

## UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

Thursday 25 May 2017 in A204

9.30 am – 12.45 pm

**Present:** Mr Jonathan Begg, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Dr Eamon Costello, Mr James Donoghue, Dr Mark Glynn, Ms. Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Dr Garrett McGuinness, Ms Phylomena McMorro, Dr Caroline McMullan, Dr Brien Nolan, Dr Justin Rami, Dr Joseph Stokes

**Apologies:** Dr Greg Foley, Dr Mark Roantree

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Dr Brien Nolan to University Standards Committee in his capacity as representative of Heads of School.

#### SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

##### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted. It was noted that a representative from the Institute of Education was available to speak to items 5.3.1 to 5.3.4 (derogation requests) should USC require further clarification on the derogations sought.

##### 2. Minutes of the meeting of 30 March 2017

The minutes of the meeting of 30 March 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair. It was noted that a minor amendment to clarify the record under 6.1a of the minutes had been made in advance of the meeting and following the original circulation of minutes.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 30 March 2017**

- 3.1** It was noted that the Akari project is close to completion and an exercise is planned, following the marking period, to delete older draft versions of modules and to upgrade the system (Item 3.3).
- 3.2** It was noted that the Chair and Secretary of USC are currently reviewing practice in other institutions with the aim of producing a draft external examiner's manual for the consideration of USC (Item 3.2).
- 3.3** It was noted that a policy document outlining a procedure for rescinding an award in the case of plagiarism for research students has been drafted. It was noted that due to the legal nature of the proposal it was agreed by the proposers that it was more appropriate that the document is considered by Executive. It was agreed that a copy of the policy would be circulated to USC for information purposes, once approved (Item 3.4).
- 3.4** It was noted that the collation of the university cycle of Period Programme Review reviews is ongoing (Item 3.5).
- 3.5** It was noted that discussions are ongoing with respect to a process for correction of module mark errors following the publication of Semester 1 provisional results online (Item 3.6).
- 3.6** It was noted that the approval of proposed changes to Marks and Standards 2017 is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.7).
- 3.7** It was noted that an external examiner for the MSc in Human Resource Strategies programme, DCUBS was approved by Chair's Action for 2016-2017 onwards, 25 April 2017.
- 3.8** It was noted that a briefing document with respect to Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma entry routes to Master's programmes had been circulated to faculties (Item 6.1a)

## **B. Faculty issues**

In advance of the consideration of the nomination forms submitted, it was noted that there are occasions in nominating external examiners where some flexibility with respect to the reciprocity regulations contained in *External Examiners for Taught Programmes/Modules the Regulations and Guidelines* might be needed. It was suggested that the wording in the regulations would be amended to enable USC to have some flexibility when a case for approval in exceptional circumstances is made.

It was noted that faculties would also benefit from additional guidance on the expectations on external examiners with respect to workload. It was clarified that this would form part of a larger exercise which has been undertaken by the Chair and Secretary of USC.

### **4.1 Nominations**

4.1.1 Professor Jan Bierhoff, Medialynx, The Netherlands  
BA in Journalism and MA in Journalism  
Approved

4.1.2 Dr Akiko Furukawa, University of London  
School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies  
Approved

4.1.3 Dr William Dinan, University of Sterling  
MSc in Public Relations & Strategic Communications  
Approved

4.1.4 Dr Helen Julia Minors, Kingston University London  
MA in Music  
Approved

4.1.5 Professor Frédérique Brossard Børhaug, NLA University College, Norway  
Modules in School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies  
Approved

