



**Minutes of the Marino Institute of Education Associated College Degrees Committee  
(MIE ACDC)**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

*Present:*

*Registrar (Chair):* Prof. Paula Murphy

*Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies:* Prof. Kevin Mitchell

*2nd Representative from the School of Education:* Prof. Joanne Banks

*Quality Officer -* Roisin Smith

*President of Marino Institute of Education:* Dr Teresa O'Doherty

*2nd Representative from Marino Institute of Education:* MIE Registrar Dr Seán Delaney

*Representatives of MIE Course Groupings -*

*UG Programmes:* Dr Julie Uí Choistealbha

*International Foundation Programme:* Brendan White

*Postgraduate Taught Programmes including Further Education:* Dr Gene Mehigan

*In attendance:*

*Vice-President of Global Relations (for IFP item ACDC/18-19/315):* Prof. Juliette Hussey

*MIE ACDC Secretary -* Ewa Sadowska

*Apologies:*

*Dean of Graduate Studies:* Prof. Neville Cox

*School of Education - Head:* Prof. Damian Murchan

*School of Education Administrative Manager:* TBC

**ACDC/18-19/313 Minutes of ACDC of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

The Minutes had been approved by email in advance of the meeting.

**ACDC/18-19/314 Matters arising**

*Re. ACDC/18-19/306 Action 1* The IFP Manager noted that the MIE had submitted additional figures to the Academic Registry in Trinity to reconcile statistics on the IFP. It was agreed to invite the Director of Student Services to the first meeting in the new academic year to report on supports for IFP students, especially in their transition from the IFP programme to Trinity. The Quality Officer undertook to meet with the Director Student Services over the summer to discuss how best to track progression of IFP students as a separate cohort over the course of their study in Trinity.

*Re. ACDC/18-19/309* The MIE registrar noted that Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and TEP programme manager had visited MIE to outline TEP developments in Trinity. He expressed thanks to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and to the programme manager for their time. Colleagues in MIE found the presentation very stimulating.



*Re. ACDC/18-19/310 Action 1* The Registrar noted that the document submitted by the MIE Registrar confirmed the final wording of the applicable regulation to do with level 7 grade descriptor in MIE. She also stated that the MIE level 7 descriptor is evidenced to be fully aligned to Trinity's ordinary degree descriptor. The MIE Registrar clarified its location in local course handbooks. The Registrar then noted that the level 7 grade descriptor ties in with relevant MIE programme learning outcomes and suggested that learning outcomes related to level 7 should be separated out into a stand-alone document easily available upon request.

***ACDC/18-19/315 Standing item on International Foundation Programme (IFP)***

The Registrar invited the Vice-President of Global Relations to speak to the circulated report. The Vice-President of Global Relations noted that of the 80 students registered in September 2018, 75 students are expected to sit final examinations at the end of May. Latest assessment results indicate that 56 students are on track to meet requirements for undergraduate study. This gives a progression rate of 75% which is slightly below the 80% of the first two years of the programme. Candidates for Medicine and Pharmacy are expected to sit interviews in the coming weeks. Dental Science students sat interviews in March with four out of the five candidates having a successful outcome. In response to a query from the floor the IFP Manager clarified that the School of Medicine decided not to go ahead this year with the earlier agreed two cycles of interviews in April/May and June/July in advance of the start of a new academic year, and currently the status quo applies i.e. interviews take place during the academic year.

The Vice-President of Global Relations noted that 67 offers had already been issued, and 37 acceptances were received with 36 deposits paid for entry in September 2019. At this stage a year ago, there were 76 offers issued and only 21 acceptances and deposits paid. The target is to reach 100 registrations for the next year. Accepted students are so far from Albania, China, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Japan and Kazakhstan. Intended degree destinations for accepted students have diversified and include Computer Science, Engineering, Global Business, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Law and Business, BESS, PPES and Physiotherapy.

