

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 20 February 2020

9.30 a.m. – 10.15 a.m. in A204

Present: Mr Callaghan Commons, Dr Lorraine Delaney, Dr Yseult Freeney, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Dr Anna Logan, Prof Christine Loscher, Dr Kenneth McDonagh, Dr Catherine McGonagle, Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Prof Edgar Morgenroth, Ms Michele Pringle and Dr Joseph Stokes

Apologies: Mr Peter McGorman

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Ms Michele Pringle to USC as representative of the Faculty Administration Peer Group (FAPG) and Dr Jennifer McManis, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Engineering and Computing.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted subject to the inclusion of an additional external examiner nomination, item 4.1.3.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 9 January 2020

The minutes of 9 January 2020 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 9 January 2020

- 3.1** It was noted that work on the linking of programme regulations to the Loop programme page was ongoing (Item 3.2).
- 3.2** It was noted that to ensure that results for those students seeking re-entry onto the Professional Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education are formally ratified, it is proposed that a one-off extraordinary Progression and Award Board would take place to confirm all legacy results. It was noted too that DCU Institute of Education would write to advise students who want to return to complete the programme that they should do so within a fixed time-period (5.1.2).
- 3.3** It was noted that the majority of the requested amendments to the revised Professional Master in Education (Primary) programme regulations have been completed, however one final outstanding item is awaiting completion, in advance of approval and publication (Item 5.1.5).
- 3.4** It was noted that 'attendance' as reflected in the programme regulations is now under the consideration of the TEU (Item 3.3).
- 3.5** It was noted that the nomination of an external examiner by DCUBS, a decision on which was deferred at the 9 January 2020 meeting of USC is on the agenda (4.1.2) of this meeting (Item. 4.1.1).
- 3.6** It was noted that the finalised programme regulations template for 2020-21, was circulated. (Item 3.1).
- 3.7** It was noted that the minor amendments to the MA in Religion and Education programme regulations were completed (Item 5.1.6).
- 3.8** It was noted that the amendments recommended to the Admissions Appeals Policy were completed and the finalised documentation was referred for the consideration of Academic Council for the meeting of 5 February 2020 (Item 6).
- 3.9** It was noted that the amendments recommended to the External Examiner Regulations and Guidelines were completed and the finalised documentation was referred for the consideration of Academic Council for the meeting of 5 February 2020 (Item 7).

- 3.10** It was noted that the amendments recommended to English language requirements for international taught postgraduate applications document were completed and the finalised documentation was referred for the consideration of Academic Council for the meeting of 5 February 2020 (Item 11).
- 3.11** It was noted that an application for legacy re-admission onto the Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education was approved by Chair's Action, 10 January 2020.
- 3.12** It was noted that the programme regulations for the MSc in Data Protection and Privacy Law, approved through the Accreditation process were published for 2019-2020, 20 January 2020.
- 3.13** It was noted that a minor change to programme regulations for the BSc in Applied Physics, BSc in Physics with Astronomy and BSc in Physics with Biomedical Sciences were approved by Chair's Action, 11 February 2020.

SECTION B: Faculty issues

4. External examiners for taught programmes

4.1 Nominations

- 4.1.1 University of London
Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing

Approved

- 4.1.2 Cranfield University
DCU Business School GTE modules

Approved. It was noted that although the nomination was not in line with regulations, the special case made by DCUBS for the appointment of this particular examiner was accepted.

- 4.1.3 University College Dublin
DCU Business School modules

Approved

4.2 Renewal of appointment/changes to duties

There were no items submitted for consideration.

5. Other issues (Faculty)

There were no items submitted for consideration.

SECTION C: Other issues (not Faculty-specific)**6. DCU Microcredentials**

The Chair introduced this item noting that the document on microcredentials had been reviewed by Education Committee. It was recommended that the document would be reviewed by University Standards Committee, as it dealt with regulatory and operational matters.

In the discussion which ensued the following were noted:

- As microcredentials are delivered online and to a world-wide audience, students will self-certify English language competency and academic prior attainment and verify identity using appropriate software.
- DCU registration will take place seven days following sign-up to the microcredential and those registered will be DCU students.
- The University is currently planning its future direction with respect to microcredentials, particularly in the context of the Human Capital Initiative call so the situation is currently evolving. It was suggested that this stage should be completed before consideration of the consequent changes to Marks and Standards would be addressed.
- For the time being, microcredentials are being treated in the same manner as stand-alone modules, although it was acknowledged that there is not an exact correlation between the two offerings.
- It was clarified that a microcredential would equate to either a 5 or 7.5 credit module, as per Marks and Standards and that Marks and Standards apply to microcredentials with the exception of items noted in the microcredential document under the 'Marks and Standards' heading.
- It would be important that students registered on microcredentials would be tagged as such and not as stand-alone module students.

7. Report on Pilot Procedure to Amend Errors to Semester 1 Provisional Results, 2019

The Chair provided the background to this report indicating that a process was proposed last year, whereby clear errors to a student's examination record, following the publication of provisional results, would be updated within a specific time period following the discovery of the errors. A pilot of the amendment process had taken place, with which three of the five faculties had engaged.

The report as presented indicated that the incidence of errors was relatively low. The Chair indicated that the view of Vice President Academic Affairs (Registrar) was that errors should be corrected as soon as they came to light. It was noted also that it is a GDPR requirement that data on record is correct, and it was very much in the interest of the student that these errors would be corrected immediately.

University Standards Committee noted the report and agreed that the process to amend any errors that come to light after the publication of provisional results should be implemented across all faculties.

8. Standard for DCU Award Titles on Official Documents (Transcripts and Parchments)

The Chair outlined that the document as circulated, set out to provide guidance on a standard for DCU award titles and to find a balance between award and programme titles.

The following clarifications were requested to the document:

- The provision of exemplars with respect to the use of (Hons) for level 8 awards.
- Some clarity on the Qualification Specialism mechanism referenced towards the end of the document.

The document was agreed subject to those minor amendments.

9. Any other business

The Chair noted that in discussions at Academic Council, 5 February 2020, on the updated External Examiner Guidelines document it was requested the change in emphasis to a more advisory role of the external examiner would be brought to the attention of Schools. He indicated that he would write to Heads of School in this regard.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 2 April 2020
9.30 a.m. via Zoom