

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday 10 September 2020

9.30 a.m. – 10.45 a.m. via Zoom

Present: Dr Lorraine Delaney, Dr Yseult Freeney, Dr Mark Glynn, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Dr Anna Logan, Prof Christine Loscher, Dr Kenneth McDonagh, Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Prof Edgar Morgenroth, Ms Michele Pringle and Dr Blanaid White

Apologies: Mr John McDonough, Dr Joseph Stokes and Mr Lucien Waugh Daly

The Chair welcomed Dr Blanaid White who has resumed her role as Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Science and Health and he thanked Mr Peter McGorman and Dr Catherine McGonagle, who were stepping down from the Committee, for their contributions over the past year.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2020

It was noted that the minutes of 21 May were already approved electronically. It was noted too that formal minutes would be signed at a later date.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 21 May 2020

3.1 It was note that a general link to programme regulations had been place on Loop for students (Item 3.2)

3.2 It was noted that an extraordinary Progression and Award Board had been held which ratified the Professional Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education results which had pre-dated incorporation (item 3.1).

3.3 It was noted that additional details relating to the context of the proposed appointment of the nominated external examiner requested by USC were provided and the nomination was approved by Chair's Action, 4 June 2020 (Item. 4.1.1).

- 3.4** It was noted that consideration of the nomination of an external examiner for the School of Mathematical Sciences, a decision on which was deferred in May 2020, is on the agenda (Item 4.1.3) of this meeting (4.1.12)
- 3.5** It was noted that additional details requested by USC with respect to the nominated external examiner had been provided and the matter was deemed complete (Item 4.1.3).
- 3.6** It was noted that additional details requested by USC with respect to the nominated external examiner had been provided and the matter was deemed complete (Item 4.1.8).
- 3.7** It was noted that additional details requested by USC with respect to the nominated external examiner had been provided and the matter was deemed complete (Item 4.1.10).
- 3.8** It was noted that clarification had been provided with respect to the additional duties required of the external examiner and the matter was deemed complete (Item 4.2.1).
- 3.9** It was noted that clarifications requested by USC with respect to a legacy re-admission request were received and the matter was deemed complete (Item 5.1.2).
- 3.10** It was noted that exemptions for a student applying for ab initio re-admission, a decision on which had been deferred at the meeting of USC of 21 May 2020, were approved by Chair's Action 29 May 2020, following receipt of a resubmitted application (Item 5.1.3).
- 3.11** It was noted that the submission date for programme regulations had been extended in order to align with the restructure plans to address change in modes of delivery for semester one, 2020-2021 (Item 7).
- 3.12** It was noted that the deferral of an assessment for a student taking a microcredential was approved by Chair's action, 8 May 2020, in the context of Covid-19 arrangements.
- 3.13** It was noted that a legacy re-admission request for a student to be re-admitted to the Master's in Special Education needs was approved by Chair's Action, 15 June 2020.
- 3.14** It was noted a derogation from Marks and Standards for the Bachelor of Education programme was approved by Chair's Action, 22 July 2020.

The derogation is as follows: creation of 2.5 credit modules, one from the addition of a new 2.5 credit module in Online Pedagogies and the second from the necessary contraction of the 5-credit module ED4010 to a 2.5 credit version.

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES**B. Faculty issues****4. External examiners for taught programmes****4.1 Nominations**

4.1.1 University of Ghent

MSc in Work and Organisational Behaviour, MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology
Approved

4.1.2 Maynooth University

Modules in SALIS
Approved

4.1.3 Maynooth University

Common Entry into Financial and Actuarial Mathematics

Not approved

USC considered the resubmitted nomination, noting as previously, that it did not align with the regulations for nomination. Having considered the argument made for this nomination and noting that the modules to be examined are first and second year modules, it did not find the reasons given for the appointment of this particular external examiner sufficiently persuasive to approve the nomination.

4.1.4 Queen's University Belfast

Modules in School of Human Development
Approved

4.1.5 Newcastle University

MA in Children's and Young Adult Literature
Approved

4.1.6 University College Dublin

Modules in Open Education

Not considered. It was noted that as the nomination was not in line with regulations that a new nomination would be submitted.

4.1.7 Dublin Institute of Technology

BEng in Mechatronic Engineering
Approved

4.2 Changes to duties

- 4.2.1 University of Essex
BSc in Nursing (Mental Health)
Approved

5. Other issues: Faculty

5.1 Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

- 5.1.1 Programme Regulations: International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies

The amended regulations were approved. It was noted that the programme was subject to a new agreement in the context of Brexit.

5.2 DCU Business School

- 5.2.1 Programme Regulations: BSc in Marketing, Innovation and Technology

The programme regulations were not approved due to the following:

- The carrying of a module during the INTRA placement
- No derogation exists for the 2.5 credit module, SB103

5.3 DCU Institute of Education

- 5.3.1 Legacy re-admission request: Professional Cert/Dip in Special and Inclusive Education

Approved, subject to confirmation of the year in which the student last registered.

