

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 4 February 2010

9.00 a.m.-11.00 a.m. in A204

Present: Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Françoise Blin,
Ms Olivia Bree, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Ms Bernadette Dowling,
Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Ms Phylomena McMorrow,
Ms Morag Munro, Mr John Murphy, Ms Annabella Stover,
Mr Ronan Tobin, Dr Sheelagh Wickham

Apologies: Dr Pat Brereton, Professor Saleem Hashmi,
Professor Martin Henry, Mr Billy Kelly, Ms Barbara McConalogue,
Professor Gary Murphy, Dr Ann Wickham

In attendance: Mr Seamus Fox
(for Item 7.1)

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the deferral of Item 8 to a future meeting of the USC and the inclusion of one submission under Item 10.

2. Minutes of meetings

2.1 Minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2009

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

2.2 Minutes of the USC Subgroup meeting of 26 January 2010

The minutes were confirmed. The following two changes were agreed to the list of issues in the appendix to the minutes: issue 19 – the first sentence under

'Recommendation' is to be deleted; issue 26 – it will be made explicit that the footnote to Item 7.1.13 is to remain part of Marks and Standards.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted that the master timetable of central and Faculty committees would be circulated to relevant staff members shortly with a request for feedback as to how useful, or otherwise, it proves (to inform a decision on whether or not to compile it again in 2010/11). (Item 4.2)
- 3.2** The interim report from the *Working Group on the recognition through the NFQ of the award formerly titled the Higher Diploma in Education and currently designated the Postgraduate Diploma in Education* was noted. (Item 4.3)
- 3.3** Noted that that the MSc in Psychotherapy is being restructured to make it compatible with Section 2.4 of Marks and Standards, i.e. to ensure that, for all students, a minimum of 60 of the credits leading to the award are taken in DCU. (Item 4.5)
- 3.4** Noted that the policy on due diligence had been finalised and made available on the DCU website under 'Policies and Procedures'. (Item 4.9)
- 3.5** Noted that a subgroup of the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel was examining the pedagogical implications of shared teaching and would report on this matter to the LIAP meeting of 18 February 2010; a report would then, in turn, also be made to the USC at its meeting of 1 April 2010. (Item 4.10)
- 3.6** Noted that the draft revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* had been discussed by the Graduate Studies Board and that Professor Murphy now intended to reconvene the working group to finalise a new draft which would be sent to Faculties for comment; the regulations would then be resubmitted to the GSB in May 2010 and submitted from there to the USC and Academic Council in June 2010. (Item 4.12)
- 3.7** Noted that a report on the February 2010 Progression and Awards Boards would be made to the USC at its meeting of 1 April 2010. (Item 4.16)
- 3.8** Noted that the EE2 form (renewal/changes to duties of external examiner) had been revised to allow for an indication of the dates of appointment in Section B. (Item 4.18)
- 3.9** Practice in a number of other institutions with regard to the appointment of external examiners was noted. The Chair requested the members to give consideration to the issues with a view to informing a discussion at the meeting of 1 April 2010.

