

## Technological University Dublin

# Academic Council

## MINUTES

### **MEETING 3**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 - 11.00am (Virtual)

### **PRESENT:**

#### **Electronic Attendance**

David FitzPatrick (*Chairperson*), Mary Meaney (*Registrar*), Lee Bennett, Bairbre Brennan, Antonio Cafolla, Ken Carroll, Fionnuala Darby, Dominic Dillane, Ray English, Patricia Ennis, Jennifer Farrell, Gerard Farrelly, Sharon Feeney, Bridget Gleeson, Rebecca Gorman, Brian Gormley, Tony Grennan, Assumpta Harvey, Sylvia Healy, Elizabeth Heffernan, Hayley Keogh, Siobhan Killion, Maeve Maguire, Fabian McGrath, Mark McGrath, Tara McKiernan, Fintan Moran, Tom Mulvey, Brian Murphy, Brian Murray, Sue Norton, Noel O'Connor, Isobel O'Reilly, Philip Owende, Joy Quigley, Tara Rooney, Robert Simpson, Daniel Sogaolu, Maureen Walsh, Pierre Yimbog

### **APOLOGIES:**

Full Attendance

### **INVITED:**

#### **Minute Item [03.01/03(2)(v) – Development of a Quality Enhancement Framework for TU Dublin]**

Brian Bowe (*Head of Academic Affairs & Assistant Registrar, City Campus*)  
Larry McNutt (*Registrar, Blanchardstown Campus*)

### **SECRETARIAT:**

Yvonne Cooke (*TU Dublin Programme Team*)

### **DOCUMENTATION:**

#### **Circulated prior to meeting**

1. Agenda – TU Dublin Academic Council Meeting 3 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2020)
2. Draft Terms of Reference – University Programme Board
3. Draft Development of a Quality Handbook for TU Dublin
  - i) Draft Underpinning Principles
  - ii) Draft Chapter 1 – Programme Validation Process
  - iii) Draft Chapter 2 – Programme Management
  - iv) Draft Glossary
4. Draft Terms of Reference – Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee
5. Draft Terms of Reference – Academic Regulations, Policies & Procedures Committee
6. Revised Draft Terms of Reference TU Dublin Academic Quality Board
7. Academic Council Approved - QA Procedures for Delivery & Assessment Changes - Covid19 (23.03.20)
8. TU Dublin Academic Council Electronic Meetings - Guidelines and Etiquette

### **DOCUMENTATION:**

#### **Presented at the meeting**

1. Presentation – Development of a Quality Enhancement Framework for TU Dublin

REF	ITEM	DECISION
<b>03.01/01</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed and thanked members for joining the meeting through the electronic communications platform <i>Microsoft Teams</i> due to the Covid-19 restrictions, and briefed members on the meeting etiquette and protocols involved in using this new communications format.</p> <p>The Chair summarised the context for this additional Academic Council meeting reaffirming that it was a single item agenda meeting convened to enable further discussion take place on the structures and categorisation of the proposed Academic Council committees. Members noted that Academic Council committees are not a statutory requirement and that the proposed list of committees is not definitive but to be considered a working list with committees formed and dissolved when required by Academic Council.</p> <p>The Chair noted full attendance for this meeting.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p>
<b>03.01/02</b>	<b>SINGLE ITEM AGENDA</b>	
	<p>At the Chair's request Academic Council agreed to take Agenda Item [(03.01/03(2)) <i>Development of a Quality Enhancement Framework for TU Dublin</i>] first followed by Agenda Item [(03.01/03(1)) <i>Draft Terms of Reference – University Programme Board</i>].</p> <p>The Agenda for the meeting was approved and adopted.</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>APPROVED</p> <p>Proposed: M Maguire Seconded: A Grennan</p>
<b>03.01/03</b>	<b>ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES</b>	
	<p><b>2. <u>Draft Development of a Quality Handbook for TU Dublin</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Dr Brian Bowe and Dr Larry McNutt to the meeting and invited Dr Bowe to present on this item on behalf of the Registrars. Dr Bowe gave an overview on the current status of the work of the project team established in 2019 to develop a draft TU Dublin Academic Quality Enhanced Framework.</p> <p>Academic Council noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently three academic quality systems in operation across the University.</li> <li>• The project team were tasked to develop academic quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures which will form part of the TU Dublin Handbook for Academic Quality Enhancement and to develop general assessment regulations which would form part of the University's marks and standards. It is intended the handbook will be available online in sections as this method is more relevant to the end user. Different sections will be used by different users at various times with some sections tailored specifically for some users. These draft documents continue to evolve and be developed.</li> <li>• The design elements of this project have four stages and the team have completed stages one and two and are currently working on stage three. This third stage includes testing the first draft against the underpinning principles based on ESG and QQI Guidelines and the TU Dublin Strategic Plan, and consulting with stakeholders which is part of the process with Academic Council members today.</li> <li>• The fourth stage includes completing the final draft for circulation and approval.</li> <li>• The project team are developing a completely new framework and not merging existing policies and practices.</li> <li>• Incorporating principles such as a student-centred approach, high academic standards, stakeholder input, equality, diversity and inclusion, responsiveness and agility, benchmarking, innovation and quality enhancement across all areas of the University is an essential part of the process.</li> </ul>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p>

