UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 1 February 2007

9.30-11.30 a.m. in A204

Present:	Dr Noel Murphy (Acting Chair), Mr Jonathan Begg, Dr Françoise Blin, Ms Olivia Bree, Mr Kevin Griffin, Ms Jean Hughes, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Andrew McGrady, Dr Gerry McNamara, Dr Ronnie Saunders, Dr Anne Sinnott, Mr Brendan Tolan
Apologies:	Professor Martin Henry, Professor Eugene Kennedy, Professor Heather Ruskin, Professor Maria Slowey

The Chair noted that Mr Griffin would shortly be leaving the University to take up the post of Director of Registry in University College Dublin and, on behalf of the Committee, thanked him for his significant contribution to the work of the Committee and wished him every success in the new post.

1.   Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 8.4 and one submission under Item 12.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2006

Confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   Follow-up actions from the last meeting were reported.

3.2   <u>Noted</u> that, following the approval by Academic Council at its meeting of
6 December 2006 of a proposal to assign 90 credits to all taught Master's
programmes apart from those less than a calendar year long, work was in progress
to make the necessary adaptations to academic structures and this work would be
finalised by the end of March 2007. <u>Noted</u> that 90 credits did not represent the
maximum possible rating and the potential existed for attributing a higher rating to
a programme. <u>Noted</u> also that the basis for the increase in credits is not the level of
the award but the effort demanded of a student. (Item 3.2)

3.3   <u>Agreed</u> that a resolution was needed urgently to the issue of devolution to Faculties
of some activities currently undertaken centrally. (Item 3.3)

3.4   <u>Noted</u> that proposals in relation to the new academic framework had been discussed
by Executive on 28 November 2006 and were currently under discussion within
Faculties. (Item 3.4)

3.5   <u>Noted</u> that work was in progress to prepare for the implementation of the revised
compensation regulations for the academic year 2007/08. (Item 3.5)

3.6   <u>Noted</u> that, to inform the discussions of the working group set up to discuss issues
relating to the delivery and award of programmes by DCU and another institution,
or other institutions, Mr Gordon McConnell had made available preliminary
guidelines on the establishment of memoranda of understanding and other types of
inter-institutional agreements. <u>Agreed</u> that Mr McConnell would be requested to
forward more detailed information about these matters to the working group.
<u>Noted</u> that both a recent change to National University of Ireland statutes to
facilitate cross-institutional programme provision, and the MAP initiative currently
being led by the Higher Education Authority, which would involve the universities
in the approval of work-based learning potentially provided outside the universities,
were of relevance to the aims of the working group. <u>Agreed</u> that they should be
factored into its discussions. <u>Agreed</u> that the working group would submit a report
to the 22 March 2007 meeting of the USC. (Item 3.6)

3.7   <u>Noted</u> that the working group to discuss a range of issues relating to research
students had met. (Item 10)

4.   Proposal on external examiners

In the course of a detailed discussion, the following points were <u>noted</u>:

- further discussions should take account not simply of the processes involved in availing of the expertise of external examiners but also of the more fundamental question of what the purpose of an external examiner system is
- fundamental issues which must also be incorporated into discussion are the remit of an external examiner (whether programme- or module-based) and the implications of this for ownership of the process from the point of view of those responsible for programmes and/or modules
- it will be important that any revised reporting mechanisms are as straightforward as possible from the point of view of the external examiner who has to use them
- as part of their commitment to streamlining processes, the Computer Services Department and the Registry have significantly extended the capability of the ITS system with regard to the management of research student records, and it is planned shortly to extend this capability to the management of external examiner records.

The following was <u>agreed</u>:

- in view of the need for further discussion of the matter, the present system is to remain in operation for 2007/08 though it is hoped that a revised system can come into operation for 2008/09
- Mr Griffin and Dr Murphy will draw up a revised proposal, taking into account the points made in discussion
- this revised proposal will be circulated electronically to the USC and, once it is agreed, the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning will be requested to bring it to the attention of Faculties for further discussion and comment
- members of the USC are requested to submit suggestions in relation to tick boxes (to facilitate ease of response on the part of external examiners) to Mr Griffin and Dr Murphy
- consideration will be given to soliciting the views of serving external examiners in the drawing up of the revised proposal
- the stipulation that external examiners' *curricula vitae* should not exceed four pages is to be removed from the annual report form and from all other places in which it appears (such as nomination forms for external examiners for research students); this is to take account of the difficulties experienced by some examiners in adhering to the current maximum; this decision does not obviate the need for relevant University staff to try to source CVs electronically to the extent possible.

