

**UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

Thursday 3 December 2009

9.00 a.m.-11.00 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,  
Professor Martin Henry, Mr Billy Kelly,  
Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Ms Phylomena McMorrow,  
Professor Gary Murphy, Mr John Murphy, Ms Annabella Stover,  
Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Sheelagh Wickham

**Apologies:** Ms Barbara McConalogue, Dr Ann Wickham

**SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES**

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 6.1.5 and one additional submission under Item 6.2.3.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2009**

The minutes were confirmed subject to the following:

- in the first paragraph of Item 6.3.1, the reference to ‘the Bachelor of Education’ to be replaced by a reference to ‘the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching)’
- in Items 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.4.7, the references to ‘the Faculty’ to be replaced by references to ‘the Programme Board’.

They were then signed by the Chair.

**3. Minutes of the derogations subgroup and of the documentation subgroup meetings of 19 October 2009**

The minutes of both of these meetings were confirmed.

**4. Matters arising from the minutes**

- 4.1** Noted that a change had been made to the minutes of the 4 June 2009 meeting of the USC to correct the job titles of Ms Susan Hurley and Mr John Murphy (from ‘incoming Education and Welfare Officer’ and ‘outgoing Education and Welfare Officer’ to ‘incoming Deputy President – Education and Welfare’ and ‘outgoing Deputy President – Education and Welfare’).
- 4.2** Noted that a master timetable of central and Faculty committees had been compiled, though further discussion was needed as to whether or not it should contain additional items such as the dates of research committees. (Item 3.1)
- 4.3** Noted that the format of the USC agenda needed further simplification and that this would be done. (Item 3.1)
- 4.4** The Chair noted that discussion at the IUA Registrars’ Group meeting of 12 October 2009 about NFQ Level 8/9 issues had focused on the issues surrounding sequential and concurrent Higher Diplomas/Graduate Diplomas and whether a distinction should be made between sequential and concurrent in terms of placing awards on the Framework. The IUA has requested Professor Tom Collins to reconstitute the study team which had previously analysed the implementation and impact of the Framework with a view to making recommendations about this specific issue. The Registrars’ Group will see a copy of the report from the study team at its meeting in January 2010, and the report will be published in February 2010. (Item 3.2)
- 4.5** Noted that the MSc in Psychotherapy was being restructured to make it compatible with Section 2.4 of Marks and Standards, i.e. to ensure that, for all students, a minimum of 60 of the credits leading to the award are taken in DCU. (Item 3.2)
- 4.6** Noted that all Faculties had by now discussed the desirability or otherwise of including the names of specialisms/pathways/majors on parchments. The consensus is for the *status quo* to remain. (Item 3.3)
- 4.7** Noted that Mater Dei Institute of Education had purchased Coursebuilder. (Item 3.4)

- 4.8** Noted that ten graduates of the Graduate Diploma in Safety and Health and Work had indicated an interest in undertaking the Master's dissertation (following the invitation issued by DCU Business School), and that arrangements were being made for their admission. (Item 3.6)
- 4.9** Noted that the form to request approval of stand-alone modules would shortly be modified to include a web link to the new due diligence policy. The final changes will shortly be made to this policy, and it will be made available on line. (Item 3.14)
- 4.10** Noted that, at its meeting of 17 December 2009, the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel would discuss the pedagogical implications of shared teaching (e.g. Levels 8 and 9 together). (Item 3.17)
- 4.11** Noted that an item on academic performance, per discipline, of students who are not native speakers of English would be on the agenda for the 4 February 2010 meeting of the USC. (Item 3.19)
- 4.12** Noted that the draft revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* had been discussed at a special single-issue meeting of the Graduate Studies Board on 1 December 2009 and would be further discussed at another such meeting on 15 December 2009. (Item 4)
- 4.13** Noted that a nominated external examiner had been approved electronically following the provision of information about the modules to be examined. (Item 5.1.3.1)
- 4.14** Noted that a nominated external examiner had been approved electronically following the provision of an explanation about a retrospection issue. (Item 5.2.3.1)
- 4.15** Noted that a nominated external examiner had been approved electronically following confirmation that a specified module needed to be externed. (Item 5.2.4.2)
- 4.16** Noted that a report on the February 2010 Progression and Awards Boards would be made to the USC following these PABs. (Item 6.6.5)
- 4.17** Noted that revised proposals on AP(E)L would be submitted to the 4 February 2010 meeting of the USC. (Item 7)
- 4.18** Noted that the additional changes recommended by the USC had been incorporated into the revised EE1 (nomination of external examiner) form and that the finalised form was now available for use. The Associate Deans for Teaching and