Applications from government sponsored students from UAE, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia are scheduled for submission over the next few months, once the scholarship selection process in those countries is completed. The Vice-President of Global Relations explained that Kuwait authorities, who normally sponsor a cohort of IFP students with a view to their progressing into Medicine, Pharmacy and Dental Science in Trinity, were planning to increase the number of sponsored students in order to enhance competition and enable their students to progress to other courses in Trinity and outside HEIs. In a short discussion which followed, the IFP Manager clarified that Kuwait IFP students not reaching the grades for Medicine, Pharmacy and Dental Science in Trinity were so far dis-inclined to accept offers for alternative degree programmes in Trinity and tended to identify alternative HEIs to study their first preference course. IFP students have ample opportunities during the course of the IFP year to familiarise themselves with a variety of courses in Trinity and can change their destination programme while on the IFP course. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies suggested that degree programmes from the Humanities should



be added to the IFP marketing offer and the Vice-President of Global Relations was happy to start discussions on ways to broaden access by IFP students to Joint Honors Programmes (other than those with a language requirements). The MIE representative for undergraduate programmes expressed a wish to see included in the Trinity offer MIE's undergraduate education programmes.

The VP-GR raised the subject of discussions ongoing with the MIE President and with the Registrar about the possibility of opportunities being created for asylum seekers living in direct provision to participate in the IFP. The Registrar recently brought a proposal to University Council to introduce four studentships annually for students in direct provision who have earned a place on Trinity programmes through the CAO which will be in place for the coming academic year. The Registrar advised that it might be useful to see if the IFP could be used as an additional support facility for students living in direct provision to help raise their academic level to match that required for entry to degree programmes in Trinity or elsewhere, or to avail of other opportunities. Trinity offers coverage of all fees and other supports to asylum seekers recognising that additional supports are needed to make higher education more accessible to the most vulnerable young people living in direct provision. Without such initiatives, asylum seekers are treated as "international students" and are unable to afford third level fees. The Vice-President of Global Relations noted that philanthropic routes should also be explored to source additional funding for applicants from countries with no direct entry to Trinity degree programmes.

In response to a query, the IFP Manager explained that the idea of organising IFP graduation ceremony in Trinity was still being worked on. The MIE President advised that going forward IFP students would be more included in intra-cultural activities in MIE.

The Registrar thanked the Vice-President of Global Relations for her report and at that point she withdrew from the meeting.

**Action 1:** The IFP Manager to update the committee in MT 2019 on the academic performance of IFP students.

**Action 2:** The Vice-President of Global Relations and the IFP Manager to provide their respective updating reports for the next meeting.

### ***ACDC/18-19/316 Standing item on the QQI Quality Assurance of Linked Providers***

The Registrar acknowledged that the MIE had submitted their quality assurance procedures required under the 2012 QQI Act for approval by Trinity, and the review process was in progress.

#### ***a) National Qualifications Register***

The Quality Officer noted that work had begun by QQI on the development of a National Qualifications Register as required under the 2012 Act. The new Register will replace the ILEP Register managed by the Department of Justice & Equality. Universities have already given their nominations to the QQI to work with the Project Manager on the design of the Register. The MIE will appear on the Register as a provider for awards validated by the



University of Dublin and Trinity College Dublin. Information to be provided to the QQI is system generated by the Academic Registry from SITS, and the MIE would have an opportunity to review the information pertaining to it before the Register goes live. It is planned that a searchable site would be available in early September for testing.

The Quality Officer also noted that amendments to the QQI Act were still making their way from the Seanad. The amendments to the Act will result in a new code of practice for international learners which will subsequently form a part of the compliance requirements when an institution is applying for the International Education Mark. There would be two separate marks i.e. one for the English Language sector and another for the University sector. The MIE President advised that the MIE had been exempt from contributing to the Protection of Enrolled Learners' fund.

***b) QQI new standards for Early Learning and Care at NFQ Levels 5 and 6***

The Quality Officer invited the MIE President to provide direct feedback to the QQI with respect to the new award standards for early learning and care at NFQ levels 5 and 6.

