

MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 194 OF
THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
OF DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
HELD ON THURSDAY 20th JUNE, 2024

Meeting No 194**194.2.1 In attendance:**

Dr. Diana Bogusevschi	Dr. Brian Boyd	Dr. Conor Brady
Dr. Ronan Bree	Dr. Breda Brennan	Dr. Kevin Burns
Dr. Anita Byrne	Ms. Maeve Caraher	Mr. Dermot Clarke
Dr. Adele Commins	Ms. Karen Commins	Dr. Coleman Dennehy
Ms. Sinead Dunne	Dr. Sheila Flanagan	Ms. Amy Flood
Dr. Joe Gildea	Mr. Peter Gosling	Dr. Edel Healy
Ms. Helen Howley	Mr. Shane Hill	Dr. Siobhan Jordan
Ms. Briege King	Dr. Gillian Lambe	Dr. Fiona Lawless
Dr. Paul Mac Artain	Dr. Moira Maguire	Dr. Annaleigh Margey
Dr. Eamonn Martin	Prof. Fergal Mc Caffrey	Ms. Catherine McCloskey
Dr. Tim Mc Cormac	Mr. Pat Mc Cormick	Dr. Martin Mc Hugh
Dr. Kevin Mc Kenna	Dr. Ruth Mc Keever	Dr. Patricia Moriarty
Dr. Kieran Nolan	Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan	Ms. Teresa O'Rourke
Dr. Jade Pollock	Ms. Denise Quigley	Mr. John Reid
Mr. Conor Reidy	Dr. Kayla Rush	Dr. Brendan Ryder

194.1.2 Apologies:

Mr. Frank Brady	Ms. Linda Murphy	Ms. Deirdre O'Malley
Ms. Michelle O'Shea		

194.1.3 Absent:

Ms. Eimear Rice	Ms. Irene Mc Causland	Mr. Mark Lee
Mr. Eoin Clarke		

194.1.4 Minutes & Matters Arising of Academic Council Meeting No. 193

The President opened the meeting by welcoming Ms. Denise Quigley and Ms. Briege King in their new roles to Academic Council.

Minutes of Meeting No. 192

Proposed by: Mr. Dermot Clarke

Seconded by: Mr. Peter Gosling

No matters arising

194.2.1 Ratification of Results (AC:DOC:194:02:01)**Motion 194.01**

That the Academic Council confirms the results of the Examinations as listed in the Examination Result Listing. (AC:DOC:194:02:01)

Proposed by: Dr. Diarmuid O’Callaghan

Seconded by: Dr. Sheila Flanagan

Votes: 42

In Favour: 42

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Each Head of School in turn presented the results from their School and acknowledged the work of their teams including Heads of Departments, Lecturers and Administrative Staff, the Registrar’s Office and Examinations Office.

The Registrar commended the Examinations Office and added her thanks to Mr. Anthony Murray and his Team.

Result Processing for the May 2024 Session

Between the four Schools and the Examinations Office; results were processed for 5163 students from the 2023/2024 Spring Semester.

Examination Overview May 2024 Session

In the May Examination Session, a total of 3517 students sat 341 separate examinations over 8 days across 4 main venues primarily.

- A total of 172 students were facilitated with a smaller / separate room as part of their special need requirements with a further 29 sitting within a main venue.
- There was a 24% increase year on year in students requiring a separate venue.
- In total 65 invigilators managed the exams sessions.
- The examinations took place from 8th of May – 20th May within a 9 day timeframe a reduction in 1 day from the previous year.

Examination Spot-checks & Examination Infringements May 2024 Session

- Approximately 1000 spot checks were carried out during the examinations.
- Six students were found with prohibited material in the exam halls, and/or in breach of the regulations.
- Of these, one student was found to be in breach of Section 5, part 7 of the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations, pertaining to mobile phones and electronic devices.
- Details of all breaches were forwarded to the Disciplinary Officer to be dealt with under the Student Code of Conduct.

