

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Wednesday 21 October 2020

2.00 p.m. – 4.15 p.m. via Zoom

- Present:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor John Doyle, Professor Barbara Flood, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Dr Joseph Stokes, Mr Lucien Waugh-Daly and Dr Blanaid White
- In attendance:** Mr Martin Grehan
- Apologies:** Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Greg Hughes and Ms Pauline Mooney

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Dr Sarahjane Belton as the representative nominated by Academic Council; Dr Brian Corcoran, Acting Dean of FEC and Dr Blanaid White representing the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning.

The Chair formally thanked Mr Billy Kelly for chairing Education Committee over the last year and noted he had undertaken the role of chair with admirable professionalism, calm and wisdom.

**SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 23 September 2020**

The minutes of 23 September 2020, were approved and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 23 September 2020**

The Chair indicated that she intends to meet with those who have responsibility for the ongoing 'matters arising' items with a view to either progressing or reprioritising them. It was noted that some outstanding items relate to the HEA Compact Goals and would need to be given attention in the short to medium term.

- 3.1 It was noted that there was a minor correction to the title of the programme, Graduate Diploma for Specialist Skills in Industrial BioPharmaceutical Analysis (brackets removed from 'Bio'), approved by Education Committee on 23 September 2020 (Item 10).
- 3.2 It was noted that discussions on the cycle of presentations and provision of statistical reports to Education Committee by the Institutional Research and Analysis Officer are ongoing (Item 3.1).
- 3.3 It was noted that work on a position paper on double and dual awards will be ongoing over the coming months (Item 3.3).
- 3.4 It was noted that *Employability Statements*, would be considered at a later meeting of Education Committee. It was noted too that these are likely to be subsumed into the work under DCU Futures Transversal Skills Framework (Item 3.4).
- 3.5 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 3.5).
- 3.6 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 3.6).
- 3.7 It was noted that a memo was due to be sent to Senior Management outlining the University-level issues raised through the Faculty APR summary reports (Item 3.7).
- 3.8 It was noted that an external review of the newly approved programme, Graduate Diploma in Web Technologies, was in the process of being completed (Item 3.8).
- 3.9 It was noted that work on the update of the Revised Academic Offering form to take account of the creation of new major programmes as a response to funding calls will be completed in the context of a more in-depth review of academic approval processes (Item 3.12/10).
- 3.10 It was noted that an 'add-on' product that might provide a solution to the extraction of data from Loop which could measure the relative engagement of cohorts, is currently being explored. The Dean of Teaching and Learning/Deputy Registrar indicated that he would continue to update Education Committee as the matter is progressed (Item 7).

## **SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING**

### **4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the Irish Universities Association (IUA)/sectoral updates**

Ms. Aisling McKenna reported on the following items which had been discussed by the IUA Quality Directors at their meeting of 12 October 2020:

- The shared experience and practice of conducting quality and institutional reviews in the context of Covid-19 and the models of remote reviews and their impact on the cohesiveness of the peer review team
- The payment of fees to external examiners and reviewers and Revenue requirements for work completed within the State for those not resident in Ireland
- The possible suspension of reviews until institutions are back on campus.

Dr Joseph Stokes reported on the following items which had been discussed at the meeting of the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies at the meeting of 12 October 2020:

- The shared experience of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on research e.g. the conduct of viva voce
- The HEA fund for Covid-19 related research cost extensions and an application process for that fund.

The Chair reported that the IUA Registrars' Group had met frequently over the past number of weeks and the meetings had focused on evolving Public Health Advice with respect to Covid-19 and the response of the universities.

The formal meeting of the IUA Registrars' Group on 12 October 2020 focused on the following:

- The admission cycle for 2020
- The July Stimulus package for postgraduate programmes and the recruitment of students to those programmes
- The Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 Projects: The microcredential framework, led by the IUA and the Recognition of Prior Learning project led by THEA
- The set-up of a sectoral group to work on inclusive student mobility (DCU has nominated two representatives)
- The engagement between the IUA and QQI and with the various professional bodies. It was suggested in a follow-up discussion on this item that it might be useful to further progress discussions across DES.
- A brief discussion on the Teaching Council review of standards for Teacher Education

## 5. **Update on DCU strategy implementation/Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3: Innovation and Agility**

The Chair presented on the various projects funded through the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3, and noted how those projects will accelerate DCU's strategic emphasis on curriculum renewal over the coming years.

