

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 1 October 2009

9.00 a.m.-11.15 a.m. in A204

Present: Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin,
Ms Olivia Bree, Dr Pat Brereton, Ms Jennifer Bruton,
Ms Bernadette Dowling, Professor Saleem Hashmi,
Professor Martin Henry, Mr Billy Kelly, Ms Barbara McConalogue,
Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Ms Phylomena McMorrow,
Ms Morag Munro, Professor Gary Murphy, Mr John Murphy,
Ms Annabella Stover, Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Ann Wickham,
Dr Sheelagh Wickham

Apologies: Professor Eugene Kennedy

The Chair welcomed the new members of the Committee: Ms Bernadette Dowling (representative of the Faculty Administration Peer Group), Mr Billy Kelly (newly-appointed Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in DCU Business School), Ms Barbara McConalogue (representative of the Directors of Information Systems and Services and the Library) and Mr John Murphy (Deputy President – Education and Welfare of the Students’ Union, attending his first meeting in his official capacity).

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 5.1.4.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 4 June 2009

The minutes, which had previously been confirmed, were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Noted that the meeting to agree communication procedures between the USC and Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees had taken place on 25 August 2009. Among the matters agreed were the following:

- Ms McDermott will, on receipt of timetables for Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee and Faculty Management Board meetings, combine these into one master timetable which will also include the USC meetings, and will circulate this to the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and the secretaries to the committees
- it is very important to ensure timely submission of items for consideration by the USC so that any queries or issues that arise can be clarified before the papers go to print
- the form used in 2008/09 by Faculties to list items for submission to the USC has outlived its purpose and will no longer be used
- the format of the USC agenda will be simpler in 2009/10 than hitherto
- Marks and Standards will be a standing item on the USC agenda in 2009/10
- late items will be accepted for tabling at USC meetings, or electronic consideration, if not to accept them would cause either operational difficulties for students or regulatory difficulties for the university (they will not otherwise be accepted)
- Ms McDermott will routinely convey USC decisions to the secretaries of the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees.

(Item 3.1)

3.2 The Chair noted that the meetings that had taken place in Faculties in September 2009 to discuss the new Marks and Standards had proved useful to all who participated and formed part of the learning process that the new Marks and Standards involves for all stakeholders. The issues raised around Level 9 on the NQAI framework (Graduate Diploma and related issues) and flagged at the IUA Registrars' meeting in June were subsumed into a short discussion regarding the remit of the working group chaired by Professor Tom Collins. This group has recently published a report entitled *Framework Implementation and Impact Study*¹. Further discussion of the issues will take place at the next meeting of the IUA Registrars' Group on 12 October 2009.

Agreed that, under the new Marks and Standards, it would not be possible for a student to get a DCU award on the basis of only 30 credits taken at DCU (e.g. a Master's award where the 30 credits for the Master's dissertation had been taken at

¹ <http://www.nqai.ie/documents/FIISreportFINALsept2009.doc>

DCU and the 60 credits for the Graduate Diploma/taught modules component had been taken elsewhere). The implications of this for Programme Boards which, in the past, have admitted students to Master's programmes on the basis of a Graduate Diploma acquired elsewhere were noted. In the case of one programme, the MSc in Psychotherapy, it was noted that significant restructuring would have to take place to ensure that it includes a minimum of 60, rather than the current minimum of 30, DCU credits.

(Items 3.2 and 3.9)