Repeat for Honours / Exit Awards

Five students benefited from the repeat for honours process and 14 Exit Awards were processed in this session.

194.3.1 Approval of Quotas (AC:DOC:194:03:01)

Motion 194.02

That the Academic Council agree quotas for FET/QQI places

Proposed by: Ms. Sinead Dunne

Seconded by: Dr. Sheila Flanagan

Votes: 42

In Favour: 42

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

The Approval of Quotas are based on submissions from the Heads of School to the Admissions officer.

The document contains the number of places held for Further Education and Matures on CAO courses and is approved annually.

194.4.1 External Examiner

Ms. Briege King presented two External examiners for approval to Academic Council.

Motion 194.03

That the Academic Council confirms the appointment of the External Examiners for the School of Health and Science

Title & Position – Dr. Melissa Corbally, Associate Professor, Trinity College.

Programme (s) – Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Time – 1st October 2024 to 30th September, 2027

Proposed by: Ms. Briege King

Seconded by: Dr. Edel Healy

Votes: 43

In Favour: 43

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Motion 194.04

That the Academic Council confirms the appointment of the External Examiners for the School of Health and Science

Title & Position – Dr. Colman Noctor, Lecturer, SETU

Programme (s) –

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing
- Certificate in Perinatal Mental Health

Time – 1st October 2024 to 30th September, 2025 **(One Year Extension)**

Proposed by: Ms. Briege King

Seconded by: Dr. Edel Healy

Votes: 42

In Favour: 42

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

194.5.1 Update from the Retention and Progression Working Group

Dr. Annaleigh Margey give a presentation to Academic Council on the progress of the Retention and Progression Working Group to date.

The following has taken place:-

- Review of existing resources for retention
- Focus groups held with the following stakeholders:
 - Students:
 - Class Representatives
- Staff:
 - Student Services Team
 - PDs and FYCs

Areas discussed :-

- Students:
 - Awareness of retention and progression issues; why do they feel this is happening; awareness of existing supports and retention measures; and how can we further support them to continue on their programmes.
- Staff:
 - Student engagement on programmes; progression and retention on programmes and any changes; issues for students in terms of retention and progression; full-time v's part-time; approaches and strategies used; suggestions.

Emerging Themes:-

- Physical Environment
- Digital and Technical Environment
- Psycho-Social Environment; Sense of Belonging and Connection to the Institute
- Academic Environment
- Economic Environment

Examples:-

- Physical Environment
 - Poor infrastructure in some areas
- Digital and Technical Environment
 - Aging infrastructure
 - Lack of infrastructure for more technical programmes
- Psycho-Social Environment; Sense of Belonging and Connection to the Institute
 - Lack of community space; limited catering options; parking; childcare
 - Lack of services for part-time students and apprentices outside of core hours

- Specific needs of Commuter Students
- Unavailable spaces
- Academic Environment
- Timetables
- Physical infrastructure
- Economic Environment
- Accommodation
- Work/Caring responsibilities

Some first steps....

- Opportunity for refurbishment of facilities with replacement of the roof in North and South Blocks
- Timetables
- Consider specific needs of commuter students and provide information
- Attend-Engage-Apply Campaign
- Induction Pages for Programmes on Moodle
- Refresher campaign for Talk Before You Walk
- Taster Days
- Peer Mentoring and Mentor Systems
- Develop an Action Plan (November Meeting of Academic Council)

Members of Academic Council commended the committee on their work and agreed that a focused plan was now required. It was agreed that some of the more basic requested such as more microwaves for commuting students were not big-ticket items.

The President noted that the work being carried out across the campus during the summer months will resolve a number of issues including the wi-fi. Dr. O’Callaghan noted that there are 400 additional car-parking spaces at DkIT-Sport with a regular shuttle bus and great spaces within the library for both meetings and quiet study. There are additional booths appearing throughout the Institute which could be promoted further.