The following projects were noted as having commenced:

- DCU Futures
- The IUA-led project on a national microcredential framework
- A Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) led project on recognition of prior learning in Irish Higher Education
- Virtual laboratories in Higher Education, led by Maynooth University

- The development of a Postgraduate Certificate in Innovative Materials for Industry, led by IT Carlow.

Under DCU Futures, it was noted that DCU has undertaken to deliver:

- A reconceptualised curricula: development of four brand new programmes and changes to five existing programme (introducing new specialist streams) incorporating new ways of delivering programmes using a blending of innovative pedagogies
- Development and embedding of a transversal skill pathway
- The creation of capacity for over 1000 additional students.

The Chair indicated that this is an opportunity to build internal capacity to apply innovative pedagogies and refresh DCU's unique profile in the national context, in terms of industry relevance and engagement. She outlined that it was intended to take an integrated and synergistic approach to the HCI 3 and related projects, and having completed some initial enabling work, the next steps would be to establish a governance structure and to recruit staff to the project.

In the discussion which followed the following points were noted:

- The investment in these projects was very welcome, particularly given the existing range of projects already underway in the University (e.g. academic calendar, SIS, the hybrid approach to teaching due to Covid-19)
- The integrated project approach was also very welcome in terms of effective use of resources, and to manage the timeline and deliverables involved
- It was clarified that the additional intake of 1000 students would be over the duration of the four-year project
- Effective communication with Faculties on the demands of the projects would be important at an early stage
- A fast-tracking and/or revision of approval process should take place (see item 6)
- It was suggested the development of the programmes would be an organic process in that learning and evaluation will take place as programme development progresses.

## **6. Revised approach to validation and accreditation process in the context of Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3: Innovation and Agility**

The Secretary outlined that it was proposed to adapt the University validation process in the context of the new and existing undergraduate programmes funded by the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 fund. It was acknowledged that aspects of the usual validation proposal had already been the subject of internal and external consideration and would not have to be reconsidered in the context of these specific programmes e.g. resourcing, strategic fit. It was noted too that a HCI-related section had been added to the validation form.

The suggested approach to validation was approved and the adapted form, as circulated was agreed.

There was discussion on a possible accreditation process and the following comments and suggestions as to next steps were made:

- Because of the timeline involved, consideration could be given to engaging internal expertise to review programmes
- Given the shared teaching approach and methodology, consideration could be given to a ‘super’ accreditation board for all the new programmes, recognising that the knowledge is disciplinary but the approach to programmes is cross-cutting
- That consideration could be given to using a pedagogical expert, rather than reviewer, who could advise across all programmes and add value to the development process
- There would be merit in finding commonality and seeking advisers who would assist in developing the methodologies.
- Consideration might need to be given to a step-by-step approach at each stage of development rather than being a fully formed programme that is then accredited
- Involving the expertise of the ECIU might be useful
- It was clarified that a proposed bespoke accreditation process in the context of HCI funding would be separate to a broader review that will be completed on the validation and accreditation process more generally.

Following this discussion, it was agreed that some further consideration of an accreditation process in this context would take place and a proposal would be brought back to Education Committee for its consideration.

It was noted that the addition of pathways to existing programmes involved the approval of Education Committee only and the ‘revised academic offering form’ had also been amended, with the addition of a HCI-related section.

In the discussion which followed on this process the following were noted:

- Although the pathways are being added to existing CAO entries and therefore accreditation is not required, it would be useful, given the extent of innovation involved, to have common external oversight on the development of all of the HCI-related programmes
- That given the possible degree of change, the additional pathways may require a process, similar to the process being engaged with for the new programmes
- Consideration should be given to having some kind of external review towards the end of the development process to ensure that the programmes meet both University and industry needs.

## **7. Review of Covid-19 related academic amendments**

The Chair noted that the amended academic arrangements introduced as a result of Covid-19 restrictions for the academic year 2019-2020 are currently being reviewed with a view to establishing what arrangements would be retained for 2020-2021. These arrangements will be noted at University Committees where relevant and will enable professional support staff to plan operations for the coming year.

