

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday, 20 March 2024

2.00 p.m. – 3.40 p.m.

AG01, Glasnevin Campus

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

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to the inclusion of two items under AOB.

2. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 21 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2024 were approved, subject to a correction. It was noted that the RPL wording referenced in feedback discussed under item 5.1 has not yet been approved and therefore was not yet 'standardised.'

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 21 February 2024

- 3.1 It was noted that the survey on Artificial Intelligence exploring staff knowledge, sentiment and current usage of Artificial Intelligence technology and tools was launched on 12 March 2024 (item 3.1).

It was noted that there were 385 responses to date which represents in excess of a 20% response rate. It was planned to highlight the survey at the imminent meeting of Heads and Deans to prompt staff to complete it. It was noted too that the survey would be open until close of business on Thursday, 28 March 2024.

The Chair thanked the Director of Quality and Institutional Insights and the Dean of Teaching and Learning for their work on the survey to date.

- 3.2 It was noted that the MA in Gender and Sexuality Studies (new title, MA in Gender Studies) revised academic offering submission is on the agenda of this meeting (item 3.7).
- 3.3 It was noted that the details of the QQI Institutional focus group for Education Committee were provided (item 7).
- 3.4 It was noted that the update to the validation forms and accreditation template is ongoing (Item 3.5).
- 3.5 It was noted that a resubmission of the Revised Academic Offering for the MA in Refugee Integration is scheduled for the 17 April 2024 meeting of Education Committee (Item 3.6).
- 3.6 It was noted that the Student Feedback on Teaching Working Group proposal is scheduled for the 17 April 2024 meeting of Education Committee (Item. 4.1)

4. Minutes of the ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee of 8 November 2023

The minutes of the ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee of 8 November 2023 were noted.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

5. Strategic academic initiatives

5.1 *DCU Futures update*

The Chair provided an update on DCU Futures and the extension of funded projects under HCI Pillar 3. Originally the project was intended to run until the end of 2024 however with the impact of Covid this was extended to March 2025. She noted that the HEA had recently held a meeting with project leads and indicated their intention to have a follow-up closed call for successful projects. HEA colleagues indicated that a proposal had been submitted regarding funding, consideration of which would run at least until the summer. It was hoped that a call would issue in the autumn with a view to a call deadline of January 2025. In the meantime, they are offering an extension to current projects to the end of 2025, albeit on a no cost basis. This will mean a gap in funding for the planned range of activities and resources. The Chair noted that the DCU Futures team is liaising with the Finance Office to establish the cost and feasibility of keeping core activities in place.

She noted too that similar budgetary considerations are taking place with respect to the funding of an extension of the micro-credential project to the end of 2025. There is currently €8 million available for subsidised student places on micro-credentials. The places allocated can be across three intakes, Sept 24, January 25, and September 25.

The Chair outlined that the first entrants onto the DCU Futures programmes are nearing completion. When considering those programmes in 2020 for validation and accreditation, an agile approach to academic approval had been taken, as the programmes continued to develop. She indicated that it was now timely to revisit the approval process and ensure that the quality assurance of the finalised programmes is fully completed. She indicated that she would work with the DCU Futures Institutional Lead, Dr Susan Hegarty in this regard.

5.2 *Design and use of campus teaching spaces*

Introducing this item, the Chair noted three recent and related items which prompted consideration by Education Committee. They were as follows:

1. At Information Systems (IS) Governance Committee a question arose about student computing resources and supports for computer-based examinations. It was queried what DCU's future needs might be around these types of facilities.
2. At the Space Management Committee, a discussion took place on requests that have been submitted for reconfiguring of particular rooms for flexible teaching purposes. In that context it was queried what the future need for various types of rooms would be.

The Chair noted that it was her view that these questions could be best answered in the context of the future curriculum model in DCU.

3. HEA Space Utilisation Survey (brief presentation). The Academic Secretary provided the context for the presentation noting that DCU has undergone two space utilisation surveys over the 2023-2024 academic year, one late in semester one and the second from 29 January - Friday 2 February 2024. The HEA intends that these surveys will take place on an ongoing basis and may extend beyond teaching spaces. She noted that although the two surveys occurred at different times in the semester the space utilisation outcomes were broadly similar in terms of booked occupancy and actual attendance rates.

