UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 14 September 2006

9.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. in A204

Present:	Professor Maria Slowey (Chair for the first half of the meeting), Dr Ronnie Saunders (Chair for the second half of the meeting), Mr Jonathan Begg, Dr Françoise Blin, Ms Olivia Bree, Mr Kevin Griffin, Professor Martin Henry, Ms Louise McDermott (Recording Secretary), Dr Noel Murphy, Professor Heather Ruskin, Dr Anne Sinnott, Mr Brendan Tolan
Apologies:	Mr Eoin Byrne, Ms Jean Hughes, Professor Eugene Kennedy, Dr Andrew McGrady

The Chair welcomed Professor Heather Ruskin, as representative of the Associate Deans for Research, and Mr Brendan Tolan, as representative of the Directors of Computer Services, Education Services and the Library, to membership of the University Standards Committee.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of an additional item as Item 10 and the consequent renumbering of Items 10, 11 and 12 as Items 11, 12 and 13 respectively.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 June 2006

Confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Follow-up actions from the last meeting were reported.

3.2   Noted that the proposed new streams on the taught postgraduate programmes in the School of Electronic Engineering had been submitted to, and approved by, the Academic Strategy Committee. (Item 3.4)

3.3   Noted that the issue of validation would be discussed again by the Academic Strategy Committee at its meeting of 1 November 2006. (Item 3.6)

3.4   Noted that no further action was to be taken at this time in relation to a proposal to offer an existing part-time programme on a full-time basis. (Item 3.8)

3.5   Agreed to recommend to Academic Council at its meeting of 11 October 2006 that, with effect from the academic year 2007/08, taught Master's programmes should have a 90-credit weighting, with the exception of those involving only two semesters, which would remain at 75 credits. Agreed that Mr Griffin would draw up the proposal for Council and that, if it were approved, an inventory of all relevant programmes would be prepared and procedures for effecting the changes formulated. (Item 9)

3.6   Noted that the Irish Universities Association had made a submission for funding, through the Strategic Innovation Fund, for the development of a sector-wide initiative related to student satisfaction protocols and student feedback mechanisms. (Item 12)

3.7   Noted that discussions were ongoing with the University of Paris IV Sorbonne about a matter pertaining to the 'cotutelle' agreement between it and St Patrick's College. (Item 16)

4.   **Confirmation of decisions taken electronically and by means of Chair's action in July and August 2006**

         Noted that, in the first week of July 2006, the USC had considered and made recommendations about a range of issues relating to research students and external examiner appointments and that, in August and September 2006, a number of decisions on special-case admission to taught programmes had been taken by means of Chair's action.

5.   **Standing orders and membership**

5.1   The draft standing orders were approved, apart from the fact that section 4 remains unfinished since final decisions on membership are still to be made.

5.2   <u>Noted</u> that one of the three remaining vacancies had now been filled by
Mr Brendan Tolan, representing the Directors of Computer Services, Education
Services and Library. <u>Noted</u> that it was hoped that a second vacancy would be
filled by a Head of School and that the identity of the Head concerned would be
known before the 12 October 2006 meeting of the USC. <u>Agreed</u> not to fill the
remaining vacancy for the moment, pending the outcome of some ongoing
developments in the University.

5.3   <u>Agreed</u> that, in view of the likely importance of both Quality issues and Student
Affairs issues to the work of the USC, the Directors of each these Units would be
invited to attend a meeting of the USC, at which relevant issues would be discussed,
as necessary but at least once per year.

6.   Proposals on committee structures

6.1   <u>Agreed</u> that, pending the appointment of a Director of Graduate Research, the
issues relating to research students (i.e. approval of external examiners for research
students, special-case admission requests from research candidates, approval of
requests to transfer to the PhD register, confirmation of continuation on the PhD
register, requests from research students to re-register under 'write-up' status
pending the discontinuation of this system, and requests from research students to
change supervisor) would continue to be dealt with by the University Standards
Committee.