- 3.3** Noted that the desirability or otherwise of including the names of specialisms/pathways/majors on parchments was being discussed in Faculties. (Item 3.3)
- 3.4** Noted that Coursebuilder was available to DCU staff both on and off campus and that consideration would be given to making it available to the linked colleges in due course. Noted that Mater Dei Institute of Education was considering buying Coursebuilder in any event. (Item 3.4)
- 3.5** Noted that the proposed stand-alone module from the Faculty of Science and Health entitled *Personal Growth and Community-building through Leadership* (NS563) had been revised in accordance with recommendations made and had been approved electronically. (Item 3.7)
- 3.6** Noted that contact had been made with the last five cohorts of students who had graduated with the Graduate Diploma in Safety and Health at Work to invite them to undertake the Master's dissertation if they so wished. Several graduates had responded to the contact but no-one had as yet submitted an application for the Master's. (Item 3.8)
- 3.7** Noted that feedback on the procedures and form in respect of external examiners which were currently being piloted in all Faculties would now be made available to the USC at its meeting of 3 December 2009. (Item 3.10)
- 3.8** Noted that the proposal for a MSc in Work and Organisational Behaviour had been approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 10 June 2009. (Item 3.15)
- 3.9** Noted that the issue of capping at two the number of repeat attempts for clinical placements on the BSc in Nursing had not been discussed with An Bord Altranais because the planned visit by this organisation to the School of Nursing had been postponed. The issue is, in any event, covered by the new Marks and Standards. (Item 5.1.1)

- 3.10** Noted, in respect of recommendations by the external expert on proposed modules in the Faculty of Science and Health developed at the request of the Homeless Agency, that the module proposer had submitted a response, as requested, and the modules had been approved electronically. (Item 9)
- 3.11** Noted that discussions had been initiated about developing procedures for submitting proposed special-purpose awards for approval. (Items 9 and 11.2)
- 3.12** Noted that the Programme Board for the BEng in Manufacturing Engineering with Business Studies had decided not to change the assessment method for a group of students taking a module in their INTRA year on an exceptional basis. The reason for the decision is that the Programme Board considered it desirable for these students to undergo the same assessment as all other students. (Item 10.1.1)
- 3.13** Noted that the wording of one bullet point in a proposal to restructure entry pathways to the taught Master's programmes in Engineering had been changed. (Item 10.1.2)
- 3.14** Noted, in respect of the form for requesting Faculty committees to approve a proposed stand-alone module, that it had been modified on the basis of recommendations made and was now deemed approved. It will be further modified to incorporate a reference to the policy on due diligence once this is approved by Executive and Academic Council. It will then be made available on line. (Item 11.1)
- 3.15** Noted that the proposed form for requesting relevant Faculty committees to approve proposed amendments to programmes (prior to the submission of these for approval by the Education Committee) had been revised to take account of recommendations made by the USC and was being discussed in Faculties with a view to being submitted for further consideration, and decision, by the USC at its meeting of 3 December 2009. (Item 11.2)
- 3.16** Noted that the finalised versions of the new Marks and Standards and the new policy on plagiarism had been approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 29 June 2009. (Items 12 and 15)
- 3.17** Noted that the pedagogical implications of shared teaching, where Level 8 and Level 9 modules are taught together, would be discussed by the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel at its meeting of 15 October 2009. (Item 14)

- 3.18** Noted that the possibility of offering a 300-credit MSc in International Management was under consideration in DCU Business School and that the report mentioned in Item 3.2 above would be of interest in terms of clarifying some of the relevant issues. (Item 14)
- 3.19** Noted that information on the academic performance, per discipline, of students who are not native speakers of English would be made available to a future meeting of the USC and would include reference to the English-language requirements of professional bodies. (Item 16)
- 3.20** Noted that, on 18 September 2009, approval had been granted electronically to a request from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to allow a student to enter Year 2 of the MSc in Guidance and Counselling in 2009/10 and concurrently to complete outstanding modules from Year 1.

4. Minutes of the Graduate Studies Board meetings of 14 May and 2 July 2009

Approved. With regard to the meeting of 14 May (Item 3.2), Professor Murphy noted that the draft revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* would, when available, be circulated for comment to the GSB members, the Research Committee, the Research Advisory Panel and the Faculty Research Committees and that they would ultimately be submitted for consideration by the USC and, once approved there, by Academic Council. They will incorporate procedures in respect of structured PhD programmes and will follow closely the *IUQB National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education*. With regard to the meeting of 2 July (Item 7), Professor Murphy confirmed that the revisions made to the R103 (change of supervisory arrangements) form did not involve any restriction of a student's right to request a change of supervisor. The USC membership noted that it would be important for the revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* to contain specific information on the rights and responsibilities of both students and supervisors.