## 8. Student Survey.ie update

The Institutional Research and Analysis Officer reported the following:

- DCU is currently awaiting feedback from StudentSurvey.ie related to the pilot for an institutional login to a dashboard developed by i-graduate
- Five new questions related to Covid-19 are being drafted and will be included in the next survey
- The StudentSurvey.ie national report will be published in November 2020.

## 9. Faculty Periodic Programme Review: Activity undertaken in 2019-2020 and planned for 2020-2021

### 9.1 DCUBS

Noted: The Acting Dean of DCUBS undertook to provide clarity on the schedule of specific programmes due for review.

### 9.2 DCU Institute of Education

Noted

### 9.3 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

Noted, the Acting Dean of FEC undertook to clarify the timeframe for the MSc in Computing and BSc in Computer Applications reviews.

### 9.4 Faculty of Science and Health

Noted

### 9.5 Open Education

Noted

It was suggested, where programmes are complementary, that the periodic programme review process should cross-link, e.g. the two Open Education programmes BSc in Information Technology and BSc in Management of Information Technology and Information Systems, with the School of Computing.

The Chair indicated that she would like to review a multi-annual report of periodic programme reviews and gain an overall picture of the stages programmes are at in terms of the 5-year cycle of PPR. It was noted that it would be useful for DCU to formally 'certify' a programme following completion of its periodic programme review.

A discussion followed on the Annual Programme Review (APR) process in the context of the atypical academic year of 2019-2020, and the usefulness of its output over the longer term. In

addition, it was noted that a great deal of evaluation had happened in 2020 in terms of staff and student surveys and the analysis of semester two examination results.

It was suggested and agreed that a different approach would be taken for this year only and, rather than data being captured at programme level, it would be captured at faculty level. It was suggested that a common approach could be adopted and a faculty template would be developed in which student feedback (captured through the student/staff liaison process) and external examiner feedback would be captured. It was suggested that this approach would be managed by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning.

It was noted that the annual University review of external examiner feedback by the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar would continue.

## **SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **10 Faculty of Science and Health: New exit award: Graduate Certificate in Psychology and Wellbeing (re-submission)**

The proposed Graduate Certificate in Psychology and Wellbeing, an exit from the MSc in Psychology and Wellbeing, was approved. It was noted that there was an error in the structure presented in Appendix 4 and it was requested that this would be corrected in the documentation.

### **11 DCU Business School: Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics: Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 1: Graduate Conversion**

The proposed Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics and its two exit awards, Graduate Certificate in Business Analytics and Graduate Certificate in Strategic Thinking were approved. It was noted that the approval was given in the specific context of the Human Capital Initiative funding and the limited timeframe for approval.

A discussion ensued on the content of the modules and the substantial overlap of content with programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. It was advised, should the programme be extended beyond approved HCI cohorts, that consultation should take place with the Faculty of Engineering and Computing with respect to including its expertise.

### **12 Noting of Collaborative Provision Arrangements/Faculty approval of Stand-alone modules**

The Stand-alone modules approved by faculties during 2019-2020 were noted, and are as listed in Appendix I.

There were no faculty-level approved new collaborative provision arrangements reported for 2019-2020.

It was noted that the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences was due to provide an update on this item.

13 **Any other business**

Dr B White announced the approval of HEA funding for a new professional Diploma in Physics for Teaching, led by DCU in collaboration with UL and NUIG. It was noted that the programme was due to commence in January 2021 and that an accelerated academic approval process would be required.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next meeting:**

18 November 2020  
at 2.00 pm  
Via Zoom



**APPENDIX 1****Professional Development/Stand-alone modules approved by Faculties during 2019-2020 and noted by Education Committee, 21 October 2020**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>ECTS Credits</b>	<b>NFQ Level</b>	<b>Date of Commencement of module</b>
<b>DCU Business School</b>	DCU Business School	BS601	FinTech- Financial Innovation	5	9	Jan-20
<b>DCU Institute of Education</b>	Language, Literacy & Early Childhood	EC912	Leading and Mentoring for Professional Practice	10	9	Semester 2, 2020/ 21-18/01/21
<b>DCU Institute of Education</b>	DCU Institute of Education (National Anti-Bullying Research & Resource Centre ABC)	AB101	Social Media, Wellbeing and Society	5	8	Semester 2, 2020/ 21-18/01/21
<b>Faculty of Science and Health</b>	School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health	NS273	Arts and Health: Connections and Synergies	5	8	Start of Semester 2