

## UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

Thursday 14 November 2019

9.30 a.m. – 11.50 p.m. in A204

**Present:** Mr Jonathan Begg, Dr Lorraine Delaney, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Dr Catherine McGonagle, Dr Garrett McGuinness, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Justin Rami and Dr Joseph Stokes

**Apologies:** Mr Callaghan Commons, Dr Yseult Freeney, Prof Christine Loscher, Dr Kenneth McDonagh and Prof Edgar Morgenroth

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Dr Catherine McGonagle to her first meeting of University Standards Committee as Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Science and Health. The Chair noted that Prof Edgar Morgenroth would join USC as the representative of Heads of School.

#### SECTION A: Minutes and related issues

##### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted. It was noted that item 4.1.6 had been approved by Chair's Action, prior to the meeting.

##### 2. Minutes of the meeting of 5 September 2019

The minutes of 5 September 2019 were approved and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 5 September 2019**

- 3.1** It was noted that the Chairpersons of the Professional Master of Education and Bachelor of Education programmes provided additional clarification on the distribution of workload between the four external examiners appointed to examine those programmes. The Chair indicated that he was satisfied with the workload distribution, as outlined to him, and the issue was now resolved.
- 3.2** It was noted that the minutes of the USC meeting of 5 September 2019 accurately reflected the discussions related to direct applications for legacy students: *'consideration of exemptions would take place after the successful admission and registration of the student'*. However, the Director of Registry indicated that for operational reasons exemptions must be sought from USC before admission and registration. She tabled a process flow document which outlined the readmission direct application process. The aim was that readmission direct applications would be submitted in July of each year and related exemptions would be submitted for the approval of USC at its September meeting (Item 9).
- 3.3** It was noted that a new nomination for an external examiner (a decision on which was deferred at the meeting of 5 September 2019) would be made by the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health. It was noted that it was likely, due to timing, that the approval would be completed by Chair's Action (Item 4.17/3.11).
- 3.4** It was noted that work in ensuring that the linking to programme regulations on the Loop programme page can be done as efficiently as possible on an annual basis is ongoing (Item 3.3).
- 3.5** It was noted that the first draft of the External Examiner handbook is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.3).
- 3.6** It was noted that the practice of attendance monitoring, as reflected in the programme regulations is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.6).
- 3.7** It was noted that the following programme regulations, which required minor amendments following the USC meeting of 5 September 2019, had been updated and the programme regulations were now published:
- BSc in Physics with Astronomy (Item 6.3)
  - Professional Master of Education (Primary) (Item 6.9)
  - Professional Master of Education Post Primary (Item 6.10)
  - Professional Diploma in Clinical Supervision (Item 6.6)

- Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours (Item 6.7)
  - Bachelor of Education (ISL pathway) (Item 6.8)
  - Graduate Certificate in Management of Operations (Item 6.11)
  - Graduate Certificate in Management of Information Systems Strategy (Item 6.12)
  - Graduate Certificate in Management of Internet Enterprise Systems (Item 6.13)
- 3.8** It was noted that a minor amendment to the programme regulations for the Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 is awaited (Item 6.14).
- 3.9** It was noted that the suggested amendment to the legacy re-admission form was completed (Item 5).
- 3.10** It was noted that the module specification for MS117 was updated to reflect the derogation approved by USC (Item 5.2.1 and 5.2.2).
- 3.11** It was noted that the *Regulations for Academic Flexibility* were submitted for the consideration of Academic Council at its meeting of 9 October 2019 and were approved.
- 3.12** It was noted that the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, English language entry requirements for ICT Skillnet applicants were submitted for the consideration of Academic Council at its meeting of 9 October 2019 and were approved.
- 3.13** The following were approved by Chair's Action:
- Update to BSc in Science Education programme regulations to accommodate an academic structure change (19 September 2019)
  - Update to BSc in Biotechnology programme regulations to accommodate an academic structure change (19 September 2019)
  - Update to MSc in Public Policy Programme regulations (19 September 2019)
  - Update to Diploma in Education Studies programme regulations (23 September 2019)
  - Retrospective change to MSc in Management (Strategy) programme regulations 2018-2019 to include the Graduate Diploma in Management (Strategy) as an exit award (14 October 2019)
  - Retrospective change to MSc in Investment, Treasury and Banking programme regulations 2018-2019 to include the Graduate Diploma in Investment, Treasury and Banking as an exit award (14 October 2019)
  - External Examiner for Marketing modules, DCUBS (16 October 2019)
  - External Examiner for modules in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, DCUBS (17 October 2019)

