UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 9 November 2017 in A204

9.30 am – 11:40 am

Present: Mr Jonathan Begg, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Dr Lorraine Delaney, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Dr Garrett McGuinness, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Caroline McMullan, Professor Eugene McNulty, Dr Brien Nolan, Mr Brendan Power, Dr Justin Rami

Apologies: Dr Mark Glynn, Dr Joseph Stokes

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Professor Eugene McNulty, representative of the Associate Deans for Research, to his first meeting of University Standards Committee.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1.   Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to the addition of two items under AOB.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2017

The minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes of 7 September 2017

3.1   It was noted that the communication with respect to Akari had not been issued due to outstanding system issues (Item 3.1).

3.2   It was <u>noted</u> that feedback had been provided by the Chief Operating Officer on the document outlining the policy of revocation of awards and credits for all programmes both taught and research, and the mechanism for final approval of the policy was under discussion (Item 3.5).

3.3   It was <u>noted</u> that a process to address legacy re-admission applications, where a Progression and Award Board originally requested a student to withdraw, and then later submits a legacy re-admission request on the student's behalf, is currently being drafted (Item 3.7).

3.4   It was <u>noted</u> that communication to faculties on the change to the Programme Regulations template would issue shortly (Item 6.2).

3.5   It was <u>noted</u> that a proposed procedure for the amendment of marks following online publication of semester one examination marks is on the agenda of this meeting.

3.6   It was <u>noted</u> that a request for a change to the BSc in Marketing, Innovation and Technology regulations for 2016-2017 had been circulated to USC electronically and approved on 25 September 2017.

3.7   It was <u>noted</u> that a legacy request for admission of a candidate onto the MSc in Management of Information Systems Strategy was approved by Chair's Action, 12 October 2017.

3.8   It was <u>noted</u> that the programme regulations for the BA in Humanities (Psychology Major), Open Education were approved by Chair's Action, 24 October 2017.

3.9   It was <u>noted</u> that USC had considered and approved a request from the School of Law and Government to confer an aegrotat award at the November 2017 graduation ceremony.

3.10   It was <u>noted</u> that follow-up with respect to the legacy re-admission of a student onto the MSc in Investment, Treasury and Banking programme had been completed (Item 5.1.1).

3.11   It was <u>noted</u> that an extension of term for the external examiner for the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries was approved by Chair's Action, 6 November 2017.

3.12   It was <u>noted</u> that follow-up with respect to a legacy-readmission of a student onto the Executive MBA programme was ongoing (item 5.1.2).

B.   Faculty issues

4.   External examiners for taught programmes

4.1   Nominations

4.1.1   Dr Anamik Saha, Goldsmith's University of London
          BA in Communication Studies
          <u>Approved</u>. It was <u>noted</u> that Dr Saha and Dr Dafydd Sills-Jones (4.1.9 below) are both
          nominated as external examiners for the BA in Communication Studies and the
          School is to be requested to identify the specific responsibilities of each external
          examiner.

4.1.2   Dr Michal Dabros, University of Applied Sciences & Arts,
          Western Switzerland
          Modules in School of Biotechnology
          <u>Approved</u>

4.1.3   Dr Ricardo Futre Pinheiro, University of Lisbon
          Bachelor of Arts in Jazz and Contemporary Music Performance
          It was <u>noted</u> that the term of appointment proposed for the nominated external
          examiner is three rather than four years, as per current regulations. The nominated
          examiner was <u>approved subject</u> to the agreement of the external examiner to serve a
          four-year term.

4.1.4   Dr Mark Widdowson, University of Salford
          School of Nursing and Human Sciences
          <u>Approved</u>

4.1.5   Dr Gabriella Avram, University of Limerick
          Open Education
          <u>Approved</u>

4.1.6   Professor Robert Davis, University of Glasgow
          Modules in the School of Human Development
          It was <u>noted</u> that the proposed nominee was <u>approved</u> by Chair's Action on 2
          November 2017 to accommodate the external examiner's review of the examination
          papers for semester 1 examinations.