It was noted that this discussion is linked to the Student Experience Strategy in the Institute’s Action Plan. The President concluded the discussion with the promise that the full feedback from the working group could be discussed at the next Management Team Meeting in detail.

194.6.1 Policies**(A) Structured Masters - Amendments to the Awarding Policy and Assessment and Standards****Motion 194.05**

That the Academic Council approves the updated Awarding Policy (AC:DOC:194:06:01) (AC:DOC:194:06:02) (AC:DOC:194:06:03).

Proposed by: Dr. Sheila Flanagan

Seconded by: Dr. Patricia Moriarty

Votes: 42

In Favour: 39

Against: 0

Abstention: 3

Dr. Sheila Flanagan, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar outlined the background to this motion to the members of Academic Council. A series of meeting have been held to discuss the decision to re-categorise the research masters as a structure masters as the HEA provides an opportunity to allow structure masters for funding purposes.

Dr. Patricia Moriarty, Head of School of Business and Humanities added that this opportunity allows the Institute to run programmes at break-even points with such important funding. This practise is inline with the sector. Approval of this updated policy will allow greater freedom in the successful delivery of programmes. Dr. Breda Brennan suggested a minor change on page 17 to “structured masters only”.

Motion 194.06

That the Academic Council approves the updated Assessments and Standards (AC:DOC:194:06:04) (AC:DOC:194:06:05) (AC:DOC:194:06:06).

Proposed by: Dr. Sheila Flanagan

Seconded by: Dr. Patricia Moriarty

Votes: 43

In Favour: 40

Against: 2

Abstention: 1

(B) Amendments to Social Care Policies**Motion 194.07**

That Academic Council approves the amendments to the following policies related to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care:

Department of Humanities and Social Care Registration Programmes Policy on Student Attendance

Work Placement for Social Care- Common Policies and Procedures

(AC:DOC:194:06:07)

(AC:DOC:194:06:08)

(AC:DOC:194:06:09)

(AC:DOC:194:06:10)

Proposed by: Dr. Annaleigh Margey

Seconded by: Dr. Patricia Moriarty

Votes: 41

In Favour: 41

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Dr. Annaleigh Margey presented a number of changes to the policies related to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care, including the Department of Humanities and Social Care Registration Programmes Policy on Student Attendance and Work Placement for Social Care- Common Policies and Procedures. These changes will allow for a stricter pre-placement training attendance and class/placement attendance requirement of 80%.

Dr. Margey carried out a survey of the sector and these changes are inline with other higher Education providers and meet all standards under CORU accreditation.

(C) Micro-credentials Policy**Motion 194.08**

That Academic Council approves the Dundalk Institute of Technology Micro-credentials Policy (AC:DOC:194:06:11).

Proposed by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Seconded by: Dr. Sheila Flanagan

Votes: 40
In Favour: 40
Against: 0
Abstention: 0

Dr. Brendan Ryder presented a new policy on Micro-credentials to Academic Council members.

- Micro-credentials are a record '...of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning' (European Commission, 2022, p.13). They have the potential to offer increased flexibility and agility in responding to specific education and training needs (Carroll, et al., 2023). DkIT has seen increased demand for micro-credentials both from individual learners and from employers seeking to address skills needs for their organisations. In response, this policy will assist in the development of accredited existing and new learning pathways to form short, flexible learning experiences that are quality assured by the Institute, ensuring that learning is in line with skills needs.
- Micro-credentials can act as a mechanism for learners to update and diversify their skills portfolio flexibly and at their own pace, or for providers to expand their educational reach to disadvantaged or minority learner groups. For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), micro-credentialling offers a novel and significant opportunity to augment educational offerings by drawing on existing programmes or developing entirely new ones. From a business perspective, it can also act as a new strategy for commercialising educational knowledge and expertise by diversifying educational packaging, delivery, and markets.
- The development and provision of micro-credentials is aligned with the DkIT Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (<https://www.dkit.ie/strategicplan>), specifically Strategic Pillar 3: Widening Access and Participation, Goal 3: To maintain a high-quality, inclusive and flexible student experience that supports all our students, holistically, and in their diversity, to achieve their potential.
- Micro-credentials offer a new opportunity to innovate and grow a HEI's programme portfolio while expanding their existing learner cohorts and reaching out to new and potentially under-served ones.