Learning/Education are requested to highlight any further issues that may need revision on this form or the EE2 (renewal/changes to duties) form. In connection with the EE2 form, it was noted that it would be helpful to include space in Section B to indicate the dates of appointment. (Item 8)

- 4.19** Noted that, since the 1 October 2009 meeting, electronic approval had been granted to a student to re-enter the MA in International Relations (part-time) on an exceptional basis, the normal maximum number of years for completion having been exceeded.

**5. Minutes of the Graduate Studies Board meeting of 10 September 2009**

Approved.

**SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES**

**6.1 Appointment of external examiners**

**6.1.1 Dublin City University Business School**

- 6.1.1.1 Professor Tom Kennedy, University of Limerick  
Modules in Accounting  
Approved.

**6.1.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing**

No items.

**6.1.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

- 6.1.3.1 Dr John Kullman, Canterbury Christ Church University  
Modules on the BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies and Graduate Diploma/MA in Intercultural Studies  
Approved.
- 6.1.3.2 Dr Séamas Kelly, University College Dublin  
MSc i nGnó agus i dTeicneolaíocht an Eolais  
Approved.
- 6.1.3.3 Professor Cathal Brugha, University College Dublin  
BA Gnó agus Gaeilge  
Approved.

- 6.1.3.4 Professor Anthony Gallagher, Queen's University Belfast  
Graduate Diploma in Education  
Approved.
- 6.1.3.5 Dr Mary Donnelly, University College Cork  
Modules in the School of Law and Government  
Approved.
- 6.1.3.6 Professor Jeffrey Haynes, London Metropolitan University  
Modules in the School of Law and Government  
Approved.
- 6.1.3.7 Professor Bob Franklin, Cardiff University  
Modules on the BA in Journalism, BA in Communication Studies, MA in Political and Public Communication and MA in Journalism  
Approved.
- 6.1.3.8 Professor Desmond Bell, Queen's University, Belfast  
Modules on the BA in Communication Studies, MA in Political and Public Communication, MA in Film and Television Studies, MA in Journalism and MSc in Science Communication  
Approved.

#### **6.1.4 Faculty of Science and Health**

- 6.1.4.1 Mr John Millett, University of Kent  
Modules in the School of Mathematical Sciences  
Decision deferred pending discussion with the School about the necessity for an alternative title
- 6.1.4.2 Professor Tina Overton, University of Hull  
MSc in Science Education  
Approved.

#### **6.1.5 Linked colleges**

- 6.1.5.1 Professor Tom Collins, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Modules on the BA for Personal and Professional Development, All Hallows College  
Approved.
- 6.1.5.2 Dr Bas Levering, University of Ghent  
Modules on the BA in Humanities, St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.1.5.3 Dr Michael Dunne, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Modules on the Bachelor of Religious Education and the BA in Irish Studies and Religious Studies, Mater Dei Institute of Education  
Approved.

6.1.5.4 Dr Martin Howard Adams, University College Dublin  
Modules on the Bachelor of Religious Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education  
Approved.

6.1.5.4 Dr William Desmond, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Modules on the Bachelor of Arts programme, All Hallows College  
Approved.

The Chair noted that, in some cases, a Faculty had appointed more than one external examiner from a corresponding Faculty in another institution and suggested that it would be preferable to have a maximum of one appointment per Faculty per institution (unless there were exceptional circumstances). Practice elsewhere in this regard will be ascertained, and the matter will be discussed again at the USC meeting of 4 February 2010.

## **6.2 Renewal of appointment of external examiners, and/or changes to duties**

### **6.2.1 Dublin City University Business School**

6.2.1.1 Professor Patrick Gunnigle, University of Limerick  
MBS in Human Resource Strategies, MBS in Human Resource Management  
Approved.

