not already done so, to review their programme case studies.

The Academic Secretary noted that though resource intensive, the project had proven beneficial and that there would be merit in building on the work that had been done. In this context, she drew attention to two areas to which further attention might be given, namely, the development at University level of classification descriptors and the provision of institutional level guidance around grading.

The Chair noted that the implications of the case study outcomes with respect to the data on CA (coursework) / Exam splits had also brought to light some interesting findings. It was suggested that consideration should be given to synoptic and programmatic level assessments in the AI context. It was noted that all of these should be included in any consideration of an assessment strategy.

10.   Threshold standards for delivery of Teaching and Learning: Response to Cinnte DCU Institutional Review 2019

The Chair introduced this item noting that due to various factors over the last few years it had not been possible to address the development of this proposed document, which is a response to a particular recommendation from the Cinnte Review Report 2019.

She noted the approach taken to the document as circulated was to categorise the items that need to be in place to create a minimum consistent standard, which focused on the overall student learning environment. She thanked colleagues who had been involved in its development. She noted that if the document is approved by Education Committee, then a decision will be made on how this document relates to/and or co-exists with the existing DCU Student Charter. She noted that it was her aim to have this in place ahead of the next academic year.

The following feedback and areas of discussion were noted:

- The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health indicated she had some feedback on the document that might strengthen it and she would provide feedback following the meeting.
- It was queried what 'timely and appropriate feedback' meant and it was noted that the thresholds document does not take the place of existing policies but points to them. With respect to the assessment feedback policy, it was noted that this currently does not provide the timeframe for feedback and the desk research on sectoral norms are between fifteen and twenty-one days. It was noted that there is an intention to address timeframe within the assessment feedback policy.
- The Chair indicated that rather than the minimum thresholds being monitored per se this would be a tool to empower a student to highlight where the University falls short of its minimum stated standards. She noted that the Students' Union would be vital in ensuring students are made aware of these standards.
- It was clarified that these standards would apply to part-time staff and resourcing would need to be in place to reflect this.
- It was noted that there is a set of guidelines for best practice for research students who are providing teaching and learning. It was suggested that the two documents should reference each other.
- It was suggested in terms of closing the feedback loop, point seven in the document would include that there are 'appropriate feedback mechanisms' available to students.

- The tone of the communication of this minimum threshold standard will be important as the document is articulating DCU's current practice, as requested by Cinnte.

The Chair outlined that there are a number of next steps involved with respect to the document.

- To ascertain where this document sits in relation to the DCU Student Charter;
- To update the existing Assessment and Feedback policy;
- To clarify roles and responsibilities.

The document was approved subject to the amendments and consideration of the input provided by Education Committee members.

It was noted that the document would be submitted to Academic Council, and in the meantime a communication strategy would be drawn up outside of this forum.

11.   Student Survey Data, Faculty Response

11.1   DCU Business School
Noted

11.2   Faculty of Engineering and Computing
Noted

The Chair updated colleagues on the status of 'Survey.ie' following a briefing at the IUA Registrar's Group. She noted that on the basis of information shared there appeared to be a lack of an overarching philosophy about how the revision of the survey would be approached. It was noted the Students' Union is disappointed with the current approach as it is felt that more substantial change might be needed. The Chair noted the view of the IUA Registrar's group was that the survey should remain focused on the teaching and learning experience but there should be a full review rather than tweaking the original survey and their representative was asked to bring this feedback to 'Survey.ie.'

12. **Any other business**

There were no items of other business.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 15 May 2024
at 2.00 pm
Room F327, St. Patrick's Campus