

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Thursday 4 June 2009

9.30 a.m. -12.20 p.m. in A204

- Present:** Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Mr Jonathan Begg,
Ms Olivia Bree, Dr Pat Brereton, Ms Jennifer Bruton,
Professor Saleem Hashmi, Professor Martin Henry,
Ms Susan Hurley, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary),
Ms Morag Munro, Professor Gary Murphy, Dr Anne Sinnott,
Ms Annabella Stover, Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Ann Wickham,
Ms Sheelagh Wickham
- Apologies:** Dr Françoise Blin, Ms Phylomena McMorrow,
Mr Paul Sheehan
- In attendance:** Ms Gillian Barry, Ms Jean Hughes (for Item 13), Mr John Murphy

The Chair welcomed Mr John Murphy, incoming Deputy President - Education and Welfare Officer of the Students' Union, to his first meeting of the University Standards Committee, and thanked Ms Hurley, outgoing Deputy President - Education and Welfare Officer, for her substantial contribution to the work of the Committee during her term of office. The Chair also noted that Dr Sinnott was about to leave the USC because of her forthcoming role as Deputy Dean of Dublin City University Business School. She thanked Dr Sinnott for her very significant contribution to the USC since its inception in her capacity of Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Business School.

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

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 2 April 2009

Confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that the meeting to discuss procedures relating to the interface between the USC and the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees had been scheduled for 24 August 2009. (Item 3.1)
- 3.2** Noted that the next meeting of the IUA Registrars' Group, at which a number of issues raised in meetings of the USC would be discussed, would take place on 8 June 2009. (Item 3.3)
- 3.3** Noted that discussions on the feasibility of including the names of specialisms/pathways/majors on parchments had been held with the Registry and the outcome communicated to the Education Committee (which had requested that these discussions take place), and that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education were now ascertaining opinion on the matter in the Faculties. (Item 3.4)
- 3.4** Noted that the Coursebuilder software package for creating and aligning module and programme outcomes had been installed, that it was currently accessible on campus only but would shortly be made generally accessible, and that the issue of making it available for use by staff in the linked colleges would be explored with Information Systems and Services in due course. Feedback to date has been positive. Professor Henry requested any USC member who wished to submit new or additional feedback to him to do so. Coursebuilder is not compatible with ITS at present, but the intention is that it will be made compatible with ITS (i.e. with the forthcoming new version 14) by March 2010. (Item 3.5)
- 3.5** Noted that procedures in relation to *Marks and Standards* for 2008/09 had been agreed by Faculties and had then been approved by Academic Council, at its meeting of 8 April 2009 in the case of the majority of programmes, and subsequent to this meeting, electronically, in the case of the remainder. (Item 3.10)
- 3.6** Noted that a letter from the President, together with a cover letter from a Programme Board, had been sent to an external examiner. (Item 3.11)

- 3.7** A proposed stand-alone module from the Faculty of Science and Health, *Personal Growth and Community Building through Leadership*, was approved subject to the inclusion on the module descriptor of a statement that the entry requirement is a qualification at NFQ Level 6 and the submission of a response by the module proposer to the recommendations of the external expert whose advice about the module had been sought. Noted that, in the event that the indicative learning time per five-credit module was increased (as outlined in the proposed revised version of *Marks and Standards* – see Item 12 below), the indicative learning time in this module would have to be adjusted. Noted in relation to undergraduate modules generally that, notwithstanding the absence of a definitive position by the NQAI, the proposed revised version of *Marks and Standards* contains a stipulation that all such modules be at NFQ Level 8 (even if not all learning outcomes are at Level 8). Noted that Academic Council would have an opportunity to discuss this matter at its meeting of 10 June 2009 in the context of the general discussion of the proposed revised *Marks and Standards*. (Item 3.12)
- 3.8** Noted that a letter had been sent to all those who had graduated with the Graduate Diploma in Safety and Health at Work over the past five years to invite them to undertake the corresponding Master's programme if they wished. (Item 3.14)
- 3.9** Noted that the Faculty of Engineering and Computing had discussed the possibility of contacting all those who had graduated with Graduate Diplomas in the Faculty over the past five years to invite them to undertake the corresponding Master's programmes, where available. The Faculty had suggested that specific contact should not be made but that graduates would be considered for entry to Master's programmes, if they applied, in accordance with standard credit transfer mechanisms. The Chair emphasised the role and responsibilities of Faculties in ensuring fair treatment for students and applicants. A discussion took place about the general issues, including the implications of the fact that both Graduate Diplomas and Master's programmes are at NFQ Level 9 and the possibility that different structures in terms of the relationship between Graduate Diplomas and Master's might be required for different disciplines. Agreed that the issues would be further discussed at the 1 October 2009 meeting of the USC, by which time information might be available about the position of the IUA Registrars' Group and any relevant legal issues. (Item 3.14)
- 3.10** Noted that feedback on the new procedures and form in relation to external examiners for taught programmes, currently being piloted in Faculties, would be made available to the USC at its meeting of 1 October 2009. (Item 3.16)