- Among the issues are the following: length of first and subsequent appointments; conditions pertaining to reappointment (e.g. a requirement for a lapse of time prior to reappointment); regulations about reciprocity of representation between institutions or departments within institutions; the extent to which different regulations might apply, in general, depending on whether an individual was the sole external examiner for a programme or one of a number. It was noted that specific issues might arise in respect of external examiners for programmes involving teaching practice. (Item 6)
- 3.10** Noted that the list of modules in the School of Law and Government for which Dr Mary Donnelly, University College Cork, had been approved as external examiner at the 3 December 2009 meeting of the USC should have included LG101 – *Introduction to Law* rather than LG102 – *Principles of Commercial Law in Ireland*. (Item 6.1.3.5)
- 3.11** Noted that the nomination of an external examiner had been approved electronically. (Item 6.1.4.1)
- 3.12** Noted that Dr Michael Dunne, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, had been approved as external examiner for Philosophy modules on the Bachelor of Religious Education programme only and not on the BA in Irish Studies and Religious Studies. (Item 6.1.5.3)
- 3.13** Noted that a proposed extension to the duties of an external examiner had been approved electronically. (Item 6.2.3.7)
- 3.14** Noted that Professor Michael Conway, Pontifical University, St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, had been reappointed as external examiner for the Theology/Religious Studies modules, rather than the Theology modules alone, on the BA in Irish Studies and Religious Studies, and that the term of reappointment was one year, 2009/10. (Item 6.2.5.8)
- 3.15** A list of requests made to the USC and other relevant committees, from May 2004 to the present, for exceptional readmission following absence was noted (absence in these instances having resulted in the student exceeding the maximum number of years permitted to complete a programme). Agreed that the list would be added to on an ongoing basis so that developing practice could be ascertained with a view to ensuring both reasonableness and consistency of response to such requests. (See also Items 3.27 , 6.1 and 6.2 below.) (Item 7)
- 3.16** Noted that discussions were in progress with Queen’s University, Belfast about issues relating to the jointly-awarded Graduate Diploma/MSc in Plasma and Vacuum Technology: the implementation of the new Marks and Standards, the fees

- implications of this and the wording of a derogation for the academic year 2009/10. (Item 8.1)
- 3.17** Noted that the regulations about deferral of module marks had been recirculated to Heads of School, Programme Chairs and the student body. (Item 8.2 (b)).
- 3.18** Noted that discussions were in progress about the operational and fees implications of extending the academic session for students on a number of programmes for whom this might be necessary. Noted that no provision for an extended academic session existed in the ITS Calculate programme at this stage in its development. Agreed that the question of the exact length of any extension needed to be incorporated into the discussions. Agreed that it should be ensured that Registry and the Finance Office continued to be involved in the discussions and that the matter should be resolved before the 1 April 2010 meeting of the USC. (Item 8.2 (c))
- 3.19** With regard to the fees implications of the stipulation in Marks and Standards that only one resit attempt at a module would be permitted, it was agreed that the AFI Executive would discuss the issue and make a recommendation to the Finance Office as soon as possible. (Item 8.2 (d))
- 3.20** Agreed that a temporary regulation in respect of the compensation regulations for Language modules offered by SALIS would not be required and that the issue that had arisen could be dealt with by means of the standard compensation regulations. (Item 8.2 (e))
- 3.21** Noted that a student who failed a 'child' module and had to re-register for it automatically had to re-register for the relevant 'mother' module also. Noted that discussions were in progress with a view to addressing the operational implications of the new Marks and Standards for 'mother' and 'child' module registration generally. (Item 8.2 (f)).
- 3.22** Noted that discussions were in progress about the operational implications of the new Marks and Standards for programmes which hold Progression and Awards Boards in November, and specifically for students who are recorded at these PABs as having failed modules. (Item 8.5)
- 3.23** With regard to the revisions to the procedures and form in respect of external examiners for modules/taught programmes, it was noted that the present paper-based system should be discontinued as soon as possible. The resource implications of the proposed online form would need to be identified and the required resources then confirmed. Following this an implementation timetable could be agreed. It was agreed that Ms McMorrow would set up a working group

