

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 1 April 2020

2.00 p.m. – 3.20 p.m. via Zoom meeting

Present: Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Professor Michelle Butler, Mr Callaghan Commons, Professor John Doyle, Dr Yseult Freeney, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Professor Lisa Looney, Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Anne Sinnott and Dr Joseph Stokes

In attendance: Mr Martin Grehan

Apologies: Professor Anne Looney, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle and Professor Greg Hughes

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted, subject to the inclusion of the following three items under AOB:

- Notification of PPR change by Open Education
- Discussion of 'no detriment' policy petition
- Graduate Outcomes Survey 2020.

2. Minutes of Education Committee 11 March 2020

The minutes of 11 March 2020 were approved. It was noted that formal minutes would be signed once on-campus activity resumes.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 11 March 2020

- 3.1 The Chair reported that the Deputy Registrar and Academic Secretary had met with the Deputy Director of Registry and the Student Enrolment/Admissions Manager to discuss the feasibility of progressing Springboard students who have successfully completed a Graduate Certificate and whom it is known wish to progress directly to a relevant master's programme without their having to graduate and thereafter surrender their Graduate Certificate parchment. A possible means of achieving this had been identified and would be progressed in the coming weeks. It was noted that once agreement had been reached with respect to Registry-related matters, Finance Office colleagues would then be consulted and Education Committee updated accordingly (Item 7).
- 3.2 It was noted that work on a position paper on double and dual awards will be ongoing over the coming months (Item 3.1).
- 3.3 It was noted that the level of modules offered within a level 8 undergraduate certificate would be considered at a later date (Item 3.2).
- 3.4 It was noted that the NFQ level of taught modules on professional doctorate programmes would be addressed over the coming months (Item 3.4).
- 3.5 It was noted that the provision of more discipline-specific information for Schools on CAO points and its correlation with first year examination performance at DCU would be prepared using the Microsoft BI dashboard tool, following a pilot of the Graduate Outcomes Survey (Item 3.5).
- 3.6 It was noted in the context of ongoing MOOC development that the Executive Deans would develop a principles document to ensure that expertise is not replicated across the University (Item 3.6).
- 3.7 It was noted that *Employability Statements*, would be considered at a later meeting of Education Committee (Item 3.7).
- 3.8 It was noted that teaching effectiveness, one of the key priorities of the Teaching and Learning Strategy will be discussed by the Director of Quality Promotion and the Chair (Item 3.9).
- 3.9 It was noted that work on the amended statistical reports requested by Education Committee related to CAO performance and first year examination performance, and data on non-standard entrants is ongoing (Item 3.10).

- 3.10 It was noted that work is ongoing on adaption of the PPR process with a view to ensuring there is a process for the quality assurance of the creation of 'new programmes' where the existing programme has changed substantially since its initial accreditation (Item 3.11).
- 3.11 It was noted that the submission of NFQ compliant programme learning outcomes for the MSc in Global Management is awaited (Item 3.12).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA

It was noted that the next formal meeting of the IUA Groups would take place on 7 April 2020.

The Chair reported that the IUA Registrars are currently meeting on a daily basis due to the Covid-19 crisis.

The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies Group would be giving consideration to the timelines around funding of research students. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions research students are not currently in a position to conduct fieldwork and progress their research.

The Director of Quality Promotion noted that the IUA Quality Officers had given consideration to the appropriateness or otherwise, of rescheduling onsite quality review visits or holding online virtual quality review visits, in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. She indicated that the preference generally was to have a physical visit to campus and to therefore reschedule onsite quality reviews when travel was once again permitted. She informed Education Committee that the DCU quality reviews, due to take place in semester two 2020, would be rescheduled to take place in semester one of 2020-2021.

It was noted that the IUA had submitted two proposals under the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 call related to the recognition of prior learning and the development of microcredentials. It was noted that DCU is the lead on the IUA microcredential proposal.

5. Update on DCU Strategy implementation

It was noted that the HCI proposals, recently submitted were closely aligned with the DCU strategy and would contribute significantly to its implementation.

