

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday 15 September 2021

2.00 p.m. – 3.20 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Professor Michelle Butler, Ms Kate Goodman, Professor Derek Hand, Ms Rachel Keegan (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Anna Logan, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Professor Joseph Stokes and Dr Blánaid White

Apologies: Professor Greg Hughes, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon and Professor Anne Looney

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of Education Committee for 2021-22, noting the significance of the year ahead as the University embarks on a revised academic calendar and a significant return to campus and face-to-face teaching. The Chair welcomed the following new members to Education Committee:

- Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Institutional Research & Analysis Officer, Quality Promotions Office
- Ms Kate Goodman, Vice-President for Academic Life, DCU Students’ Union
- Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, DCU Institute of Education

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 26 May 2021

The minutes of 26 May 2021, which were previously approved electronically, were noted.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 26 May 2021

- 3.1 The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning reported on progress to date with respect to employability statements. A draft institutional employability statement has been developed and the Head of Career Services is working on a template for the completion of Faculty-level employability statements. It was noted that this documentation will be ready for consideration at the next meeting of Education Committee.

- 3.2 It was noted that the position paper on Joint, Double (Multiple) and Dual Awards is on the agenda of this meeting (item 4).
- 3.3 It was noted that the proposed BSc in Bioprocessing is on the agenda of this meeting (item 8).
- 3.4 It was noted that feedback from Education Committee in relation to the BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence has been addressed.
- 3.5 It was noted that feedback from Education Committee in relation to the BSc in Physics with Data Analytics has been addressed.
- 3.6 It was noted that a correction to the exit title in the BEd in Technology, Engineering and Graphics validation documentation has been completed.
- 3.7 It was noted that a typographical error on the Faculty of Engineering and Computing collaborative provision report has been corrected.
- 3.8 It was noted that a change to the programme title for the BEng in Sustainable Systems and Energy was approved by Chair's action. The title has been changed to BEng in Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering, following a recommendation made by the Accreditation Board.
- 3.9 It was noted that an alternative proposal for an exit award from the BEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering is ongoing.
- 3.10 It was noted that work in regard to the provision of an overview of Education Committee/Vice-President for Academic Affairs commitments and activities, and a proposed cycle for reporting to Education Committee, is ongoing.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4. Joint, Double (Multiple) and Dual Awards

The Chair reminded members that feedback was requested from Faculties following an initial discussion on the position paper at the May 2021 meeting of Education Committee. The Academic Secretary informed members that feedback has so far been received from Registry and DCUBS. She advised members that once all feedback has been received, the next step for Education Committee is to establish agreed principles, definitions and parameters to inform the development of a policy on joint, double and multiple awards. It was agreed these will be considered at the next meeting of Education Committee, giving all Faculty an opportunity to input in advance of such decisions. The Academic Secretary informed members that, once developed, the draft policy will be circulated to Faculties for input, before being brought back to Education Committee for consideration.

It was agreed that it would be useful to have the input of GRBS on the applicability of the proposed principles, definitions and parameters to research degree programmes. It was noted that the Dean of Graduate Studies will raise this at the next meeting of GRBS.

5. **QQI Principles for Professional Engagement with Education Providers, including Programme Validation, Professional Accreditation and Approval**

The Academic Secretary and Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research provided some context on the development of the proposed QQI Principles for Professional Engagement with Education Providers. It was noted that these are intended to ensure, in as far as is possible, a complementary approach to programme validation and accreditation by professional and statutory bodies (PRSBs), awarding bodies and independent providers of programmes leading to QQI awards. It is hoped that the establishment of agreed overarching principles will harmonise separate approaches, avoid unnecessary duplication and reduce administrative burden.

It was noted that the Principles have been considered by the IUA Quality Committee and have largely been endorsed by others in the university sector. The Principles were also considered by the DCU Quality Promotion Committee, and feedback was essentially positive, recognising that these present opportunities to avoid unnecessary duplication and for more open dialogue with PRSBs.

Members discussed the principles, noting they reflect current ongoing dialogue and engagement between education providers and PRSBs, and are focused on quality assurance and enhancement. The complementary nature of academic and professional accreditation processes was noted and subject to the clarifications provided by QQI (circulated as item EC2021/A7/5c), members agreed that the principles be brought to Academic Council with a recommendation for endorsement.

6. **Strategic academic initiatives**

The Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation provided an update on the DCU HCI Pillar 2 projects:

DCU Futures

There has been strong interest in the new DCU Futures programmes in terms of CAO preferences and class sizes, and the significant efforts of the Faculties and Communications and Marketing in this regard was acknowledged.

Work on the transversal skills element of the project is progressing well, with the incorporation of the work of the Life Skills Centre into Semester 1 and career visioning, supported by the Careers Service, into Semester 2, 2022. Work is also at an advanced stage in scoping out the transversal skills framework.