- External Examiner for Marketing modules (29 October 2019)

## **SECTION B: Faculty Issues**

### **4. External examiners for taught programmes**

#### **4.1 Nominations**

- 4.1.1 Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick  
Bachelor of Education, Professional Master of Education  
Approved
- 4.1.2 Marino Institute of Education  
Modules in School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Approved
- 4.1.3 University College Dublin  
Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours), Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Religious Education and English  
Approved
- 4.1.4 Maynooth University  
Modules in School of Law and Government  
Approved
- 4.1.5 University College Dublin  
Modules in School of Law and Government  
Approved
- 4.1.6 University of Leeds  
Modules in DCUBS  
It was noted that this nomination was approved by Chair's Action, 5 November 2019
- 4.1.7 University of Nottingham  
Modules in School of Law and Government  
Approved

- 4.1.8 Bristol University  
Modules in School of Law and Government  
Approved
- 4.1.9 Queen's University Belfast  
MA in Refugee Integration  
Approved
- 4.1.10 Oxford Brookes University  
Modules in School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Approved
- 4.1.11 Aston University  
Modules in School of Law and Government  
Approved
- 4.1.12 University of Stirling  
Modules in School of Law and Government  
Approved
- 4.1.13 University College Dublin  
Modules in School of Health and Human Performance  
Approved

#### **4.2 Renewal of appointment/changes to duties**

No items were submitted for consideration.

### **5. Other Faculty submissions**

#### **5.1 Faculty of Engineering and Computing**

##### **5.1.1 Legacy re-admission request: BSc in Computer Applications**

The application was approved and it was advised that the candidate should be re-admitted in September 2020. It was queried if the student would be exempt from two fourth year modules which were already successfully completed. The Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning undertook to check if the modules remained on the structure and to advise accordingly.

## 5.2 Open Education

### 5.2.1 Exemptions for a direct application readmission candidate

#### Approved

It was noted as the process for direct application for readmission had recently been initiated (see note under item 3.2) there were some amendments agreed to the process for any future candidates. In this case the exemptions were being considered following registration.

It was advised that a unit/faculty exemption form should be used when requesting approval for exemptions from USC for direct application readmission candidates. This form should include the credits of the modules exempted and the credits to be completed. It was noted that evidence of the currency of the student's knowledge of the modules completed should also be assessed.

## 5.3 DCU Business School

### 5.3.1 Legacy re-admission request: MSc in Human Resource Strategies

#### Approved

## SECTION C: Other items (not Faculty-specific)

## 6. Taught External Examiners

### 6.1 *Draft Taught External Examiner handbook*

It was noted that the following amendments would be made to the External Examiner handbook and it would then be made available to External Examiners, following a design process:

- Include reference to the PPR process
- Include Open Education as a unit
- Rephrase paragraph 6.7.3
- Include the November Progression and Award Boards in the diagrammatic schedule
- Some minor formatting edits

## 6.2 *Taught External Examiner Regulations and Guidelines*

The proposed amendments to the External Examiner Regulations and Guidelines were approved.

## 7. **Programme Regulations**

### 7.1 *Programme Regulations Template*

It was noted that there were no changes to the Programme Regulations template for 2020-2021. The Secretary indicated that there were some issues with regard to the online links contained in the programme regulations and that a meeting involving faculties and ISS would take place in this regard over the coming weeks.

### 7.2 *Attendance as reflected in Programme Regulations*

The categorisation and treatment of 'attendance' as contained in programme regulations 2019-2020 was reviewed. It was noted that there were primarily five types of statements dealing with attendance. Following discussion on the differences in how attendance is managed on different programmes, it was agreed that further consideration should be given to consolidation of approach and the production of a set of guidelines around the management of assessment related to attendance.

