

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Wednesday, 14 May 2025

2.00 p.m. – 4.45 p.m.

Room AG01, Glasnevin Campus

**Present:** Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Jennifer Bruton, Ms Aoife Butler, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Dr Ruth McManus, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Sharon O’Brien, Dr Monica Ward, Professor Blánaid White and Dr Paul Young

**Apologies:** Dr Rachel Keegan

**In attendance:** Dr Jing Burgi-Tian

The Chair thanked Ms Aoife Butler for her contribution to DCU over the past year as DCU Student’s Union Vice-President of Academic Life. Ms Butler has had a hugely positive impact, particularly in developing approaches to student feedback on the quality of teaching, DCU’s response to artificial intelligence, academic integrity and the ECIU University project, in addition to her consistent and considered engagement with the work of Education Committee.

### **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 16 April 2025**

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 16 April 2025 were **approved** and signed by the Chair.

### 3. Matters arising from the minutes of 16 April 2025

- 3.1 Dr Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching and Learning, informed the Committee that a number of specific changes were made to 'Procedure for Closing the Feedback Loop on the Student Survey of Teaching at DCU' in response to the feedback provided at the last meeting. The changes included clearly indicating that module coordinators will be required to provide an initial response to both quantitative and qualitative feedback provided by students, and clarifying how feedback data will be analysed in the first few iterations of the new procedure when institutional norms and trends have yet to be identified.

Dr Ward explained that the recommendation to gather data on the gender of survey participants had been considered further but that there were concerns about compromising the anonymity of the feedback. The Committee recognised that it would be useful to have this data, particularly considering evidence presented as part of the review of the DCU Futures programmes (EC2025/A2/4.1). It was agreed that this data should be captured in future, perhaps on an opt-in basis, and Dr Ward will engage with the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) and Quality and Institutional Insights Office (QIO) to determine the most effective approach for subsequent iterations of the survey to do this while preserving anonymity.

'Procedure for Closing the Feedback Loop on the Student Survey of Teaching at DCU' was **approved** subject to the workflow being updated to indicate that Heads of School will have sight of whether lecturers have issued a response to the feedback provided by students.

- 3.2 The updated documentation for the Revised Academic Offering for the Graduate Certificate in Management (Operations and Supply Chain) was provided to the Secretary, which includes the correct award title, 'Graduate Certificate in Management in Operations and Supply Chain'.
- 3.3 The necessary confirmation was provided to the Secretary regarding what modules on the Graduate Certificate in Climate Action, Energy and Public Policy will contribute toward the calculation of the award classification.

**4. Minutes of the meeting of the ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee of 25 February 2025**

The minutes of the meeting of the ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee of 25 February 2025 were noted.

**SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS****5. Strategic academic initiatives**

There were no items for discussion.

**SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS****6. DCU Institute of Education****6.1 Revised Academic Offering: Bachelor of Early Childhood Education**

Professor Anne Looney, Executive Dean of DCU Institute of Education, set out the context for the proposed development of the delivery of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, informing the Committee they are in response to government policy on upskilling in the early childhood education (ECE) sector and its commitment to establishing a graduate led workforce.

Professor A. Looney explained that early year's educators in receipt of a L6 ECE qualification are being supported to pursue a L8 qualification via programmes delivered in a blended learning mode to ensure they continue working in the sector throughout their studies. Students who satisfy these criteria will have their fees paid under the Nurturing Skills Learner Fund.

Professor A. Looney confirmed that blended delivery of the programme will involve an equal proportion of curriculum content delivered in-person and online. The Faculty does not envisage any implications from a student recruitment perspective as the programme will continue to be offered fully in-person and via a blended learning mode to meet the

requirements of two distinct target learner groups, i.e. post-primary school leavers applying via CAO and graduates from ECE programmes with a L6 award who are employed in the sector, respectively.

The Revised Academic Offering (RAO) for the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education consisted of four distinct components, each of which were considered separately by the Committee as follows:

- The proposal to change the programme and award title to 'Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood' was **approved**. It was noted that the new title will apply to entrants in 2026/27 onward. The Committee recognised that there is precedence for applying a new programme and award title to current students and recommends that the programme team consider existing practices in other Faculties, i.e. surveying current students to determine if there is unanimous support for adopting the new title.
- The proposal to create an exit award for exceptional circumstance was **approved** subject to the programme team revising the award title so that it aligns with similar awards on other Bachelor of Education programmes, e.g. Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies.

The Committee recognised that the proposed title is intended to mitigate the risk of students exiting the programme at the end of Year 3 as the preferred option. However, it was noted that, as per practices in other Faculties, students may only be considered for the exit award if they have attempted but failed Year 4; students should be adjudged for the exit award at the end of Year 4 rather than having the option to exit the programme at the end of Year 3.