6. StudentSurvey.ie

It was noted that the fieldwork for the survey closed last week and it was expected that DCU data would be available for analysis in late April 2020. The Director of Quality Promotion introduced Martin Grehan, recently appointed as Institutional Research and Analysis Officer to the meeting, noting that he would be conducting analysis of the data.

7. Covid-19 – Continuity Arrangements

7.1 *DCU key principles to inform development and approval of alternative assessments*

The DCU key principles to inform development and the approval of alternative assessments document were noted. It was noted that the principles had been circulated to DCU staff by the Vice President Academic Affairs.

7.2 *Template, Semester two examinations 2020*

It was noted that the template for alternative assessments was circulated to DCU Staff by the Vice President Academic Affairs on 24 March 2020. The Chair noted that the gathering of the data was to ensure audit and quality assurance in changes to assessment brought about by the Covid-19 crisis. It was noted that the revised assessments would be submitted to faculties for approval in order to ensure co-ordination and consistency of approach, and the application of the key principles.

A vote of thanks was extended by Education Committee to the Dean of Engineering and Computing and to Mr David Molloy for the work completed at short notice in accommodating the capturing of alternative assessment arrangements through Guru.

A vote of thanks was extended also to all those closely involved in bringing about the changes required during the crisis including Programme Chairs, Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and professional and technical support staff.

7.3 *Alternative test to replace the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for DCU Admissions—interim arrangement*

It was noted that adoption of Duolingo as a supplemental English language test for students affected by testing centre closures due to COVID-19 was approved by the Vice President Academic Affairs/Registrar on 27 March 2020.

The following were noted with respect to the use of the Duolingo test:

- The use of the Duolingo English Test (DET) will be a temporary measure from 1 April 2020 to 31 July 2020, for students entering the 2020/21 academic year only.
- The minimum requirement will be a DET score of 90 for the two-semester DCU IFP Foundation programme and 100 for the one semester DCU IFP foundation programme.
- The minimum requirement will be a DET score of 110 for programmes requiring an equivalent of 6.5 IELTS with no less than 6.0 in each component. This applies for all undergraduate applications and to all postgraduate Faculty of Engineering and Computing and Faculty of Science and Health programmes.
- Programmes having a higher IELTS of 7.0 overall at postgraduate level the minimum requirement will be a DET of 120. This applies to postgraduate master's in the DCU Business School and programmes at master's level in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Chair noted that it is intended that those students admitted through this mechanism will be assessed and provided with supplementary English tuition as appropriate to their needs. This will give DCU an additional element of quality assurance in using this alternative test.

It was noted that subsequent to the approval of Duolingo English language test, TOEFL and Pearson had developed online versions of their tests which would be accepted for DCU admission and would be considered equivalent to the previous centre-based TOEFL and Pearson tests.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

8. Validation proposal: Professional Doctorate in Elite Performance (DProfElite)

It was noted that recommendations made by Education Committee at the meeting of 11 March 2020 were addressed comprehensively by the programme proposers in the revised proposal.

The Education Committee approved the proposed Professional Doctorate in Elite Performance for further development towards accreditation subject to the following recommendations being addressed in the Accreditation proposal:

- That the title of the programme would be amended to Professional Doctorate in Elite Performance (Sport). It was noted that a wider discussion would take place in the context of the other professional doctorates offered by DCU and the consistency of designation of DCU's professional doctorate framework. This discussion will include those faculties currently offering and/or planning professional doctorates and the programme currently under consideration.
- That a master's exit award would be introduced, in addition to the existing proposed Diploma. To provide context to this recommendation, Education Committee referred in particular to circumstances where a student has progressed to thesis level (may have engaged for 3 years on the programme) but may be unable to continue to completion. Consideration should be given to awarding the credits achieved to date, including the research elements if feasible (e.g. provision of a 30 credit minor dissertation to make up appropriate credits for a master's award). The title of the exit awards should reflect the recommended change to title of the professional doctorate.
- That disciplinary stipulations in terms of previous qualifications would be specified in the entry requirements section, given the specific emphasis of the programme on sport performance (page 11 of proposal).
- The Faculty review the academic costs for year one of the programme; there are academic costs allowed from years two onwards, and it was recommended those costs should be accounted for in year one also (page 23 of proposal).
- The detail related to the carrying of modules in the 'progression section' is corrected. If a student must pass 30 credits to enter into year two, then the maximum number of credits they would be carrying would be 15 rather than 30, as specified (page 20 of proposal).

