

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Wednesday 26 May 2021

2.00 p.m. – 3.45 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Professor Michelle Butler, Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor Derek Hand, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Dr Ken McDonagh, Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Professor Joseph Stokes, Mr Lucien Waugh-Daly and Dr Blanaid White

Apologies: Professor Greg Hughes

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 28 April 2021

The minutes of 28 April 2021 were approved and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 28 April 2021

- 3.1 The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning reported on progress to date with respect to employability statements. He indicated that he had almost completed the task of drafting an employability statement for the University which establishes general principles and he had also worked with the Head of the Careers Service to draft a template which would request from Faculties particular discipline knowledge related to employability. It was noted that the item would be considered by Education Committee at its September 2021 meeting (Item 3.2).

The Chair noted that there would be an EUA Study visit on 27 and 28 May 2021 focused on employability, and it was a useful opportunity to showcase DCU’s work to date in this area. The Chair thanked the Academic Secretary for all the work that had been done in preparing for the event, and also those who would be contributing to the event.

- 3.2 It was noted that Faculties would consider the policy paper on Joint, Double and Dual Awards over the summer period with a view to providing feedback in relation to the definitions proposed in the paper and to suggest criteria that might provide an evidentiary basis for the assessment of the strategic alignment and, impact of collaborations which, it is proposed, would result in joint or double (multiple) awards and related decision-making (Item 4).
- 3.3 It was noted that work is ongoing on a process by which Education Committee would maintain oversight of its strategic commitments and activities. The item will be considered by Education Committee at its September 2021 meeting (Item 3.3).
- 3.4 The deferred decision on the undergraduate exit award of BSc in Electronic and Computer Technology (level 8) from the BEng in Electronic and Computer Engineering was discussed (Item 7).

The Chair clarified that the concept of an exit award is accepted but there were particular issues with the specific proposal as presented to the Education Committee meeting of 28 April 2021. The issues related to the weighting of 195 credits and misalignment with similar types of awards in other institutions, which are more commonly 180 ECTS credits.

It was suggested that the best option would be to create an exit award with 180 credits based on taught modules, but there would need to be a good rationale for INTRA not contributing in this instance to an award, as it is relevant accredited learning.

- 3.5 It was noted that the proposed Grad Certificate in Energy Systems and Decarbonisation, a decision on which was deferred at the 28 April 2021 meeting of Education Committee is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 10).
- 3.6 It was noted that the feedback requested by Education Committee with respect to the proposed Erasmus Mundus programme European Master in Law, Data and Artificial Intelligence has been provided in the validation proposal submitted to today's meeting (Item 11).
- 3.7 It was noted that the feedback provided by Education Committee on the Widening Participation plan had been incorporated into the document and it had been recirculated to Education Committee. It was noted too that the assignment of roles and responsibilities with respect to the plan had been completed and circulated in the Education Committee papers (Item 5).
- 3.8 It was noted that some minor amendments had been made, as requested, to the BEng/MEng in Mechatronic Engineering documentation (Item 6).
- 3.9 It was noted that some further clarifications had been provided with respect to the Wuhan University request, which was considered by Education Committee at its meeting of 28 April 2021 and the document was now finalised (Item 9).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING**4. DCU Futures update**

The Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation reported that in the last two weeks the following programmes had been through the accreditation process and were recommended for approval to Academic Council:

- BEng in Sustainable Systems and Energy
- BSc in Digital Business and Innovation
- BSc in Psychology and Disruptive Technologies
- BA in Climate and Environmental Sustainability

She noted that the first meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Projects Steering Committee was scheduled to take place next week and acknowledged all the work that had been done by all staff concerned to bring the project to this point. It was noted that the accreditation of the BSc in Global Challenges would take place in the autumn.

Education Committee acknowledged the contribution of the Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation to the quality of the accreditations in providing the background and context to the DCU Futures programmes. In addition, the Chair thanked colleagues who had chaired the Accreditation Boards for their valuable contribution to the process.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**5. Faculty of Engineering and Computing Springboard funding: Graduate Certificate in Energy Systems and Decarbonisation**

The Graduate Certificate in Energy Systems and Decarbonisation was approved.

It was recommended that the programme proposers would consider designation of the programme as a special purpose award rather than a minor award given that it is a stand-alone programme where students are following a specific route to upskill in a particular area.

6. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Validation proposal: European Master in Law, Data and Artificial Intelligence (Erasmus Mundus)

The Acting Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences provided a brief introduction to the programme noting its strategic importance.

