

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Thursday 3 June 2010

9.00 a.m.-11.45 a.m. in A204

- Present:** Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin,
Ms Olivia Bree, Dr Pat Brereton, Ms Jennifer Bruton,
Ms Bernadette Dowling, Professor Saleem Hashmi, Mr Billy Kelly,
Ms Barbara McConalogue, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary),
Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Ms Annabella Stover,
Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Ann Wickham, Dr Sheelagh Wickham
- Apologies:** Ms Morag Munro, Professor Gary Murphy, Mr John Murphy
- In attendance:** Ms Gillian Barry, Mr Cillian Byrne

The Chair welcomed Mr Cillian Byrne, incoming Deputy President – Education and Welfare of the Students’ Union, to his first meeting of the University Standards Committee. On behalf of the USC, she paid tribute to the outgoing Deputy President, Mr John Murphy, for his very significant contribution to the work of the committee during his term of office.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted. It was agreed to transfer one of the matters arising from the meeting of 1 April 2010 (relating to Item 7.3) to item 7 on the agenda so that it could form part of the discussion about Marks and Standards issues.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 April 2010

The minutes were confirmed, and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Agreed to change the wording of the minute relating to Item 6.1.4.1 of the meeting of 3 December 2009, as requested by Professor John Carroll at the meeting of Academic Council of 14 April 2010, so that it reads 'Decision deferred pending discussion with the School about the necessity for an alternative title.'
(Item 6.1.4.1 from the meeting of 3 December 2009.)
- 3.2** The dates in the list of NCEA legacy awards in the period 1980-1988 were approved. This list will now be made available on the NQAI website. Noted that such NCEA legacy awards as are described as 'Graduate Diploma (conversion)' are placed at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications whereas equivalent awards from DCU, while not referred to as 'conversion' awards, are placed at Level 9. Agreed that Ms McMorrow would make the NQAI aware of this. Noted that this matter is of relevance in view of the current discussions about the appropriate level for the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (formerly Higher Diploma in Education). Noted that the level for the PGDip is to be discussed at the June 2010 meeting of the IUA Registrars' Group on the basis of the draft report on the issue from the Technical Subgroup chaired by Professor Tom Collins, and that the outcome of this discussion might have a bearing on the extent to which the university needs to identify Graduate Diploma programmes as involving conversion, where this is the case. The preliminary list of DCU legacy awards was approved. Noted that the Registry, with input from the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, would continue the work of compiling the full list of 'conversion' awards from 1988 onwards as part of the ongoing work to agree levels for all legacy awards with the NQAI. Noted that a letter and minutes relating to a meeting of the Technical Subgroup had been made available to the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education.
(Item 6.2 from the meeting of 4 February 2010, and Item 3.1 from the meeting of 1 April 2010.)
- 3.3** Noted that a restructuring proposal in respect of the MSc in Psychotherapy, to make it compatible with Marks and Standards, had been submitted to the Education Committee for its meeting of 5 May 2010 and had been approved. (Item 3.2)
- 3.4** Noted that the Graduate Studies Board had got very extensive feedback on the last revised draft of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* and that, to allow time for this feedback to be incorporated appropriately into the final draft, this draft would be prepared over the Summer months and then submitted to the USC at its meeting of 30 September 2010. (Item 3.3)

- 3.5** Noted that discussions were ongoing about the operational implications of Marks and Standards for ‘mother’ and ‘child’ modules. Noted that, at a future stage, consideration might be given to discontinuing the use of such modules. (Items 3.7 and 7.2)
- 3.6** Noted that a protocol for the management of November Progression and Awards Boards in the light of the new Marks and Standards had been agreed between the Registry and Faculties. Noted that it would not be appropriate or necessary for students to have an opportunity to appeal the outcome of the proposed Module Progression Boards but that, following the November PABs, they would have the right of appeal in accordance with regulations. (Item 3.8)
- 3.7** Noted that the online form for completion by external examiners was available and that all examiners had been requested to use it and to discontinue the practice of completing hardcopy forms. Discussions are continuing with a view to setting up the online system to underpin the form, and a request for resources for this will be made to Budget Committee in July 2010. The Chair noted the importance of ensuring, to the extent possible, that data yielded by means of the form and the proposed system could be easily made available for use in other contexts, e.g. for the purposes of quality reviews. Noted that the changes agreed by the USC had been incorporated into the procedures for communicating the external examiners’ reports to relevant staff members. (Item 3.9)
- 3.8** Noted that the working group on approval procedures had devised forms for submission to Faculty committees and the Education Committee in respect of proposed changes to programmes and related matters and that these would shortly be made available on line. The working group is now addressing the revision of the regulations and guidelines on validation and accreditation. (Item 3.12)
- 3.9** Noted, with respect to approval routes for taught modules for research students, that the Director of Graduate Research, the Associate Deans for Research and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education had agreed that such modules would be approved by the Faculty Research Committees, and considered for NFQ compliance by the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees, prior to being submitted for approval to the Graduate Studies Board. The timing of the presentation of modules and academic structures to these Faculty committees will be agreed at Faculty level. (Item 4.2)
- 3.10** Noted that the fee implications of an extended academic session would be discussed with the Finance Office at a meeting on 9 June 2010. (Item 7.2)