- 3.11** Noted that clarification in relation to the timing of repeat examination opportunities for students on the BSc in Athletic Therapy and Training had been obtained and the associated derogation *from Marks and Standards* had therefore been deemed approved for 2008/09. (Item 4.1.3)
- 3.12** Noted, in the case of a student who was entitled to all remaining attempts to pass a Practicum, that the student would be eligible to avail of the first of these attempts after outstanding modules had been passed, but that these modules had not yet been passed and the Programme Board had expressed concern at the student's level of engagement. (Item 4.2.1)
- 3.13** Noted that a student in respect of whom a request to register on two programmes concurrently had been made, and approved by the USC, had been facilitated in understanding all the implications of the approval. (Item 10)
- 3.14** Noted that the initial draft proposals on credit transfer from other institutions had been redrafted and circulated for electronic consideration by the USC and that a later version, revised on the basis of comments received, had now been incorporated into the draft proposals on APL and APEL (see Item 13 below). (Item 11)
- 3.15** Noted that, at its meeting of 12 May 2009, the Validation Subgroup of the Education Committee had approved the establishment of a MSc in Work and Organisational Behaviour, to be offered alongside the existing MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology and distinguished from it by the substitution of a small number of modules. This new programme, unlike the existing one, will afford admission to students without a degree in Psychology. The recommendation of the Validation Subgroup was subsequently approved by the Education Committee and will be submitted for approval to the 10 June 2009 meeting of Academic Council. (Item 12.2)

4. Minutes of the Graduate Studies Board meeting of 5 March 2009

Approved.

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES**5. Derogations from *Marks and Standards*****5.1 Faculty of Science and Health**

- 5.1.1 In respect of a request for a derogation to facilitate the capping at two of the number of repeat attempts for clinical placement modules on the BSc in Nursing from 2009/10, it was agreed that the advice of An Bord Altranais should be sought.
- 5.1.2 A request for a derogation to facilitate the capping at two of the number of repeat attempts for clinical placement modules on the Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing from 2009/10 was approved.
- 5.1.3 Noted that the above two requests had been considered on an exceptional basis because they relate to issues of professional practice in the coming academic year and that no other proposed derogations from *Marks and Standards* had been accepted for consideration at the present meeting.

6. Changes to examination regulations

No items.

7. Nominations/renewals/changes to duties of external examiners for taught programmes**7.1 Appointment of external examiners****7.1.1 Dublin City University Business School**

No items.

7.1.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

- 7.1.2.1 Dr Denise Leahy, Trinity College Dublin
BSc in Enterprise Computing
Approved.
- 7.1.2.2 Professor Guy Fitzgerald, Brunel University
BSc in Enterprise Computing
Approved.

7.1.2.3 Professor Bob Wood, University of Manchester

MSc in Electronic Commerce (Technical)

Approved.

7.2.1.4 Professor Wesley Cantwell, University of Liverpool

Graduate Diploma/MSc in Computer-aided Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

Approved.

7.1.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

7.1.3.1 Professor Christopher Day, University of Nottingham

MSc in Education and Training (Leadership strand)

Approved.

7.1.3.2 Dr Regina Uí Chollatáin, University College Dublin

BA Gnó agus Gaeilge, BA Gaeilge agus Iriseoireacht, Teastas Iarchéime sa Chleachtas Dátheangach, Diplóma Iarchéime sa Chleachtas Dátheangach, MA sa Chleachtas Dátheangach

Approved.

7.1.3.3 Dr Suzanne de Cheveigné, CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique),
Marseille

MSc in Science Communication

Approved.

7.1.4 Faculty of Science and Health

7.1.4.1 Professor M Teresa VT Lago, University of Porto

BSc in Applied Physics, BSc in Physics with Astronomy, BSc in Physics with Biomedical Sciences

Approved.

7.1.4.2 Mr Timothy John Birse, Reliance Mutual Insurance Society

Graduate Certificate in Actuarial Applications

Approved.

7.1.5 Oscail

7.1.5.1 Professor Frederic Adam, University College Cork

MSc in Information Systems Strategy

Approved.

7.1.6 Linked Colleges

7.1.6.1 Professor Maurice Stringer, University of Ulster

BA (Theology and Psychology), All Hallows College

Approved.

Noted that consideration would be given to the development of a standard short *curriculum vitae* for external examiner nominees for use with EE1 (appointment of external examiner) forms and that, if developed, a draft would be submitted to the USC for consideration at its meeting of 1 October 2009.

