

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 19 September 2018

2.00 p.m. – 3.45 p.m. in A204

Present: Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Professor Michelle Butler, Mr Callaghan Commons, Professor John Doyle, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Dr Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney, Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Anne Sinnott and Dr Joseph Stokes

Apologies: Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle and Professor Greg Hughes

In attendance: Ms Karen Johnston

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chair welcomed Dr Jennifer Bruen as representative of the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and Mr Callaghan Commons, Students' Union Vice President for Academic Affairs to Education Committee.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to the addition of one item of AOB.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30 May 2018

The minutes of the meeting of 30 May 2018, already electronically approved, were noted and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 30 May 2018

3.1 It was noted that the publication of an interim First Destination Survey/Graduate Outcomes report is close to an agreed format. It was anticipated that a template would be available for the October 2018 meeting of Education Committee (Item 3.3).

3.2 Matters arising from Faculty APR Reports

3.2.1 *Change of module choice*

A discussion took place on a proposal from the university level annual programme reviews faculty summaries related to student change of module choice and considered originally at the Education Committee meeting of 2 May 2018. It was noted that allowing a change of module choice period into week three of the semester posed problems for timetabling, room assignments and allocation of group assessments.

Following a detailed discussion on the matter the following was agreed:

- That all students will be permitted to make changes to module choices during the first two weeks of semester only. During the second week students must have the approval of the Programme Chair to make a change to module choices. No fee will apply.

It was noted that this new policy would be implemented from Semester two, 2019 and kept under review to assess its impact (Item 3.2).

3.3 It was noted that the revised documentation proposing the introduction of an optional INTRA placement for specific programmes in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had been circulated to Education Committee on 10 July 2018, with a view to updating the prospectus entry for 2019-2020. Feedback from members on the proposal had been provided. In particular it was advised that only paid placements should be offered, and in the discussion which followed, the Dean confirmed that this would be the case.

A general discussion on the future of INTRA took place. The sectoral impact of the Higher Education System Performance Framework, a key objective of which is that all students should be provided with an opportunity for work placement/project by 2025, and the consequent potential changes to the INTRA landscape was noted.

It was requested that confirmation would be provided of the year of entry the first INTRA placements would be piloted and the Secretary undertook to provide clarification (Item 6).

3.4 It was noted that Ms K. Johnston's work on the roll-out of Tableau as an ISSE dashboard tool is ongoing (Item 3.1).

- 3.5 It was noted that the form to address collaborative provision type 11 is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.4).
- 3.6 It was noted that the NFQ level of taught modules on professional doctoral programmes will be addressed over the coming months (Item 3.5).
- 3.7 It was noted that clarification on issues with respect to the validation financial template is awaiting the outcome of a Finance Office led consultancy report on new business development and related financial implications (Item 3.6).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA

Ms. Aisling McKenna reported on the following item, which had been discussed by the IUA Quality Officer's/IUA Registrar's Group.

She noted that the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills had requested a written submission from the Irish Universities Association (IUA) on the proposed Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill 2018. She indicated that the Quality Officers would hold a series of meetings over the coming weeks to provide feedback to the IUA for submission to the Oireachtas Committee, by the deadline of 5 October 2018.

Dr Joseph Stokes reported on the following items which had been discussed at the meeting of the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies' Group.

- The 'Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes' for Ireland, in which the IUA Deans' group have had input will be published in November 2018.
- Science Foundation Ireland launched the SFI Centres for Research Training programme in May 2018, with applications due in September 2018. Dr Joseph Stokes indicated that he had been in touch with those in DCU who would potentially apply, indicating how the Graduate Studies Office can support such applications and providing details on the mechanism by which the training of postgraduate students is structured in DCU.

5. Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

It was noted that the national Irish Survey of Student Engagement Report for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be published at a QQI event on 20 November 2018. With respect to the pilot ISSE for research students, it was noted that the report due to be published will focus on the pilot itself, rather than its outcomes.

It was noted that programme level reports using Tableau software are currently being developed and will be circulated to faculties by the end of September 2018. This development represents a significant improvement in the method of provision of reports to faculties and in their functionality.

6. Review of External Examiner Reports, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017

The Chair outlined that the introduction of the Guru system had enabled a process to systematically review annual external examiner reports, and in 2016 the Vice President Academic Affairs (Registrar) had initiated an annual cycle of review with each of the Faculties, meeting with the Dean and the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning from each Faculty.

It was noted, having piloted two separate timings for follow-up on reports with faculties, the most appropriate timing for review meetings is late January/February of each year.

Some common themes identified by external examiners in their reports were noted as follows:

- The balance between individual and group work in some modules
- Consistency in grading across modules on a programme
- Consistency in complexity across modules
- Disparities as between continuous assessment and terminal examination marks
- Use of the full range of marks
- A need for clarity in what is expected of external examiners in fulfilling their duties.

A general discussion took place on current practice in DCU and on the use of the full range of marks available and included consideration of a GPA type system.

It was noted that in the context of the reviews of external examiners reports and the broader Student Information System project it was intended that the Vice President Academic Affairs (Registrar) would be setting up a number of groups tasked with development of discussion papers addressing assessment, changes to Marks and Standards and grading.