4.1.6 Dr Ian Willcock, University of Hertfordshire  
BSc in Multimedia, MSc in Multimedia  
Approved

- 4.1.7 Professor Denis Alexander, University of Ulster  
MSc in Biomedical Diagnostics  
Approved
- 4.1.8 Dr Frank De Langen, Open University of the Netherlands  
Modules in Open Education  
Approved
- 4.1.9 Professor Joanna Hodge, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Modules in School of Theology, Philosophy & Music  
Approved
- 4.1.10 Professor John Dwyfor Davies, University of the West of England  
Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education, Learning Support & Special Education  
Approved
- 4.1.11 Professor Peter Schuster, University of Applied Sciences Schmalkalden  
Modules in DCU Business School  
Approved
- 4.1.12 Dr Martin Edwards, King's College London  
MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology/Organisational Behaviour  
Approved. It was noted that Dr. Edwards was also being appointed to examine the  
MSc in Leadership and Organisational Behaviour
- 4.1.13 Dr Nicholas Battard, ICN Business School, Metz, France  
Modules in DCU Business School  
Approved
- 4.1.14 Dr Cormac Mac Fhionnlaoich, UCD  
Modules in Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge  
Approved It was noted that the nominated external examiner was succeeding a  
colleague from the same institution. However as the pool of external examiners for  
the examination of these modules is very small, USC agreed to approve the  
appointment in this particular circumstance.
- 4.1.15 Dr Caoimhín Ó Dónaill, Ulster University  
Modules in Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge  
Approved

- 4.1.16 Dr Malachy Ó Néill, Ulster University  
Modules in Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge  
Approved, subject to clarification of the workload of the external examiner
- 4.1.17 Dr Simon Watson, University of Manchester  
Modules in the School of Electronic Engineering  
Approved
- 4.1.18 Dr Dan Emanoil Grigoras, UCC  
MSc in Computing  
Approved
- 4.1.19 Dr Hitesh Tewari, TCD  
BSc in Computer Applications  
Decision deferred. This nomination was considered in tandem with the nomination under 4.1.22. It was noted that clarification would be sought from the nominating School to justify proposing two external examiners from the same department in the same institution
- 4.1.20 Dr Judith Hebron, University of Leeds  
Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils on the Autism Spectrum  
Approved
- 4.1.21 Professor Wendy Phillips, Bristol Business School  
Modules in DCU Business School  
Approved
- 4.1.22 Professor Brendan Tangney, TCD  
BSc in Computational Problem Solving & Software Development  
Approved (see 4.1.19). This nomination was approved as the case was made that there a small pool of experts to choose from to examine in this area.
- 4.1.23 Professor Melanie Giles, University of Ulster  
BSc in Psychology  
The nomination was not approved as additional information was required with respect to the experience of the external examiner before a decision could be made on her suitability. It was noted that clarification was also required with respect to the proposed workload of the examiner.

## **4.2 Change of Duties**

- 4.2.1 Professor Tony Dobbins, Bangor University  
DCU Business School  
Approved

## **5. Other issues**

In a general discussion with respect to the legacy re-admission form it was noted that question one on the application form could be made a little clearer and it was agreed that it would be reviewed.

### **5.1 Faculty of Engineering & Computing**

- 5.1.1 Legacy readmission request: BEng in Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering  
Approved

### **5.2 Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences**

- 5.2.1 Proposed change to minimum entry requirements: BA in Economics, Politics & Law  
Noted
- 5.2.2 Legacy readmission request: BA in Journalism  
Approved

It was noted that the candidate in this instance had been asked to withdraw by the Progression and Awards Board in 2008 and a block put on his student record. As this decision has been superseded by the legacy re-admission request, a process is required to be put in place to enable the correction of the student record and the registration of the candidate.

### **5.3 DCU Institute of Education**

- 5.3.1 Derogation request: Bachelor of Education (Reflective Practice)

An extensive discussion took place with respect to the derogation request that students must pass all elements of modules ED1018 (100% continuous assessment, pass/fail) and ED2015 (50% continuous assessment/50% examination) to satisfy the Teaching Council Guidelines, 2.8 Reflective Practices; '*Programmes should prepare students to be reflective practitioners throughout their teaching career.*'

It was noted that this derogation request has been considered on two previous occasions. Background information to the request was tabled by the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning of the Institute of Education which was considered by USC. It was strongly felt that although a pedagogical argument was made in the documentation circulated, a compelling argument to approve the derogation and require students to pass all elements was not. It was felt that the fundamental issue was how the learning outcomes of the entire module are being assessed. USC was not convinced that the Teaching Council (the Teaching Council documentation was reviewed also) require the level of granularity indicated for the reflective practitioner requirement to be satisfied. The derogation was not approved.