- 3.11** Noted that a resolution of the issue relating to the fee implications of the regulations in Marks and Standards on repeating modules was required urgently and that the proposal on this issue would be circulated electronically to the USC as soon as it became available. (Item 7.2)
- 3.12** Noted that the policy on leave of absence and the recommendations on shared teaching would be submitted to the 9 June 2010 meeting of Academic Council and, if approved, would be communicated to all stakeholders. Noted that the policy on leave of absence would be monitored on an ongoing basis for implications for Oscail students. (Items 7.4 and 8)
- 3.13** Noted that the work on formulating guidelines for the supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate taught projects and dissertations would be undertaken in the context of formulating marking grids (as required under the *ENQA Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*) for use with taught programmes generally. As the NQAI is engaged in discussions with a view to the provision of sector-wide guidelines on such grids, it is considered preferable to await the outcome of these discussions rather than beginning to devise grids *ab initio*. Therefore the project/dissertation guidelines and the DCU marking grids will be submitted for consideration by the USC at a future meeting. Discussions on these issues will take place in Faculties in tandem with discussions on AP(E)L (see Item 10.1 below). (Item 9)
- 3.14** Noted that a report from the EU Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs about the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending on higher education had been made available to the USC. (Item 10)
- 3.15** Noted that the possibility of establishing (a) 60-credit Master's programmes and (b) Certificates of Continuing Professional Development would be discussed by the USC at a future date. (Item 7.2 and USC Subgroup meeting (01/04/10), Item 1.5)
- 3.16** Noted that one of the outcomes of the extensive work recently undertaken to ensure that the ITS calculate programme can enable the implementation of the new Marks and Standards is that the handling of module exemptions, where they need to be taken into consideration for compensation purposes, is now automated. (USC Subgroup meeting (01/04/10), Item 2)
- 3.17** Noted that a list of frequently-asked questions, and responses, in relation to Marks and Standards had been drawn up and would be made available on the Registry website. (USC Subgroup meeting (01/04/10), Item 3.1)

- 3.18** Noted that information on procedures in terms of labelling versions of documents, and presenting FAQs and responses, as used in University College Dublin had been made available to the USC. (USC Subgroup meeting (01/04/10), Item 3.2)

4. Minutes of the Graduate Studies Board meeting of 4 March 2010

Approved. Noted that Professor Gary Murphy was due to discuss with the Chair an issue relating to the Doctorate of Music in Performance programme in the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES

5.1 Appointment of external examiners

- 5.1.1 Dr James Power, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
BSc in Computer Applications
Approved.
- 5.1.2 Dr Máire O'Neill, Queen's University Belfast
MSc in Security and Forensic Computing
Approved.
- 5.1.3 Ms Jane Dunstan, Thames Valley University
Modules on the BSc in Multimedia and the MSc in Multimedia
Decision deferred pending receipt of additional information.
- 5.1.4 Dr Neil Gavin, University of Liverpool
Modules on the BA in Journalism, MA in Journalism and MA in International Journalism Studies
Approved subject to clarification of the reason two external examiners appear to be required for one module, CM503.
- 5.1.5 Professor Aidan Moran, University College Dublin
BSc in Psychology
Decision deferred pending receipt of additional information. Agreed that, if necessary, approval of an external examiner for this programme could take place electronically.
- 5.1.6 Professor Máire Ní Annracháin, University College Dublin
Modules in Irish on programmes in St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 5.1.7 Professor Séamus O'Connell, St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Modules in Scripture on the BA in Theology and Philosophy/Psychology/English Literature/Spirituality, All Hallows College
Approved. Noted that the reference on the form to 'previously approved' referred to the modules rather than the nominee.