***ACDC/18-19/317 Standing update on communication & inter-institutional collaboration by Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies***

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to a new fixed timetabling policy, recently approved by Council. He explained that it had resulted from an internal review in College, which underlined inefficiencies in the timetabling system across all Schools, and from new TEP requirements for a fixed timetable commencing in 2019/20 for year 1 of the shared curriculum within new Common Architecture. As mandated by the new policy individual subjects will occupy fixed time slots within the year to enable students to avail of other optional modules outside those slots.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies also referred to the definition and criteria of "Capstone Project", recently approved by Council. He noted that under TEP all undergraduate students entering the new TEP programme architecture will have the opportunity to complete a 20 ECTS capstone project or equivalent during their undergraduate degree course. Council approval refines the criteria that define the capstone project such that a degree of parity will be achieved for students around the quality of the experience and the opportunities to showcase the attainment of the graduate attributes across the disciplines, regardless of the nature of the project undertaken.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies also noted that a policy on non-satisfactory engagement was in progress, and that parallel work was advancing on agreeing common non-satisfactory regulations related to course work, attendance etc. to be included in the Calendar part 2 for the next year.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies then advised that a new policy on Internships and Placements developed in consultation with Schools as part of the work of TEP Subgroup 5 – Internships & Careers, Student Exchanges/Mobility & Co-Curricular Activities (Employability) in 2018 had been submitted to Council. Internships and placements both at postgraduate and undergraduate level came within the scope of the



new policy, and that the insurance aspects of the policy had required additional clarification, which has been obtained and incorporated into the final document. Unfortunately, the policy was not considered by the last Council due to a lack of time.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that TEP was due to finish as a stand-alone project in 2020 and will be integrated into the mainstream education provision in Trinity necessitating a significant culture change especially in terms of approach to assessment. Currently, there are a few teething issues to address such as to obtain an increase in the capacity of optional open modules to be offered next year, re-evaluation of assessment balance on degree programmes including a reduction in the number of assessment exercises but an increase in their diversity. The MIE President underlined that the MIE staff have huge experience in the area of assessment to share with Trinity and would be happy to discuss it over the summer.

Finally, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to a new strategic plan for 2019 – 2024 currently being put together with an emphasis on the postgraduate space. He clarified that as part of the plan a review of postgraduate courses was planned to identify shareable modules across courses and to unify progression regulations across College. He stated that a need to open up the taught provision of postgraduate courses to a broader clientele has been identified (so-called micro-credentialing) whereby under CPD non-standard students can choose individual modules. In response to a query it was suggested that this could potentially build up towards a Masters degree in a bottom up way. The MIE Registrar noted that some Irish universities already offer “Modular Masters” to be completed within a prescribed specific timeframe; once an academic Masters qualification has been achieved some students may wish to obtain a professional qualification or accreditation and for that they may require additional credit by way of taking additional free standing modules.

The Registrar acknowledged apologies from the Dean of Graduate Studies. There were no further postgraduate issues reported on.

### ***ACDC/18-19/318 MIE response to external examiners' 2017/18 reports***

The Registrar noted the very comprehensive nature of the MIE response and invited the MIE Registrar to speak to it. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies then complimented MIE staff on a strong level of engagement with external examiners' reports and very positive responses offered. He expressed concern, however, about a very low level of 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honors stating that normally one would expect 10%-15% of graduands in that grade band whereas the percentage in the MIE was as low as 4%. The MIE President and the MIE Registrar advised that steps (such as revision of procedures relating to raising borderline marks) were being taken to gradually redress the balance of firsts without compromising the academic standards and excellence. It was agreed that more effort needs to be undertaken in guiding the staff to use the full range of marks including the highest 80%-100% band and the lower band of 50%-40% to achieve more discrimination and to avoid grade inflation. It was agreed that properly designed assessment should differentiate students' performance more easily.