REF	ITEM	DECISION
03.01/03	<b>ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES</b>	
	<p><b>2. <u>Draft Development of a Quality Handbook for TU Dublin (con/td.)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding these principles across the University through a number of areas including an enhanced student voice and student experience, closing the loop on all feedback processes, greater use of student analytics and enhanced role of external examiner and increased focus on external reviews.</li> <li>• Greater focus on clearer alignment of programme outcomes to module learning outcomes, increased lecturers' input into the quality assurance, staff training on quality matters, enhanced communication for all stakeholders, incorporated reflection on EDI and Universal Design, dissemination and sharing of best practice, delegation of more responsibility to faculties and schools and streamlined approval mechanisms.</li> <li>• Chapter 1 of the Handbook entitled Programme Validation has completed and its first draft has been tested for its responsiveness and innovation resulting in a proposal that responsibility should be delegated to the Faculty Board and to remove the external panel requirement</li> <li>• Chapter 2 of the Handbook entitled Programme Management has also completed its first draft which has resulted in two issues being raised, the first concerning External Examiners and their current role, and secondly the Programme Committees in relation to benchmarking, responsiveness, innovation and context, and EDI</li> <li>• The timelines for this project have had to be amended with planned focus groups, feedback from key stakeholders internally and externally, and input from the OD process delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. It is anticipated that the four stages of this project will be completed by the end of the calendar year.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Dr Bowe and the Registrars for this briefing.</p> <p>Following an extensive discussion Academic Council agreed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) To support the design and development of a modularisation/discipline approach.</li> <li>ii) To support the delegation of authority and empower professionals to deliver their areas of expertise which will allow further transparency and enable responsiveness, agility and innovation take place</li> <li>iii) To support the development of new validation procedures which consider the role of external stakeholders including when and how they should be involved in the process. It was proposed that the process will place emphasis on their involvement at the design stage of a programme rather than validation of the end of the programme development cycle.</li> </ol> <p><b>1. <u>Draft Terms of Reference – University Programme Board and additional Committees</u></b></p> <p>The Chair stated that the intent of the Academic Council sub-committees is to increase engagement with Academic Council and to devolve specific decision making and approvals to these Board/Committees. This will enable Academic Council to focus on its role as the overarching decision making authority for academic matters.</p> <p>Following discussion the Academic Council agreed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) There would be no interim sub-committees put in place but that membership of these sub-committees may be interim pending the outcomes of the Organisation Design process.</li> <li>ii) To focus on the establishment of the proposed University Programme Board, Quality Assurance &amp; Enhancement, and Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures sub-committees in the first instance.</li> <li>iii) The draft Terms of References for the proposed sub-committees referenced in (ii) above to be circulated to members for feedback for discussion at the next Academic Council meeting.</li> <li>iv) Members from the current six Academic/College Boards may become members of these sub-committees.</li> </ol>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>AGREED</p> <p>AGREED</p> <p>AGREED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>AGREED</p> <p>AGREED</p> <p>AGREED</p> <p>AGREED</p>

REF	ITEM	DECISION
03.01/04	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	<p>The following matters were raised under this item:</p> <p>i) <b><u>QA Procedures for Delivery &amp; Assessment Changes – Covid-19</u></b> Academic Council noted the policy document ‘QA Procedures for Delivery &amp; Assessment Changes – Covid-19’; approved by members electronically on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.</p> <p>Academic Council also noted that the standard ‘personal circumstances’ process across the University is still in place for students to flag any extenuating circumstances. Clarification was sought on the number of modules that are being taught on-line.</p> <p>ii) <b><u>No Detriment Policy</u></b> Academic Council noted concerns raised in relation to the increased stress levels on students arising from Covid-19.</p> <p>Academic Council noted that the University has responded by introducing a policy on alternative assessment approved by Academic Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. In addition the University in conjunction with QQI and other stakeholders are working to ensure a balance between fairness and the integrity, quality and reputation of awards to students in 2020. Academic Council noted that the President would meet with representatives of the Students’ Union to further discuss their concerns raised including repeat fees, deferrals and communications to students.</p> <p>iii) <b><u>Chair’s Action</u></b> Academic Council approved the Chair’s request in relation to standard items having gone through their normal processes and procedures may require Chairs Actions in advance of Academic Council meetings.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>APPROVED Proposed: F Moran Seconded: T Rooney</p>
03.01/05	<b>NEXT MEETING</b>	
	<p>1. <b><u>Interim Academic Council Meeting</u></b> Members agreed to hold an interim meeting (virtual) in April in advance of the scheduled meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The secretariat would notify members of this meeting date as soon as possible.</p> <p>2. <b><u>Scheduled Academic Council Meeting</u></b> The next scheduled Academic Council meeting takes place on <b>Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 11.00am</b> in TU Dublin, Grangegorman.</p> <p>SIGNED _____ DATE: 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020 Professor David FitzPatrick President CHAIRPERSON</p>	<p>AGREED</p> <p>NOTED</p>