

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday 4 October 2007

9.30 a.m.-11.30 a.m. in A204

- Present:** Professor Maria Slowey (Chair), Mr Jonathan Begg, Ms Olivia Bree, Ms Hazel Hayes, Professor Martin Henry, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Andrew McGrady, Professor Heather Ruskin, Dr Ronnie Saunders
- Apologies:** Dr Françoise Blin, Ms Jean Hughes, Professor Eugene Kennedy, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Anne Sinnott, Mr Brendan Tolan
- In attendance:** Ms Jennifer Bruton (representing the Teaching and Learning function in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing)

The Chair welcomed Ms Hazel Hayes to membership of the University Standards Committee in her capacity as Education and Welfare Officer of the Students' Union. She also, on behalf of the USC, thanked outgoing members Professor Heather Ruskin and Professor Gerry McNamara, who had represented the Associate Deans for Research and the Heads of School, respectively, for their very significant contributions to the work of the USC since its inception. Noted that replacements for Professor Ruskin and Professor McNamara would be identified as soon as possible. Noted also that Dr Gary Murphy, Director of Graduate Research and Chair of the Graduate Studies Board, would henceforth be a member of the USC (see Item 4 below).

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of four submissions under Item 12 (now 'Requests for special-case admissions') and two additional Items, 13 and 14.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 7 June 2007

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** Noted that Chair's action had been used in the Summer months to approve a number of urgent submissions, details of which were on record.
- 3.3** An addition to the new compensation regulations to allow for them to be implemented on a *pro-rata* basis, where required, in the case of programmes for which the pass mark is 50% as distinct from 40% was approved.
(Item 3.2 of the minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2007)
- 3.4** Noted that the Chair would shortly discuss with the Deans of Faculty the devolution to Faculties of some activities currently undertaken centrally. (Item 3.2)
- 3.5** Noted that the proposals in relation to the Academic Framework for Innovation had been approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 25 June 2007. (Item 3.3)
- 3.6** Noted that the working group to discuss issues relating to the delivery and award of programmes by DCU and another institution, or other institutions, would shortly be reactivated. (Item 3.4)
- 3.7** Noted that the desirability or otherwise of adding a note to the Diploma Supplement to indicate that taught Master's programmes with a 90-credit rating had previously had a 75-credit rating would be discussed between Registry and Faculty Administrators later in the academic year in the context of wider discussions about Diploma Supplements and related issues. (Item 3.7)
- 3.8** Noted that Dr Claire Bohan, Director of Student Affairs, would be invited to a future meeting of the USC to discuss the issue of standards of English among students who are native speakers of other languages. (Item 5)
- 3.9** Noted that a number of issues relating to graduate research had been brought to the attention of the relevant Schools and of Dr Gary Murphy. (Items 10 and 11)
- 3.10** Noted that the revised proposal on the deposit of e-theses in electronic formats had been approved by Academic Council its meeting of 25 June 2007. (Item 13)

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 6 September 2007

Approved.

The Chair noted that the Graduate Studies Board would be a sub-committee of the USC (with its Chair, Dr Gary Murphy, being a member of the USC) and would make decisions on individual student issues as well as making recommendations to the USC on policy matters. She noted also that she intended to hold a meeting with Dr Murphy and Ms McDermott to discuss the terms of reference of the GSB.

5. External examiners for taught programmes

- 5.1 *(Renewal of appointment)*
Dr J P Gibson, Institut National des Télécommunications, France
BSc in Computer Applications
Approved.
- 5.2
Dr P F Conway, University College Cork
Education modules on the BSc in Physical Education with Biology
Approved.
- 5.3 *(Renewal of appointment)*
Dr C Buttimer, University College Cork
Modules in Fiontar
Approved.
- 5.4 *(Renewal of appointment)*
Dr C Feltham, Sheffield Hallam University
Modules in Counselling and Psychotherapy in the School of Nursing
Approved.
- 5.5 *(Addition to duties)*
Dr H Aveyard, Oxford Brookes University
A module in the School of Nursing
Approved.
- 5.6 *(Confirmation of existing duty)*
Dr H Aveyard, Oxford Brookes University
A module in the School of Nursing
Approved.
- 5.7
Dr B Clift, University of Warwick
BA in Economics, Politics and Law and BA in International Relations
Approved.
- 5.8
Professor C Fennell, University College Cork
Modules in Law in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Approved.
- 5.9
Dr R Long, National University of Ireland, Galway
Modules in Law on the BSc in Environmental Science and Health
Approved.
- 5.10
Mr C O’Cinneide, University College London
BA in Economics, Politics and Law
Approved.

