

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, 16 April 2025

2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Room AG01, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Jennifer Bruton (Chair), Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan, Professor Anne Looney, 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: Ms Aoife Butler, Professor John Doyle and Professor Lisa Looney

In attendance: Dr Jing Burgi-Tian and Ms Goretti Daughton

Professor Lisa Looney requested that Dr Jennifer Bruton, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, chair this meeting of Education Committee in her absence.

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 19 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 19 March 2025 were **approved** and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 19 March 2025

- 3.1 The Chair informed the Committee that the necessary changes were made to DCU's IEM Application Statement before submitting it to QQI on 27 March 2025.
- 3.2 Dr Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching and Learning, confirmed that the module descriptor for 'Global Finance Challenge' was provided to her for review. This module is now aligned with DCU's Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) framework and the revised MSc in Finance is ready for delivery in September 2025.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 11 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project (SLIP) Steering Group of 11 March 2025 were noted.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS**5. Strategic academic initiatives****5.1 *Student Feedback on Teaching***

Dr Monica Ward introduced a draft document, 'Procedure for Closing the Feedback Loop on the Student Survey of Teaching at DCU', which was developed in consultation with Ms Aoife Butler, DCU Students' Union Vice-President for Academic Life (SU-VPAL), Ms Martina Crehan, Head of the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU), and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning (ADTLs). This is part of the new, institution-wide approach to student feedback that was approved by Academic Council on 4 June 2024.

Dr Ward explained that the proposed procedure will enable closing of the feedback loop at multiple levels across the University, beginning with module coordinators providing initial responses to quantitative and qualitative feedback from students before the data is analysed at the programme level and responded to at the corresponding Programme Board. Subsequently, each faculty will also analyse the quantitative data to supplement the qualitative feedback provided through staff-student forums. Finally, student feedback will be

analysed at the institutional level and considered at a meeting with the Dean of Teaching and Learning, the SU-VPAL and the ADTLs, with an agreed statement issued to all students indicating what actions will be taken to address specific issues raised in the feedback.

It was agreed that an updated document for the 'Procedure for Closing the Feedback Loop on the Student Survey of Teaching at DCU' would be brought back to Education Committee with changes being made and/or clarifications being provided with respect to the following:

- Clearly indicate that module coordinators will be required to provide an initial response to both quantitative and qualitative feedback provided by students.
- Remove references to 'outlier' and replace with a more appropriate term.
- Make explicit the expectation that Programme Chairs are to meet with Class Reps in advance of the Programme Board to discuss student feedback at the programme level.
- Consider who has access to the data and how access to this data will be sequenced. For example, what is done when a sensitive issue emerges from the data and who is responsible for managing this with the relevant individual(s)?
- Clarify how feedback data will be analysed, especially in the first few iterations of the new procedure when institutional norms and trends have yet to be identified.
- Consider updating the Student Survey on Teaching (SSOT) to allow students to indicate their gender, if they wish to do so, and depersonalise the feedback by concentrating questions on the module and teaching and learning activities rather than the individual lecturer.

The Committee considered the potential to embed student feedback in the annual programme review and periodic programme review processes. It was acknowledged that this has not progressed beyond high-level design and that further work is required to achieve an integrated model that is systems enabled.

The Committee also considered how programme-level feedback will be benchmarked against averages and trends within schools and faculties and across the institution as a whole. Dr Ward explained that the functionality of Loop will be explored in the first instance before liaising with the Quality and Institutional Insights Office (QIO) to utilise its expertise in data analysis, dashboards and reporting.

Dr Ward informed the Committee that implementing this procedure is part of a multiphase plan to close the feedback loop. Phase 1 is currently underway as the SSOT process is being embedded across the University, while Phase 2 will commence in the 2025/26 academic year with a specific focus on enhancing the reporting process. Phase 3 aims to increase automation of the student feedback and reporting processes and will require enhancements to Loop and engaging with QIO and TEU to explore the most efficient and effective methods for gathering, presenting and analysing student feedback data and reporting back to students on key findings and the actions being taken to address issues being raised.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

6. DCU Business School

6.1 Revised Academic Offering: Graduate Certificate in Management (Operations and Supply Chain)

The Revised Academic Offering (RAO) for the Graduate Certificate in Management (Operations and Supply Chain) was **approved** subject to the following amendments being made to the RAO document:

- The approved award/parchment title is 'Graduate Certificate in Management in Operations and Supply Chain' as per the decision of Education Committee on 17 April 2024, when it concluded approval of the 'Operations and Supply Chain' pathway in the MSc in Management.
- Include a reference to DCU's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process with respect to applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirements for the programme.

DCU Business School is advised to liaise with DCU Studio immediately to begin preparing the modules for online delivery and engage with the OVPAA to discuss the requirement for a service level agreement to establish the contractual basis for the collaboration with Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE) for the purpose of delivering this particular programme.

7. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

7.1 Revised Academic Offering: Graduate Certificate in Climate Action, Energy and Public Policy

The Revised Academic Offering for the Graduate Certificate in Climate Action, Energy and Public Policy was **approved** subject to the following clarifications being provided and reflected in the RAO document:

- Will the award classification be calculated based on results from 'Public Policy Analysis', 'Sustainable Enterprise and Innovation' and 'Future Generations: Priorities, Policies, Politics' only? If so, please indicate this and that 'Career Transitions and Success' will not be included in the calculation of the award classification as it is 'pass/fail'.
- Confirm that the Faculty has engaged with DCU Finance regarding the additional resources required to deliver the programme.

8. Faculty of Science and Health

8.1 Revised Academic Offering: MSc in Psychotherapy

The Revised Academic Offering (RAO) for the MSc in Psychotherapy was **not approved**.

The Committee recognised that the regulatory body permits blended delivery, with a maximum 30% of content delivered online. However, it was noted that the proposal does not demonstrate adherence to DCU's quality assurance standards regarding blended and online delivery. The following points of feedback were noted by the Committee:

- The proposal does not provide detail of any pedagogical re-design to make the programme suitable for blended delivery and there is no commitment or plan to implement a re-design of the programme to align with the standards as set out in 'DCU's Principles for Quality Assurance of DCU E-Learning and Blended Provision'.
- The proposal does not articulate what the programme team understands best practice to be with respect to blended delivery or how it intends to ensure suitable teaching and learning technologies will be embedded in the programme. More specifically, the proposal does not provide sufficient evidence

of how the programme redesign will support active learning and utilise technologies suited to the content being delivered online.

- The precise rationale for the increase in online content to a maximum 30% is unclear. With no information provided regarding the delivery schedule, i.e. when content will be delivered online or in-person, it is difficult to understand how the proposed change to the programme will improve its competitiveness in the current market.
- There appears to be no oversight at the programme level regarding what content or teaching and learning activities will be delivered online. Without such oversight, the decision to deliver specific content and activities online will happen on an ad hoc basis, which risks increasing potential for inconsistency in the learning experience across the programme as a whole and creating confusion amongst students. Further information is required regarding how the programme is being redesigned as a blended learning programme with up to a maximum 30% of its content being delivered online across the programme as a coherent whole.

It was agreed that each of the points above must be addressed in a revised RAO in order for the proposal to be re-considered by Education Committee.

SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

9. Student Performance Dashboards

Dr Rachel Keegan, Director of Quality and Institutional Research, requested to defer this item to the May meeting of Education Committee. Dr Keegan asked the Committee to consider its data requirements going forward in the context of the new student information system and how data should be shared with members to facilitate detailed and broad analysis.

Dr Keegan also informed the Executive Deans that a number of dashboards can be made available to them in advance of the May meeting of Education Committee, including dashboards on academic success, exam results for postgraduate taught programmes, student progression and CAO points v. Year 1 performance.

10. Green Paper on QQI's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy

Ms Goretti Daughton, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance, provided an update to the Committee on DCU's response to 'Green Paper on QQI's Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) Policy'. Ms Daughton informed members that QQI is requesting input on multiple initiatives and policy developments, including intermediate qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 and micro-credentials.

Ms Daughton informed members that following this initial consultation, it is expected that the white paper will signal greater alignment of organisational structures and harmonisation of credit systems across the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors to support students to move between different types of providers for the purpose of progression.

Feedback on 'Green Paper on QQI's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy' has been received from units across the University. DCU's response will refer to the University's particular approach to the double counting of credits; suggest the development of a qualifications and credit framework to support flexible learning and credit accumulation; seek clarification on what is meant by, and the key terms associated with, 'stacking of credits' and 'recognition of prior learning' in the context of ATP; and highlight some of the challenges involved in harmonising data across multiple sectors and systems to allow for monitoring of the student journey across different institutions.

The Committee recognised that the ATP policy reflects a unified tertiary system and presupposes standardisation of delivery across the FE and HE sectors and speaks to a desire to establish equivalence between HET and FET credit systems. It was also recognised that the policy would see QQI adopt a more active monitoring role as it seeks to obtain relevant data via the Annual Quality Report and evaluate implementation of the policy.

It was noted that any proposal to disband the concept of double counting of credit will require institutional consideration and that DCU's current objective is to build partnerships in the region to facilitate enhanced access, transfer and progression rather than subscribing to the model for a unified national tertiary system.

11. Any Other Business

Professor Blánaid White, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health, informed the Committee that the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is seeking expressions of interest from universities to expand capacity in courses relating to the allied health professions in the 2025/26 academic year.

Professor White confirmed that the Faculty of Science and Health intends to submit an expression of interest to increase capacity in the MSc in Physiotherapy to sixty students over two years. The Committee expressed its support for the submission as the MSc in Physiotherapy was originally developed in anticipation of this call from the HEA.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 14 May 2025
at 2.00 pm

AG01, Glasnevin Campus