

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 30 November 2016

2.00 – 3.50 in A204

Present: Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Professor John Doyle, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Lisa Looney, Ms. Pauline Mooney, Professor Colette McDonagh, Dr Garrett McGuinness, Ms Aisling McKenna, Professor Barry McMullin, Professor Anne Sinnott

Apologies: Professor Mark Brown, Professor Greg Hughes, Dr Pádraig Ó Duibhir

In attendance: Ms Karen Johnston, Institutional Research and Analysis Officer
Ms Pauline Willis, Chair of Examinations Appeals Board (Item 9)

The Chair welcomed Ms Pauline Mooney to her first meeting of Education Committee in her capacity as Academic Secretary. She also noted that it was Professor Lisa Looney's last meeting of Education Committee as Dean of Graduate Studies. She thanked her most sincerely for her valuable contribution to Education Committee over the last five years.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 26 October 2016

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 26 October 2016

- 3.1 It was noted that the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning had met with International Office staff to discuss the request to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for the development of stand-alone modules with a weighting of six ECTS credits, for a specific international audience. It was clarified by the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning that this was not possible under DCU Marks and Standards (Item 3.7).
- 3.2 It was noted that meetings to review external examiner reports submitted in 2015-2016 had taken place with the Faculties of Science and Health, and Engineering and Computing. Meetings with DCU Business School and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences are due to take place next week. The Chair noted that the meetings to date had proven fruitful (Item 9).

It was noted that an amendment would be made to the *Review of External Examiner Reports* and the document would contain the following: 'It is proposed that from 2016 onwards, an annual review process is put in place whereby the Vice President Academic Affairs (Registrar) will meet with the Executive Dean and Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning of each Faculty to review that *faculty's external examiner reports and the responses to these reports by the relevant Head of School/Group or their nominee* (Item 9).

- 3.3 It was noted that following the introduction of the Guru system for the management of external examiners, issues with respect to their engagement had largely been addressed. It was proposed that it would be established in the New Year if the ongoing operation of Guru has resolved any remaining issues (Item 3.1).
- 3.4 It was noted that technical issues with respect to the publication of First Destination Survey outcomes on the university website had been referred to ISS (Item 3.2).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the Irish Universities Association (IUA)

The Director of Quality and Institutional Research informed the Committee that she is the IUA Quality Officers' representative on a working group which is preparing the terms of reference and handbook for the upcoming institutional reviews. The handbook is due to be published in January 2017.

5. Presentation by Ms Karen Johnston, Performance in First Year versus CAO attainment (2012-2016)

In the course of Ms Johnston's presentation and in the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:

- There is a small decrease in entrants with less than 400 points
- The number of entrants with over 500 points is increasing
- 70% of entrants have attained between 400 and 495 points
- Overall 46% of 2016 entrants had higher level maths
- Analysis suggests a positive relationship between CAO points attainment and first year precision mark *
- 71% of Entrants with Higher Maths enter with C1 or lower
- Those with As and Bs at ordinary level maths fare better in first year precision mark terms than those with C1 or lower in higher level maths
- Analysis suggests a positive relationship between maths attainment and first year precision mark*

(*Correlation tests did not return a strong correlation).

The Chair thanked Ms Johnston for a most interesting presentation.

6. Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) 2016-2017

The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning informed the Committee that the ISSE plenary group met recently and is setting out a pilot survey for research students. The survey, which is drawn from a UK survey, will be piloted in Semester one of 2017 with the intention of full roll-out by 2018, at the earliest.

It was noted that the plenary group discussed the management of the public availability of ISSE data and possible requests for that data under Freedom of Information. It is planned that a proposal on planned release of data will be prepared for discussion by the IUA Registrar's group.

7. Education Committee Goals 2016-2017

There were no updates for this item.

8. Proposed plan for addressing ‘at risk’¹ students

The plan presented by Dr Claire Bohan, which aims to ensure that all first year students classified as ‘at risk’ following the release of semester one results are offered targeted advice and support was noted. It was noted too that a date by which the list of ‘at risk’ students is supplied to Student Support and Development is to be agreed with the Institutional Analysis Officer.

9. Draft Report from Appeals Review Group, Ms Pauline Willis

Ms Pauline Willis outlined the background to and recommendations of the Appeals Review Group. The Group had been set up following the 2015 Appeals Board Report to Academic Council which made recommendations on amendments to the Appeals process. The Appeals Review Group had reviewed those recommendations and will report to Academic Council at its 7 December 2016 meeting. She requested that Education Committee note the proposals in advance of consideration of Academic Council.

The proposals discussed were as follows:

1. Introduction of module exam review facility and introduction of formal re-check facility
2. Subsume category 3 modules (modules with a continuous assessment and exam element but do not offer a resit of continuous assessment) into categories 1 and 2
3. Maintain an overview of students progressing carrying failed modules
4. Ensure arrangements are in place at school level for students to discuss their performance
5. Ensure communication to students of continuous assessment re-submission requirements

The following points were made in the discussion which followed:

- The discussion on appeals process improvements and the formalisation of appeals follow-up arrangements were most important and welcome
- It would be important to ensure consistency of marking across a cohort in the context of the review of individual assessments

¹ Instances where an undergraduate entrant fails 2 or more modules in the January diet of exams, or where an undergraduate entrant completes 2 or less modules after Semester 1 and that student fails 1 of these modules.

- The elimination of category 3 modules may be problematic for some Faculties. It was noted that a previous recommendation that all category 3 modules should have a continuous assessment percentage of less than 40 has not been fully implemented
- It would be useful to explore with Registry the possibility of registering students who have failed the continuous assessment element (similar to the registration for examination resits).

10. Validation process for the consideration of joint taught programmes

The Dean of Graduate Studies provided the background to the proposed validation process for the consideration of joint taught programmes. Having worked through the approval towards accreditation of the first joint taught programme, it was timely to review the validation process in a collaborative context.

It was noted that it was intended that the process would be implemented on Guru.

A discussion took place on the proposed content/questions on the revised validation documentation and the following points were noted:

- Page 2: rather than prescribing the DCU delivery of 33% of the credits, it could be indicated that DCU should be delivering a substantial proportion of the credits.
- Page 3, Section 4: Locus of Responsibility for Quality Assurance. It was noted in the context of the recently published QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines that this question should be re-phrased such that it doesn't assume that responsibility can be devolved to a partner institution for quality assurance, but rather points toward the guidelines as the context of any proposed QA arrangements.
- There is a need to be able to assure external accrediting bodies that all participants have the equivalent 'student experience' in the context of a joint programme.

The validation process document was approved subject to changes with respect to the question on quality assurance.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**11. Proposed change to title of MA in Children's Literature**

The request from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to change the title of the MA in Children's literature to the MA in Children's and Young Adult Literature was approved.

12. Any other business*12.1 Fee payment by employers and the Finance Office*

Professor Anne Sinnott brought Education Committee's attention to a difficulty being experienced by students whose companies are paying their course fees. Those students are receiving bad debt notices as the employer companies don't necessarily pay within the timeframe required by the Finance Office, although the Finance Office have been assured that the payment will be made.

Ms Pauline Mooney indicated that she would undertake to look into this issue. She suggested that as a starting point it would be useful to document what the current system and process issues are and requested members to send her any pertinent information they may have.

Signed: _____ Date _____
Chair

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 11 January 2016

at 2.00 in A204