4.1.7   Dr Ruth Pearce, University of Nottingham
        MSc in Nursing: Advanced Practice
        Approved

4.1.8   Dr Anthony Malone, Maynooth University
        Modules in the School of Policy & Practice
        Approved

4.1.9   Dr Dafydd Sills-Jones, Aberystwyth University
        BA in Communication Studies
        Approved, *please see note under 4.1.1 above*

4.1.10 Professor Mathieu d'Aquin, NUI Galway
        BSc in Data Science
        Decision deferred. It was noted that the information on the nomination form did not
        provide sufficient evidence of necessary experience for appointment in order for USC
        to make a decision on the suitability or otherwise of the nominee. The nominating
        School is to be requested to provide additional information, if available. Should
        additional information be forthcoming the nomination will be considered by Chair's
        Action.

4.1.11 Dr Donnacha Lowney, Institute of Technology, Carlow
        Modules in the School of Electronic Engineering
        Approved

   4.2   Changes to duties

4.2.1 Professor David Citrin, Georgia Institute of Technology (France)
       Modules in the School of Electronic Engineering
       Approved. It was noted that the examiner did not engage with his duties as external
       examiner and USC approved the cessation of his appointment.

4.2.2 Professor Iain Phillips, Loughborough University
       Modules in the School of Electronic Engineering
       Approved

5.   Other issues

5.1   DCU Institute of Education

5.1.1   Legacy re-admission: Professional Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education

Approved subject to additional information being provided with respect to the following:

- Provision of details of credits already achieved (the transcript does not include this information)
- Details on the credits to be included for the calculation of the precision mark to determine the award of the student.

5.1.2   Admission of external candidates to Master's in Special Educational Needs (MSEN)

It was noted that the request for the approval of the admission of candidates to the Master's in Special Educational Needs was being considered on a one-off basis, the circumstances having arisen through a legacy practice in the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE).   (Originally students funded through the Department of Education and Skills to complete a Graduate Diploma could achieve the award of Master's with an additional 30 credits in a partner institution).

The decision to admit students onto the MSEN programme to complete 60 credits only was approved subject to the following additional information being provided by the Faculty:

- Clarity on how it is proposed that the student record and transcript is to be managed in terms of the exemptions/credits already held by the applicants
- Provision of a mapping of the 30 credits already achieved by students, onto the Master's programme
- An indication of how many potential students there are who could conceivably request to return under the same set of circumstances.

The admission of these candidates was discussed at length in terms of the principle of the double-counting of credits towards separate awards and whether or not this would be a one-off decision. It was agreed that further discussion about this issue should take place i.e. recognition of awards (credits) from other institutions contributing to a DCU award.

5.1.3   Revised structure of Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Professional Master of Education (Primary) PMEP to address Teaching Council Requirements

The Chair outlined that the proposal as presented arose from a request from USC that the DCU Institute of Education consider amending the academic structures of both the BEd and PMEP programmes to address the accommodation of Teaching Council requirements within the structures of each programme, and to ensure USC was assured of the integrity of the individual student record of results.   The proposal as outlined proposes breaking down the 5-credit modules into their individual component 2.5-credit modules aligning to the Teaching Council requirements. It was noted that in the re-examination of the BEd progamme structure it also became necessary to increase the total number of credits to achieve the award.

The proposal for the change to 2.5 credits modules from 2018-2019 was approved.   It was noted that in order to roll-out the proposed structure that derogations will need to be submitted to USC for its consideration as follows:

- Request to allow 2.5 credit modules in order to be able to satisfy Teaching Council requirements for the BEd and PMEP programmes
- Request to allow the BEd programme to require students to take more than 240 credits over the 4-year programme.

Some reservations were expressed by Committee members in relation to the number of modules to be undertaken by students and possible consequent implications for assessment workload. It was requested that the Chair of the programme would monitor the scale and timeframe of assessments to ensure a realistic workload for students.

