

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 29 May 2013

2.00-4.40 p.m. in A204

Present: Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Aaron Clogher, Dr John Doyle, Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Lisa Looney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Barry McMullin, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Mr Martin Molony, Dr Anne Sinnott, Dr Sheelagh Wickham

Apologies: Professor John Costello, Dr Sarah Ingle

In attendance: Ms Aisling McKenna

On behalf of the Education Committee, the Chair thanked Mr Aaron Clogher, outgoing Vice-President – Education Officer of the Students' Union, for his significant contribution to the work of the EC during his term of office, and wished him well in his forthcoming new role as President of the Students' Union.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the addition of a new Item 16, the renaming of the existing Item 16 as Item 17 and the inclusion of one submission under Item 17.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 May 2013

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** It was noted that the working group on academic collaboration with external institutions had met three times and had concluded as follows: it will be important to identify the role of the EC with regard to such collaboration as well as the articulation of this role with other processes in the University; the development of a system of classifying the various types of collaborative arrangements and the associated expectations and responsibilities, begun by the working group, is likely to benefit from similar work in this area which has been initiated on a sectoral basis by QQI. It was agreed that the issues would be revisited in Autumn 2013. (Items 3.1 and 6.2.1)
- 3.2** It was noted, with respect to recommendations about non-major awards, that proposals of relevance to the issues in St Patrick's College would be submitted for the consideration of the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 29 May 2013 and that consideration of the remaining issues would be undertaken by the working group on non-major awards as soon as possible. (Item 3.2)
- 3.3** It was noted that Business Intelligence was likely to be used for making available the proposed online repository of reports from the Institutional Research and Analysis Office. (Item 3.3)
- 3.4** With respect to the proposed MEng in Healthcare Technologies, it was noted that the approval process relating to the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland was nearing completion. (Item 3.4)
- 3.5** It was noted that the HEA quality framework on PhD education would be circulated to the EC when it became available. (Item 3.5)
- 3.6** With respect to the use of students' mobile telephone numbers for bulk communication by text message, it was noted that a number of issues exist: the proposed opt-out facility is not automatically available on the ITS system and would (if deemed desirable) have to be commissioned and built in; ownership of, and responsibility for, a bulk communication system would have to be clarified, as would protocols to prevent its use for local or frivolous purposes; the issues with the alumni database are different because, by definition, they do not relate to the use of student data; none the less, a number of data protection issues relating to the use of alumni data (as well as student data) exist and need to be resolved. Dr Bohan undertook to conduct a survey of practice in other institutions with regard to bulk communication by text message. (Items 3.8 and 3.9)

- 3.7** It was noted that the recommendation with respect to the BSc in Education and Training was under consideration in the School of Education Studies. (Item 3.10)
- 3.8** It was noted that the Senior Management Group would discuss the proposed viability criteria for programmes at its meeting of 4 June 2013. (Item 6.1.3)
- 3.9** It was noted that consideration was being given to the optimum title for the ‘Graduate Attributes’/‘Generation 21’ initiative, in the context of discussions on branding being led by Ms Teresa Murray, Head of Communications and Marketing. (Item 6.3.2)
- 3.10** It was agreed that the Chair, Dr Ingle and Dr Wickham would meet to discuss the ownership issues relating to Annual Programme Review and Periodic Programme Review. (Item 6.4)
- 3.11** It was agreed that the proposal in respect of the BSc in Horticulture did not in fact fall within the remit of the EC and that it could be discussed and agreed between the Faculty of Science and Health and the Registry. (Item 9)
- 3.12** It was noted that the meeting of the Accreditation Board for the proposed MSc in Chronic Disease Management would now take place in Autumn 2013. (Item 10)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Update on activities undertaken within the IUA

It was noted that the next meeting of the IUA groups would take place on 10 June 2013 and that developments would be reported to the EC meeting of 4 September 2013.

5. Update on the Irish National Student Survey

Ms McKenna summarised the results available to date, noting that further analysis at sectoral level would be carried out shortly, with the full findings expected to be made available in November 2013. It was noted too that the Chair would make summary information on the position to date available to all University staff shortly. With respect to issues that might emerge as being salient for the University, Ms McKenna advised that clearer information would emerge once the sectoral averages were known and that it might be premature to try to identify issues at this stage. The Chair thanked Ms McKenna for her considerable work in relation to the

INSS, noting that the University was one of a small number of institutions which had collected its data using its own staff resources.

6. EC goals 2013

6.1 DCU Online

6.1.1 Mr Kelly noted that the DCU Online Project Group had met on two occasions to date, that its membership and terms of reference reflected EC recommendations, that it had established subgroups to examine specific issues and that these would meet over the course of Summer 2013. The report to the EC, as specified in the terms of reference of the Group, would be made available in Autumn 2013.

