

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, 22 January 2025

2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Room AG01, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Jennifer Bruton, Ms Aoife Butler, Professor Dominic Elliott, Professor Derek Hand, Dr Rachel Keegan, 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 and Professor Blánaid White

Apologies: Professor Mark Brown and Professor John Doyle

In attendance: Dr Jing Burgi-Tian. Dr Breda McNally and Dr Justin Rami attended to deliver a presentation under Item 5.1.

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 11 December 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 11 December 2024 were **approved** and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 11 December 2024

- 3.1 As per the recommendation of the Education Committee regarding the validation proposal for the MSc in Business Analytics, two additional nominations for the Accreditation Board were submitted by the programme proposer. These nominations were **approved**.
- 3.2 The revised validation proposal for the MSc in Behavioural Science for Innovation and Design is on the agenda (Item 6.2).
- 3.3 The validation proposal for the Bachelor of Laws (LLB), including a memo from the proposers addressing queries raised by the Committee, is on the agenda (Item 7.2).
- 3.4 DCU Futures programmes will be concluded at the February meeting of Education Committee.
- 3.5 Dr Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching and Learning, confirmed that the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in DCU Business School is liaising with her regarding the development of the Challenge-Based Learning component of the revised MSc in Finance programme.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project (SLIP) Steering Group of 17 December 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the SLIP Steering Group of 17 December 2024 were noted.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS**5. Strategic academic initiatives****5.1 *Stronger Connections with Further Education: Report from Steering Committee***

Professor Anne Looney, Executive Dean of DCU Institute of Education and Chair of the Steering Committee, recognised that while significant targets have been achieved as part of the Stronger Connections with Further Education initiative and there is a lot of interest from Further Education and Training (FET) providers in establishing partnerships with DCU and

creating advanced entry routes to the University's programmes, key decisions are required to determine future activities in this area and how FET sits within the institutional strategy and constituent Faculty strategies.

On behalf of the steering committee, Dr Breda McNally and Dr Justin Rami, DCU Institute of Education, delivered a presentation on Phase 1 of the initiative, providing an update on the number of FET routes and growth in uptake during the period 2022 – 2024. Dr McNally called particular attention to the significant increase in the number of programmes with FET routes compared to 2020 and that some of these routes are highly competitive, as illustrated by the number of offers as a percentage of the total number of applications. However, it was recognised that the university is not in a position to make offers to some applicants and that the reasons for this require further exploration.

Dr Jennifer Bruton, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, explained that FET applicants sometimes do not satisfy the minimum entry requirements. In the context of computing and engineering programmes, FET students need to be made aware of the entry requirements in mathematics for specific programmes so they choose the correct course, which the Faculty is doing at Open Days and through its engagements with FET providers. The Chair recognised the value of maintaining close relationships with individual partners to ensure students are aware of the minimum entry requirements for specific programmes when choosing their FET course.

The Chair welcomed the report from the Steering Committee for Stronger Connections with Further Education as establishing the starting point for discussions on what DCU wants to achieve next, with respect to specific performance indicators as per the Teaching & Learning Strategy. The Chair acknowledged that the work of the Steering Committee reflects the work of individual members from stakeholder units across DCU.

Professor Looney explained that, as DCU enters the next phase of the initiative, it is important to determine exactly what DCU wants to achieve with respect to FET and how this can be realised, and to consider whether a specific strategic approach should be adopted to manage requests from existing partners for new pathways and initial engagements from potential new partners. Professor Looney reiterated that the focus should be on those places already ring-fenced on programmes that are currently not being filled, before considering new requests for places on specific programmes.

The Chair reiterated the goal that FET students be spread across all eligible programmes rather than concentrated in a select few and that demand for all programmes should be analysed to understand why specific programmes do not attract many FET students and to ensure prospective students are aware of all access options available to them. Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Institutional Research & Analysis Officer, informed the Committee that the Quality and Institutional Insights (QIO) Office can provide the Steering Committee with market analysis and reports on progression and attainment for FET students to assist it in its subsequent activities.

It was noted that the report makes a number of proposals in response to significant changes in the FET sector and to utilise DCU's position as a sought after partner amongst FET providers within the northeast region. The Chair thanked the Steering Committee for its work to date and reiterated the importance of the University adopting a strategic approach to its ongoing activities in this dynamic sector.

It was agreed that the Chair and Professor Looney would collaborate on a paper setting out DCU's proposed position for the next phase of this work, including in relation to routes to Bachelor of Education programmes.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

6. Faculty of Science and Health

6.1 *Revised Academic Offering: BA in Humanities (Psychology Major)*

The Revised Academic Offering (RAO) for the BA in Humanities (Psychology Major) was **approved**.

It was noted that the programme will continue to offer open-access entry for applicants over 23, alongside standard entry according to DCU's minimum entry requirements for applicants between 18 and 23. It is recommended that the Programme Board analyse completion rates with respect to the different entry routes as part of the programme review process.

6.2 *Validation Proposal: MSc in Behavioural Science for Innovation and Design*

The validation proposal for the MSc in Behavioural Science for Innovation and Design was **approved**.

It was noted that the proposers addressed the misalignment of claims regarding the technical ability of graduates and the content of the curriculum, confirmed the capacity within the School of Psychology to develop and deliver the programme as it is proposed, and revised the financial model so that the projected enrolment numbers are aligned with the additional resource requirements.

7. **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

7.1 *Memorandum of Agreement: College of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb)*

Professor Derek Hand, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, informed the Committee that Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) is now a constituent college of the College of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb).

The Committee noted the revisions to the Memorandum of Agreement, which now reflects the new title of BCFE, 'City of Dublin FET College, Southwest Campus, Ballyfermot Road', and includes details of arrangements for students on the BA in Media Production Management that do not complete the programme during the 2025-26 academic year.

7.2 *Validation Proposal: Bachelor of Laws (LLB)*

The validation proposal for the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) was **not approved**. It was noted that the proposed programme does not adhere to *Marks and Standards*, more specifically Regulation 2.4.4, which states that "a student may not present the same ECTS credits as qualification for more than one DCU award" or "claim exemption in respect of ECTS credits towards one award that have already been presented as qualification for another award".

Furthermore, it was noted that approval of the proposal would result in an undesired precedent being set. Should the proposers wish to proceed with introducing a programme leading to a Bachelor of Laws, they are encouraged to explore models that adhere to *Marks and Standards*, such as a Level 8 conversion course or a Level 9 Master's.

SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

8. Any Other Business

8.1 SATLE Funding

Dr Ward provided an update on the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding. The annual report is due to be submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) at the end of January and will set out how the allocated funds have been used in the areas of sustainable development, academic integrity and digital transformation.

The report will highlight that the funds have been used in the way agreed at Education Committee: to finance a number of teaching and learning enhancement projects across the University, three staff positions, and faculty initiatives in academic integrity and education for sustainable development, while a proportion has been ring-fenced for related activities coordinated by the DCU Students' Union.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 19 February 2025
at 2.00 pm

AG01, Glasnevin Campus