

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 15 January 2015 in A204

9.00 – 10.15 am

Present: Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Dr Brian Corcoran, Dr Greg Foley, Mr Gary Gillick, Dr Mark Glynn, Professor Lisa Looney, Dr Caroline McMullan, Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Pádraig Ó Duibhir, Ms Michele Pringle, Ms Annabella Stover, Dr Andrew O'Regan

Apologies: Professor Barbara Flood, Professor Colm O’Gorman,

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Dr Andrew O’Regan as representative from All Hallows, and Ms. Margaret Irwin-Bannon as Secretary, to University Standards Committee (USC). He wished to record his thanks to Ms. Louise McDermott for her work on USC and wished her well in her new role working on the Incorporation Project.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2014 (USC2015/A1/2)

The minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2014 were approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes (USC2015/A1/3)

- 3.1** It was noted that the Memo of Understanding regarding the MSc in Plasma and Vacuum Technology with Queen's University Belfast has been discontinued (Item 3.4) and it was confirmed that the existing cohort of students will be managed to completion.
- 3.2** It was noted that a re-submitted legacy re-admission request for the part-time MA in International Relations programme was approved by Chair's action on 17 December 2014.
- 3.3** It was noted that it is intended to include Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an agenda item during the academic year 2014-2015 (Item 3.2).
- 3.4** With respect to the management of records of (re-)accreditations of programmes by external professional bodies, and the sign-off of documentation, it was noted that consideration was being given to the implementation of best practice (Item 3.3).
- 3.5** It was noted that consideration would be given to the possibility of requiring a rationale to be provided in instances where the serving external examiner was not selected as the external expert for Programme Period Review (PPR) (Item 3.5).
- 3.6** It was noted that discussions about re-sit categories and other Marks and Standards issues were in progress and the working group would submit proposals to USC in due course (Item 3.6).
- 3.7** It was noted that discussions were ongoing with respect to the drafting of proposals about the management of communication with external examiners and that, in this context, the Chair and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education had drawn up a work plan for the remainder of 2014 (Item 3.7).
- 3.8** It was noted that discussions on issues in relation to Programme Regulations, namely sharing good practice and ownership of the regulations were ongoing (Item 3.9).

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES**4.1 Appointment of external examiners**

- 4.1.1 Dr Patricia Leahy-Warren, UCC
Module in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved.
- 4.1.2 Dr Sarah Amsler, University of Lincoln
Modules in Ethical Education, EdD programme, St. Patrick's College
Approved.
- 4.1.3 Professor Linda Clarke, University of Ulster
Modules in Teacher Education, EdD programme, St. Patrick's College
Approved. It was noted with respect to this item and item 4.1.2 that both examiners were proposed to examine modules with the same module codes. It was clarified that although the modules have the same codes, they were taught to two separate cohorts of students on separate pathways. It was advised that the module codes should be changed for one cohort and the new module codes notified to USC.
- 4.1.4 Dr Aileen Kennedy, University of Strathclyde
Professional Certificate/Professional Diploma in Education, St. Patrick's College
Approved.
- 4.1.5 Dr Aisling Leavy, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
Master of Education, St. Patrick's College
Approved.

4.2 Changes to duties of external examiners

There were no items for consideration.

5. Other issues

5.1 DCUBS

5.1.1 Outcomes of English-language derogation for Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University (PNU)

Dr C. McMullan outlined the brief background to this report on the outcomes of the English language derogation for PNU students. Three students had been accepted onto the BSc. in Marketing, Innovation and Technology (Digital) and BBS in International Finance programme in PNU with a derogation from the English language requirement, and it had been agreed that their academic progress would be tracked in the first year of study. Dr C. McMullan confirmed that each student was progressing well with each of the students passing all subjects and one student in the top 4% in the class. It was noted that due to the very competitive nature of entry into the PNU programmes acceptance of students without the required English language standard was unlikely to arise again.

5.1.2 Readmission request on a legacy basis: Bachelor of Business Studies International USC2015/A1/5.1.2a

It was noted that the applicant had not exceeded the maximum registration period and it was advised by USC that it was within the remit of the Progression and Award Board (PAB) to consider offering the candidate an additional academic session. It was also advised that, depending on the decision of the PAB, a letter would be sent to the candidate which would reference the previous invitation to withdraw and indicating the new decision of the PAB. It was further noted that the module ZH110 which was completed originally by the student as a 10 credit module, has now become a 20 credit module. As Marks and Standards precludes the student from re-taking the module, this issue will need to be dealt with by the Programme Board, should she be given an additional academic year.

