

**UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Thursday 9 January 2025

10:05 am – 11:00 am

A204, Glasnevin Campus

Present: Dr Martina Crehan, Dr Jennifer Foster, Professor Theo Lynn, Professor Anne Matthews, Dr Ruth McManus, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Professor Sharon O’Brien, Dr Monica Ward (Chair), and Ms Aedín Whelan (Secretary), and Ms Jennifer Yore

Apologies: Ms Aoife Butler, Professor Yseult Freeney, Dr Mark O’Brien, Ms Miriam Ryan

A. Minutes and related issues

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the University Standards Committee meeting of 31 October 2024 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the University Standards Committee of 31 October 2024

3.1 It was noted that the maximum number of modules to be assigned to External Examiners is on the agenda of this meeting (item 7).

- 3.2 It was noted that the Faculty of Science and Health framework for consideration of students with outstanding assessment material for Category 2 modules in exceptional circumstances is on the agenda of this meeting (item 13).

B. Faculty issues

4. External examiners for taught programmes

4.1 Nominations

- 4.1.1 South East Technological University - Carlow
Graduate Certificate in Women's Health (Sport & Exercise)
Approved
- 4.1.2 Atlantic Technological University - Sligo
BSc in Biotechnology
Approved

4.2 Renewal of appointment/changes to duties

There were no items for consideration.

5. Other issues: Faculty

5.1 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

- 5.1.1 Confirmation of Periodic Programme Reviewers in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Noted
- 5.1.2 Programme Regulations: European Master in Law, Data and Artificial Intelligence
Approved

5.2 Faculty of Science and Health

5.2.1 Confirmation of Periodic Programme Reviewers in the Faculty of Science and Health Noted

C: Other issues (not Faculty-specific)

6. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Update

The Chair provided an update regarding the National RPL Project which is funded by the Human Capital Initiative and funding for which is due to cease in March 2025. It was noted that significant work has been undertaken and DCU specific Standard Operating Procedures are near completion. The RPL team recently submitted an Institutional Spotlight for DCU for the upcoming RPL in 2025: Outcomes, Reflections, and Next Steps event which will take place on February 17th 2025.

7. External Examiner Guidelines – Maximum number of modules

It was noted that the number of modules proposed to be allocated to new external examiners, at the point where their nomination is being considered for approval by USC, can sometimes appear high. This could potentially present an unreasonable workload for the external examiner. It was remarked that as it not possible to quantify a precise number to illustrate the maximum number of modules that should be allocated to an external examiner and therefore it is suggested to expand section 3.11 of the Regulations and Guidelines: External Examiners for Taught Programmes/Modules, to include an advisory note as below:

The number of modules allocated to an external examiner should present a reasonable workload to ensure the nominated examiner is suitably able to carry out their duties.'

Approved

8. English Language Policy

It was noted that DCU is preparing its application for authorisation by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to use the new statutory quality mark, 'TrustEd', formerly referred to as the International Education Mark (IEM). As part of its application, DCU must demonstrate its compliance with six distinct principles, as set out in the 'Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners'. The English Language Policy has been developed by the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (OVPA), in consultation with Registry, so that DCU satisfies a specific criterion relating to Principle 5: English Language Policy Statement and International Foundation Year Programmes.

Approved

9. Programme Regulations Template 2025-26

The Secretary noted that some amendments to the 'Programme Regulations Template 2025/26' and associated 'Guidelines for use of Programme Regulations Template and information to be contained in each section 2025/26' have been made, as outlined below:

- Section 1.2 'Modules and credit weightings' has been removed as this functionality does not exist in Banner.
- Section 5: Wording updated to reflect Marks and Standards.
- Section 5: There is currently no longer an option to link to module specification guides for category 2 and/or category 3 modules.
- "Coursework" now replaces "continuous assessment" in line with Banner terminology.
- Guidelines have been updated to include updated text regarding carrying of modules as approved by USC in October 2024.

'Programme Regulations Template 2025/26'

Noted

'Guidelines for use of Programme Regulations Template and information to be contained in each section 2025/26'

Approved

10. DCU Admissions Principles

It was noted that the DCU Admissions Principles have been updated to refine and reword some text. The proposed revisions account for expanded admission routes and entry requirements and have been benchmarked against university and national strategic goals. The proposed changes have been reviewed by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar.

Following detailed discussion, the Committee approved this item subject to two amendments:

- replace "practices" with "procedures" in the first sentence of the second paragraph
- removal of bullet point 4 "Only admits students to academic programmes with which it believes they can successfully engage".

11. Draft Terms of Reference: Sub-committee on Academic Integrity

Approved

12. A Level scoring update

The Director of Registry introduced this item noting that University Standards Committee and Academic Council had previously approved a Universities Ireland working group proposal to make changes to A Level scoring for entry 2025. Since that approval, 2024 grade distribution data and A level participation data has been made available and applied to the draft scoring contained in the proposal.

Approved

13. Framework for consideration for students with outstanding assessment material for Category 2 modules in exceptional circumstances

It was noted that University Standards Committee approved a pilot framework specific to the Faculty of Science and Health in 2021, for the consideration of students with outstanding assessment material for Category 2 modules in exceptional circumstances.

The pilot was approved with an agreement that it would be reviewed after three years of operation, during the 2024-25 academic year. The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Science and Health confirmed that this process has only been used for students in exceptional circumstances, and the criteria for consideration are clearly defined in the relevant programme specific regulations. The Faculty propose that they would continue to use the framework in exceptional circumstances.

Approved

14. Faculty PPR Report: activities undertaken in 2023-2024 and planned for 2024-2025

The periodic programme reviews completed in 2023-2024 and planned for 2023-2025 for each Faculty/Unit were noted.

15. Any other business

There were no items of business.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 20 February 2025 10:00am A204, Glasnevin
--