The Chair presented a number of slides depicting survey outcomes as they related to booked frequency, occupancy and attendance rates and noted that it was not possible to interpret booked occupancy as necessarily accurate. There was a general discussion about the multitude of factors which contributed to the survey outcomes and the following points and queries were noted from the discussion:

1. The primacy of facilitating our curriculum and student experience over space usage
2. How we timetable, in terms of projected numbers versus eventual student registration numbers for a module, and rooms capacity and how classes are organised (break out rooms from labs etc)
3. Rescheduling of classes through the booking system (rather than the timetabling system)

4. The fitness for purpose in terms of capacity and configuration of our teaching facilities relative to our current delivery needs
5. It was suggested that to understand and potentially address the survey outcomes, a case study approach focusing on a subset of rooms may be useful.

The Chair noted that there is provision in the strategy for a project focused on timetabling processes and systems, due be addressed after SIS Release 2 implementation.

The Chair noted, given all of the above, it would be important to ensure that future decisions as they relate to our teaching facilities are guided by the Teaching and Learning strategy, rather than being viewed primarily as system or space management and utilisation issues. Consideration of campus teaching spaces should come under the remit of Education Committee and Academic Council as it concerns future curriculum needs. It was agreed that Education Committee would set up a subgroup which will consider the design, use and support of campus teaching/assessment spaces, the terms of reference for which would be developed over the coming months.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

6. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

6.1 *Revised academic offering: MA in Sexuality Studies (resubmission)*

The feedback provided by the programme team to Education Committee was reviewed in the context of the revised proposal and it was acknowledged that items of feedback had been addressed. The programme was approved subject to the following additions and clarifications being made to the proposal document:

EC noted that although the programme title was amended to the MA in Gender Studies the structure and the module titles had not changed. It was clarified in the meeting that the sexuality element was very much about the cultural context and representational aspect. However, it was queried in particular if the thesis module title should reflect the stronger focus on gender studies. The query was in the context of how the completeness of the change to Gender Studies is reflected throughout the proposal.

It was requested that the view of the external examiner, provided in the context of the proposed MA in Gender and Sexuality Studies originally, would be updated to reflect the change to an MA in Gender Studies.

It was suggested that the first career pathway list i.e. 'Public health settings' should not be the first bullet point as a primary career from this programme and should be moved further down the list.

In the entry requirements section, it was noted that a statement on the university process for RPL had been added and therefore the existing third bullet point was not now needed within the proposal document i.e. applicants with appropriate combinations of professional qualifications and experience.'

It was recommended, if appropriate, that an exit award of Graduate Certificate would also be made available. Education Committee requested that an indication of the specific modules and credits to be counted towards both the Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate would be submitted for the record.

SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

7. Any other business

7.1 Artificial Intelligence

The Dean of Teaching and Learning highlighted that the EU Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act had been endorsed by all Member States and will come into force in the coming months. She noted too that she had been at a talk in the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment which focused on the public sector and AI.

7.2 QQI Classification Project

The Academic Secretary provided an update on the focus groups which had taken place in early March. She noted that there had been three focus groups, in addition to the Education Committee group, and each focus group had been extremely well attended. She formally thanked the Faculties for their contribution to the process. She noted that although there was commonality in the response to the questions posed by QQI, there were also

differences, and many insightful contributions were received. She noted that colleagues who had contributed to the focus groups had remarked on the value of the exercise in discussing something so fundamental to what we do as a university.

She noted that work was ongoing on the individual programme case studies and she asked if Deans would ensure that they linked in with relevant colleagues involved in the case studies. She noted that at a meeting held with the programme teams involved in the case studies she had advised that only data specifically requested by QQI should be provided.

The Secretary of Education Committee noted that she had had an opportunity to review the draft case studies and that it was important that the Faculty review them in advance of submission. She noted that it would be necessary to ensure consistency of answers where they refer to university policies.

The Academic Secretary noted that it was intended to bring the QQI Classification Project submission to Education Committee for its next meeting.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 17 April 2024
at 2.00 pm

Room AG01, Glasnevin Campus (change from planned venue)