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

7.2.1 Dublin City University Business School

No items.

7.2.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

7.2.2.1 Professor Michael Fagan, University of Hull
BEng in Medical Mechanical Engineering/BEng in Biomedical Engineering
Approved.

7.2.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

7.2.3.1 Dr Michael Ryan, St Patrick's College, Thurles/Tipperary Institute
BSc in Education and Training (full time), Diploma in Education and Training
(part time), BSc in Education and Training (part time)
Approved.

7.2.3.2 Professor Brian McNair, University of Strathclyde
MA in Political and Public Communication, MA in Journalism
Approved.

7.2.4 Faculty of Science and Health

7.2.4.1 Professor Duncan Mitchell, Manchester Metropolitan University
BSc in Nursing (Intellectual Disability)
Approved.

7.2.4.2 Ms Sue Higham, The Open University
BSc in Children's and General Nursing (Integrated), Higher Diploma in Children's
Nursing
Approved.

7.2.4.3 Mr Tony Leahy, Health Service Executive
Stand-alone module NS499: *Case Management of People with Complex Problems*
Approved.

7.2.4.4 Dr Richard Timoney, Trinity College Dublin
Common Entry into Actuarial, Financial and Mathematical Sciences
Approved.

7.2.5 Oscail

- 7.2.5.1 Dr Jillian McBryde, University of Strathclyde
MSc in the Management of Operations
Approved.

7.2.6 Linked Colleges

- 7.2.6.1 Dr Paul Delaney, Trinity College Dublin
BA (Theology and English), All Hallows College
Approved.
- 7.2.6.2 Dr Gemma Donnelly-Cox, Trinity College Dublin
MA in Management: Community and Voluntary Service
Approved.
- 7.2.6.3 Professor PJ Drudy, Trinity College Dublin
MA in Social Justice and Public Policy
Approved.
- 7.2.6.4 Professor Eamonn O'Shea, National University of Ireland, Galway
MA in Social Justice and Public Policy
Approved.
- 7.2.6.5 Dr Vasilis Politis, Trinity College Dublin
BA (Theology and Philosophy), All Hallows College
Approved.

8. Regulatory issues as highlighted in external examiners' reports

No items.

9. Stand-alone modules

Proposed Professional Development modules for staff in Homeless Sector Services:

- Holistic Needs Assessment and Care Planning: Process and Practice
- Socio-economic Contexts and Needs for Homeless People and Families
- Health, Illness and Addiction in Homelessness
- Effective Management in Homeless Sector Services

Approved subject to the submission by the module proposer of a response to the recommendations of the external expert.

Noted that, in due course, consideration would be given to the development of a special-purpose award for holders of a number of related modules (e.g. a group of modules such as those above).

10. Other issues (from Faculties)

10.1 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

10.1.1 Request to allow a BEng in Manufacturing Engineering with Business Studies (BME2) cohort to carry a 5-credit module into the 3rd year of their programme

Approved. Agreed that consideration would be given to changing the academic structure for the module as offered to this group of students so as to allow all learning outcomes to be assessed by means of continuous assessment. Noted that INTRA employers would, in due course and as appropriate, be notified that the students would be undertaking this module during part of their INTRA placement.

10.1.2 Request to restructure entry pathways to the Electronic Engineering taught Master's programmes – Master's Qualifier Course

Approved subject to clarification, in the first bullet point in section 3, that a minimum mark of 50% must be achieved in each Level 8 module taken.

SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY SPECIFIC)

11. Proposals on approval procedures for stand-alone modules and amendments to programmes

11.1 The proposed form for requesting the relevant Faculty committee to approve a proposed stand-alone module was approved subject to the following: the inclusion of a reference to continuous professional development modules (as potentially separate entities from stand-alone modules generally); the inclusion of a section to elicit the response of the module proposer(s) to the recommendations of the external expert; the reordering of the spaces for signatures so that the order becomes: module proposer, Head of School, Dean of Faculty or nominee. Noted that, with effect from 2009/10, Faculty approval of a stand-alone module would be reported to the Education Committee with a request for formal approval and that the USC would no longer be involved in the approval of such modules.

11.2 Noted, in relation to the proposed form for requesting the relevant Faculty committee to approve amendments to programmes, that the potential existed for duplicate information having to be provided as between Section A and Section B and, more generally, for duplication of work in Faculties, particularly in cases where the proposed changes involved the addition of new modules without any more fundamental change to a programme being involved. Noted also that the signatures of the Programme Chair and Head of School should precede that of the Dean of Faculty or nominee and that consideration might be given to using separate forms for amendments/additions to offerings and discontinuation of offerings. Agreed that a revised form, taking account of the points raised, would be brought by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education to the relevant Faculty committees for discussion at their meetings in Autumn 2009, with a view to having a further revised form available for consideration by the USC at its meeting of 3 December 2009. Agreed that the Associate Deans would emphasise to the Faculty Committees the importance of ensuring a consistent and transparent system for approving amendments to programmes. Agreed that Ms Wickham and Ms McDermott would discuss possible procedures for submitting proposed special-purpose awards for approval. The Chair thanked Ms McDermott for her work to date on the draft procedures.