7. Update on Institutional Review 2018

Ms Aisling McKenna provided an update to Education Committee on the status of the Institutional review as follows:

- A preparatory visit of two members of the review team had taken place on 4 Sept 2018 in which the themes of the review visit were explored.
- The schedule of the review visit has been finalised and invitations will issue next week to those invited to attend the individual sessions.
- Three preparatory briefing sessions, hosted by the Quality Promotion Office and HR Learning and Development will take place over the coming weeks.

8. Collaborative provision forms for ‘shared delivery (partner delivery, partner credits) leading to a DCU award’ (AA3—new programme, AA3a—existing programme)

It was agreed that colleagues would be provided with additional time to review the collaborative provision forms as circulated.

9. Report on Year-end summary on programme level pass rates in undergraduate programmes, Ms Karen Johnston

Ms Karen Johnston provided a brief summary of the findings of the report on the year end programme level pass rates in undergraduate programmes as follows:

- First year pass rates have increased slightly this year to 89.5% from 89.4% in 2017
- Pass rates in all years have increased and the fourth year pass rate is now at 95.5% from 94.4% last year
- For those first years repeating the academic year in 2017-2018, pass rates have decreased to 63.8% overall compared to 71.6% in 2016-2017
- Average precision grades overall have continued to increase over the five year period reviewed, from 57% in 2014 to 61% in 2018.

With respect to the ‘at risk’ students the following were noted:

- 91 (48%) out of 188 students identified as ‘at risk’ in January 2018 received a fail grade at the end of the academic year
- Those 91 students represented 34% of all students who failed first year at their first attempt
- 32% of students who repeated year one failed in 2017-2018.

In the discussion which followed it was noted that:

- A report providing grade distribution on an annual basis would be useful
- There is a narrow grade distribution in the DCU Institute of Education. The Dean of the DCU Institute of Education informed the Committee, having reviewed data previously, that there were factors which explained the narrow grade distribution including *inter alia*, multiple assessment components, the fact that entrants had very similar CAO entry points and that due to the large class sizes conservative assessment modalities were employed.
- The impact of the IGNITE programme for first year Engineering students (2017-2018) was evident in the pass rate for those students, which when aggregated was up by 10% on last year.

10. Noting of Faculty approval of Stand-alone/professional development modules

Noted. It was requested that the credit weighting of the module would be included in any future summary report.

11. Noting of collaborative provision related approvals at Faculty level

Noted

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

12 Validation proposal: MA in Digital Storytelling and Humanities

The validation proposal was not recommended for accreditation. It was the view of members that although the programme concept was strong, and one which Education Committee would consider if re-submitted, the proposal did not succeed in presenting itself as cohesive, nor did the proposed content reflect the title of the programme. The following points were made by members with respect to the programme as proposed:

- Whereas semester one modules appeared to have relevance in the context of an MA in Digital Story-telling and Humanities programme, the second semester did not have cohesion in terms of the types of modules offered.
- The programme learning outcomes were not written at NFQ level 9 and it was recommended they would be re-written.

- The absence of contributions from colleagues in multi-media/communications was noted, and in the context of digital story-telling it was felt that input from this area would be important.
- The Committee had difficulty with the title of the programme versus its actual content and the fact that only one module appeared to directly address the content suggested by the title.
- The Committee noted that the possible careers for graduates lacked specificity.
- Related to the point directly above it was also the view of Education Committee that all DCU graduates are "the 'ideas person' in their workplace" (page 6) and potential graduates of this programme need to be differentiated further in the documentation.
- It was advised that a placement of 80 hours should not have a 10-credit weighting.
- In section 9.2 the additional capacity needed in terms of computer labs was not actually addressed. Consultation will need to take place with the Chief Operating Officer with regard to the requirement for additional resources, as it is understood that the existing resources are already used to capacity. Consultation with those who timetable in the Faculty would also need to take place.
- It was noted that two of the nominated external accreditors were from the US and one from Russia. In terms of the cost to the University, this would need to be reconsidered.

13. Validation proposal: MA in Choral Studies

The Education Committee granted approval to the proposed MA in Choral Studies, subject to the following recommendations/ considerations being addressed in the Accreditation proposal:

- To amend the entry requirements (page 10 of the proposal) section 4.1 bullet one, to read 'A recognised honours primary degree (level 8) in Music, or in which Music is a subject, with a minimum of second class honours (i.e. 'delete having fulfilled the requirements, i.e. normally')
- Section 4.1 (page 10), bullet 2, to provide a more explicit description of what 'sufficient competence in Music' is in terms of the specific requirements for entry
- To give consideration to including a module/credits on vocal health and singing techniques i.e. 'teaching how to sing'
- It was noted that the figures for academic expenditure in the financial model do not reflect the additional academic teaching time involved in the development and delivery of 90 new credits. However, it was noted in discussions that the delivery of the programme would be feasible within the current staff complement.

14. Any other business**14.1 *Future-Tech Building and input from Education Committee on Teaching and Learning Space planning***

Members of Education Committee welcomed the recently announced Government funding of the 'Future-Tech' Building. In light of the strategic remit of Education Committee with respect to teaching and learning and the need to future proof the University in terms of teaching developments, Education Committee members indicated that they would like to provide input to Senior Management on the space planning for teaching and learning in the new building.

The Chair (Mr Billy Kelly) indicated that he would request that the Vice President Academic Affairs bring this request to the attention of Senior Management.

Signed: _____ Date _____
Chair

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 17 October 2018

at 2.00 in A204