UNIVERSITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday 6 December 2007

9.30 -11.30 a.m. in A204

Present:	Professor Maria Slowey (Chair), Mr Jonathan Begg, Dr Françoise Blin, Ms Olivia Bree, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Ms Hazel Hayes, Professor Martin Henry, Ms Jean Hughes, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Andrew McGrady, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Dr Ronnie Saunders, Dr Anne Sinnott
Apologies:	Professor Saleem Hashmi, Dr Gary Murphy, Mr Brendan Tolan

1. **Adoption of agenda**

   The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one additional submission under Item 5.2 and four submissions under Item 10.

2. **Minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2007**

   Confirmed and signed by the Chair.

   Noted, in relation to Item 6, that the issue of derogations from *Marks and Standards* for the current academic year would be discussed between Ms Bruton and the Chair of the Programme Board for the BSc in Computer Applications.

   Noted that clarity was needed in relation to the procedures for ensuring that issues arising from Faculty Teaching/Education Committees were conveyed to the USC as necessary. Agreed that one possibility would be the inclusion of Teaching/Education Committee minutes in USC papers as a matter of course, with each Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning making a brief verbal presentation at each meeting on the issues of relevance within his/her Faculty. Agreed that the Chair would discuss this possibility with the Deans, the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and the Senior Faculty Administrators. Agreed that, if this or a similar system were put in place, it might be helpful for the USC to suggest a

list of the kinds of issues that would need to be brought to the attention of the USC. The Chair also suggested that she and Ms McDermott might attend a meeting of each of the Teaching/Education Committees to discuss the issue.

Noted that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning reported on relevant issues in their Faculties at the meetings of the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

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

3.2   The Chair noted that Professor Saleem Hashmi had replaced Professor Gerry McNamara as representative of the Heads of School on the USC and that the issue of a representative from the Associate Deans for Research was under discussion.

Agreed that Professor Martin Henry should continue to be a member of the USC, in his new capacity as Academic Project Leader for the Academic Framework for Innovation, having previously been a member in his capacity as Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Science and Health. The Chair welcomed Professor Henry to his first meeting of the USC in his new capacity.

3.3   Noted that the possibility of devolving to Faculties some activities currently undertaken centrally was related to the issue at Item 2 above. (Item 3.4)

3.4   Noted that issues relating to the delivery and award of programmes by DCU and another institution, or other institutions, were being discussed in the context of a working group between DCU and University College Dublin relating to a jointly-offered MEngSc in Biopharmaceutical Engineering. (Item 3.6)

3.5   Noted that Dr Claire Bohan, Director of Student Affairs, had agreed that she or a representative would attend a meeting of the USC in 2008 to discuss the issue of standards of English among students who are native speakers of other languages. (Item 3.8)

3.6   Noted that an *aegrotat* degree of MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology had been awarded to a student on 6 November 2007. (Item 10)

3.7   Noted that information was to be sought from the School of Computing about the implementation of the attendance monitoring system for the BSc in Computer Applications, Year 1. (Item 11)

Noted that, when learning outcomes were being formulated, it would be helpful to identify which modules involved attendance as a necessary means of attaining the outcomes and which did not.

Noted that the issue of engagement with online learning materials also needed to be incorporated into discussions about attendance and that, where appropriate, systems for measuring such engagement should be formulated and communicated to students.

(Item 11)

3.8   Noted that work was in progress on revised policies and procedures in relation to plagiarism and that these would be submitted in draft form to the USC.

Noted that, as a related issue, it was very important to provide students with online resources in relation to academic writing skills. Noted that the Learning Innovation Unit had commissioned a suite of such resources and planned to introduce it to students in Semester 2, using Moodle. Noted that a number of related resources existed in the University and that it would be very desirable to ensure consistency on a campus-wide basis while also allowing for discipline-specific issues to be covered. Noted, in this connection, that it would be important to communicate the new suite of resources to staff as well as to students. Noted that it would be useful to know if the suite was compatible with Refworks.com; Ms Hughes undertook to investigate this.

Agreed that all material on plagiarism and academic writing skills resources should be made available to students as widely as possible in both electronic and manual formats.

(Item 14)

4.   Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 1 November 2007

Approved. Noted that the draft terms of reference for the GSB were in the process of being completed.

5.   External examiners for taught programmes

5.1   Appointment of external examiner

5.1.1   Mr J C Bunt, University of Manchester
         Modules in Japanese in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
         Approved.
5.1.2   Dr D Dunn, University of Birmingham
         Graduate Programme in International Governance, School of Law and Government
         Approved.
5.1.3   Dr R Ryan, National University of Ireland, Galway
         Modules in the School of Mathematical Sciences
         Approved.

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

5.2.1   Dr R Crawshaw, Lancaster University
         A module on the BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
         Approved.
5.2.2   Dr T Morgan, Anglia Polytechnic University
         A module on the BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
         Approved.
5.2.3   Professor M Rogers, University of Surrey
         A module on the BA in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
         Approved.
5.2.4   Dr A Long, University of Ulster
         Bachelor of Nursing Studies, Oscail
         Approved.
5.2.5   Dr J Deegan, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
         Modules in Education on the Bachelor of Education and the Graduate Diploma in
         Education, St Patrick's College
         Approved.
5.2.6   Professor S Ó Coileáin, University College Cork
         Modules in Irish on programmes in St Patrick's College
         Approved.
5.2.7   Professor T J Anderson, University of Ulster
         BEng in Digital Media Engineering
         Approved.