Education Committee commended the level of work undertaken in terms of the preparation of the documentation and the range of consultation which had taken place both internally and externally to date. This was clearly reflected in the comprehensive documentation that was submitted.

The areas of feedback which had been provided to the programme team by Education Committee on 28 April 2021, when considering the application in principle were clarified as follows:

- The joint European Master's would be accredited as a DCU award using the DCU accreditation process and the Consortium partners would recognise it
- Students domiciled in Ireland who want to access the scholarship now have a route (a two-mobility option) to meet EU requirements for funding
- Language classes for the two mobility periods involving French and Spanish would be provided.

It was noted that the proposal was strategically important to DCU in its involvement with the Erasmus Mundus programme in terms of providing recognition and visibility, particularly in the post-Brexit context. It was noted too that the quality of the proposal as circulated was a benchmark for future DCU Erasmus Mundus applications.

Education Committee granted the proposed programme approval for further development towards accreditation, subject to the following recommendations/ considerations being addressed:

- The validation approval would be subject to the completion of the separate due diligence process in respect of partners
- That some minor corrections would be completed. The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning indicated that he would contact the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science directly in this regard.
- It was queried if the need for additional physical space should be addressed, given the plan to add students to the programme. It was indicated in the documentation that there was no provision for additional specialist space or additional resources, however there would be additional students taking computing
- It was indicated that there was no evidence within the documentation of consultation with the Library or ISS
- It was noted that there would be operational issues to be addressed that might need particular consideration, e.g. students accessing DCU resources from outside of Ireland
- It was noted that Annex 1 in Six C outlined a very complex admissions process, which would require input from all of the partners, and should not be underestimated in terms of the work involved and resourcing of impacted areas to be included in planning.

In a general discussion on Erasmus Mundus applications it was noted that earlier engagement within the University at the point of the consideration of application would be advantageous, and further consideration would be given to a pre-approval process in the context of the position paper on Joint, Double and Dual awards. In the context of the programme under consideration it was also emphasised that there is a need to be mindful of the structures put in place, not only for the funding application process, but also for the accreditation, delivery and roll-out of the programme. It would be important that structures and resources are put in place to be able to sustain the processes and mitigate institutional risk.

It was clarified that the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Registrar) would have final sign-off on the Erasmus Mundus documentation, both the funding application and the Memorandum of Agreement.

7. Faculty of Science and Health, revised academic offering: DCU Futures: existing programmes offering new specialisms

7.1 BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence

The revised academic offering for the BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence was approved subject to the points and recommendations listed below being addressed by the programme proposers:

- It was noted that the School of Chemical Sciences is currently in a transition period whereby Analytical Sciences and Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences each have a denominated entry currently, in addition to the new Chemistry common entry route, with the expectation that ultimately there would be only one entry route to programmes in the School. In advance of this scenario it was recommended that the maths module MS146 would be placed on both the denominated entry and the common first year chemistry structures, thereby providing the opportunity for all students to make a choice for Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence.
- It was noted that there was an over reliance on the computing modules as a source of challenge-based learning. One of those modules is new, i.e. CA4109, but the other, CA146 is a traditional module and it may not provide opportunities for CBL. Programme proposers were asked to revisit this and to incorporate CBL in other year two modules.
- Programme proposers were cautioned against using an online test bank as source of material for summative assessment due to known academic integrity issues with using such test banks. This comment related particularly to modules CS101 and CS102.
- It was noted that the year 3 transversal model (page 11 and 12) which offers students options in law, communications and humanities is not appropriate. If the comment of the external examiner is reviewed, the external examiner welcomes the addition of alternative modules but in the context of the application of machine learning to other contexts. Therefore, other disciplines may be appropriate but the context should be machine learning and those other disciplines. It was requested that this would be revisited, also in the context of the transversal skills framework priorities.
- It was noted that there were a series of issues with module categories as documented on pages 16 and 17 of the proposal. The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning indicated that he would write directly to the Executive Dean of the Faculty in this regard.
- It was highlighted that on page 24 of the proposal the External Examiner's second comment refers to an issue which appeared to be about the volume of learning in a single module, but the response appeared to be about the combination of disparate topics within a module. It was suggested that volume of learning concern could potentially be addressed in conjunction with the revision of the transversal module indicated in point 4.
- Through the accreditation process of the new DCU Futures programmes one of the key aspects of the feedback from the international external accreditation boards was the importance of coherence and integration of the disciplines with the programmes. Although this is addressed by the Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence programme in the

documentation it was recommended, to make that coherence and integration stronger, that the capstone research project should incorporate an AI component.