The longer-term objectives of the project are also advancing; work has commenced on the establishment of the industry integration forum and advisory panels, and the Futures team is currently looking at how the student voice will be best represented as the project progresses, working closely with Ms Aisling McKenna and Dr Jing Burgi-Tian in the Quality Promotion Office.

Graduate Certificate in Additive Manufacturing

The initial intake for the Graduate Certificate in Additive Manufacturing (an IT Carlow programme) has been moved from September 2021 to January 2022, which will allow time to ensure the MOU is in place prior to the registration of students.

Virtual Laboratories in Higher Education

The MOU for the virtual laboratories project is complete, and third-year students will be starting to take the DCU module this semester.

MC2

The MC2 micro-credential project is currently in the scoping phase and a branding exercise is currently underway.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The recognition of prior learning project is in the initial stages, following the recent recruitment of a Head of Research. It was noted that the DCU recruitment process is completed. The initial phase of this project will involve a scoping exercise, and DCU is in a good position given the widening participation report produced by Ms Karina Curley last year.

The Chair expressed her thanks to colleagues supporting the Strategic initiatives, noting the significant work in getting the DCU Futures programmes to this point. She noted the recent event, hosted by the Dean for Strategic Learning Innovation and the Director of Transversal Skills, which brought together the Faculty Futures Teams. The afternoon involved discussions across a number of themes including some of the big questions on how success will be measured and how we might assess how different the student experience is on these new programmes.

7. Widening Participation

7.1 FE entry routes to DCU undergraduate programmes

The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning briefed members of a necessary, time-sensitive decision taken in relation to the combination of QQI and Leaving Certificate results for the purposes of admissions for 2022. He noted that the decision made earlier in the year to expand the number of programmes accepting QQI qualifications saw participating programmes increase from 6 to 64. He informed members that 52 of these programmes have specific entry requirements, and it was previously proposed that DCU would accept a combination of QQI and Leaving Certificate results. He advised members that this would require a manual assessment of each application, during a short 2 ½ day window. Registry colleagues have since estimated that the exercise would take approximately 6 days to complete.

Based on this assessment it has been agreed that DCU will not accept a combination of QQI and Leaving Certificate results for entry for 46 of the programmes for 2022. He advised members that there are 6 additional programmes where this combination was previously allowed, and this will be retained.

The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning informed members that the CAO has indicated an openness to a development that might address the requirements for combination qualifications if there is a sectoral demand for this change. To date, three other universities have indicated they would be supportive of this development. This item will be raised at the next CAO Technical Group. The Chair confirmed she will also raise this issue with the CAO as a strategically significant matter.

7.2 Stronger connections with FE, Steering Committee Terms of Reference

The Steering Committee Terms of Reference were approved subject to the following:

- That a more explicit statement on DCU's strategic commitment to widening participation be included in the context on page 1.
- That membership is revisited, specifically in regard to the possible benefits of including a representative with a mature student support/Access brief and a Registry Admissions Team representative.
- That the typographical error on the second line of page 1 is corrected (correct to FE institutions).

The Chair highlighted to members that it is important that the Faculty representatives have an active brief in this space. The Chair recorded her thanks to Prof Anne Looney for agreeing to lead out on this Subcommittee, with a view to progressing DCU's objectives in increasing the number of students coming through the FE to HE route. It was noted that this Steering Committee will act as a conduit between the Faculties and Education Committee, and should ensure we have a coherent approach in progressing this goal.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

8. Faculty of Science and Health: BSc in Bioprocessing, DCU Futures Programme

The BSc in Bioprocessing exit award was approved.

The Committee commended the extent to which the DCU Futures ethos and approach has been fully embedded into this new pathway, and noted the significant undertaking in bringing the proposal to this point.

It was noted that the text in Section 2 of the revised academic offering form should be updated to reflect that this is an exit award from the BSc in Biotechnology.

9. DCU Business School: Graduate Certificate in Strategic Leadership

The Graduate Certificate in Strategic Leadership was approved.

It was noted that page 1 should be updated to reflect that this is a minor award.

10. Extension of MOA with Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) to September 2022

A one-year extension to the MOA with Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) was approved.

It was noted this extension will allow time for work to progress on exploring the possibility of a new agreement.

11. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: memo related to proposed European Masters (EMJM) in Public Policy

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Design Measure application was endorsed.

It was noted that, if successful, this funding will allow proposers to work on the development of a proposal for a European Master in Public Policy. The alignment of this proposal to DCU Strategy was commended, and it was noted that the proposed partners are members of the ECIU consortium. The Chair noted the usefulness of the forward-planning of the proposers, in bringing the proposal to the attention of Education Committee at this time.

12. Any other business

There was no other business.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
Wednesday, 13 October 2021