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES

5.1 Appointment of external examiners

5.1.1 Dublin City University Business School

- 5.1.1.1 Professor Bart MacCarthy, Nottingham University Business School
Certificate and MSc in Operations and Technology Management
Approved.

5.1.1.2 Dr Nicholas McDonald, Trinity College Dublin
MBS in Safety and Health at Work
Approved.

5.1.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

5.1.2.1 Dr Mike Barnes, University of Manchester
BEng in Mechatronic Engineering
Approved.

5.1.2.2 Dr Margaret Morgan, University of Ulster
BEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved.

5.1.2.3 Professor Peter Ashburn, University of Southampton
Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MEng in Electronic Systems
Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/MEng in Telecommunications Engineering
Approved.

5.1.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

5.1.3.1 Dr Deborah Jermyn, Roehampton University
BA in Communication Studies and MA in Film and Television Studies
Decision deferred pending information as to the modules to be examined (as it is unlikely that one individual could act as extern for these two programmes, in view of the very diverse range of subjects they include). Approval can be sought electronically once this information is available.

5.1.3.2 Dr Tom Young, School of Oriental and African Studies, London
MA in International Relations and MA in Development
Approved.

5.1.4 Faculty of Science and Health

5.1.4.1 Professor Patrick Bracken, West Cork Mental Health Service, Bantry General Hospital
Stand-alone module NS563, *Personal Growth and Community-building through Leadership*
Approved.

5.1.4.2 Professor Sheila Payne, Lancaster University
Graduate Diploma/MSc in Psycho-oncology
Approved.

5.2 Renewal of appointment of external examiners, and/or changes to duties**5.2.1 Dublin City University Business School**

5.2.1.1 Professor Bjorn Axelsson, Stockholm School of Economics
MSc in Strategic Procurement
Approved.

5.2.1.2 Professor Kevin Keasey, University of Leeds
MBS in Corporate Leadership
Approved.

5.2.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

No items.

5.2.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

5.2.3.1 Dr Martin Oliver, Institute of Education, London
MSc in Education and Training Management (E-learning)
Approved subject to the provision of information as to why the request for approval had been made retrospectively.

5.2.3.2 Dr Arnd Witte, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
German language module on the following programmes:
BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
BA in Language for International Communication
BA in International Business and Languages
BA in European Business
Approved.

5.2.3.3 Dr Ben Clift, University of Warwick
BA in Economics, Politics and Law
Approved.

5.2.4 Faculty of Science and Health

5.2.4.1 Professor Seamus Higson, Cranfield University
MSc in Biomedical Diagnostics
Approved.

5.2.4.2 Dr Kevin Kavanagh, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
BSc in Biotechnology
Approved subject to clarification of the statement on the form that module BE210 *Introduction to Biotechnology and Essay* does not require externing.

The Chair noted that the maximum six-year period of service as an external examiner (three years initially with the possibility of a renewed three-year term to follow) was a relatively long one.

SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY SPECIFIC²)

6. Marks and Standards 2009/10 (including requests for derogations)

6.1 Dublin City University Business School

6.1.1 Professional Diploma in Accounting

Approved.

6.1.2 MBS in Accounting

Approved.

6.2 Faculty of Engineering and Computing

No items.

6.3 Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

6.3.1 Graduate Diploma in Education

Noted that it is the practice of the Teaching Council to develop some of its regulations on a case-by-case basis rather than by providing them in written form before cases arise, and that this has the potential to cause difficulties for Programme Boards which wish to specify the regulation from which a derogation is sought.

Noted that the Council intended to carry out an accreditation exercise, on a pilot basis, on a number of teacher education programmes, including the Bachelor of Education in St Patrick's College and the Graduate Diploma in Education. Agreed that Ms Bree would report to the USC on this accreditation exercise, from the perspective of St Patrick's College, after it had taken place.

Agreed that a final position on the three proposed derogations would be requested from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences after consultation had taken

² In these minutes, Faculty-specific requests for derogations from Marks and Standards are located in Section C because of their close relationship with Marks and Standards, which is a standard Section C item.

place with staff in Mater Dei Institute and St Patrick's College, in both of which there is considerable experience of issues relating to student attendance and performance where the programme being followed leads to a professional qualification (in these instances, a teaching qualification). Agreed that it would not be appropriate for the USC to make decisions on the proposed derogations before final recommendations were available from the Faculty.