In the general discussion which followed it was noted that the amending of module credits, while maintaining the same module code, causes problems for legacy re-admission candidates. The Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education requested that it is communicated to Schools, that where modules are amended and there are consequent credit changes, it is required that module codes are changed to distinguish them from the previous version of the module.

5.1.3 Readmission request on a legacy basis, MSc in Marketing (USC/A1/5.1.3a)

This readmission request was approved.

SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY SPECIFIC)**6. Marks and Standards issues****6.1 Exemption for student transfers – proposed addendum (USC2015/A1/6.1)**

The Chair introduced this item, indicating that an addendum was proposed to deal with an anomalous scenario, whereby the application of the standard definition of exemptions for transfer purposes (Type E and Type T), and the consequent calculation of the overall degree result could be deemed, in this particular situation, unduly unfair on the student.

Following discussion, it was agreed in the particular case under discussion, that the student would be made exempt (Type E) from the particular module which he completed in second year and which is now a core module on the fourth year structure, and his final year calculation would be based on 55 credits.

The addendum as proposed was not agreed in principle as it was so specific to the set of circumstances presented and it was agreed that any future cases would be dealt with by USC on a case-by-case basis.

7. Report on Assessment Practice Audit (USC2015/A1/7)

Dr M. NicGhiolla Mhichíl provided a brief report on the Assessment Practice Audit conducted by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education over the 2013-2014 academic session. Items of note included:

- A wide variety of assessment types are conducted across the university.
- Modules are assessed primarily on an individual basis. Marking work based on group work is still proving problematic
- Staff have engaged far more with learning outcomes than in previous years, and are referencing them in the provision of feedback to students.

- Continual Assessment is not being reviewed as a matter of course by external examiners. (This and other matters relating to External examiner matters have been referred to Education Committee and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education for review).
- The current two-week deadline in which to give large classes feedback on assessment is placing undue stress and pressure on academic staff.
- There is still some further work to be done in assisting staff to provide effectively both formative and summative continual assessment. Co-ordinators need to link learning outcomes and the setting of assessments.

In the brief discussion which followed, there was consensus that feedback should be as timely as possible; however circumstances did not always allow it. It was further noted that the feedback days following the release of examination results only catered to/were availed of by a small minority of students.

8. Incorporation Matters

The Chair indicated that feedback on Incorporation would be a standing item on the agenda at the behest of the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar, given the impact it will have on all Faculties. It was noted that as Incorporation progresses there will be issues which will flow into and inform wider university issues, and items of regulation will be referred back to USC.

It was noted that there is currently a Working Group which is looking at Marks and Standards across the three institutions.

Dr M. Nic Ghiolla Mhichíl informed the Committee that a large volume of work is being progressed in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for the Joint Honours Programme, e.g. the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee is currently reviewing 280 modules, associated regulations and learning outcomes.

9. Any other business

- 9.1** The Dean of Graduate Studies outlined that a paper entitled *Quality Assurance of Graduate Training Elements (GTEs) (Excluding those part of accredited programmes)* will be considered by Graduate Research Studies Board. She indicated that she would like members of USC to review the document and should they wish to do so, the Associate Deans for Research have a copy available to them.

9.2 Readmission requests on legacy basis, provision of transcripts by Registry

The Director of Registry indicated that following discussions at the last meeting of USC, she had undertaken to explore the issue of the provision of transcripts to accompany application for readmission on a legacy basis. She confirmed that copies of student transcripts to support an application for a legacy re-admission can, in future, be obtained directly from Registry by the relevant Programme Chair or Faculty Administrator. The set of transcripts will be printed on plain white paper and will contain a Registry stamp. All legacy re-admission requests to USC should be accompanied by a full set of transcripts of results from Registry.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Director of Registry for arranging the provision of transcripts for legacy readmission applications.

End

Date of next meeting:

<p>26 February 2015 9.00 a.m. in A204</p>

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____