- 5.1.8 Dr John Scally, Trinity College Dublin
Modules in Moral Theology on the BA in Theology and
Philosophy/Psychology/English Literature/Spirituality, All Hallows College
Approved. Noted that the reference on the form to ‘previously approved’ referred
to the modules rather than the nominee.
- 5.1.9 Dr Susan Stephenson, Sarum College, Salisbury
MA in Applied Christian Spirituality, All Hallows College
Approved.
- 5.1.10 Dr Barbara Pizziconi, SOAS, University of London
BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, BA in International Business
and Japanese, MA in Translation Studies
Approved subject to confirmation that the modules to be examined in the three
programmes are modules in Japanese.

5.2 Renewal of appointment of external examiners, and/or changes to duties

- 5.2.1 Mr Michael Good, RTÉ
Modules in broadcast journalism and related areas, School of Communications
Approved.
- 5.2.2 Dr Paul Conway, University College Cork
Modules relating to teaching on the BSc in Physical Education with Biology,
School of Education Studies
Approved.
- 5.2.3 Professor Gary Granville, National College of Art and Design
Professional doctoral programme, School of Education Studies
Approved subject to clarification of the work involved in examining the three
workshops referred to on the form.
- 5.2.4 Dr Michael O’Rourke, Trinity College Dublin
Graduate Diploma in Education and MSc in Guidance and Counselling
Approved.
- 5.2.5 Professor Terry J Anderson, University of Ulster
BEng in Digital Media Engineering
Agreed that, as Professor Anderson had already acted as external examiner for the
maximum number of years permitted, the School of Electronic Engineering would
be requested to nominate an alternative examiner.
- 5.2.6 Dr Raymond A Ryan, National University of Ireland, Galway
Modules in the School of Mathematical Sciences
Approved.
- 5.2.7 Professor George King, University of Manchester
BSc in Applied Physics, BSc in Physics with Astronomy, BSc in Physics with
Biomedical Sciences
Approved.

- 5.2.8 Professor James G Deegan, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
Modules in Education on the Bachelor of Education programme and the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching), St Patrick's College
Decision deferred pending further discussion. Agreed that, if necessary, approval of an external examiner for this programme could take place electronically.
- 5.2.9 Dr Eugene Duffy, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
Modules in Systematic Theology on the BA in Theology and Philosophy/Psychology/English Literature/Spirituality, All Hallows College
Approved.
- 5.2.10 Dr Dirk Nitzsche, City University, London
BSc in Quantitative Finance
Approved.
- 5.2.11 Professor Mike Ferrara, University of Georgia
BSc in Athletic Therapy and Training
Approved.
- 5.2.12 Professor Desmond Hunter, University of Ulster
BA in Music Performance, BA in Composition, Master of Music in Performance
Decision deferred pending receipt of further information.

6. Other issues

None.

SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY SPECIFIC¹)

7. Derogations from Marks and Standards for 2010/11

7.1 Proposed new derogation for the MSc in Psychotherapy School of Nursing

Approved.

¹ In these minutes, Faculty-specific requests for derogations from Marks and Standards are located in Section C because of their close relationship with Marks and Standards, which is a standard Section C item.

**7.2 Proposed new derogation for the MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy
School of Nursing**

Approved. Noted, in respect of this proposed derogation and the proposed derogation referred to under Item 7.1 above, that the requests had come about because the maximum duration of programmes is now, under new Marks and Standards, determined on the basis of credit volume whereas previously it was determined by doubling the minimum duration. Noted that the maximum duration for the two programmes in question, now agreed as being six years, appeared long by comparison with that for Master's programmes generally. Noted that consideration might need to be given to separating the prior academic work for programmes such as these from the subsequent professional practice, as is the case in some other disciplines which involve registration with a professional body.

7.3 Proposal to extend the derogations granted for 2009/10 for the BSc in Physical Education with Biology and the MSc in Plasma and Vacuum Technology

7.3.1 Approved with respect to the BSc in Physical Education and Biology, for 2010/11 only. Agreed to request the Programme Board to give consideration to alternative marking mechanisms, that would not require a derogation, for 2011/12 and subsequent years.

7.3.2 Approved with respect to the MSc in Plasma and Vacuum Technology.

7.4 Clarification in respect of a number of issues relating to Marks and Standards

7.4.1 Agreed that, in exceptional circumstances and provided there was appropriate supporting documentation, a request by a student for a deferral of a repeat attempt at a module at the final sitting in an academic session would be granted, resulting in one further academic session being available.

