

ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES

5 February 2025

2.05 p.m. – 3.35 p.m.

AG01, Glasnevin Campus

Present:

A. Bourke	M. Breen	J. Bruton
A. Butler	P.J. Byrne	J. Cherry
P. Clarke	O. Clarkin	E. Clinton
E. Conway	B. Daly	J. Doyle
N. Dunne	M. Efthymiou	J. Foster
M. Freeley	Y. Freeney	G. French
C. Furlong	F. Gallagher	P. Gallagher
J. Gaughran	R. Keegan	N. Kerrigan
M. Leahy	L. Looney (Chair)	A. Maillot
A. Matthews	U. McCabe	R. McManus
P. McMorrow	E. McNulty	P. Mooney
P. Murphy	W. Murphy	T. Ní Mhuirthile
B. Nolan	M. Rocchi	M. Ryan
S. Sambandam	G. Uí Laighléis	M. Venker
A. Whelan (Secretary)	B. White	

Apologies:

C. Bohan	A. Brennan	D. Burke
M. Coulter	Y. Crotty	D. Elliott
M. Flynn	P. Flynn	C. Gurrin
B. Harney	E. Healion	D. Keogh
V. Lambert	J. Lynch	J. McDonough

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AC2025/A1

E. Ní Mhaille	S. O'Brien	M. Pryce
A. Sinnott	M. Ward	

In Attendance:

V. Cooke	C. Dunne (for Item 9.1)	D. Galvin
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1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A. Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 27 November 2024

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

It was noted that there were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 13 November 2024 and 11 December 2024

The minutes were approved.

5. Minutes of the meetings of the University Standards Committee of 31 October 2024

The minutes were approved.

6. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 17 October 2024 and 28 November 2024

The minutes were approved.

7. Minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 17 December 2024

The minutes were approved.

B. Policy and Strategy issues

8. President's report (oral report)

There was no President's report due to the absence of the President on university business.

9. Strategic academic initiatives

9.1 Transversal Skills programme and platform roll out

Dr Ciarán Dunne, Transversal Skills Director, joined the meeting for this item.

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar introduced this item and welcomed the Transversal Skills Director to the meeting, remarking that it was timely for Academic Council to receive a briefing on the significant progress that has been made in the transversal skills dimension of DCU Futures.

The Transversal Skills Director noted that the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy seeks to ensure that students develop both the disciplinary knowledge, and the transversal skills needed to reframe uncertainty as an opportunity and successfully navigate a world defined by rapid change. As agreed in the Performance Agreement 2024-2028 between DCU and the Higher Education Authority, a key performance objective is to integrate transversal skills in curriculum delivery and university processes for an expanded set of undergraduate programmes across each of the five Faculties. It was highlighted that transversal skills have already been integrated into one hundred modules to date, reaching over 2,400 students. It

is planned to scale this over time. The Transversal Skills Director remarked that the development, embedding and scaling of transversal skills continues to be a substantial innovation and change management process.

A significant driver in the strategic prioritisation of transversal skills is to ensure that the University can help students thrive in unscripted times and respond to a 'skills first' recruitment model among employers, while remaining distinct in our offering within the higher education sector. The skills first recruitment model requires the skills of DCU students and graduates to be demonstrable. 'MySkills', a dedicated transversal skills platform, has been developed to allow students to build a profile based on an assessment within their programme of their competence in specific transversal skills. Students will also be able to self-report via the platform. Students are prompted to draw on their lived experience to demonstrate their skills. Students can present their skills portfolio to potential employers, a functionality that is welcomed by DCU Students' Union as it enables students to enhance their attractiveness in a competitive labour market.

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar thanked the Transversal Skills Director for the informative presentation and noted his appointment to the National Skills Council, which demonstrates national recognition of his expertise and ongoing contribution to the skills agenda.

Dr Ciarán Dunne, Transversal Skills Director, left the meeting after this item.

C. Items for formal approval/noting

10. DCU Admissions Principles

Approved

11. English Language Policy

Approved

12. Validation Reports**12.1** *MSc in Business Analytics*

Approved

12.2 *MSc in Behavioural Science for Innovation and Design*

Approved

13. Recommendations from Progression and Award Boards for Spring 2025 Conferring

Approved

14. Recommendations from Faculty Award Boards for Research Degrees for Spring 2025 Conferring

Approved

15. DCU Outline Academic Calendar 2027-2028

This item was discussed under Item 18. 'Any other business'.

Approved

16. Report from Research Strategy Committee University Research Committee 2023-2024

The Vice-President for Research introduced this item by calling attention to the recent change to the University's research committee structure. The Research Strategy Committee is a sub-committee of Academic Council and University Research Committee is a sub-committee of the Research Strategy Committee. A joint report on the work of both committees will be submitted to Academic Council annually and will address research performance in light of agreed objectives of the University Research Strategy.

The Vice-President for Research drew attention to the volume of articles produced by DCU in 2023 and 2024 noting a 28% increase based on current available data, in comparison with the baseline year. Overall research income has increased by 42% when compared with the baseline. It was noted that a focus of the Research Strategy is to advance the University's research reputation and impact, with the growth in the number of citations being illustrative of growing impact. The Research Strategy calls out a commitment to ensure that all individual articles are widely promoted for maximum impact. It was noted that there is no expectation that academic staff would equally contribute to research output, as the balance between research and other responsibilities can vary.

Although there has been an increase in overall research productivity some opportunities remain to make further advances. One such example is to encourage a higher number of PhD graduates to publish during, or within a year of completing their studies, as well as managing communications to ensure that DCU is cited in their publications, to enable them to be counted in our annual research publication statistics. Other key performance indicators include an increase in funding applications and Postgraduate Research numbers. The Vice-President for Research welcomed the PhD stipend increase in the most recent government budget but noted that it will result in a higher cost to the University and, most likely, fewer studentships being offered.

The Vice-President for Research informed members that the Research Development and Support Team had recently undergone its Quality Review and will be following up on the recommendations made as a result of this.

Noted

17. Report from GRSB Appeals Standing Committee

Noted

18. Any other business

A discussion took place in relation to Item 15. 'DCU Outline Academic Calendar 2027-2028'. A query was raised regarding the possibility of changing the start date of semester two, to allow more time after the conclusion of semester one examinations before the next teaching

term begins. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar noted that the draft outline academic calendar is bound by the annual calendar principles and reflects previous decisions made by Academic Council within the guardrails of agreed parameters. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar recognised the concerns raised and stated that an engagement would take place with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning regarding the concern raised.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

2 April 2025

2:00 pm

AG01, Glasnevin Campus