6.3.2 MSc in Guidance and Counselling

As for 6.3.1.

6.4 Faculty of Science and Health

6.4.1 BSc in Science Education

With regard to the first and second derogations requested, it was agreed to request the Faculty to devise a mechanism, possibly involving making changes to existing weightings (with effect from 2010/11 rather than 2009/10), which would facilitate the desired outcomes. Agreed that the third request did not in fact represent a request for a derogation and therefore did not require discussion.

6.4.2 BSc in Physical Education with Biology

With regard to the three derogations requested, it was agreed to request the Programme Board devise a mechanism, possibly involving making changes to existing weightings (with effect from 2010/11 rather than 2009/10), which would facilitate the desired outcomes.

6.4.3 BSc in Nursing (General) (Intellectual Disability) (Psychiatric) (Children's and General)

The first derogation request was approved. Agreed that the second request did not in fact represent a request for a derogation and therefore did not require discussion.

6.4.4 Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing

Approved.

6.4.5 Higher Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing

Approved.

6.4.6 Graduate Diploma in Nursing Practice/Health Care Practice

Approved.

6.4.7 Graduate Diploma/MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy

Agreed to request the Programme Board to devise a mechanism, possibly involving making changes to existing weightings (with effect from 2010/11 rather than 2009/10), which would facilitate the desired outcome.

6.5 Other programme-specific issues from Faculties

6.5.1 With regard to issues raised by DCU Business about the new Marks and Standards, it was agreed that the first one, relating to section 6.2.2, could await discussion at the 3 December 2009 meeting of the USC (see Item 6.5.5 below). The second one, a request relating to section 7.1.1 and involving giving permission (as in previous academic years) to students on year-long INTRA (Year 3) to carry a maximum of 15 failed Year 2 credits into the INTRA year, was recognised as being consistent with Marks and Standards and was approved. Noted that such a mechanism could not be applied automatically but would have to be requested formally of the Programme Board.

6.5.2 The request from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in respect of a small number of students on the now-discontinued version of the BA in Journalism who had yet to pass module CM323 *Shorthand* was approved. Agreed that it would be mentioned to the Faculty that the request did not involve a derogation from the new Marks and Standards.

6.5.3 The first request from the Faculty of Science and Health, relating to section 7.1.1 of new Marks and Standards and involving giving permission (as in previous academic years) to students who fail Year 3 modules to complete the Clinical Experience in Year 4 while carrying these modules, was recognised as being consistent with Marks and Standards and was approved. Noted that such a mechanism could not be applied automatically but would have to be requested formally of the Programme Board.

6.5.4 With regard to the requests made by the Faculty of Science and Health, in respect of Nursing programmes, to create an extended academic session to facilitate repeat opportunities for students who fail modules, it was agreed that the Faculty should ascertain whether or not such an extended session would be operationally feasible and should also discuss with the Finance Office the possibility that students might be permitted to register for a second (normal) academic session without having to pay fees.

6.5.5 Agreed that the remaining issues which had been submitted for discussion would be considered at the 3 December 2009 meeting of the USC in the context of a detailed examination of the implementation to date of the new Marks and Standards. Noted that a register of all the emerging issues would be maintained, on an ongoing basis.

6.6 Other issues relating to Marks and Standards

6.6.1 Agreed that Programme Boards should make every effort to use local mechanisms, including changing weightings where appropriate, to encourage students to attend lectures and other academic exercises. Noted that, if this is done, and if alignment between assessment methods and learning outcomes is carried out appropriately, it should not normally be necessary to formulate requests for derogations relating to attendance and minimum performance in modules (unless these form part of the requirements of external accrediting bodies).

6.6.2 Agreed to hold a supplementary meeting, of a subgroup of the USC involving Professor Scott, Professor Henry, the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and Ms McDermott, approximately two weeks after the present meeting, to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the derogation requests at 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.5.4 above. The outcomes of this meeting will be communicated electronically to the full USC membership.

