

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

Wednesday 11 March 2020

2.00 p.m. – 4.10 p.m. in A204

**Present:** Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Professor Michelle Butler, Mr Callaghan Commons, Professor John Doyle, Dr Yseult Freeney, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair) Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Anne Sinnott and Dr Joseph Stokes

In attendance Ms Karen Johnston

**Apologies:** Professor Eithne Guilfoyle and Professor Greg Hughes

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

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

**2. Minutes of Education Committee 12 February 2020**

The minutes of 12 February 2020 were approved and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 12 February 2020**

3.1 It was noted that work on a position paper on double and dual awards will be ongoing over the coming months (Item 3.1).

- 3.2 It was noted that the level of modules offered within a level 8 undergraduate certificate would be considered at a later date (Item 3.2).
- 3.3 It was noted that the issues with the incentivisation model were referred to Senior Management by the Chair (3.3).
- 3.4 It was noted that the NFQ level of taught modules on professional doctorate programmes would be addressed over the coming months (Item 3.4).
- 3.5 It was noted that the provision of more discipline-specific information for Schools on CAO points and its correlation with first year examination performance at DCU would be prepared using the Microsoft BI dashboard tool, following a pilot of the Graduate Outcomes Survey (Item 3.5).
- 3.6 It was noted in the context of ongoing MOOC development that the Executive Deans would develop a principles document to ensure that expertise is not replicated across the University (Item 3.6).
- 3.7 It was noted that *Employability Statements*, would be considered at a later meeting of Education Committee (Item 3.7).
- 3.8 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 3.9).
- 3.9 It was noted that work on the amended statistical reports requested by Education Committee related to CAO performance and first year examination performance, and data on non-standard entrants is ongoing (Item 3.10).
- 3.10 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 3.11).
- 3.11 It was noted that the submission of NFQ compliant programme learning outcomes for the MSc in Global Management is awaited (Item 3.12).
- 3.12 It was noted that a list of FutureLearn option modules available as a resource for faculties was circulated to the Deans, 28 February 2020 (Item 3.8).
- 3.13 It was noted that the additional nominees for the BSc in Psychology and Mathematics Accreditation Board were deemed approved by means of electronic circulation on 6 March 2020.

- 3.14 It was noted that the issue of the surrender of award parchments in particular circumstances is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 8.1).

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

### **4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA**

It was noted that there were no updates on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA.

### **5. Update on DCU Strategy implementation**

It was noted that all resources related to curriculum renewal were currently being focused on the Human Capital Initiative funding call and on the online delivery of programmes

### **6. StudentSurvey.ie**

It was noted that the final response rate to StudentSurvey.ie was 28%, slightly lower than last year's response rate. It was noted that the number of responses would provide sufficient volume to be able to extract meaningful data.

### **7. Entry to and progression between taught postgraduate offerings—considerations**

The Academic Secretary summarised the background to the document as presented noting that the discussion at the 12 February 2020 Education Committee meeting had focused on a particular issue pertaining to the surrender of parchments by DCU students progressing to a master's programme following completion of a postgraduate certificate. It was agreed that Education Committee would have a strategic discussion on all related issues, and as necessary, refer to University Standards Committee to consider Marks and Standards implications, should any change be considered necessary.

The discussion which followed considered the practical aspects of how the surrender of the parchment impacted both the student record in terms of credits already achieved (Graduate Certificate) and the overall calculation of the final master's award. It also considered the difference between the treatment of those students coming from external institutions being awarded exemptions and the calculation of their awards.

It was agreed that it would be explored with relevant Registry and Finance Office colleagues, if students who have been admitted as Springboard-funded students and are intending to progress to a master's programme from the graduate certificate could do so seamlessly without having to surrender their parchments. This interim solution would be presented for the consideration of Education Committee. It was noted that this would be a solution for the immediate term and in these specific circumstances, however it could not be applied where there was a time gap in learning and issues of currency arise, or where the mix of credits previously achieved were at both NFQ level 8 and level 9.

It was noted too that it would also have to be established what the requirement for Springboard, as the funding agency, would be for the current cohort of students who want to progress from a graduate certificate to the relevant master's programme e.g. ratified results through the Progression and Award Board or the conferring of the award (but not presenting the parchment).

It was agreed by Education Committee that it would not recommend dispensing with the stipulation in Marks and Standards of 'not presenting the same ECTS credits as qualification for more than one DCU award'.

It was noted that the discussion had proved useful and that a further broader discussion should take place in the context of the 'stacking' of microcredentials, leading to an award. It was suggested that it would be useful to identify and explore previous cases and in addition that some research on how this process is managed in the US context might be useful. It was noted that this may have to be done over the longer-term.

It was noted that plans are being made to develop a European framework for microcredentials for June 2020 which may inform future discussions.

**8. Review of first semester examination results (2019) and review of 'at risk' profile (Presentation), Ms Karen Johnston**

Ms Karen Johnson made a presentation on examination results from semester 1, 2019-2020. The following were noted from the presentation:

- The module pass rate is 94% (excluding repeating students)
- The pass rate of first year entrants for first attempts remains relative stable at 94%
- Out of the 3401 new entrants in 2019, 242 have been identified as being 'at risk' (failed two or more modules in the January/ or completed two or less modules in Semester 1 and failed one of these modules)
- 19% of new entrants in 2019 failed one module

- The percentage of elite sports entrants and FETAC entrants who failed were notably high. It was recommended that this would be brought to the attention of the Director of Sports and Wellbeing.
- It was noted generally that modules failed by new entrants tended to be mathematics or economics based modules, across the board.