- 5.3.2 Change to entry requirements: BSc in Education and Training

The entry requirement changes were noted as follows:

- (a) The opening up of an external transfer route for undergraduate applicants. This route is similar to routes that already exist for other DCU programmes and will be published in the prospectus as follows. "Applications are welcomed from students who have studied at level 6, Level 7 and Level 8 in relevant areas. Such transfers may be exempt from certain modules."
- (b) A change to the current QQI entry path: The current pathways are linked to specific awards and modules. The Faculty has approved a more open approach, in line with other programmes at DCU namely to change the QQI entry path to "Applicants may present any award with distinctions in five modules".

5.3.3 Legacy re-admission request: MSc in Education and Training Management (e-Learning)

Approved. It was recommended that the candidate be given one year to complete the programme, rather than one semester, as indicated on the form.

5.3.4 Programme Regulations: Bachelor of Education

Approved, subject to a change to the paragraph related to the repeating of school placement, and making a distinction between those who fail the module and those who defer it.

5.3.5 Programme Regulations: Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching)

Approved

5.4 Open Education

5.4.1 Legacy re-admission request: MSc in Management of Operations

Approved

5.4.2 Legacy re-admission request: BSc in Management of Information Technology and Information Systems

Approved

5.3.5 Programme Regulations: Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching)

5.5 Faculty of Science and Health

5.5.1 Change to entry requirements: MSc in Psychology and Wellbeing

Noted as follows: Applicants will be required to submit two recent academic references with their application. This applies to applications applying in 20/21 for a place in 21/22.

5.6 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

5.6.1 Legacy re-admission request: BEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

The re-admission was approved. USC noted that the School should take cognisance that the applicant has not been engaged in academic work for some time

5.6.2 Legacy re-admission request Access to the MEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

Approved. It was noted as a general point that there was an anomaly created in how the results for Access students were reflected on the transcript, compared to undergraduates

who took the same module. The pass mark for the Access programme is 50%, whereas on the undergraduate programme it is 40%.

C: Other issues (not Faculty-specific)

6. Amendment to Marks and Standards 2020: Discussion document

The Chair provided the background to the discussion document as circulated. Discussions had taken place at various points during the closure of the campus and the move to online delivery with respect to the potential disadvantages students may face as a result of assessment changes. These discussions resulted in a decision for 2019-2020 to use the minimum passing mark of 40%, rather than the first attempt, as would be the norm, in calculating the overall precision mark.

The Chair indicated that he would like to explore the possibility of adopting this method as a permanent feature of the calculation of the precision mark and he sought feedback from the faculties as to their view on the discussion document. He indicated that this change would bring DCU more in line with the sector as a whole.

The following feedback was provided with respect to the proposal:

While there was general positivity in principle amongst academic staff to the proposal there were strong reservations expressed in terms of the implementation of the change, and it was strongly felt that the change would have to be systematised.

The following issues were raised with respect to implementation:

- There is a high-level of complexity in applying the rule on a manual basis and risk associated with manual intervention
- A distinction needs to be made between students who have a failing grade and those who have a failing grade due to a disciplinary matter. This can be complicated by the fact that a student can have a 'punishment' grade on only one element of a module assessment and it is not necessarily visible at module level
- The description of what happens in a plagiarism case would need to be amended so it is clear that it does not represent a double punishment, both on the module and on the calculation of the precision mark
- How this proposal is framed to students is important as it may have the impact of disincentivising students who may decide not to submit a first attempt at an assessment if they anticipate they may not pass the first time around
- The development of the calculate programme on the existing ITS system to accommodate this change would involve staff who will also be involved in the implementation of the new student system at the same time next year, and therefore it would be anticipated that resources would be over-stretched
- Consideration would have to be given to class ranking, i.e. a student who resits a module (s) may do better in the class ranking than a student who passes all modules first time around

- Consideration would have to be given to the application of preponderance and whether it would provide a double benefit to a resit student
- Students may be disadvantaged on modules where there is a derogation for professional recognition reasons and students must pass both elements. In these cases, students, may be carrying a mark higher than the passing grade for a component, but have failed a second element. Once they resit the failed element they may have a mark higher than the passing grade. Reducing this mark to the minimum mark of 40 would disadvantage these students.
- It would be important to bear in mind that DCU students are currently at a disadvantage when compared to processes in other institutions and if consideration should be given to a simpler implementation.

It was noted that the discussion raised complex issues and the proposal be re-considered at a later stage.

It was clarified that the current cohort of students who are taking modules with a derogation attached where they must pass both elements, should get the benefit of their original component marks in that instance, which may be above 40%.

7. Any other business

There were no items of business for consideration.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 19 November 2020 At 9.30 am via Zoom
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