6.6.3 Agreed that a number of general issues, including attendance and minimum performance in practice modules, are common to programmes which involve practice elements (and which often lead to professional qualifications) and that detailed consideration should be given to these issues, on a global basis, as soon as possible. Professor Henry undertook to co-ordinate this work.

6.6.4 Noted that, for the Progression and Awards Boards to be held in November 2009, the previous Marks and Standards should be used, as all assessment for the relevant programmes had taken place when these were in force.

6.6.5 Agreed that, for the Progression and Awards Boards to be held in February 2010 to approve final examination results for a small number of students across a range of programmes, the previous Marks and Standards should also be used, on the basis that the bulk of the students' assessment had taken place when these were in force. Noted that ITS Version 12 would be kept in use to facilitate the work of these PABs and would be discontinued thereafter. Agreed that a report on issues arising from these February PABs would be made to the USC after they had taken place.

6.6.6 Agreed that a short-life working group consisting of Ms Dowling, Ms McDermott and Ms McMorrow would be convened to examine issues relating to the location, and ownership, of a range of documentation of relevance to the USC and to make recommendations to the USC.

7. Revised proposals on Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning

7.1 Noted, in relation to point 1.e. of the proposal document, that the issue of minimum and maximum credits to be obtained through AP(E)L could be determined by reference to the new Marks and Standards. Agreed that all AP(E)L documentation should include reference, where appropriate, to policies and procedures being 'subject to the university's Marks and Standards'.

7.2 Agreed that it would be important to ensure consistency in terms of the application of AP(E)L across the university. Agreed that each Programme Board would be requested to submit its policy to the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee for approval, that the Committee would then publish broad criteria in respect of AP(E)L and that the policy for each programme would be included in programme descriptors. Further discussion will be needed about the desirability or otherwise of including a specific AP(E)L heading in descriptors. Noted that the related issue of module exemptions is dealt with by Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees.

7.3 Noted that, if the PAC system were introduced for direct application to undergraduate programmes, it would need to incorporate a means of allowing Programme Chairs to confirm that AP(E)L policies and procedures had been adhered to in respect of applicants, where relevant. Agreed that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education would discuss this matter with Programme Chairs. Noted that, regardless of the application system used, it would be desirable for Schools and Faculties to keep records of decisions made.

7.4 Agreed that, while it would be desirable to have AP(E)L policies and procedures in place, and made available as information to prospective applicants, as soon as possible, it would none the less be essential to devote the requisite time, at this point, to allowing the fullest discussion possible to take place about the issue with a view to ensuring the best possible policies and procedures.

7.5 Noted that a module developed by All Hallows College as part of its new BA for Personal and Professional Development and entitled *Preliminary Learning Assessment Seminar* had the potential to provide valuable insights into current issues relating to AP(E)L. The involvement of All Hallows College in the submission for funding, under the European Globalisation Fund, to provide educational opportunities for former staff members of SR Technics was noted.

- 7.6 Agreed that comments on the AP(E)L proposals should be submitted to Ms Jean Hughes, Acting Interim Director – Oscail and LIU and Director of SIF Programmes, or Dr Sheelagh Wickham, by 16 October 2009.
- 7.7 The Chair expressed appreciation to Ms Hughes, Dr Wickham and other colleagues involved for the work carried out to date in preparing AP(E)L policies and procedures.

8. Revised EE1 (appointment of external examiner) form

Approved subject to the following:

- section 6 on page 1 to include an instruction, at the beginning, to state whether the nominee is envisaged as an external examiner for a programme or for individual modules and to list the modules only if the latter is the case unless there is a specific need to list the modules within a programme (see Item 5.1.3.1 above)
- the words ‘if any’ to be added to the heading ‘Details of the nature and extent of previous external examining experience’; this is to cater for the possibility that, for some nominees, the external examining duties undertaken in DCU will be their first such duties
- a sentence to be added to state that the nominee has no association with the university that are in contravention of regulations.

Agreed that the changes, once made, could be circulated electronically to the USC with a request for final approval. The Chair expressed appreciation to Ms Claudine Devereux of the Registry for her work in revising the form.

9. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

3 December 2009

9.00 a.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____