5.   Marks bands for degree classification (including comparisons across institutions)

The following was <u>agreed</u>:

- the University should move to the following standard classification:
First class	70% and over
Second class, grade one	60-69%
Second class, grade two	50-59%
Third class	40-49%
- where modules are failed, and passed at a repeat attempt, an undenominated degree classification will be awarded, except in cases where there is an approved practice of allowing an honours degree classification to be awarded if warranted by the precision mark; in such cases, an honours degree classification will be awarded
- derogations from the new classification may be sought formally from Academic Council, but only on the basis of a clearly stated and documented reason, as follows: (i) where there are formal requirements from professional accrediting bodies or Government agencies to use a different classification; (ii) where there is an alternative and widely-accepted national practice for a discipline
- the earliest academic year from which the new classification will apply is 2008/09; before a final decision is taken about the date, further information on any likely future national developments will be sought; the Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar will be requested to raise this matter within the Irish Universities Association; it is noted, in connection with the matter, that the final classification awarded in some degree programmes is based on the results of penultimate, and sometimes earlier, years as well as the final year
- there will be no retrospection in relation to the agreed date of application, i.e. awards obtained before that date will not be changed to take account of the new classification
- discussions will take place with the Computer Services Department to ensure that appropriate changes are made to the ITS system
- a proposal incorporating all the above will be submitted for noting to the 22 March 2007 meeting of the USC and for approval to the next available meeting of Academic Council.

6.   Examination regulations and code of discipline: request for clarification

<u>Agreed</u> that a recommendation from Disciplinary Committee in respect of a student should have the status of a final decision, to be implemented in full by the Programme Board (or equivalent). <u>Agreed</u> that the relevant sections of the

Examination Regulations would be amended, in consultation with the Secretary's Office, to reflect this and that approval for the amendment would be sought from the 18 April 2007 meeting of Academic Council.

INTERIM BUSINESS ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

7.   Appointment of external examiners

7.1   Taught programmes

7.1.1   Mr I Thomson, University of Strathclyde
          Modules in Accounting in Dublin City University Business School
          <u>Approved.</u>
7.1.2   Professor K Keasey, University of Leeds
          MBS in Corporate Leadership
          <u>Approved.</u>
7.1.3   Dr Pedro Sampaio, University of Manchester
          MSc in Electronic Commerce (Technical)
          <u>Approved.</u>
7.1.4   *Reappointments*
          Dr R Crawshaw, Lancaster University
            Graduate Diploma/MA in Intercultural Studies
          Professor T Hartley, University of Leeds
            BA in Applied Languages/Languages for International Communication
            MA in Translation Studies
          <u>Approved.</u>
7.1.5   Dr B Elliott, University College Dublin
          MA in Humanities (Human Development), St Patrick's College
          <u>Approved.</u>
7.1.6   Professor K Lynch, University College Dublin
          MA in Humanities (Human Development), St Patrick's College
          <u>Approved.</u>

7.2   Postgraduate research students

7.2.1   Professor F Smyth, University of Ulster
          Student ref. USC/2007/U1/7.2.1, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
          <u>Approved.</u>
7.2.2   Professor R B Timmons, University of Texas at Arlington
          Student ref. USC/2007/U1/7.2.2, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
          <u>Approved.</u>

7.2.3   Dr A Niven, University of Limerick
         Student ref. USC/2007/U1/7.2.3, MEng, School of Mechanical and
         Manufacturing Engineering
         Approved.
7.2.4   Professor G Hawkes, Queen Mary, University of London
         Student ref. USC/2007/U1/7.2.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
         Approved.
7.2.5   Dr A Long, Trinity College Dublin
         Student ref. USC/2007/U1/7.2.5, PhD, School of Biotechnology
         Approved.

8.   Postgraduate research matters

8.1   Application for special-case entry to the PhD track

         None.

8.2   Applications to transfer to the PhD register

8.2.1   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.1, School of Electronic Engineering
         Approved.
8.2.2   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.2, School of Electronic Engineering
         Approved.
8.2.3   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.3, School of Mechanical and
         Manufacturing Engineering
         Approved.
8.2.4   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.4, School of Physical Sciences
         Approved.
8.2.5   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.5, School of Health and Human Performance
         Approved.
8.2.6   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.6, School of Health and Human Performance
         Approved.
8.2.7   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.7, School of Health and Human Performance
         Approved.
8.2.8   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.2.8, School of Electronic Engineering
         Approved.

8.3   Applications for change of supervisory arrangements

8.3.1   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.3.1, Dublin City University Business School
         Approved.

8.3.2   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.3.2, Dublin City University Business School
        Approved.
8.3.3   Student ref. USC/2007/U1/8.3.3, School of Applied Language and
        Intercultural Studies
        Approved.

8.4   Requests for re-registration under 'write-up' status for 2006/2007

8.4.1   School of Biotechnology (1 candidate)
        Approved.
8.4.2   School of Chemical Sciences (1 candidate)
        Approved.
8.4.3   School of Law and Government (1 candidate)
        Approved.

9.   Request for exemption from modules

9.1   Bachelor of Nursing Studies (1 candidate)
        Approved.

10.   Marks and Standards 2006/07: St Patrick's College

        Approved.

**11.   Proposal to change the academic structure for the MA in Humanities
            (Human Development), St Patrick's College**

        Approved.

12.   Professional development modules in the Faculty of Science and Health

        Approved. Noted that there was a distinction to be made between the
        approval of stand-alone modules, as in the present instance, and the approval
        procedures (validation and accreditation) for a new programme such as a
        special-purpose minor award.

13.   Any other business

Noted that it had been necessary to move the next meeting of the USC from 29 to 22 March 2007 because the visit by the Peer Review Group for the quality review of the OVPLI/Registrar was scheduled to take place on 28, 29 and 30 March.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 22 March 2007

Signed: _____   Date: _____
                  Chair