12. *Marks and Standards: proposed revised version*

Agreed that the proposed *Marks and Standards*, incorporating some further revisions to take account, as necessary, of points raised by the USC (see below), would be circulated to the members of Academic Council for consideration at its meeting of 10 June 2009. Agreed that Professor Henry, one or more of the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, Dr Wickham and Ms Barry would meet as soon as possible after the present meeting to agree these further revisions.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- the focus on learning outcomes in module descriptors is likely to make it easier to quantify the indicative time allowances for the various learning activities associated with a module
- the particular circumstances relating to current Oscail students, in terms of issues such as maximum registration period and compensation, need to be taken into account
- the proposal to allow discretion to Programme Boards as to how a deferral may be deemed to impact on the maximum registration period has the potential to lead to inequity of treatment of students

- clarity is required about the circumstances in which a student may carry forward continuous assessment marks where a piece of continuous assessment has been passed but other elements of the module have been failed
- clarity is required in relation to the number of resit and repeat attempts to be available to students
- rewording is necessary in relation to the reference to performance in prior years being used to contribute to the final award
- the proposal to cap the duration of the examination for a five-credit module at two hours may be problematic
- where a proposal carries fee implications for students, it will need to be communicated clearly to students and the feasibility of applying it from September 2009 (if approved by Academic Council) will need to be assessed.

The Chair thanked Professor Henry and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education for their significant work to date on this issue.

13. Draft proposals on APL/APEL

The proposals were noted as being a set of guiding principles and approved as such.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- issues relating to APL/APEL may be particularly relevant in the current difficult economic circumstances if greater numbers of people than hitherto decide to upgrade their qualifications
- as a related issue to the above and in the context of the current upskilling initiative, it will be important to ensure synergy with APL/APEL policies in the Institutes of Technology
- as noted in the proposals, it will be necessary for the university to have overarching principles and procedures, and perhaps an oversight board, but decisions on admission on the basis of APL/APEL can be taken only on the basis of local expertise and on a case-by-case basis
- it will be important to provide potential applicants, at an early stage, with information on APL/APEL and guidance on how to apply; an important element of this will be the website being developed by Ms Hughes and Ms Ita Tobin, Head of Access and Student Recruitment, which will provide information on all part-time offerings and will invite potential applicants to provide a brief profile of themselves which can be matched to programmes/modules.

Agreed that all existing practice in the university would be collated and a draft application template, and associated processes and procedures, would be drawn up on the basis of this and submitted for consideration to the 1 October 2009 meeting

of the USC. Agreed that, to facilitate this, each Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education would nominate a member of the Faculty to liaise with Ms Hughes and that Ms Celine Jameson, Student Enrolment Manager, would likewise be requested to liaise with Ms Hughes. Agreed also that Ms Barry would ascertain how APL/APEL achievement is recorded in the Diploma Supplement.

The Chair thanked Ms Hughes for her considerable work to date on this issue.

14. Inclusion of Level 8 modules on Level 9 awards

Approved. Noted that discussions would take place with the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel on the implications of shared teaching.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- what is proposed is in line with practice in other Irish universities
- what is proposed facilitates the inclusion of Level 8 conversion skills-based modules on Level 9 programmes
- what is proposed facilitates further consideration of a proposal for a 300-credit Master's programme, which was made by DCU Business School to the USC meeting of 2 April 2009 but consideration of which was deferred pending approval of the present proposals
- it will not normally be the case that core modules form part of the Level 8 offering as part of a Master's programme
- it will be important to keep sight, on an ongoing basis, of the importance of maintaining the integrity of the university's taught Master's programmes
- it will be important to ensure ongoing communication across Faculties to prevent undue duplication of material across programmes

The Chair thanked Ms Munro and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education for their work on this issue.

15. Final draft policy on plagiarism

Approved. Agreed that the draft policy would now be circulated to the members of Academic Council for consideration at its meeting of 10 June 2009.

16. Proposal to amend the university's English-language equivalencies

Approved. Agreed that Ms Marie Heraughty, Head of the International Office, would be requested to submit to the USC, for consideration, such data as might be available in relation to the ability of non-native speakers of English to undertake academic work in so far as these speakers come from different disciplines. In carrying out this work cognisance should be taken, where relevant, of English-language requirements of professional bodies with a view to determining the extent to which they currently align with DCU requirements and any changes in alignment that might need to be made.

17. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

**1 October 2009
9.30 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____