The Chair indicated that he would consult with the Teaching Enhancement Unit with a view to drafting a set of guidelines for the consideration of a future meeting of University Standards Committee.

## 8. **Report from Deputy Registrar on granting of exceptional additional academic session**

It was noted that five students were granted an exceptional additional academic session in 2018-2019.

## 9. **Proposed amendment to University Examination Regulations**

The following amendment to the University Examination Regulations was approved:

Proposal: Replace the existing paragraph 5.7

*A candidate shall not bring into the examination hall, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is taking the examination: Phones, electronic dictionaries, or any other electronic/digital device other than a standard scientific calculator. Clothing should not be used to conceal forbidden devices or materials with the new wording as follows:*

*A candidate shall not bring into the examination hall, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is taking the examination: Any electronic device, including smart watches and electronic dictionaries, with the exception of a mobile phone or a standard scientific calculator. Clothing should not be used to conceal forbidden devices or materials.*

Insert a new paragraph 5.8 as follows:

*Should a candidate bring their mobile phone into the Examination Hall, it must be switched off at all times and placed under the desk for the duration of the examination. If a mobile phone is found powered on or it emits a sound, the phone will be confiscated for the remainder of the examination and the student will be subject to the disciplinary process. The use or attempted use of a mobile phone or any other electronic device is strictly prohibited and is a serious breach of the examination regulations.*

It was noted that the Students' Union supported this amendment.

## **10. Proposed Admissions Appeals Policy (discussion)**

The Director of Registry introduced this item noting that the policy as presented is currently under development and she was seeking USC's view on the initial draft document.

In the discussion which ensued the following changes were recommended to the draft Admissions Appeals policy:

- To amend the last line at the end of the 'Grounds for Appeal' paragraph to read 'Where an appeal is deemed to be malicious or vexatious, action may be taken, as appropriate'
- To indicate that appeals should be submitted to Registry only (i.e. not sent to the International Office)
- To amend 'postgraduate applicants' to 'postgraduate research applicants'
- To insert that there will be an initial assessment of appeals submissions to establish a *prima facie* case, by the Registrar or a nominee



- Under '3.2 Appeal Assessment' to delete the phrase 'where possible', to read 'The appeal will be considered impartially by staff who were not involved in making the original decision'.
- The Admission Appeals panel should be a minimum of three people.

It was agreed, as the document presented was for discussion only, that a final version would be considered by University Standards Committee at its January 2020 meeting with a view to submitting to Academic Council for approval at its February 2020 meeting.

#### **11. English language entry requirements for international applicants to postgraduate programmes**

The proposal on language requirements, was discussed extensively and some Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning indicated that there had not been adequate time, in advance of this meeting, to consult widely within their faculties on the proposal.

Although University Standards Committee did not have any principled objections to the proposal it recommended that further time should be provided to facilitate Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning, who had not yet had an opportunity to do so, to consult within their faculties and provide feedback in this regard.

In addition, it was the view of USC that further work on the proposal was required before its submission to Academic Council, and submission should be made by the faculties to Academic Council. USC was of the view that time permitting, it would normally have requested the finalised document to be resubmitted for its next meeting in January 2020, but given time pressure it was agreed that a revised proposal would be reviewed electronically by USC.

The following were noted as the elements of feedback that USC requested would be reflected in the proposal:

- It is made clear that the proposal only applies to taught programmes (not research students where there are different requirements)
- It is made clear that the proposal applies to all international students, both EU and non-EU
- It would be proposed that it is piloted and reviewed over two years, similar to the decision made by Academic Council regarding the FEC proposal with respect to Skillnet applicants

- The proposal reflects and integrates the current English language requirements published on the DCU website
- The last paragraph of the proposal entitled 'English language attainment at School Leaving or Matriculation level' is not necessary from an operational point of view
- To address the fact that a process of verification would need to be put in place, which would require further discussion e.g. verification of residency and employment
- It should be noted as currently published, both FHSS and DCUBS have separate English language entry requirements.

**12. Any other business**

It was noted that this was Dr Justin Rami's last meeting of University Standards Committee and the Chair thanked him for his contribution to USC over the past three years.

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

**Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday, 9 January 2020**

**9.30 a.m. in A204**