7.2 *BSc in Bioprocessing*

It was noted that the development of the BSc in Bioprocessing had been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. It was agreed that the finalised proposal would be considered for approval in September 2021. It was noted that the first semester of this programme overlaps with the other DCU Futures science programmes and therefore the delay in consideration of the programme would not impact on the cohort entering in September 2021.

7.3 *BSc in Physics with Data Analytics*

The revised academic offering for the BSc in Physics with Data Analytics was approved subject to the points and recommendations listed below being addressed by the programme proposers:

- It was noted that there were a series of issues with module categories as documented on pages 9 and 10 of the proposal. The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning indicated that he would write directly to the Dean of the Faculty and in this regard
- There is a 2.5 credit module in Year 3 which is not permitted under Marks and Standards. It was suggested that the additional 2.5 credits would be incorporated into another module or modules. It was noted that the aim of the DCU Futures programmes is that transversal skills should be embedded into discipline modules.
- There was a very heavy continuous assessment load in some Physics modules, involving weekly tests and there is a risk that students might concentrate on them to the detriment of more expansive learning. It was suggested that a solution to this may involve a discussion with TEU on the best approach.
- Through the accreditation process of the new DCU Futures programmes one of the key aspects of the feedback from the international external accreditation boards was the importance of coherence and integration of the disciplines with the programmes. Although this is addressed by the BSc in Physics with Data Analytics programme in the documentation it was recommended, to make that coherence and integration stronger that the capstone research project should incorporate a data analysis component.

8. **Faculty of Science and Health: MSc in Astrophysics and Relativity, restructure**

The proposed restructure for the MSc in Astrophysics and Relativity as presented was approved

9. **Doctor of Education: new area of professional focus, Education for Sustainable Futures**

The new area of professional focus of 'Education for Sustainable Futures' for the Doctor of Education programme was approved.

The proposal was considered by the Committee to be very interesting and of exceptionally high quality.

The alignment to the DCU futures agenda and the module 'Futures Thinking and Futures Studies' were discussed specifically. It was suggested, in the context of the DCU Futures agenda that a version of this module would be offered to other cohorts and/or to academic staff involved in teaching on the DCU Futures programmes. It was suggested that it would be useful if the DCU Futures Transversal Skills Director and the lead programme proposer explore the embedding and broadening of sustainability in the context of this module as it encompasses one of the core aspects of DCU Futures.

10. DCU Institute of Education: Validation proposal: BEd in Technology, Engineering and Graphics (Collaborative programme)

The Dean of DCU Institute of Education provided a brief overview of the context to the BEd in Technology, Engineering and Graphics, noting that the proposed programme would be a DCU award and that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would be developed in parallel with the accreditation process. The intention would be to accept students for entry in September 2022.

It was noted that this joint programme is a significant development in teacher education in the national context.

Education Committee granted the proposed programme approval for further development towards accreditation, subject to the following recommendations/ considerations being addressed:

- It was suggested that further market research would be useful to establish the demand for the programme
- It was recommended that it would be made clearer in the documentation, from a student's perspective how the programme will be delivered between the partner institutions (e.g. how credits would be delivered by DCU in the first two years of the programme when students are based on the AIT site).
- It was requested that 'disability allowance' would be corrected to 'disability support' (page 31, Section 15).

It was noted that the MOA would be developed in parallel with the accreditation process and further consideration would be given by the University to those elements to be decided for the MOA, in line with our approach to implementation of collaboratively delivered programmes.

Education Committee also discussed how the roll-out of this programme might raise issues of student institutional identity and it was acknowledged that this is an issue being explored by the programme proposers with Student Support and Development.

11. Faculty approvals 2020-2021, for noting

11.1 Approval of stand-alone/professional development modules

The approved stand-alone/professional development modules presented by Faculties that were approved during 2020-2021 were noted.

11.2 Collaborative provision arrangements

The approved collaborative provision arrangements presented by Faculties that were approved during 2020-2021 were noted.

11.3 Change to programme/award titles

The approved change to programme/award titles presented by Faculties that were approved during 2020-2021 were noted.

11.4 Change to mode of delivery of programmes

The approved change mode of delivery of programmes presented by Faculties that were approved during 2020-2021 were noted.

12. Any other business

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of Education Committee before the summer period and she extended a vote of thanks to colleagues for their contribution to Education Committee over the last year. She thanked Lucien Waugh-Daly for his contribution as Sabbatical Officer and made particular mention of the contribution made by Mr Billy Kelly, Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning for the rigour and wisdom he had brought to bear on the business of Education Committee.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
Wednesday, 15 September 2021