- The proposal to introduce a blended learning delivery mode was **approved**. The Committee noted it is an exceptional case to deliver a blended learning programme to students in full-time employment according to the same timeline as the programme delivered full-time on campus.

The Committee was assured that the overlap between large placement elements of the programme and the work commitments of the students make this model suitable for this unique context. The programme team is advised to keep delivery of the programme under review to ensure students can achieve the learning outcomes in the assigned timeframe.

- The proposal to permit advanced entry to Year 2 of the programme based on students having a L6 ECE qualification was considered by the Committee. It was confirmed that students who hold a L6 ECE qualification can already avail of advanced entry to Year 2 of the programme.

The Committee **approved** the creation of a separate admissions pathway for advanced entry to Year 2 of the programme delivered through a blended learning mode, which requires applicants to hold a L6 ECE qualification and have current employment in a ECE provider for a period of no less than 6 months.

The Committee commended the programme team for the extensive effort put into redesigning the programme so that it adheres to DCU's 'Principles for Quality Assurance of DCU E-learning & Blended Provision' and preparing the necessary documentation.

## 7. DCU Business School

### 7.1 BA in Global Business - existing dual award in new collaborative context

Professor Dominic Elliott, Executive Dean of DCU Business School, set out the context for changing the partner in the BA in Global Business (USA) from Northeastern University to University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee's considerations relate specifically to the integrity of the existing dual award as it was accredited by DCU and the quality assurance mechanisms in place for the delivery of this particular programme.

It was noted that, while the BA in Global Business predates the institutional requirements for due diligence with respect to partner approval, the Office of the Executive Director of Engagement confirmed that, in the case of UMass Boston, due diligence was completed at

the appropriate level for a dual award as per DCU's collaborative provision approval protocols.

The Committee queried the implementation timeline for the proposal and how the transition from Northeastern University to UMass Boston will be managed, as it was not clear in the documentation. The Committee also queried the clarity of the curriculum mapping and requested assurance that the existing curriculum in Northeastern University is equivalent to the proposed curriculum in UMass Boston.

The proposal to offer the existing dual award in a new collaborative context was **approved** subject to the following being provided to the Committee:

- Confirmation of the timeline for the transition from Northeastern University to UMass Boston as the partner in the BA in Global Business (USA). This should clearly indicate when the partnership with the former will conclude and when the partnership with the latter will commence, and what university DCU students who commenced their studies in 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 onwards will attend in Year 3.
- Synthesis of information regarding the curriculum mapping that clearly demonstrates how the curriculum at UMass Boston maps to the approved award. This can be done by demonstrating how the curriculum at UMass Boston compares to the curriculum at Northeastern University so that the Committee can be satisfied they are closely aligned or equivalent.
- Statement confirming that the same methods of operating currently in place with Northeastern University will continue with UMass Boston and, if not, providing an outline of how they will be different.

The Faculty is also required to engage with the OVPAA to ensure a suitable MOA setting out how this arrangement will be operationalised is in place in advance of DCU students attending UMass Boston in Year 3 of the BA in Global Business.

## 8. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

### 8.1 Revised Academic Offering: MA in European Law and Policy

The proposal to deliver a Graduate Certificate in European Law and Policy and a Graduate Diploma in European Law and Policy as standalone programmes, worth 30 and 60 credits respectively, was **not approved**.

It was noted that the University has pulled back on offering standalone Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programmes unless they are developed in response to national funding initiatives, e.g. Springboard, or there is a guaranteed pipeline of students through an agreement with a professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB).

The Committee recommends that the modules in the MA in European Law and Policy are instead submitted for approval as micro-credentials, which would ensure the Faculty meets its contractual commitment regarding EUACADEMY and can offer the learner opportunities envisaged.

## 9. DCU Futures: Completion of the approval process

### 9.1 Change to Programme Title: BSc in Global Challenges

The Chair reminded the Committee that at its meeting on 19 February 2025, the programme team for the BSc in Global Challenges were given an opportunity to change the programme title as part of the formal closing out of the accreditation process.

The proposal to change the programme and award title to ‘BSc in Global Challenges: Sustainable Societies and Technology’ was **approved**. It was noted that the use of a colon in the award title does not reflect standard practice and its approval in this instance relates to very particular circumstances and does not set a precedent.

The Committee recognised the extensive work of the programme team in consulting with students and arriving at a unanimous decision regarding the preferred award title that captures the three distinct streams within the programme.

## 10. Faculty of Science and Health

### 10.1 Proposal for Collaborative PhD Programme Provision – Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU)

The Chair informed members that the proposal for collaborative PhD programme provision involving DCU's School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health (SNPCH) and the College of Nursing in Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) is being considered by Education Committee in accordance with the collaborative provision approval protocol for off-site delivery of research programmes. The proposal was approved by the Graduate Research Studies Board at its meeting on 24 April 2025, ahead of consideration by Education Committee.