### 5.3.2 Derogation request: Professional Master of Education (Primary) (Reflective Practice)

#### Not approved

The request was considered under item 5.3.1 and the outcome is also reflected under the decision outlined above.

### 5.3.3 Derogation request: Bachelor of Education (Literacy, Teagasc na Gaeilge, Mathematics & Gaeilge)

The request under 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 were considered together. The derogation requested under 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 was as follows:

‘Students must pass the Literacy, Teagasc na Gaeilge, Mathematics and Gaeilge components of certain modules.’

USC gave this request extensive consideration. It was their view that other solutions could be found to address the need to satisfy the Teaching Council, the student record requirement, and Marks and Standards. It was recommended that the programme team revisit the programme structure to find a way of meeting the learning outcomes that does not require a derogation. It was suggested that the Institute of Education would seek specific expertise from faculty administration and from Registry to assist in the development of possible solutions, e.g. ‘dummy modules’ with zero credits. As there was appreciation that this proposed solution would take time to develop, USC agreed to approve the derogation proposed for 2017-2018 only. USC requested that an outline proposal involving proposed changes to structure would be provided to the Chair of USC for his consideration by Thurs 24 August 2017 and in advance of the 7 September 2017 meeting of USC. The proposal may then be considered by USC. It was noted that the work should be completed in outline format for the start of the

academic year to ensure a finalised structure would be ready for approval in spring of 2018.

- 5.3.4 Derogation request: Professional Master of Education (Primary) (Literacy, Teagasc na Gaeilge, Mathematics & Gaeilge)

Approved for 2017-2018 only.

Please see outcome noted under 5.3.3.

- 5.3.5 Legacy readmission request: Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education

Approved and noted the permission granted is for completion of the Certificate in Special and Inclusive Education

- 5.3.6 Legacy readmission request: Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education

Approved

- 5.3.7 Legacy readmission request: Professional Master of Education

Approved

- 5.3.8 Legacy readmission request: Master of Education

Approved

- 5.3.9 Legacy readmission request: MSc in Guidance Counselling

Approved

## **6. Other issues (not Faculty-specific)**

### 6.1 Marks and Standards 2017

The Secretary noted some additional changes which had been made subsequent to the consideration of the document at the 30 March 2017 meeting of USC. The proposed amendments to Marks and Standards 2017 were approved and it was noted that the document would be considered at the 7 June 2017 meeting of Academic Council.

Whilst a note of concern was expressed on behalf of Faculty Administrators with respect to the level of administration the introduction of entry at Graduate



Certificate/Graduate Diploma level for follow-on Master's might create, it was clarified that it was not mandatory for these entry points to be made available.

## 6.2 Programme Regulations 2017-2018

The Secretary noted that subsequent to posting the Programme Regulations on the USC shared drive some additional/amended regulations had been submitted and she proposed extending the time by which the Programme Regulations would be approved. This was agreed and the Secretary undertook to circulate a communication in this regard.

## 6.3 Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis

The Dean of Graduate Studies outlined the proposed changes to the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis.

Some discussion took place with respect to paragraph 11.4.6 (the process which follows when the internal examiner is not satisfied with corrections or revisions). It was suggested that in such an instance the examiners may make an 'alternative' recommendation. The Dean of Graduate Studies undertook to amend the regulations and it was noted that the PGR6 form would need to be amended to accurately reflect the process.

The regulations were approved subject to the amendment as outlined above.

## 6.4 RPL Policy for Research Programmes

Approved

**7. Any other business**

There were no items for consideration.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

**Date of next meeting:**

Thursday, 7 September 2017 9.30 a.m. in A204
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