6.2.1.2 Professor Edmund Heery, Cardiff University  
Bachelor of Business Studies  
Approved.

6.2.1.3 Professor Tom Redman, Durham University  
MBS in Human Resource Management  
Approved.

### **6.2.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing**

6.2.2.1 Dr Siobhán Clarke, Trinity College Dublin  
Graduate Diploma in Information Technology and MSc in Information  
Technology  
Approved.

6.2.2.2 Dr Frank Bannister, Trinity College Dublin  
BSc in Computer Applications  
Approved.

6.2.2.3 Professor Gary McGuire, University College Dublin  
MSc in Security and Forensic Computing  
Approved.

6.2.2.4 Professor Tom Coffey, University of Limerick  
MSc in Security and Forensic Computing  
Approved.

### **6.2.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

- 6.2.3.1 Dr Anwei Feng, Bangor University  
Modules on the BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies and the BA in International Business and Languages  
Approved.
- 6.2.3.2 Professor Séamus Mac Mathúna, University of Ulster  
Modules in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies  
Approved.
- 6.2.3.3 Dr Honor Fagan, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Modules on the BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, the BA in Languages for International Communication and the Graduate Diploma/MA in Intercultural Studies  
Approved.
- 6.2.3.4 Dr Nicola Glover-Thomas, University of Liverpool  
Modules in the School of Law and Government  
Approved.
- 6.2.3.5 Professor Caroline Fennell, University College Cork  
Modules in the School of Law and Government  
Approved.
- 6.2.3.6 Mr Colm O’Cinneide, University College London  
Modules in the School of Law and Government  
Approved.
- 6.2.3.7 Dr Regina Uí Chollatáin, University College Dublin  
Modules in Fiontar  
Decision deferred pending discussion with the School about the wide range of modules proposed for the nominee to examine.

### **6.2.4 Faculty of Science and Health**

- 6.2.4.1 Professor Christine Cardin, University of Reading  
BSc in Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, BSc in Analytical Science  
Approved.
- 6.2.4.2 Dr Hywel Evans, University of Plymouth  
BSc Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, BSc in Analytical Science  
Approved.
- 6.2.4.3 Dr Andrew Tubb, University of the West of England  
BSc in Environmental Science and Health  
Approved.
- 6.2.4.4 Professor Patt Dodds, University of Massachusetts  
BSc in Physical Education with Biology  
Approved. (The approval includes the examination of an additional module, SS417, which was appended manually to the list of modules to be examined.)

### **6.2.5 Linked colleges**

- 6.2.5.1 Dr Robert Davis, University of Glasgow  
Bachelor of Education, St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.2 Dr Jim Gleeson, University of Limerick  
Bachelor of Education, St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.3 Professor Helen Gunter, University of Manchester  
Bachelor of Education, St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.4 Dr Dawn Male, University of London  
Doctorate in Education, St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.5 Professor Raymond Gillespie, National University of Ireland, Maynooth  
Modules in History in St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.6 Professor Brendan Leahy, St Patrick's College, Maynooth  
Modules in Religious Studies and Religious Education in St Patrick's College  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.7 Dr Patricia Kieran, Mary Immaculate College of Education, University of Limerick  
Bachelor of Religious Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education  
Approved.
- 6.2.5.8 Professor Michael Conway, St Patrick's College, Maynooth  
BA in Irish Studies and Religious Studies, Mater Dei Institute of Education  
Approved.

## **7. Other issues**

### **7.1 Dublin City University Business School**

Request for readmission of a student to the MSc in Investment and Treasury  
Approved.

### **7.2 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Request for readmission of a student to the MA in Journalism  
Approved.



Noted that, while requests such as the two above needed to be discussed on a case-by-case basis, an institutional guideline would none the less be needed as to what constituted reasonableness in the context of such requests. Agreed that this matter would require further discussion.

## **SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY SPECIFIC<sup>1</sup>)**

### **8. Marks and Standards: ongoing issues for discussion**

**8.1** The proposal for four derogations from Marks and Standards with respect to the Graduate Diploma/MSc in Plasma and Vacuum Technology was approved for 2009/10 only. Agreed that the issue of alignment with Marks and Standards for future academic years, and the possible implications for student fees, would be discussed with Queen's University, Belfast, with which the programme is jointly offered.