Professor Blánaid White, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health, set out the context for the proposal, explaining to the Committee that it builds on the longstanding collaboration between the School and PNU involving the off-site delivery of the MSc in Nursing: Advanced Practice.

Professor White answered a number of queries raised by the Committee, confirming that faculty from SNPCH will fulfil the role of primary supervisor and have capacity to do so, while secondary supervision will be provided by faculty from PNU who are PhD qualified; a dedicated administrator will be assigned to this programme to manage and systematically monitor engagement of PNU students so potential issues are identified before they arise at the point of annual review meetings; and all standard entry requirements for the DCU PhD programme will apply to PNU students.

She acknowledged the work of Professor Sharon O'Brien, Dean of Graduate Studies in developing the model. Approval will ensure that PNU Nursing postgraduate research students will not be subject to the standard process for notifying the University of their intention to reside abroad for the duration of their studies at the point of registration. Instead, the completed Student-Supervisor Agreements for these students must be submitted to GRSB for noting.

The Committee **approved** the proposed model in the context of the SNPCH delivering DCU's PhD programme off-site in PNU in parallel with the master's programme. It was noted that this is not a model that is applicable universally but rather sets out the University's expectations regarding the supports, capacity and experience of collaborating with a



potential partner required for collaborative PhD programme provision to be considered. Professor Elliott signalled that a similar context exists within DCU Business School in relation to longstanding collaboration with PNU and that he intends to progress a similar proposal over the coming months.

It was also noted that the memo regarding operations was not under consideration by the Committee but would be further discussed by the Chair, Professor White and Professor O'Brien.

#### 10.2 Revised Academic Offering: MSc in Psychotherapy

The Revised Academic Offering for the MSc in Psychotherapy was deferred to the next meeting of the Education Committee Standing Committee, scheduled for 20 May 2025, to allow additional time to consider the revisions to the proposal following feedback from Education Committee.

### SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

#### 11. Report on Devolved Decisions (2024/25)

The report on devolved decisions made by the Faculties during the 2024/25 academic year was noted by the Committee.

#### 12. Faculty APR Reports

The Annual Programme Review (APR) Reports from DCU Business School, DCU Institute of Education, the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and the Faculty of Science and Health were noted. Professor Hand informed the Committee that the APR Report from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences will be submitted to the Secretary in the coming weeks.

It was agreed that the Chair would review the APR Reports over the summer period, with the aim of preparing a summary of key findings and actions for consideration at the September meeting of Education Committee, before these are raised with the University Executive.

### **13. Student Performance Dashboards**

Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Institutional Research & Analysis Officer, demonstrated the functionality of the new dashboards that have been recently developed by QIO to support institutional analysis of student performance and CAO application data.

With respect to the former, Dr Burgi-Tian informed the Committee that staff can now review summary data relating to exam results for postgraduate taught programmes, Year 1 results in undergraduate programmes v. CAO points or Leaving cert mathematics performance, academic journey and progression, and module coursework and examination mix. Dr Burgi-Tian called particular attention to how the new dashboards allow for the learner journeys to be mapped from students' point of entry to DCU onward or from their point of graduation backward, which captures important data on student transfer, progression and completion trends. She also highlighted that CAO application data can be analysed against sectoral and institutional data over the last five years. Dr Burgi-Tian confirmed that the conversion prediction model for CAO applicants is accurate within <1% variance.

Dr Burgi-Tian informed members that upcoming analysis by QIO will concentrate on the analysis of student performance correlated with deprivation index data, post-primary to university progression prediction and academic success and graduate outcomes, and the development of mechanisms to measure industry engagement and identify at-risk students.

The Chair thanked Dr Burgi-Tian for the presentation, which demonstrates the considerable advances made by the University in terms of its capacity to analyse and report on key student data and recognised the vital work of QIO in this regard. The Chair reiterated that specific decisions must now be made so this new capacity supports targeted decision-making related to student success initiatives.

The Chair emphasised the need for a systematic framework for the presentation, analysis and reporting of data, an agreed protocol on access to specific datasets, and an act/monitor/review cycle in relation to prioritised issues or targets. The Committee acknowledged that a significant portion of data review, reflection and response takes place at the programme level but that Education Committee has a role to maintain oversight of trends and outliers at the institutional level, and to monitor the impact of initiatives to address areas of concern identified.

The Committee agreed that a working group would be established to develop a draft framework and agree on core datasets over the summer period and report back early in the 2025/26 academic year so QIO can start developing the necessary data analysis and reporting tools.

**14. Any Other Business**

The Chair informed members that the minutes of this meeting of Education Committee will be approved electronically to allow for submission to the final meeting of Academic Council for the current academic year.

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

**Date of next meeting:**

Wednesday, 10 September 2025  
at 2.00 pm

AG01, Glasnevin Campus