6.1.2 It was noted that the forthcoming appointment of a Professor of Digital Learning and Director of the Centre for Digital Learning would be of significant relevance to the work of the Group and that it would be important to ensure appropriate interaction between this postholder and the Chair and members of the Group. It was noted too that it would be important for the Group to communicate with the newly-established IS Governance Committee.

6.2 Business Intelligence

Ms McKenna presented the two options on access to data identified by the working group which had analysed the issues. Of the two, it was agreed that the preferable one was that which allowed more openness and flexibility of access, notwithstanding the fact that it would require an active audit approach to ensure that data would not be accessed in an inappropriate fashion. Besides the practical advantages of the preferred option, it was noted that it was consistent with the value of transparency espoused by the University. It was agreed that the term ‘open access’ should be avoided, as it has a specific meaning in other contexts. It was also recommended that data should be easily identifiable and searchable, that straightforward language should be used in instructions, that the use of training podcasts should be considered and that account should be taken of relevant committees in drawing up the lists of those to be given access to data. In the context of such lists, it was noted that definitional issues exist that would need to be addressed. It was agreed that the recommended option would be implemented, on a pilot basis and subject to review in due course. The Chair, on behalf of the EC, expressed appreciation to Ms McKenna and the working group for their work on this issue.

6.3 Policy on assessment

6.3.1 It was noted that the policy had been drafted on the basis of the same principles as those which underpinned the associated policy on feedback to support student learning, i.e. academic rigour, and fairness and equity. A discussion took place on the desirability, or otherwise, of the explicit marking criteria mentioned in the proposal, with a view being expressed that such criteria might run the risk of stifling creativity. The consensus was, however, that criteria are likely to be positive, particularly from the perspective of providing 'feed forward' to students.

6.3.2 The policy was approved subject to the deletion of references that might indicate that a thoroughgoing review of assessment would need to be undertaken as part of Annual Quality Review (on the basis that this would make excessive demands on Programme Boards). It will be submitted for the consideration of Academic Council at its meeting of 24 June 2013. On behalf of the EC, the Chair expressed appreciation to Ms Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the other members of the working group which had drawn up the policy.

6.4 QuEST

The importance of having QuEST championed by Deans of Faculty and Heads of School was noted. An operational issue relating to the production of forms was also noted.

6.5 Updates on other goals

It was noted that progress on other goals was ongoing.

7. Draft Teaching and Learning strategy

The Chair thanked all those who had submitted feedback on earlier drafts, noting that it had been incorporated, that there would be an opportunity for further feedback, that she and Mr Kelly were finalising a detailed introduction and that the final strategy would be submitted for the consideration of Governing Authority at its meeting of 13 June 2013. It was noted that the component strategies differ from one another in that some are more amenable than others to the inclusion of specific performance metrics; in this connection, the Chair mentioned that EC members were welcome to suggest any possible such metrics to her provided they were realistic and meaningful in the context of the Teaching and Learning strategy.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

- 8. Proposed new pathway on the Bachelor of Business Studies programme for delivery in Princess Noura University, Saudi Arabia**

Approved.

- 9. Proposed new pathway on the BSc in Marketing, Innovation and Technology for delivery in Princess Noura University, Saudi Arabia**

Approved.

- 10. Proposed new pathway in Corporate Responsibility on the MA in Ethics**

Approved.

- 11. Proposed new module in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: ‘ACE (Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship)’**

Approved subject to the entry criteria being specified and further detail being provided about the activities students are to be expected to undertake during the time allocated to independent learning.

- 12. Proposed new programme from 2013/14: Professional Master’s in Education**

Agreed that the module descriptors would need to be rewritten in line with Level 9 requirements and that once this work had been done they would be scrutinised by a group comprising the Chair, Mr Kelly and Dr Sinnott. They would then, if deemed appropriate, be made available to an external expert with a request for an opinion.¹ It was agreed that the deadline for submitting this proposed new programme to the Teaching Council (following University approval, if forthcoming) would be ascertained from the proposers.

¹ Approval by the group, and approval by the external expert, were confirmed on 18 June 2013. The proposed new programme was therefore deemed approved by the Education Committee.

13. Proposed pathway on the MSc in Education (2012/13)

Approved subject to the deletion of references to the Professional Diploma in Education as forming part of the material that would be deemed to be prior learning with respect to entry to the pathway.

14. Proposed new stand-alone module in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences: ‘Understanding Psychotherapeutic Approaches’

Approved.

15. Three proposals in respect of programmes in All Hallows College

It was agreed to defer consideration of these proposals so as to allow EC members sufficient time to consider them, and to undertake the decision process on an electronic basis.

16. Proposed title change for Master’s programme in Oscail

It was agreed to defer consideration of this proposal so as to allow EC members sufficient time to consider it, and to undertake the decision process on an electronic basis.

17. Any other business

It was noted that, at its meeting of 4 April 2013, the University Standards Committee had approved proposals in respect of English-language requirements for non-native speakers who apply to programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and that these proposals had been approved by Academic Council, with some modifications, at its meeting of 10 April 2013.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 4 September 2013, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____