Agreed that the wording of the derogations should, where necessary, be changed to ensure that it was in conformity with the wording of the relevant sections of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions. Noted that derogations from Marks and Standards often involve manual calculation of results.

**8.2** A range of issues arising from the implementation of Marks and Standards in 2009/10 was discussed. The decisions arising from the discussion are as follows:

**a. M&S Section 6.2.2**

Where, through custom and practice, Progression and Awards Boards have allowed the continuous assessment mark to count towards the overall module mark where this is to the benefit of the student, and have not allowed it to count where it is not to the benefit of the student, the procedure should be discontinued. The reason for this is to uphold the principle that students should be required to resit elements of a module for which they have not attained the stated learning outcomes (and, conversely, should not be required to resit elements for which they have attained the stated learning outcomes).

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**b. M&S Section 6.2.3**

In principle, there should be conformity of practice across the university with regard to the granting of deferrals in respect of module marks. To reinforce this, the Registry will recirculate the relevant regulations to Heads of School and Programme Chairs and will create a link to these regulations from this section of Marks and Standards. The Students' Union will also highlight the regulations to the student body.

**c. M&S Section 7.1**

An issue has arisen with regard to the Level 8 programmes in Nursing whereby, for logistical reasons, it is not possible for students who fail a clinical placement module at the first and the resit attempts to re-register for the module in its entirety in the following academic session (Item 6.5.4 of the minutes of the USC meeting of 1 October 2009, and Item 2.3 of the minutes of the USC derogations subgroup meeting of 19 October 2009, refer.) The same issue arises, in principle, where (as for some students in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing) the intake is in February rather than September; such students may not have a resit examination possibility within the same academic session. In both cases, the possibility arises of providing an extended academic session. Dr Sheelagh Wickham and Ms Bruton are to ascertain the operational and fees implications of such an extended session and to report these to the USC so as to inform a decision on the matter.

**d. M&S Section 7.1**

The regulations about resit opportunities carry implications for fees which did not exist under the previous Marks and Standards. Ms McDermott and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education are to discuss these with the Finance Office. Pending recommendations on the issue, existing fees mechanisms will apply.

**e. M&S Section 7.1**

The previous Marks and Standards allowed for a condoned pass in a foundation Semester 1 module if the corresponding advanced module was passed in Semester 2 (subject to prior identification by the Programme Board of the modules in question, and notification of these to students). The current Marks and Standards do not make provision for this; therefore, any relevant foundation and advanced modules must be deemed to be linked modules with effect from 2010/11. For 2009/10, the situation may be addressed by means of temporary measures such as more generous compensation arrangements in respect of the foundation module than would normally be permitted. As this issue is of particular relevance to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Blin is to liaise with the relevant

Programme Boards with a view to formulating temporary measures and, before the examinations in May 2010, ensuring that they have been submitted to, and approved by, the USC.

- f. M&S Section 7.1.6**  
Where a student fails a 'child' module, thereby failing the 'mother' module, and does the same at the resit opportunity, what the student should re-register for in the following academic session is the 'child' module only, not the entire 'mother' module. The operational implications of this will need to be discussed by Registry and Faculties.
- g. M&S Section 7.1.4**  
Where there is a concern that a student may benefit from compensation in a failed module and professional competence may thereby be compromised, the Programme Board should take the decision to make the module non-compensatable, in the normal way.
- 8.3** Noted that the current Marks and Standards were the subject of discussion between Oscail and the other institutions involved in the delivery of the Bachelor of Arts/Diploma in Arts programmes and that, if issues arose, they would be submitted to the USC for consideration.
- 8.4** Agreed to hold a meeting of a subgroup of the USC (to consist of the Chair, Ms McDermott and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education), as happened also on 19 October 2009, to discuss outstanding Marks and Standards issues with a view to reporting on the decisions made about them to the 4 February 2010 meeting of the full USC.
- 8.5** Agreed that one issue would need to be discussed in advance of the subgroup meeting and reported on to the subgroup. It arises from M&S Section 7.1 and relates to students who fail one or more modules at a November Progression and Awards Board; the question arises of how, within the one academic session, such students can repeat a Semester 1 module if this is what has been failed. Discussions are to take place between the Registry and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to identify such students and agree an appropriate procedure.
- 9. Programme-specific information: availability to students**

