

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday, 19 March 2025

2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Room G401, St. Pat's Campus

Present: Dr Jennifer Bruton, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr David Mc Carthy (Secretary), Dr Ruth McManus, Professor Sharon O'Brien, Dr Monica Ward and Professor Blánaid White

Apologies: Dr Claire Bohan, Ms Aoife Butler, Professor John Doyle, Ms Pauline Mooney and Dr Paul Young

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

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 February 2025

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

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 19 February 2025

- 3.1 Paper setting out DCU's priorities for the next phase of the Stronger Connections with Further Education initiative is on the agenda (Item 4.2).
- 3.2 The Secretary confirmed that the necessary changes were made to 'Collaborative Provision Approval Protocols' following feedback from Education Committee on the proposed revisions. The revised protocols have been published on the collaborative provision webpage.
- 3.3 DCU's application to QQI for authorisation to use the 'TrustEd Ireland' quality mark is on the agenda (Item 4.1).
- 3.4 Professor Dominic Elliott, Executive Dean of DCU Business School, confirmed that the Programme Chair is focusing on the Global Finance Research Challenge module to ensure the revised MSc in Finance is ready for delivery in September 2025. The Programme Chair will liaise with Dr Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching and Learning, to close out the remaining action and finalise approval.
- 3.5 The Chair informed members that a revised Memo was submitted to Education Committee, which included the revised module descriptors for the MSc in Business Administration (Aviation Leadership). It was agreed that the revised descriptors provide the necessary information regarding the changes to teaching and independent learning hours, indicative content and learning outcomes to reflect the reapportioning of credits across the four modules. The proposed changes to the MSc in Business Administration (Aviation Leadership) were **approved**.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS

4. Strategic academic initiatives

4.1 *DCU's Application for TrustEd Quality Mark*

The Chair welcomed Ms Goretti Daughton, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance, who coordinated the preparation of DCU's application to QQI for authorisation to

use the 'TrustEd Ireland' quality mark. The Chair reminded members that Education Committee agreed at its last meeting to consider the application for approval before it is submitted to QQI by the deadline of 28 March 2025.

Ms Daughton informed members that DCU must apply to QQI for authorisation to use the quality mark, which requires demonstrating the University's compliance with 'Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners' (HE Code') via its International Education Mark Application Statement (IEMAS). The Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (OVPA) prepared DCU's IEMAS following structured engagements with key units involved in the delivery of services and supports to international learners, including DCU Student Recruitment, the Admissions and Student Fees Teams in DCU Registry, Student Support & Development and DCU International Academy (DCUIA). These units provided important input regarding the institutional policies and local processes and procedures that facilitate the delivery of services and supports to international learners.

Ms Daughton explained that an executive summary has been provided alongside the IEMAS, which highlights key components of DCU's application, including the strategic objectives for international education, the organisational structures supporting the international learner experience, the nature and scope of DCU's transnational education and fully online programmes, and the enrolment figures for international learners for the 2022/23 academic year.

It was noted that DCU has demonstrated its compliance with 59 of the 60 applicable criteria and achieved the minimum compliance rate across the six distinct areas covered by the HE Code, i.e. marketing and recruitment; admissions; fees, refunds and subsistence; student services and supports; English language supports; and international learners outside the state.

It was further noted that, at the time of submitting its IEMAS, DCU cannot demonstrate full compliance with one of the applicable criteria, Criterion 5.5(c). This criterion requires that the International Foundation Year (IFY) programmes recognised by a provider must be validated by an Irish awarding body and lead to an award included within the NQF. DCU has included a plan for how the University will demonstrate full compliance with this criterion, while confirming that the timeline is dependent on engagements between DCUIA and QQI regarding the validation of its IFY programme.

DCU's IEM Application Statement was **approved** subject to the following changes being made:

- Make it clear that DCU Global is an online information hub for international learners and that recruitment activities are integrated into DCU Student Recruitment.
- In the section setting out the nature and scope of DCU's transnational education activities, indicate the length of time that formal collaborative partnerships have been in place with Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) and Wuhan University and include the programmes that are currently delivered as part of these arrangements.
- In the section setting out the nature and scope of DCU's fully online programmes, confirm that the University's approach is focused on the domestic market rather than recruiting international learners.
- With respect to the plan for how the University will demonstrate full compliance with Criterion 5.5(c), clarify that DCU has informed DCUIA of the steps involved in having its IFY programme validated by an Irish awarding body and the associated timeline for ensuring it leads to an award included within the NFQ.
- Indicate that DCU will explicitly commit that IFY programmes it recognises are validated by an Irish awarding body and leads to an award included within the NFQ, within two years of receiving authorisation from QQI to use the 'TrustEd Ireland' quality mark.

It was agreed that the OVPAA would submit the IEMAS to QQI on behalf of the University once the necessary changes have been made. It was also agreed that the IEMAS would be submitted to Academic Council for noting at its next meeting on 2 April 2025.

4.2 *Stronger Connections with Further Education*

The Chair set out the context for 'Stronger Connections with Further Education – DCU Priorities', which builds on the report from the Stronger Connections with Further Education Steering Committee that was considered by Education Committee at its meeting on 22 January 2025 and the discussion at that meeting.

The document was developed by the Chair and Professor Anne Looney, Executive Dean of DCU Institute of Education and Chair of the Steering Group, and aims to firmly re-establish

DCU's priorities regarding engagements with further education and education (FET) institutions before further actions in this area are undertaken by faculties.

Professor A. Looney reiterated the importance of establishing these priorities so that the University's objectives are understood at the faculty level, while having robust agreements in place with FET partners will help ensure these engagements are successful and sustainable for the next phase of the Stronger Connections with Further Education initiative.

The following priorities for the next phase of the Stronger Connections with Further Education initiative were **approved**:

1. New partnerships would be considered only where there is a prospect of a pipeline into programme(s) currently undersubscribed.
2. Advanced entry pipelines with a partner would be limited to contexts where that partner is also already delivering for DCU in terms of first year entry, and it is clear that any arrangement does not constitute a joint programme.
3. The University will build on existing FET partnership(s) to provide a pipeline of suitably prepared FET graduates into the Bachelor of Education programme while working on the system barriers to progression.
4. The University will put existing NAVET arrangements on a firm footing in terms of the underpinning MOAs and will consider up to 2 more programmes/partnerships using this model if any Faculty wishes to establish such an arrangement.
5. The University will consider the admission of a small number (< 5) of FET graduates who meet the FET entry requirements for their chosen programme, and a) do not have a LC result because of early school-leaving and b) have participated in and completed a validated National Volunteering Portfolio.

It was noted that the proportion of places allocated to FET graduates will continue to include a large number of direct applicants as well as those entrants via partnerships with specific FET providers.

It was agreed that the Steering Committee should be dissolved now that the first phase in the Stronger Connections with Further Education initiative has been completed and a set of strategic priorities for the University have been approved. Professor A. Looney will inform the Steering Committee of this decision and inform members of the actions that will be taken as part of the next phase of the initiative.

It was also agreed that a working group would be established for this next phase, which will adopt a two-stage approach to support the University in achieving its overall FET enrolment target. This will involve focusing on the mechanics of the processes relating to the approved priorities before engaging with faculties to ensure staff are provided with clear and concise instruction on how to operationalise these processes. It was noted that the Working Group will not be a sub-committee of Education Committee.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

There were no items for consideration under Section C.

5. Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 16 April 2025
at 2.00 pm

AG01, Glasnevin Campus