- to make recommendations as soon as possible. The working group should also explore an interim simplified solution for the Summer diet of examinations. The membership of the working group will include Dr Blin, Ms Bruton, representation from ISS, and other stakeholders as necessary. The Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education will, meanwhile, make the minor adjustments to procedures which they noted to the USC, at its meeting of 3 December 2009, as being necessary. Noted also that it would be desirable to highlight to external examiners that, once the online system was in place, it would be expected that they would use it to submit their reports and paper-based reporting would cease. (Item 10)
- 3.24** The proposed revision to section 4.2 of the policy on plagiarism was approved subject to the deletion of the reference, in the last paragraph, to adding a 'flag' to the centrally-held student record (as this matter is covered earlier in the section). (Item 11)
- 3.25** Noted that the working group set up to make recommendations on procedures for approving changes to programmes and special-purpose awards would hold its first meeting on 8 February 2010. (Item 12)
- 3.26** Noted that the 3-year+2-year Level 8/Level 9 model devised in the context of the Bologna process would be raised as an item for discussion at a meeting of the Education Committee. (Item 14)
- 3.27** Noted that Dr Blin would ascertain, in the case of a student who had been readmitted to a programme after an exceptional absence, how the Programme Board intended to deal with the module marks the student had obtained when the programme had first been undertaken, i.e. whether the Board intended to calculate the overall grade including, or excluding, these marks. (Item 2.1 of the minutes of the meeting of the USC Subgroup of 26 January 2010)
- 3.28** Noted that the linkage agreements between DCU and St Patrick's College, Mater Dei Institute of Education and All Hallows College did not require either that the linked colleges' Marks and Standards be in conformity with those of DCU or that they be submitted for approval by the USC or any other committee. However, any linked college which wishes to submit its Marks and Standards for approval will be facilitated in doing so. Noted that it would be helpful for the linked colleges' Marks and Standards to take cognisance of DCU's Marks and Standards as far as practicable. (Item 2.2 of the minutes of the meeting of the USC Subgroup of 26 January 2010)
- 3.29** Noted that the draft policy on leave of absence would be discussed with the Registry to determine the operational implications and that a revised draft would be submitted for consideration to the USC.

(Item 2.3 of the minutes of the meeting of the USC Subgroup of 26 January 2010)

4. Minutes of the Graduate Studies Board meeting of 5 November 2009

Approved subject to clarification in respect of one of the issues listed in Item 10.2, i.e. the extent of flexibility that might apply with regard to resitting/repeating failed modules. Agreed that Marks and Standards should apply in all respects to taught modules undertaken by research students. Noted that this would have implications for research students in terms of fees, and agreed that this matter would be factored into the discussion referred to at Item 3.19 above.

SECTION B: FACULTY ISSUES

5.1 Appointment of external examiners

- 5.1.1 Dr Philip Stiles, University of Cambridge
MBS in Human Resource Strategies
Approved.
- 5.1.2 Dr Marian Traynor, Queen's University, Belfast
BSc in Nursing (General)
Approved.
- 5.1.3 Dr Alan Cohen, West London Mental Health Trust
Stand-alone module NS464 – Mental Health in Primary Care Settings
Decision deferred pending further discussion.
- 5.1.4 Dr Daniel O'Connell, Mary Immaculate College of Education, University of Limerick
Master's in Religious Education (Primary), Mater Dei Institute of Education and St Patrick's College
Approved.
- 5.1.5 Dr Patrick Connolly, Mary Immaculate College of Education, University of Limerick
BA in Theology and Lifelong Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education
Approved.
- 5.1.6 Dr Thomas G Grenham, Mary Immaculate College of Education, University of Limerick
MA in Chaplaincy Studies and Pastoral Work, MA in School Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care, Mater Dei Institute of Education
Approved.
- 5.1.7 Dr Michael Shortall, Pontifical University, St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Bachelor of Religious Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education
Approved.
- 5.1.8 Dr John Deehan, St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill
Bachelor of Religious Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education
Approved.

5.2 Renewal of appointment of external examiners, and/or changes to duties

5.2.1 Dr Raphael Gallagher, Accademia Alfonsiana, Rome
MA in Religion and Education & MA in Religion and Culture, Mater Dei Institute of Education

Approved.

5.2.2 Dr Fiachra Long, University College Cork
MA in Religion and Education & MA in Religion and Culture, Mater Dei Institute of Education

Approved.

6. Other issues**6.1 Readmission of legacy students to postgraduate programmes, School of Electronic Engineering**

Approved in the case of all four candidates.

6.2 Request to permit graduates of the Graduate Diploma in Journalism to apply to convert to, or complete, the MA in Journalism

6.2.1 The request in respect of students previously registered on the MA in Journalism to be re-admitted so as to complete the programme was approved, i.e. such requests should continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis and, if approved by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, should be submitted for consideration by the USC.