- 5.11 Dr P Okowa, Queen Mary, University of London
Modules in the School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 5.12 Ms A Nowinska, Jagiellonian University, Krakow
Graduate Certificate in Community Interpreting
Approved.
- 5.13 Ms I Perez, Heriot Watt University
Graduate Certificate in Community Interpreting
Approved.
- 5.14 Ms Julie Stoker, freelance translator
Modules in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.
- 5.15 Dr A McMahon, University of Bristol
Graduate Diploma/MSc in Education and Training Management
Approved.
- 5.16 *(Renewal of appointment)*
Dr N Glover-Thomas, University of Liverpool
Modules in the School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 5.17 *(Renewal of appointment)*
Professor I Lynch-Fannon, University College Cork
Modules in the School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 5.18 *(Renewal of appointment)*
Dr J Bennett, University of York
MSc in Science Education
Approved.

6. Issue from the June 2007 Progression and Awards Boards: derogation from Marks and Standards

Noted that, on the advice of the Chair in June 2007, it had been agreed that the derogation would stand only for the academic year 2007/08. Noted that clarity would be required in relation to the approval procedures for issues such as this one (a derogation proposed by a Programme Board).

7. Draft revised report form for external examiners

Noted that, at the meeting of the Academic Strategy Committee of 3 October 2007, the importance of having a simple and transparent system for communicating and implementing the recommendations of external examiners had been discussed and a recommendation had been made that the USC complete its work on this within a specified timeframe. The ASC had also noted, in the context of a presentation on this and related issues made to it by Dr Heinz Lechleiter, Director of Quality

Promotion, that the external examiner system played an important role in enhancing quality in the University.

Noted that any system would need to balance the importance of gathering as much information as possible with the need to take account of external examiners' workloads. Noted that the inclusion of tick boxes (as well as scope for free text comment) on the report form would facilitate this.

Agreed that processes relating to the external examiner system would be updated, clarified and or/ modified where necessary, and submitted for approval to the December 2007 meetings of both the USC and the ASC.

Noted that the establishment of Module Boards, as envisaged under the Academic Framework for Innovation, would impact on the role of external examiners.

8. Request for approval of professional development modules in the Faculty of Science and Health

Approved. Noted with approval that the Faculty, and the School of Nursing, appeared to be very responsive, in terms of developing stand-alone modules, to ongoing developments in health care.

Noted, as a general observation, that where a Faculty had a wide range of stand-alone modules it would be important to avoid duplication of content.

9. Request for approval of proposal for entry of FETAC applicants to the BA in Humanities in St Patrick's College

Approved. Noted that any future changes to the availability of relevant FETAC qualifications might necessitate changes to the entry requirements stipulated by St Patrick's College.

10. Request for consideration of *aegrotat* award of degree

Agreed to recommend to Academic Council that the degree be awarded, and be awarded with second-class honours. Noted that a revised and shortened version of the proposal would be submitted to Council but that the essential information would remain the same.

11. Monitoring of student attendance at lectures: proposal from the School of Computing

Noted, with approval for the general principle involved. Noted that formal approval was not required in that the Programme Board for the BSc in Computer Applications intended to activate a provision already existing in *Marks and Standards*.

The following are recommended:

- the precise details of the measures to be taken need to be determined and conveyed clearly to students
- the language used to describe the measures should be such as to convey to students that they are intended to be in their best interests
- the measures should be conceived of as being on a pilot basis and subject to review
- those involved should be mindful of the fact that such measures can be very time-consuming to administer.

12. Requests for special-case admissions

12.1 Graduate Diploma in Nursing Practice/Health Care Practice (one candidate)
Approved.

12.2 Graduate Diploma in Education (one candidate)
Approved.

12.3 Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling (one candidate)
Approved.

12.4 Graduate Certificate in Development Education (one candidate)
Approved.

13. Request for inclusion of additional offering type for the European MSc in Business Informatics

Approved.

14. Request from the Faculty of Engineering and Computing for clarification of the extent to which a Faculty should develop Faculty-specific policies in relation to an issue

Agreed that, in relation to this specific issue (plagiarism), recommendations would be made to the next meeting of the USC.

Date of next meeting:

6 December 2007

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____