6.2   <u>Agreed</u> that it would be desirable for the USC to have an opportunity to contribute
to the current discussion on the creation of a graduate school. <u>Noted</u> that a paper on
the issue had been discussed by Executive. <u>Agreed</u> that a copy of this paper
would be requested and circulated to the members of the USC and that the issue
would be placed on the agenda for the meeting of 12 October 2006.

6.3   <u>Agreed</u> that it would be desirable that a range of issues not specifically related to
research students henceforth be dealt with by Faculties. These issues are: approval
of Programme Board (or equivalent) minutes; approval of academic structures;
special-case admission requests to taught programmes; requests for exemption from
modules on taught programmes; approval of external examiners for taught
programmes. <u>Noted</u> that the working group on committee structures had agreed
that the Senior Faculty Administrators would advise the OVPLI/Registrar by
2 October whether or not this would be feasible given current resources. <u>Agreed</u>
that, if the work was devolved to Faculties, a review might be held – for example, in
early 2007 – to ascertain how well the new system was working. <u>Agreed</u> that, in
any event and for reasons of timing, the USC would continue to deal with all issues
currently within its remit for the purposes of its next meeting of 12 October 2006.

7.   Modularisation and related issues

7.1   Update on Phase II Modularisation

Noted that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning were formulating proposals based on the outcome of the discussions relating to Phase II Modularisation.

7.2   Proposal on compensation regulations

7.2.1   Agreed to adopt recommendations 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7 and 1.9 within this proposal. The following were also agreed: the practice of requiring double the deficiency of marks in passed modules in order for students to be allowed to compensate in failed modules should be discontinued, but for compensation to apply a minimum precision mark of 45% should be required; where a module is effectively linked across two semesters, a new system (probably involving a new result code) should be used where it is necessary to indicate that the Semester 1 portion of the module has been failed (and it was agreed to investigate the technical feasibility of this); compensation should apply in all years of all taught programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate, and a student who, within regulations, benefits from compensation should not be precluded from being awarded an honours qualification.

7.2.2   Agreed that Ms McDermott would draft a revised proposal which would incorporate the recommendations in 7.2.1 above and circulate it to the members of the USC with a request for comments to be submitted by an agreed date. Agreed that the finalised proposal would be submitted to the meeting of Academic Council of 11 October 2006 and, if approved there and subject to technical feasibility, would be notified to staff and students, and implemented, in the current academic year.

7.3.3   The Chair thanked the working group on compensation regulations for having formulated the recommendations.

8.   Proposals on non-major awards in the context of the NQAI framework

8.1   The proposal was approved.

8.2   Noted that a programme proposed by the School of Nursing had been validated and accredited, and approved by Academic Council, on an electronic basis in July and August 2006. Noted that this was a Level 8 programme in the NQAI framework and that its original title had been *Post-registration BSc (Hons) in Children's Nursing*. Noted, however, that an issue about the title had arisen whereby external

funding and accreditation for the programme would be available only on the basis that is offered as a Higher Diploma (a title not currently in use by the University), though the level at which it is to be offered remains unchanged. <u>Agreed</u> to recommend to Academic Council that the University create the award of Higher Diploma.

9.   Awarding of degrees jointly with other institutions

Discussion deferred.

10.   The external examiner system (taught programmes) in DCU

Discussion deferred.

INTERIM BUSINESS ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

11.   Appointment of external examiners

11.1   Taught programmes

11.1.1   Professor D Freshwater, Bournemouth University
             Modules in the School of Nursing
             <u>Approved.</u>
11.1.2   Dr T Young, University of Limerick
             Modules in the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
             <u>Approved.</u>
11.1.3   Professor H Bunting, University of Ulster
             Humanities modules in Oscail
             <u>Approved.</u>
11.1.4   Professor M Eysenck, Royal Holloway, University of London
             Humanities modules in Oscail
             <u>Approved.</u>
11.1.5   Dr S Kilfeather, Queen's University, Belfast
             Humanities modules in Oscail
             <u>Approved.</u>