7.4.2 Noted that some Programme Chairs had deemed that Sections 6.2.1 and 7.1 of Marks and Standards allow the possibility of subsuming a continuous assessment resit into an examination resit, i.e. marking the examination out of 100%, and had informed students accordingly. Agreed that all Programme Chairs would be requested to give consideration to this issue, where relevant to the June and September 2010 Progression and Awards Boards, on the basis of what would be likely to be in the best interests of students and to notify the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education in their Faculty of the proposed course of action. Agreed that Chairs would also be requested, with respect to 2010/11, to inform the USC, in time for its meeting of 30 September 2010, of the programmes in which it

was intended to implement the procedure with respect to resit examinations that is noted above and to provide a rationale for this. Noted that some manual calculations of marks would be necessary prior to the June and September PABs to ensure the implementation of the procedure and that it would be desirable for members of PABs to take cognisance of the fact that this does not imply a weakness in the calculate programme.

- 7.4.3** Agreed that the calculation of the precision mark and classification for students who had failed in 2008/09 and were repeating in 2009/10 should be based on the marks obtained in the first attempt at all modules.
- 7.4.4** Agreed that, although normally the contribution from the previous year or years, where used in the calculation of the final mark, should be calculated on the basis of the marks obtained in the first attempt at all modules, an exception would be made for relevant PABs, for 2009/10 only, to allow other arrangements to be implemented. This is to accommodate some legacy issues where such other arrangements had previously been put in place and communicated to students.
- 7.4.5** Agreed that current repeat students who might have been notified that they had one final attempt in 2009/10 will now, in line with new Marks and Standards, also have one additional attempt in 2009/10 provided such an attempt is available.
- 7.4.6** Agreed that Ms Barry and Ms McMorrow would draft a document to outline the issues at 7.4.1-7.4.5 above, inclusive, and that it would be circulated for comment to the USC within a short timeframe and then, revised if appropriate, submitted for approval by Academic Council at its meeting of 9 June 2010 prior to being made available to relevant staff members.
- 7.4.7** The importance of having the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education present at PBERCs and PABs, to the extent possible, was noted. It is understood that this is not possible in all cases because PBERCs and PABs are scheduled in parallel sessions.
- 7.4.8** Agreed that a policy and procedures in respect of making minor awards were required by the university and that this matter would be on the agenda of the meeting of the USC of 30 September 2010. Enquirers will be informed that no decision to make such awards can be taken pending the formulation and approval of the policy and procedures.

8. Programme-specific regulations 2010/11 for formal approval

Approved subject to the addition of regulations for a small number of programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and minor revisions to a small number of the regulations in the Faculty of Science and Health. Agreed that these final matters could be approved by means of Chair's action.

9. Proposals relating to the appointment of external examiners

Agreed to defer detailed consideration of this issue to the 30 September 2010 meeting of the USC. The Chair requested that comments on it be submitted to Ms McDermott, by a date to be specified by e-mail.

10. Revised policy and procedures on AP(E)L

10.1 Dr Sheelagh Wickham, on behalf of the working group on this issue, noted that, as the NQAI Framework Implementation Network was preparing sector-wide guidelines, it would be preferable to wait until this work was completed before finalising the DCU policy and procedures. The work of the FIN is likely to be completed by late 2010, so the DCU policy and procedures are likely to be submitted for consideration by the USC at its meeting of 3 February 2011. In the meantime, the consultation process with Faculties will continue.

10.2 The working group had also given consideration to the necessity, or otherwise, of devising university-wide guidelines for Faculties to use when dealing with special-case admissions requests. It had concluded that such guidelines are not necessary at the present time. The situation will, however, be kept under review.

11. Marks and Standards 2010/11, All Hallows College

Noted. Noted also that these Marks and Standards are subject to a small number of revisions and that the final version is to be submitted for approval by the Academic Council in All Hallows College at its meeting of 29 June 2010.

12. Any other business

12.1 Agreed not to schedule an additional meeting of the USC for 2010/11 at this point but to monitor the workload with a view to determining, at a later stage, whether or not one might be necessary. Noted that the option of holding a subgroup meeting to

discuss specific issues had proved useful in 2009/10 and might also prove useful in 2010/11.

- 12.2** The Chair expressed appreciation to the members of the USC for the very considerable time and effort they had devoted to ensuring the completion of a significant body of work in the course of 2009/10.

Date of next meeting:

**30 September 2010
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____