6.   Requests for special-case admissions

Graduate Diploma/MSc in Operations and Technology Management
(five candidates)

Approved.

**7.   Clarification on the implementation of the new marks bands and
compensation regulations**

7.1   Noted that a question had arisen as to whether or not the new marks bands and
compensation regulations, effective from 2007/08, should apply to students
who were registered for a particular year of a programme in 2007/08 but had
initially registered for it in 2006/07 or an earlier year, i.e. who had undertaken the
year prior to the approval and implementation of the new regulations. Agreed that
the regulations should apply to all students in 2007/08, without exception and
regardless of the date of initial registration for the year of the programme. Noted
that, to facilitate understanding of the change from the old to the new marks bands,
an explanatory note would henceforth be included on all transcripts and information
on both the old and the new bands would be included in *Marks and Standards*.

7.2   Noted that the changes to marks bands involved a concomitant change to ECTS
(European Credit Transfer System) grades as indicated, per module, on transcripts.
The following system was agreed:

HI	=	70% or above	=	ECTS grade A
H2.1	=	60-69%	=	ECTS grade B
H2.2	=	50-59%	=	ECTS grade C
H3		46-49%	=	ECTS grade D
H3		40-45%	=	ECTS grade E
Fail		30-39%	=	ECTS grade FX
Fail		29% or below	=	ECTS grade F.

(Exceptions:
1. If a student has a P (Pass) result code and the final mark is null, the ECTS grade
obtained is C.
2. If a student has an F (Fail) result code, the student obtains an 'F' ECTS grade
except if the final mark >= 30, then a grade of 'FX' is allocated.)

7.3   <u>Noted</u> that, in line with the proposals approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 18 April 2007, the following applied in the case of a student who eventually passed all modules in the course of any given year but had previously failed one or more of them: whereas up to 2006/07 such a student would have had his/her result capped at a pass (unless the programme involved a derogation which permitted an alternative outcome), from 2007/08 such a student will have his/her result capped at a Third Class Honours. <u>Agreed</u> that the issue of capping *per se* merited further discussion and would be addressed in the context of the Academic Framework for Innovation. <u>Agreed</u> that, in relation to the present regulation – i.e. that outlined above, effective from 2007/08 – further communication with staff and students would be necessary to ensure it was fully understood, and the Registry would undertake this communication.

7.4   <u>Agreed</u> that, because of the imminence of Semester 1 examinations, the results of some of which would be submitted to Progression and Awards Boards, it would be important to bring Item 7.2 above to the attention of Academic Council in the near future.

8.   Draft procedures: external examiner reports

8.1   <u>Agreed</u> that Step 1 of the procedure for distributing reports should be amended to read: *External examiner report is received by Registry and copied (a) to the President's Office and (b) to the relevant Dean of Faculty for distribution to members of the Faculty as appropriate, including the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning.* <u>Noted</u> that, in certain circumstances, a Dean might opt not to receive the reports directly, but it was essential that a central distribution point be identified within each Faculty and notified to the Registry.

8.2   <u>Agreed</u> that some amendments also needed to be made to the wording of Steps 2, 3 and 4.

8.3   <u>Agreed</u> that amendments needed to be made to the draft form, as follows:
- references to 'electronic submission' should be replaced by references to 'e-mail submission'
- examiners should be asked to indicate their satisfaction, or otherwise, with the various aspects of the examination process on a scale of 3 down to 1, and should also have an opportunity to indicate which aspects were not applicable to them
- section 2 should be divided into 2a (applicable to examiners for programmes) and 2b (applicable to examiners for modules)

▪ an additional section should be added to give examiners an opportunity to indicate the extent to which their previous recommendations had been responded to.

Agreed that a further draft of both the procedure for distributing reports and the report form would be circulated to the USC with a request for comment.

9. ***Marks and Standards*** **for the Bachelor of Education and the BA in Humanities, St Patrick's college**

Approved. Noted that all *Marks and Standards* in St Patrick's College now incorporated the revised marks bands.

10.   Any other business

10.   Request for exemption from module

Graduate Diploma in Education (one candidate)

Approved.

10.2   Issues arising from meetings of Appeals Board

Noted that a meeting was to take place between Professor John Carroll, Chair of the Appeals Board, and Programme Chairs from DCU Business School to clarify a number of issues arising from decisions made by the Board.

10.3   Report on anonymous marking

Noted that a report on anonymous marking (as an issue of principle rather than in terms of its implementation) would be submitted for discussion at the 12 December 2007 meeting of Academic Council.

10.4   Mapping of awards on to National Framework of Qualifications

Noted that the issue of mapping all awards on to the National Framework of Qualifications, including all awards from the linked colleges and all minor, supplemental and special-purpose awards, would be on the agenda for the 7 February 2008 meeting of the USC.

Date of next meeting:

7 February 2008

Signed: _____   Date: _____
            Chair