

**UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Thursday 11 April 2024

10:15 am – 11:15 am

G401, St. Patricks' Campus

**Present:** Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Yseult Freaney, Dr Seline Keating, Professor Theo Lynn, Dr Jennifer McManis, Dr Ruth McManus, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Mark O'Brien, Professor Sharon O'Brien, Dr Niamh O'Sullivan, Dr Monica Ward (Chair), Ms Aedín Whelan (Secretary), and Ms Jennifer Yore

**Apologies:** Dr Martina Crehan and Mr Justin Doyle

**A. Minutes and related issues**

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2024**

The minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2024 were approved.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 22 February 2024**

It was noted that there are no immediate matters arising for action.

**B. Faculty issues****4. External examiners for taught programmes****4.1 Nominations**

## 4.1.1 University of Lancaster

Modules in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies

Approved

## 4.1.2 University of Limerick

Module in the School of Electronic Engineering

Approved

## 4.1.3 University of Edinburgh

Doctor of Elite Performance (Sport)

Approved, subject to the removal of thesis modules.

## 4.1.4 University of Sheffield

Doctor of Education

Approved, subject to confirmation that modules are taught, rather than research based.**4.2 Renewal of appointment/changes to duties**

No items.

**5. Other issues: Faculty****5.1 Faculty of Humanities and Social Science**

## 5.1.1 Legacy Readmission Request: MA in International Security and Conflict Studies

Not approved

There was insufficient information provided on the Legacy Readmission form for University Standards Committee to make a decision. It was requested that additional

information would be provided with respect to any related learning undertaken by the student since they were last registered, as well as further detail regarding the circumstances that prevented the submission of their dissertation. It was requested that the student should be informed that if a legacy readmission was granted, they would be required to surrender the Graduate Diploma previously awarded. The student should also be informed that the zero mark awarded for the first attempt of their dissertation would have an impact on their grade upon completion. USC requested that the form be resubmitted for consideration at its next meeting.

5.1.2 Confirmation of Current External Examiners as Periodic Programme Reviewers

Noted

**5.2 Faculty of Science and Health**

5.2.1 Programme Regulations for MSc in Psychotherapy 2023-24

Approved

**5.3 Faculty of Engineering and Computing**

5.3.1 Legacy Readmission Request: BSc in Information Technology

Approved

**C: Other issues (not Faculty-specific)**

**6. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Update**

The Chair outlined that an external review of content for the RPL webpage has been completed and progress is ongoing. Standardised text regarding the RPL process for use in validation and accreditation documentation is due to be finalised at the next meeting of the working group.

## **7. QQI Proposed Convention on the Titling of Minor, Special Purpose, and Supplemental Classes of Awards**

The Chair introduced this item, referring to a paper circulated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) regarding the titling of non-major awards. Three questions are posed for consideration by awarding bodies. The paper will be referred to Education Committee and then Academic Council further to this meeting, before an

institutional response is returned to QQI by the President. The Chair indicated that there should be an agreed response of the Committee to the first question posed, and views are requested for the second and third questions. She also noted that question three would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration at a later date, as QQI have indicated that they will issue a subsequent paper specific to this topic.

***Question 1: Do you agree to abide by the proposed titling convention for minor, special-purpose and supplemental award classes.***

It was outlined by the Chair that DCU currently abides by the proposed titling convention for minor, special-purpose and supplemental classes of awards. However, it should be noted that for level 9 Certificate and Diploma programmes the terms 'Graduate' (as opposed to Postgraduate) as a prefix in both award titles are used. Discussion took place regarding the use of the word 'postgraduate' rather than 'graduate', with members noting that within the University both terms are used conversationally.

University Standards Committee approved confirming to QQI that the University abides by the proposed titling convention.

***Question 2: Do you think that the titling of minor, special-purpose and supplemental classes of awards should be regulated by a formal NFQ determination?***

The Committee agrees that having national standardisation across the sector would be best practice. Standardisation would ease recognition across the higher education system as well as for employment purposes.

**Question 3: What are your views on having a convention restricting the usage of the term “professional” and cognate terms in NFQ award stems to qualifications that are recognised as preparing a person to practice a well-defined (but not necessarily regulated) profession?**

- a. Do you think such awards should be required to be consistent with the NFQ Professional Award-type Descriptors?**
- b. Is there a need for such a convention for:**
  - i. Minor, special-purpose and supplemental awards?**
  - ii. Major awards?**
- c. Are there other specific prefixes that, in your view, should be avoided in NFQ award stems?**

It was noted that DCU currently offers a number of Professional Certificates / Professional Diplomas, all of which are related to regulated professions such as teaching, accountancy, and taxation. It was observed that there is inconsistency of practice across the sector and there would be a preference to standardise award titles nationally. The Committee believes that DCU is conservative in its use of the term ‘professional’ and will continue to be. It was agreed by the Committee that usage of the term ‘professional’ should be protected and limited to well-defined professions.

## **8. Marks and Standards 2024-25**

It was noted that the Marks and Standards 2024-2025 (V2024.1) document was presented for consideration at today’s meeting and that final approval would take place at the next meeting of USC in May 2024. There were no proposed changes to this version of the document.

A discussion ensued regarding the structure of the MSc in Finance programme. It is likely that this topic will need to be considered by USC in future with regard to current Marks and Standards however the matter requires consideration by other decision-making processes for approval in the first instance.

**Academic Integrity Update**

The Chair provided an update from the first meeting of 2023-24 of the sub-committee on Academic Integrity which took place on 28 March. It was outlined that the sub-committee will review and update DCU's Procedure for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Sanction in line with current national and international guidance and good practice. The updated Procedure will be referred to USC for approval at the May meeting. The Chair thanked members of the sub-committee for their engagement and contribution at the first meeting which led to a valuable discussion of the proposed changes to the procedure.

**9. Any other business**

There were no items of business.

**Date of next meeting:**

Thursday, 16 May 2024 10:00am Room A204, Glasnevin Campus
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