

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL****MINUTES****8 April 2020****2.00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.****Zoom Meeting****Present:**

B. Anderson	S. Belton	F. Blin
S. Blott	C. Bohan	L. Boran
M. Brown	J. Brunton	J. Bruton
M. Butler	P.J. Byrne	C. Commons
B. Corcoran	E. Costello	M. Coulter
M. Crane	R. Devery	J. Doyle
N. Dunne	O. Farrell	L. Fitzsimons
B. Flood	P. Flynn	Y. Freeney
G. French	C. Furlong	P. Gallagher
R. Gillanders	Y. Graham	E. Guilfoyle
D. Hand	S. Hegarty	G. Hughes
G. Jones	A. Kearns	R. Keegan (Secretary)
B. Kelly	J. Kelly	D. Keogh
P. Landais	A. Logan	A. Looney
L. Looney	J. Lovatt	B. MacCraith (Chair)
C. Mac Murchaidh	M. McAdam	K. McDonagh
E. McDonald	C. McGonagle	A. McKenna
J. McManis	P. McMorrow	E. McNulty
M. McSharry	P. Meleady	P. Mooney
E. Morgenroth	J.-P. Mosnier	F. Murphy
C. Ni Mhurchú	D. Nic Mhathúna	P. Ó Duibhir
M. O'Brien	S. O'Brien	A. Parle-McDermott
D. Robbins	P. Rosati	K. Sanders
P. Sharkey Scott	A. Sinnott	J. Stokes
M. R. Sweeney	T. Szecsi	J. Travers
J. Usher	L. Van Der Werff	P. Van Kampen

**In attendance:** V. Cooke, M. Irwin-Bannon

**Apologies:**

D. Collings	P. Guasoni	C. Gurrin
A. McAuley	E. McGlynn	

The President welcomed members to the first remote meeting of Academic Council and offered his thoughts and support to members and their families during this difficult period.

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**A. Minutes and Related Issues**

**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 5 February 2020**

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

**3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 15 January 2020 and 12 February 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of Education Committee of 15 January 2020 were approved subject to the correction of an error on page 13, 3<sup>rd</sup> last point, which should read 'the median CAO points were 449'.

The minutes of the meeting of Education Committee of 12 February 2020 were approved.

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 9 January 2020**

Approved

**6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 16 January 2020**

Approved

**B. Policy and Strategy Issues****7. President's report (oral report)**

- 7.1 The President commended the DCU community on its response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The President acknowledged the huge effort in moving academic and operational activities online and commended the student body for engaging with DCU during this transition. The President praised the many DCU staff and students who are contributing to the national effort through volunteering. The President informed Council that the DCU community would continue to receive weekly updates through the new newsletter and emphasised that the health and safety of students and staff will continue to be DCU's number one priority.
- 7.2 The President informed Council that the University is actively engaging in contingency planning for the short and medium term, including planning for potential Leaving Certificate arrangements which may necessitate alternative admissions timings.
- 7.3 The President provided Council with a brief overview of the Human Capital Initiative, Pillar 3, which closed on 31 March 2020. DCU submitted two large proposals addressing issues linked to DCU's Strategic Plan. DCU was also involved in 2 sectoral bids through the IUA and a number of smaller consortium bids. The President acknowledged the huge effort of those involved in the bid and expressed his thanks to Aisling McKenna, Lisa Whelan, Gerry Whelan and Rachel Keegan who supported the working group in developing the proposals.

**8. Covid 19 – Continuity arrangements****8.1 Amendment to Marks and Standards 2019.1 and Examination Regulations**

B. Kelly updated Council on recent decisions which have been made in light of the ongoing Covid-19 situation. At the meeting of University Standards Committee on 2 April 2020 approval was given to allow the VPAA/Registrar to make changes as appropriate to Marks and Standards and Programme Regulations.

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

B. Kelly summarised the key principles adopted for the development and approval of alternative assessments. These principles have been informed largely by the work of the Executive Deans and colleagues in the OVPAA. The Principles will ensure that academic standards will not be compromised in the design of alternative assessment methods.

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**8.3 Template, Semester two examinations 2020**

B. Kelly briefly summarised the new template which academic colleagues have been asked to complete in relation to alternative assessment arrangements.

**8.4 Alternative test to replace the International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) for DCU Admissions – interim arrangement**

B. Kelly outlined the University's decision to approve the use of Duolingo as a supplemental test up to 31 July 2020. It has been agreed that students admitted through this test will receive supplementary English language supports as needed. B. Kelly advised Council that Pearson and TOEFL are now also offering online alternatives to their tests.

B. Kelly advised Council of a number of further issues that are being addressed at present. These relate, in particular, to the postponing of examinations by students and extenuating circumstances. These were discussed by Council. In summary:

- It was noted that additional amended procedures need to be developed in relation to PABs and resit examinations.
- There was a discussion around carrying forward a 1<sup>st</sup> mark for calculation precision marks (first attempt rule), which was seen as unfair in the current context. Being proposed in its stead is the minimum passing mark carrying forward.
- A student who decides to postpone any examination may take that exam in August as a first attempt. There will be no penalty for choosing to do so. However, it was noted that students who pursue this option will have no resit opportunity.
- It was noted that deferrals will also have to be addressed in the coming weeks.
- Students have received an email from the VPAA/Registrar early this week outlining the approach to final assessments. Revised processes in relation to Extenuating Circumstances and Postponement of Assessment will be available on the website by next Wednesday, 15 April 2020. It was recognised that students will have many questions regarding revised assessment arrangements and an FAQ is being developed to answer the most common queries.
- A concern was raised regarding the knock-on implications of alternative assessments on markers and administrative staff processing results. At present there are no plans to adjust PAB dates but this may need to be considered. B. Kelly indicated that he can liaise with Faculties and Open Education to address potential bottlenecks in capacity.
- The President informed Council that DCU are currently establishing a new DCU Examination Support Centre (DESC). This new centre will support students through

alterative examination and assessment arrangements. P. Ó Duibhir has agreed to Chair a group to define the structure and composition of the new DESC.

### **C. Items for Formal Approval/Noting**

**9. Validation Report: BSc in Psychology and Mathematics**

Approved

**10. Validation Report: Professional Doctorate in Elite Performance**

Approved

**11. *Aegrotat* award request: DCU Business School**

Approved

**12. Report on INTRA activities 2018-19**

Noted

**13. Items from recent sub-committees of Academic Council**

Approved

**14. Any other business**

There were no others items for discussion under AOB.

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

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

**Date of next meeting:**

3 June 2020
2:00 pm
<b>Location: TBC</b>