The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to a comment made by one of the external examiners that the students' quality of their academic writing can be variable, and that staff should explore ways in which students are required to pay closer attention to the quality of their writing. A short discussion followed on how best to assist students to obtain good academic writing skills. A newly approved "Transition to Higher Education" module, which contains a writing skill component, delivered this year to 1<sup>st</sup> year students on the B.Sc. (Education Studies) course, was commented on very positively. This module is to be offered to all first year undergraduate students from 2019-20 but it was noted that the module was not available to students in other years. Nevertheless, it was noted that academic writing classes are offered to students on an optional basis and that staff are learning and becoming more aware about where supports are needed at all levels through the delivery of the module to first year students. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to an academic writing centre in Trinity and suggested that the MIE could establish contact with it.

***ACDC/18-19/319 To consider new optional module Educational Disadvantage and Community Mentoring on B. Sc. In Education Studies yr 2***

The MIE Registrar spoke to the circulated new module descriptor. He clarified that the optional module would explore research that highlights the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and access to college. Theories underpinning access programmes to higher education will be explored and community mentoring will be examined as a theoretical framework for supporting students who come from groups that are often under-represented in higher education settings. This work is embedded in the focus on the study of adolescence in Year 2 of the Education Studies programme and falls within one of the pillars of the programme: Ethics and Social Justice. The module will connect with existing programmes that aim to promote access to higher education (such as the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Fund which supports access to higher education at regional cluster level. Students who opt for this module will have the opportunity to train as mentors. They will undertake two or three visits to their assigned education setting and provide opportunities for school, college and adult/community education students to explore course and career plans, ask questions, and share important information about the transition to college, with a view to motivating young people about their potential to succeed in third level and to encourage them to make informed decisions about their future education.

Members expressed their support for the module. In response to a query, the MIE Registrar was unsure if schools identified as part of the mentoring network are part of TAP network schools. The use of the word summative on the final assessment was explained to reflect that it is a final mark but the form of assessment used has developmental and formative dimensions. The use of the word summative here is to be reconsidered.

**Decision 1:** The new module was recommended for approval by Council via endorsement by USC through MIE ACDC May minutes.

***ACDC/18-19/320 To consider: Calendar Part II and Part III changes for 2019-20***

***a) Undergraduate validated courses***



The committee approved the proposed changes to Calendar part II.

**b) *Postgraduate validated courses***

The committee approved the proposed changes to Calendar part III.

**Decision 1:** The proposed changes to Calendar part II and part III were recommended for approval by Council via endorsement by USC through MIE ACDC submission.

***ACDC/18-19/321 Nominations for External Examiners***

The committee assessed the circulated candidatures, considered their CVs strong, and approved three new external examiners for a term of three years from 2019/20 as follows: Dr Róisín Coll, University of Glasgow, on Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching), Dr Seán Mac Corraidh, St. Mary's University College, Belfast, on Bachelor in Education (through the medium of Irish), and Dr Sarah Brewer, University of Reading on International Foundation Programme (Pathway A, excluding Mathematics). The Quality Officer expressed concern whether there would be a sufficient pool of candidates for external examiners for the BEd programme through Irish in three years' time but was reassured by the MIE President and the MIE Registrar that other potential candidates had been identified on this occasion but were unavailable and would likely be available in the future.

**Decision 1:** The proposed external examiners were endorsed for Council. The MIE ACDC Secretary to submit their names to the May Council for approval.

***ACDC/18-19/322 AOB***

- (i) In response to a request from the MIE Registrar, the Registrar undertook to pass on to the MIE President draft graduation dates for 2019/20.
- (ii) The MIE President advised that Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching) and BES in Early Childhood Education would be semesterised going forward, and that an internal review of governance structures is being carried out with a view to increasing staff engagement and participation in leadership.
- (iii) The MIE President thanked the Registrar for her ongoing support throughout the year.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 10.30am.

Date                    9<sup>th</sup> May 2019                    Registrar                    \_\_\_\_\_