11.2   Postgraduate research students

11.2.1   Dr A Bunch, University of Kent at Canterbury
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology/NICB
          Approved.
11.2.2   Dr K Kavanagh, NUI Maynooth
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.2, MSc, School of Biotechnology/NICB
          Approved.
11.2.3   Professor Michael Comer, freelance consultant and Acting Director of
          Research, Adelaide and Meath Hospital
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.3, PhD, School of Biotechnology/NICB
          Approved.
11.2.4   Dr T McLoughlin, Environmental Protection Agency
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.4, PhD, School of Biotechnology/NICB
          Approved.
11.2.5   Dr G Heneghan, Dublin Institute of Technology
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.5, PhD, School of Biotechnology
          Approved.
11.2.6   Professor B Walker, Queen's University, Belfast
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.6, PhD, School of Biotechnology
          Approved.
11.2.7   Professor M Dalrymple, University of Oxford
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.7, MSc, School of Computing
          Approved.
11.2.8   Dr P Bennett, University of Manchester
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.8, PhD, School of Computing
          Approved.
11.2.9   Professor T Lange, Technical University of Denmark
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.9, PhD, School of Computing
          Approved.
11.2.10   Professor L Karttunen, Stanford University
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.10, PhD, School of Computing
          Approved.
11.2.11   Mr B Brophy, University College Dublin
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.11, MEng, School of Mechanical and
          Manufacturing Engineering
          Approved.
11.2.12   Dr R Narayanaswamy, University of Manchester
          Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.12, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
          Approved.

11.2.13 Dr P Fielden, University of Manchester
Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.13, MSc, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved. Noted that, to ensure compliance with regulations, it would be important that this examiner not be invited to act again in respect of a research student until an appropriate length of time had elapsed.

11.2.14 Dr L McGinty, University College Dublin
Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.14, MSc, School of Computing
Approved.

11.2.15 Professor T Fahey, Economic and Social Research Institute
Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.15, MA, All Hallows College
Approved.

11.2.16 Professor M Forcada, Universitat d'Alacant, Spain
Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.16, MSc, School of Computing
Approved.

11.2.17 Dr R Ansell, University of Leeds
Student ref. USC/2006/U3/11.2.17, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.

Noted that, in the case of three of the research students listed above (one completing a PhD and two completing a Master's degree), the internal examiner is a postdoctoral student. Noted also that, in the case of another student listed above who is completing a Master's degree, the external examiner has a Master's degree and not a PhD. Noted that no particular regulations exist with regard to these issues, and agreed to discuss them at the 12 October 2006 meeting of the USC.

12.   Postgraduate research matters

12.1   Application for entry to the PhD-track register

No items.

12.2   Applications to transfer to the PhD register

12.2.1 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.1, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.

12.2.2 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.2, School of Nursing
Approved.

12.2.3 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.3, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.

12.2.4 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.4, School of Physical Sciences
Approved.

12.2.5 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.5, School of Physical Sciences
        Approved.
12.2.6 Student ref. USC/2006/U2/12.2.6, School of Electronic Engineering
        Approved.
12.2.7 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.7, School of Computing
        Approved.
12.2.8 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.8, School of Chemical Sciences
        Approved.
12.2.9 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.9, School of Computing
        Approved.
12.2.10 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.2.10, Dublin City University
        Business School
        Approved.

12.3   Request for change of supervisor

12.3.1 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.3.1, School of Physical Sciences

        Approved subject to confirmation that the change of supervisor would not
        lead to a lengthening of the time required for the student to complete the
        thesis.

12.4   Special-case application for entry to a Master's degree by research

12.4.1 Student ref. USC/2006/U3/12.4.1, School of Chemical Sciences

        Agreed that, since the applicant would be taking a Master's qualifying
        programme, no decision on this issue was required.

12.5   Requests for re-registration under 'write-up' status for 2006/2007

12.5.1 Dublin City University Business School (4 candidates)
        Approved.
12.5.2 School of Chemical Sciences (1 candidate)
        Approved.
12.5.3 School of Nursing (1 candidate)
        Approved.
12.5.4 School of Computing (1 candidate)
        Approved.
12.5.5 School of Electronic Engineering (3 candidates)
        Approved.
12.5.6 School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (6 candidates)
        Approved.

13.   Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 12 October 2006

Signed: _____   Date: _____
             Chair