The minutes of the meeting of 19 October 2009 of the USC subgroup which discussed this matter were confirmed (see Item 3 above). Noted that considerable work on preparing programme-specific information had already taken place and that a template existed which would be used by all Faculties. Further work is to be

undertaken (and advice also sought from Information Systems and Services on the feasibility of making available an online list of Marks and Standards-related frequently-asked questions, with responses). The outcome of this further work will be reported to a meeting of the USC later in 2009/10. Noted that it would be possible to have a standard and comprehensive system in place at the beginning of the 2010/11 academic session for the provision of programme-specific information to students.

**10. Report on pilot form and procedures in respect of external examiners**

Noted that the pilot exercise conducted in 2008/09 had indicated that the procedures required revision to streamline them and also needed to be available on line as distinct from in paper format (as in the pilot exercise). Agreed that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning would map out a revised workflow and that the Registry and Information Systems and Services would determine the associated necessary electronic processes. Noted that these tasks would involve considerable deployment of resources; agreed that, once the extent of the resource requirements had been established, the advice of the Chair would be sought on how to meet the need. The revised procedures can be approved electronically by the USC. In all events, they will include provision for Heads of School to see external examiners' reports, as a matter of course, and the elimination of Step 4 of the pilot exercise, which proved to be redundant.

**11. Additional proposal in respect of plagiarism**

Noted that the proposal was of most relevance in a case where a student transferred from a programme in one Faculty to a programme in another, and that it would benefit greatly from the inclusion of a step whereby the Registry was informed of all plagiarism offences which had been dealt with locally; this would ensure that a central record was always available. Agreed that the proposal would be revised to incorporate this step and that electronic approval would be sought for the revised version. Agreed that the fitness for purpose of the procedures arising from the revised proposal would be reviewed in the academic year 2010/11. Agreed that the proposal should not include a reference to the use of electronic plagiarism detection software.

**12. Approval procedures in respect of changes to programmes**

**12.1** Noted that the proposed procedures had been discussed in Faculties and the general recommendation was that the approval of the Education Committee should be sought for changes to the following: programme title; purpose of programme; award learning outcomes; alignment of module learning outcomes to award learning outcomes (substantial changes only); volume of credits; duration (e.g. a move from four years to three); other recent changes (e.g. substantial incremental changes). Agreed that consideration should be given to removing from the proposed procedures the section relating to withdrawal of a programme. Agreed that the procedures would benefit from the incorporation of relevant features of Coursebuilder, including a reference to the alignment rate (before, and after, the proposed change). Noted that the proposed procedures had in fact been used by the Faculty of Engineering and Computing to facilitate the approval of the changes to the Level 8 and Level 9 programmes in the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (see Item 14 below) and had been found very useful. Agreed to progress discussions on the issue with a view to having final proposals approved by the USC as soon as possible.

**12.2** The outline proposals on approval of special-purpose awards were approved. Agreed to progress discussions on this issue with a view to having final proposals approved by the USC as soon as possible.

**13. Proposed Marks and Standards for the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Education, St Patrick's College**

Approved for 2009/10. Noted that, in the case of all the linked colleges, the question arose of the extent to which it was desirable, or feasible, that their Marks and Standards should conform to those of the university. Agreed that the Chair would ascertain the position on this as indicated in the linkage agreements signed on 4 February 2008, would also, if necessary, consult the IUA Registrars' Group and would then make a recommendation to the USC. Noted that revisions to linked colleges' Marks and Standards were, in any case, under consideration in the light of the new university Marks and Standards. The importance of distinguishing between Marks and Standards and programme information was noted.

**14. For noting: changes to Level 8 and Level 9 programmes in the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering**

Noted. Noted that, in a general sense, it might be desirable for the USC to give consideration to the 3-year+2-year Bachelor's/Master's model as proposed in the context of the Bologna Framework.

**15. Any other business**

None.

**Date of next meeting:**

**4 February 2010  
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

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