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

#### **9. Faculty of Science and Health: Validations: MSc in Elite Performance (9.1) and Professional Doctorate in Elite Performance (9.2)**

There was extensive discussion on both proposals and the decision of Education Committee was not to approve either proposal.

The following comments, observations and suggestions were made by Education Committee with respect to the programmes, which were considered individually and together, as the content was integrated:

- Sixty taught credits are common to both programmes, which is very unusual for a professional doctorate programme. The focus on the taught modules should be through a 'doctoral lens' and be a reflection on practice, which should be distinct from a taught master's programme.
- The modules in the MSc are very individualised and it is not apparent what the value to a taught master's cohort would be. 4 x 15 credit blocks do not allow for a range of topics to be covered, as would be expected in a stand-alone taught master's programme.
- The mode of delivery is indicated as distance delivery and also enquiry-led, it was felt that the costings did not take account of the complexity of the planned delivery.
- The programme proposal indicates that the application of 'elite performance' may apply to a range of fields or performance domains. It was felt strongly that the programme should reflect an emphasis on Sport and Health so it does not cut-across other DCU offerings e.g. DCU Business School and the DCU Institute of Education, or consideration could be given to a joint proposal across Schools, if the programme is to remain so broad ranging.
- It was noted that in the purpose of the programme section there is no mention of domain and it was recommended that it is made clear what those settings are in the context of the programme.
- The programme learning outcomes should be amended to contextualise them to this specific programme and should not merely replicate the NQF template descriptors.

- It was noted that the finances were not clear and it was suggested that there appears to be a double-counting of students across the two programmes. Both documents indicate aggregate capacity to deal with 20/25 students, but finances are treated separately in terms of student numbers.
- It was noted that one of the nominees to the Accreditation Board has published in significant numbers with the programme proposer and this does not ensure 'appropriate professional distance' as per DCU guidance on Accreditation Board nominations.
- It was observed that there is a heavy focus on 'careers' in the proposal.
- It was questioned if this award would be recognised outside of the UK and queried as to what currency it would have outside of the UK context.
- The issue of what the professional doctorate would be called has to be considered in a wider context given the fact that DCU already has four professional doctorates, each with a different nomenclature.
- It was observed that the fees to be charged appear low.
- It was noted that the student application for each of the programmes is similar in that an applicant in each case is asked to provide an outline proposal. This could be justified for the professional doctorate but not necessarily for the master's programme as it is not aligned with DCU's entry requirements. It was requested that more guidance should be provided on the definition of 'high ranking official in a performance domain' for providing references.
- It was noted that the master's programme appears as if it was conceived as an exit award.
- It was noted that the thesis description for the MSc and Professional Doctorate are very similar and much more detail should be provided on what is expected in the doctoral thesis. The challenge based learning detail was noted however programme proposers were requested to provide further detailed information in terms of output (clarification of 'research paper format or equivalent'—what is 'equivalent'), scale, size of the research project, at level 10.
- It was noted that the theoretical underpinning and research in the School to support practice is essential to roll-out this programme. Because there could be up to 25 projects the depth of expertise in the school for supervision of all these projects was queried.
- It was noted that a google search revealed that the intention to offer the programme (s) is already online. It was requested that this would be taken down immediately.
- It was recommended that the programme proposers look at the current demand for programmes in this area and prioritise one offering. It was recommended that a master's programme should not form part of the doctorate
- It was noted that the Doctor of Education runs modules on professional practice and research methods for practice so there may be opportunity for synergy and it was suggested that collaboration in this regard would be useful.
- It was noted that, for a part-time professional doctorate, 260 ECTS credits in four years is too great a workload.

**10. DCU Business School new pathway: Bord Bia funded, MSc in Management (Insight and Innovation)**

The proposal was approved. It was noted that the exit awards would be entitled as follows: Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma in Management (Insight and Innovation). It was noted that in line with the recently approved guidance on parchment titles the award title on the parchment would be Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MSc in Management.

**11. DCU Business School: new pathway on MSc in Management (Business Analytics)**

It was noted that this proposal would be a collaboration with Dar Al Uloom University (DAU) Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the collaboration was currently undergoing the due diligence process.

It was noted that a framework for the provision of data analytics content is currently being developed in the context of the current Human Capital Initiative funding call, considering the range of skills required on three levels: expert data scientists; those who need to understand and apply analytics to their discipline; those who require a broad set of data literacy skills. It was noted that should the programme as proposed be offered at DCU then there was a danger that the University would be duplicating content in different disciplinary contexts. It was noted that a broader discussion should take place in this regard.

It was noted that the exit awards would be entitled as follows: Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma in Management (Business Analytics). It was noted that in line with the guidance on parchment titles the award title on the parchment would be Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MSc in Management.

The programme was approved.

**12. DCU Institute of Education: retrospective approval of exit awards from Professional Master of Education (Primary) and MA in Religion and Education**

The retrospective application of the approval of the exit awards for the Professional Master of Education (Primary) and the MA in Religion and Education was approved.

**13. Any other business**

There were no items of business.

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

**Date of next meeting:**  
Wednesday, 1 April 2020  
at 2.00: virtual meeting via Zoom