5.2   Open Education

5.2.1   Legacy re-admission: MSc in Management of Operation

Approved

C.   Other issues (not Faculty-specific)

6.   Marks and Standards issues

There were no items for consideration.

7.   Procedure for changes to marks following online publication of semester 1 provisional results

It was <u>noted</u> that the impetus to draft the procedure as circulated came from difficulties which had arisen for students whose academic record was incorrect following the publication of Semester 1 results, and who were trying to secure INTRA or placements based on those results. USC discussed the procedure and feedback from the Faculty Administration Peer Group at length. It was noted that the FAPG expressed the view that the discussion should take place in the wider context of engagement with the examination process as a whole.

The following was <u>noted</u> with respect to the draft procedure presented:

• There needs to be a clear definition of what 'material' (as used in the document) error means in the first instance and some clear criteria outlined as to when it is necessary to change the student record following the discovery of the error, post publication of semester 1 provisional results.
• Additional discussions should take place on who is best placed within a faculty to judge that a significant/material error has occurred and subsequently authorise a change to the student record. The view was expressed that the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning is best placed to make this decision rather than the Programme Chair, to ensure consistency of practice across each faculty.
• The procedure, once initiated should be kept under review and a high-level report should be made to USC for its April meeting (for a period of time, to be agreed).

During the discussion on the issues raised by the proposed procedure it was <u>noted</u> that a gap exists in current process where errors are identified (not necessarily 'material') and individual examiners are requested to bring those changes to the Progression and Award Board (practice varies between faculties on this). It was the view of USC that a process to formally record these errors should be put in place to ensure that those errors are brought to the attention of the relevant Progression and Award Boards (it was noted that practice varies in faculties on this also). The view was also expressed that responsibility for this process might most appropriately rest with Faculty Administration.

It was <u>agreed in principle</u> that a procedure should be put in place to rectify the student record when 'significant/material' error (s) has been uncovered in the recording of marks, but further work will need to be done to agree the detail of the procedure as originally drafted.

It was <u>agreed</u> that the Chair of USC would take the matter forward with the relevant parties concerned.

8.   **Programme Regulations: Joint International Master in Security, Intelligence & Strategic Studies**

The regulations were <u>approved</u> subject to the following:

- Insertion into the DCU Programme Regulations' section (under the heading *Derogations*) that a repeat option is not available
- Insertion into the programme regulations that DCU regulations, policies and guidelines are applicable to all modules delivered by DCU.

9.   **Periodic Programme Reviews**

The Periodic Programme Reviews completed in 2016-2017 and planned for 2017-2018 were <u>noted.</u>

10.   **Any other business**

10.1   Items of feedback from the Faculty Administration Peer Group

It was <u>noted</u> that the Faculty Administration Peer Group had requested that its representative raise the following items:

- A request for a review of RPL particularly in the context of legacy re-admission. It was clarified that RPL may be used to add weight to the application for legacy re-admission; however it had no official role with respect to legacy re-admission.
- Request for a discussion on the use of the term 'award'. The nomenclature issue was raised in the context of the Student Information Systems workshops and whether or not the term 'qualification' should be used.   The Chair noted that QQI use 'award' as standard. However it was noted that the use of 'qualification' in the context of the current student system does lend itself to some confusion.

10.2   *Retrospective amendment of the BSc in Marketing, Innovation and Technology programme regulations 2016-2017*

The Chair <u>noted</u> that he had been asked to bring to the attention of USC by the Chair of the Examination Appeals Board that in approving the changes to the BSc in Marketing, Innovation and Technology programme regulations retrospectively to allow students to carry modules into year 3, that due to timing, it had the potential to appear to undermine the integrity of the Appeals process (some students had appealed their result).

USC expressed the view that it had not been the intention to undermine the process and noted that the original request had come through the Progression and Award Board to enable it to make a decision with respect to these students.

Signed: _____Date: _____
            Chair

Date of next meeting:

Thursday, 11 January 2018
9.30 a.m. in A204