The following micro-credentialing strategies have been identified at DkIT for implementation:

- **Existing Accredited Modules Strategy:** Developing micro-credentials from existing validated programmes to offer "bite-sized" and flexible learning pathways and expand and widen access. Such micro-credentials could potentially be stackable toward the full award. Stackable micro-credentials can be combined towards a larger award.
- **New Accredited Modules Strategy:** Designing novel micro-credentials in areas that address current or future skills needs. This strategy might include developing short programmes in trending subject areas or modules that appeal to particular industry

sectors or new learner groups. Their primary intention is to upskill or cover urgent skills gaps. As such, these micro-credentials could be categorised as 'just in time' or 'on demand'. They may or may not be stackable.

Dr. Ryder recommended this policy be adopted as a pilot for an initial 12 months and then reviewed. The policy was widely welcomed but a number of members had concerns regarding the less than 10 credits clause.

"The objective of this policy is to provide a quality assurance framework for the validation and certification of micro-credentials, units of learning that attract less than 10 ECTS credits."

A lengthy discussion took place on the need for flexibility in particular for the Peace Plus funding application and it was agreed to change the wording to "10 credits or less"

Further discussion was had on the difference between special purpose awards and micro-credentials, the process for dealing new and existing modules, the role of the Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC), the format of the form in appendix 1 and what is required for operational and marketing purposes, the monitoring of the demand for such modules due to the resourcing and cost involved, the recording and management of records.

It was agreed to include a line in the policy under monitoring and periodic review on the role of the Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC) in the process.

(D) Policy on Transfer and Progression

Motion 194.09

That Academic Council approves the amendments to the Transfer and Progression Policy (AC:DOC:194:06:12)
(AC:DOC:194:06:12(B)).

Proposed by: Ms. Sinead Dunne

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 37

In Favour: 37

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Ms. Sinead Dunne, Admissions Officer outlined the changes to the transfer and progression policy which will allow QQI applicants on a level 6 programme to be considered for years other than 2nd year.

These changes will allow for articulation agreements as the current policy allows for advanced entry into year 2 only and approval is now required to change to a 2+2 advanced entry.

Following a discussion, the following changes were agreed.

Under Advanced Entry 2.2

- The normal entry requirement for admission to an add-on honours degree is a credit-weighted average mark of at least **50% changes to 40%** in a cognate level 7 award, unless otherwise specified during programme validation. Non-EU candidates whose first language is not English, must have a score of IELTS 6.0 or equivalent. Students who have already completed undergraduate programmes or stages through English will be exempt from this requirement.
- Remove the text specified during validation- in sentence below

In the case of QQI-FET graduates, specific articulation arrangements, **specified during validation-** may be agreed for advanced entry to programmes.

Under 3.2. Progression to Add-On Programmes within DkIT

- The normal entry requirement for admission to an add-on honours degree is a credit-weighted average mark of at least **50% changes to 40%** in a cognate level 7 award, unless otherwise specified during programme validation or explicitly approved by Academic Council.

The discussion concluded with an agreement that a communication needed to go out to Students.

Extension of 15 Minutes

Proposed by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Seconded by: Ms. Sinead Dunne

(E) Assessment and Standards**Motion 194.10**

That Academic Council approves the amendments to the Assessment and Standards (AC:DOC:194:06:13) (AC:DOC:194:06:14).