6.2.2 With respect to the request to admit to the MA in Journalism graduates of the Graduate Diploma in Journalism, which predated the MA, the following was agreed:

- the USC is supportive of the reasons for the request
- pending the outcome of current discussions between the university and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland to agree policy and procedures in respect of legacy awards, requests from GDJ graduates for admission to the MAJ should continue to be accepted and held on file
- once the policy and procedures have been agreed, the matter will be discussed again by the USC.

SECTION C: OTHER ISSUES (NOT FACULTY SPECIFIC¹)**7. Marks and Standards: ongoing issues for discussion**

The following were agreed:

- Among the issues considered by the USC Subgroup at its meeting of 26 January 2010 (see Item 2.2 above) are a small number that require further discussion and clarification. Some other issues have also been notified to the Registry, and it is likely that additional issues will emerge from the deliberations of the Programme Board Faculty Review Committees in the week beginning 8 February 2010. All issues from these PBERCs will be communicated to Ms Gillian Barry, Student Awards Manager, and thence to Ms McDermott for incorporation in the list of Marks and Standards-related matters for discussion/resolution. It will then become apparent whether a further meeting of the Subgroup is necessary prior to the 1 April 2010 meeting of the USC or whether the issues can be addressed at this latter meeting. If the Subgroup meets, Ms Dowling will be added to the membership.
- To ensure that there is clarity in relation to the implementation of Marks and Standards at the forthcoming PBERCs, a group including Faculty administration staff and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education will meet before the PBERCs, identify the issues most likely to raise queries and prepare a summary of the answers (in a 'frequently asked questions' format) for distribution to relevant staff members.
- The Students' Union will, in addition to issuing its standard information to students prior to the promulgation of provisional results after the PBERCs, ensure that all feedback from class representatives and Faculty Convenors in respect of the operation of Marks and Standards is made available to Ms McDermott.
- If necessary, and within a very short time after the relevant PBERC meetings so as not to delay the promulgation of results, outstanding issues with regard to individual students may be resolved by means of Chair's action.
- All changes / clarifications to Marks and Standards arising from discussions held since their implementation on 28 September 2009 will be submitted for approval to the USC at its meeting of 1 April 2010 and to Academic Council at its meeting of 14 April 2010; so as to ensure that all necessary matters are clarified before the Summer examinations, PBERCs and Progression and Awards Boards take place.

¹ 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.

7.1 Request for a derogation from Marks and Standards: BA in Humanities, Oscanil

Approved in respect of both of the issues raised, i.e. the position will henceforth be as follows: both (a) students currently registered on the programme and (b) students who undertake the programme at a future date may complete it on the basis of an undesignated timeframe, i.e. there is no maximum period of years during which they must complete. It will be made clear to both current and prospective students, in the context of information about Marks and Standards and related issues that is made available to them as a matter of course, that programmes may be restructured from time to time (e.g. on the basis of the development of the Academic Framework for Innovation).

8. Revised policy and procedures: AP(E)L

Deferred to a future meeting of the USC. Noted that the implication of this deferral is that those applying for admission to the university in September 2010 will not undergo a standardised, approved AP(E)L process though they may, where necessary, undergo a local process.

9. Programme-specific information for formal approval

- 9.1** The information (for 2009/10) was approved pending a rewording of some of the references to compensation. Ms McDermott will liaise with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and Faculty administration staff about this rewording outside the context of the USC meeting.
- 9.2** The subgroup of the USC established to make recommendations about the procedures for ensuring the online availability of programme information to students is due to meet in mid-February, and the recommendations, once approved by the USC (most probably by an electronic process), will be made available.
- 9.3** Programme-specific information in respect of 2010/11 will be submitted for formal approval by the USC at its meeting of 1 April 2010 and, henceforth, the April meeting will be the standard meeting at which such approval is sought in respect of programme-specific information for the coming academic session.

10. Any other business

The Chair noted that it was important, when preparing a paper for submission to the USC, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders had been consulted and their recommendations addressed before the paper was finalised.

Date of next meeting:

**1 April 2010
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____