In arriving at the recommendations as above there was discussion on the development of a framework for professional doctorates and it was noted that there was a need to review international practice with respect to a proposed DCU designation of professional doctorates.

9. Reporting from Faculties for decisions made during 2019-2020:

9.1 Change to programme titles

The submission from the DCU Business School was noted as follows:

From MSc in Human Resource Strategies **to** MSc in Talent, Leadership and HR Strategies, to apply to entrants from September 2020.

9.2 *Change to mode of delivery of programmes*

It was noted that no change to mode of delivery of programmes were reported from faculties.

10. **DCU Business School: Confirmation of award and exit titles**

10.1 MSc in Management (Insight and Innovation)

The following titles were approved:

- MSc in Management (Insight and Innovation)
- Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate in Management (Insight and Innovation)

10.2 *MSc in Management (Business Analytics)*

The following titles were approved:

- MSc in Management (Business Analytics)
- Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate in Management (Business Analytics)

The exit from the MSc in Management (Business Analytics) as approved at the meeting of 11 March 2020 was noted¹: Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Management.

The Dean of DCU Business School noted that the use of brackets in the title of the award to denote the specialism was important and had come about in the context of the master's model of 30/30/30 adopted in 2014 by DCU Business School, where 30 credits were in a particular specialist area, and provided a distinction between the various master's programmes on offer .

¹ Confirmed subsequent to the meeting, from documentation submitted to 11 March 2020 meeting of Education Committee

11. Any other business

11.1 Open Education

It was noted that following the decision to postpone the Digital Learning Thematic Review due to the Covid-19 restrictions, Open Education took the decision to postpone the Period Programmatic Review (PPR) of the BSc in IT/BSc in Management of IT/IS and associated exit and special purpose awards. It was noted that the Thematic Review would have informed elements of the PPR review of those programmes, and for that reason it was postponed.

11.2 'No detriment policy' petition

The Students' Union Vice President Academic Affairs sought the views of Education Committee on a petition currently being circulated with respect to requesting DCU to implement a 'no detriment policy', similar to those adopted in the UK in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. The policy essentially requested that if students perform less well in semester two then they will not be disadvantaged, and if they do well with the alternative assessment arrangements, then they would benefit from that performance.

The Chair indicated that the University's intent in devising alternative assessments would be to maintain standards. He noted that the University fully recognised the changed circumstances with which students are coping, and these would be taken into account in terms of alternative arrangements currently being put in place. He indicated that the University has not yet considered a 'no detriment policy' however he felt at this stage it would be pre-emptive until the approved alternative arrangements are approved and communicated by faculties. He wanted to reassure students that the concerns they expressed are central to the DCU plan for alternative assessments.

The Deans noted that the aim in providing alternative assessments would be to enable students to perform at their best under the circumstances, however it was also noted that students also need to be assured of the quality of their degree. It was felt that a blanket 'no detriment policy' could do a disservice to students in that it might undermine the standard and quality of their degree. It was reiterated that faculties are looking at the circumstances of each cohort of students and are working through the options available in great detail, for the benefit of students.

It was agreed that it would be preferable at this stage to await the alternative assessment details and understand what the alternative would be before subscribing to a 'no detriment policy'.

The Students' Union Vice President Academic Affairs indicated that in the communication to students on the arrangements, the assurance that they would not be disadvantaged and the standard of their degree would be maintained, was important.

The Chair indicated that he would be happy to discuss further with The Students' Union Vice President Academic Affairs, should he so wish.

11.3 Graduate Outcomes Survey 2020

It was noted that the Graduate Outcomes Survey will not take place this year.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
Wednesday, 29 April 2020
at 2.00 via Zoom