

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF ADDITIONAL MEETING

Thursday 4 November 2010

9.00-10.40 a.m. in A204

- Present:** Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin, Ms Olivia Bree, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Ms Bernadette Dowling, Professor Saleem Hashmi, Mr Billy Kelly, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Ms Morag Munro
- Apologies:** Dr Dermot Brabazon, Professor Gary Murphy, Mr Paul Sheehan, Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Sheelagh Wickham
- In attendance:** Dr Anne Morrissey

The Chair welcomed Dr Anne Morrissey, who was the Oscail representative to the meeting.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Resit continuous assessment opportunities

2.1 With regard to Proposal 1, it was agreed to reword the relevant part of Section 7.1 of Marks and Standards as follows:

RESIT: A resit assessment offers students a second and separate opportunity within an academic session to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes associated with a module. It does not require that a student resit all the assessment components of the module; the overall resit module mark is determined according to the approved module specification. The maximum number of resit opportunities in any one academic session is one.

- 2.2** Noted that the wording above would apply with effect from the date of Academic Council approval – see Item 5.1 below) even if different information already appears in the 2010/11 academic structures and that all necessary changes would be made to the academic structures for 2011/12 at the appropriate time. Agreed that, irrespective of the contents of the re-assessment tab in Coursebuilder, the web-hosted module descriptor would not show the information from this tab for 2010/11 but would show it from 2012/13 onwards. Noted that module co-ordinators are responsible for the management of this issue.
- 2.3** The importance of communicating any and all changes to Marks and Standards clearly to students, Programme Chairs, Heads of School, Deans of Faculty and all other stakeholders was noted. It was agreed that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education would draft the wording of a generic document to explain the decision outlined at Item 2.1 above to all stakeholders. A list of modules that fall under each of the categories in which no continuous assessment resit is available will be placed on line alongside the programme-specific regulations for 2010/11. Agreed also that the Associate Deans should liaise with the module co-ordinators in their Faculties to ensure that, where the format of the resit continuous assessment opportunity is different from that notified at the beginning of 2010/11, this is clearly communicated to students.
- 2.4** Noted that the decision outlined at Item 2.1 above represented the only change to the actual wording of Marks and Standards and that the discussions on Proposals 2, 3 and 4 had resulted in clarifications of aspects of Marks and Standards which could be incorporated into the advisory document to be prepared by the Registry (as agreed by the USC at its meeting of 30 September 2010 – see Item 7.1 of the minutes of this meeting).
- 2.5** Notwithstanding Item 2.4 above, it was agreed that Marks and Standards should be added to by means of a preamble which would indicate that a resit is normally triggered by a mark of less than 40% in a module (there may also need to be a reference to programmes for which the overall pass mark is 50%) (with the decision as to what has to be resat being triggered by the achievement of less than 40% in either/both elements, taking account of other procedures as noted in these minutes).
- 2.6** With regard to Proposal 2, it was agreed that no threshold should be defined in Marks and Standards on the basis that resit CA should normally be made available (except in situations covered by Proposal 4 below) and exceptions to this must be justified to, and approved by, the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee – see Item 2.9 below. Following a discussion which covered issues such as the importance of ensuring equity of treatment of all students and the need to avoid undue complexity in respect of the calculation of marks, the following was agreed:
- In the case of resit module mark calculations, the original continuous assessment/examination weightings apply

- Marks for any components passed¹ at the original sitting are carried forward and used in the calculation of the overall module mark that follows the resitting of the failed components
- Where components are failed and resat, the resit marks are used in the calculation of the overall module mark even if they are lower than the marks obtained at the original sitting; where there is an absence from a resit opportunity, a mark of zero will apply
- Progression and Awards Boards do, however, have discretion to make decisions in respect of individuals students' marks (i.e. in respect of the application of the higher or lower mark for continuous assessment and/or an examination) in situations in which the PAB believes such a decision would more accurately reflect the student's performance (to this end, it is recommended that the web page which displays module results to examiners be amended to include, in future years, the original module marks obtained in the Semester 1 and Semester 2 examinations)
- This discretion applies both to situations in which a student has failed both components (i.e. continuous assessment and examination) and to situations in which a student has failed only one component (i.e. continuous assessment or examination).

Agreed that the above would need to be outlined in the advisory document (see Item 2.4 above.)

2.7 With regard to Proposal 3, the proposed revised wording is as follows:

If a CA resit is not available and the module is not 100% CA, the resit module mark is calculated using the original module weighting. The original CA mark is used in the overall resit module mark calculation. The student is given the opportunity to resit the examination component in order to compensate for a failed CA component, regardless of the original examination mark.

2.8 Proposal 4 was approved, i.e.

For modules that are fully laboratory, workshop or project based, with the result that it is not feasible to provide resit opportunities, no resit opportunity will be available. Students who, at the first sitting, fail a module to which this applies must repeat it (or, if it is not available, register for an alternative module) in the next academic session.

¹ Technically, all module component marks will be carried forward.

- 2.9 The Chair emphasised the importance of making resit opportunities available to students in all situations in which this was possible and of requiring that all instances of non-availability be justified to, and approved by, the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee. The link between the provision of resit opportunities and student retention was noted.

3. Other outstanding Marks and Standards issues

- 3.1 Students on the Graduate Certificate in Actuarial Applications who fail or defer in an academic session may not be able to repeat in the following academic session but must await the next available one. This is because the programme is offered when viable and it is not practicable or desirable to offer repeat modules in alternative modes. Students on this programme are made aware of this by means of the programme regulations. Noted that the same issue may arise in the case of other programmes. Noted that it also arises in the case of Level 9 programmes in which Years 1 and 2 are taught on a back-to-back basis, with the result that modules are available in alternate years only, and agreed that the best option would be to reconceptualise such programmes as continuous programmes.
- 3.2 Noted that discussions were ongoing about the desirability or otherwise of continuing the use of 'mother' and 'child' modules (currently a feature of programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and the Faculty of Science and Health).
- 3.3 Noted that a situation had arisen in the Faculty of Science and Health whereby, consequent upon the restructuring of programmes, students on a Level 9 programme were being asked to take a module they had already passed when on a Level 8 programme and, not being eligible for exemption from it under Marks and Standards, were in the position of having to take (and pass) it again. Noted that this was an undesirable situation and that it would be important to ensure that alternative modules were made available for students in similar situations in future. The relevance of this issue to the ongoing discussions on Recognition of Prior Learning was noted.
- 3.4 A discussion took place about the number of resit attempts at a module to be allowed to a student who transfers from one programme to another or who takes a common entry year and then moves to Year 2 of a specific programme. Agreed that a student in either of these situations would, in the year into which he/she transferred, be allowed to begin any failed module(s) *ab initio*, i.e. that previous sittings would not count and the student, having transferred, would be allowed the number of sittings of each module that was permissible under Marks and Standards. Agreed that further consideration of this matter would need to take place once further discussion of annual progression issues had been completed in due course.

4. Request for re-admission of legacy student (Faculty of Engineering and Computing: BSc in Computer Applications; last year of study 2004/05)

Approved.

5. Any other business

5.1 Agreed that, following electronic approval of the minutes of the present meeting, the decision outlined at Item 2.1 above would be communicated to Programme Chairs and then submitted for electronic approval to Academic Council at the earliest opportunity.

5.2 Noted that the procedures outlined at Item 2.6 above would have resource implications and that the Director of Registry would communicate this to Information Systems and Services and to the Faculties and would provide the Chair with a broad estimate of the requirements. Agreed also that the Chair would mention this matter to Executive and Senior Management.

Date of next meeting:

**2 December 2010
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____