Proposed by: Ms. Sinead Dunne

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 37

In Favour: 37

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Ms. Sinead Dunne, Admissions Officer outlined the amendments to the Assessment and Standards. This includes an addition of a credits gained academic standing to incorporate a result for single subjects and micro credentials.

194.7.1 Validations

Dr. Edel Healy presented a number of programmes for validation. Dr. Healy acknowledged the work involved and congratulated the teams involved and thanked the Registrar's Department. Many of the programmes were developed as cross disciplinary and are in response to industry demand.

(A) Programme Validation–School of Health and Science (AC:DOC:194:07:01)

Motion 194.11

That the Academic Council ratifies approval of the following programme(s)
(AC:DOC:194:07:01)

Department	Programme Title(s) (provisional)	Validation Type	NFQ Level	Award Class	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode(s)
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Master of Science in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation</i>	New	9	Major	90	Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation</i>	New	9	Major	60	Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Certificate in Operations Management and the Production of Innovative and Sustainable Food Products</i>	New	9	Minor	20	Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended
Agriculture, Food and Animal Health	<i>Certificate in Compliance and Continuous Improvement in Sustainable Food Manufacturing</i>	New	9	Minor	20	Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended

Proposed by: Dr. Edel Healy

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 37
In Favour: 37
Against: 0
Abstention: 0

(B) Programme Validation–School of Health and Science (AC:DOC:194:07:02)

Motion 194.12

That the Academic Council ratifies approval of the following programme(s)
(AC:DOC:194:07:02):

Department	Programme Title(s) (provisional)	Validation Type	NFQ Level	Award Class	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode(s)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</i>	New	8	Special- Purpose	20	Part-time- time, Blended

Proposed by: Dr. Edel Healy
Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 36
In Favour: 36
Against: 0
Abstention: 0

(C) Programme Validation–School of Health and Science (AC:DOC:194:07:03)**Motion 194.13**

That the Academic Council ratifies approval of the following programme(s)
(AC:DOC:193:07:03):

Department	Programme Title(s) (provisional)	Validation Type	NFQ Level	Award Class	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode(s)
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Master of Science in Nursing in Community Mental Health Nursing</i>	New	9	Major	90	Part-time Blended
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Nursing in Community Mental Health Nursing (Entry and Exit)</i>	New	9	Major	60	Part-time Blended
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in Science in Nursing in Community Mental Health Nursing (Entry and Exit)</i>	New	9	Minor	30	Part-time Blended
Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years	<i>Certificate in Trauma Informed Care</i>	New	9	Minor	10	Part-time Blended

Proposed by: Dr Edel Healy

Seconded by: Dr Brendan Ryder

Votes: 37

In Favour: 37

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

(D) Programme Validation–School of Informatics and Creative Arts (AC:DOC:194:07:04)

Professor Fergal Mc Caffrey presented a suite of programmes for validation. He acknowledged the work involved and congratulated the team led by Dr. Martin Mc Hugh which included Staff/Projects from the RDC and thanked the Registrar's Department. The Master of Science in Digital Health Innovation is funded in part by Digi-bio. 12 Fellows will commence in September 2024 and it is envisaged that the programme will have a total of 76 fellows over 6 years

Motion 194.14

That the Academic Council ratifies approval of the following programme(s)
(AC:DOC:194:07:04):

Department	Programme Title(s) (provisional)	Validation Type	NFQ Level	Award Class	ECTS Credits	Delivery Mode(s)
Visual and Human-Centred Computing	<i>Master of Science in Digital Health Innovation</i>	New	9	Major	90	Full-time, Full-time Blended
Visual and Human-Centred Computing	<i>Postgraduate Diploma in Science Digital Health Innovation (Entry and Exit)</i>	New	9	Major	60	Full-time, Full-time Blended
Visual and Human-Centred Computing	<i>Master of Science in Computing in Medical Device Software Engineering</i>	Differential	9	Major	90	Full-time Online, Part-time Online

Proposed by: Professor Fergal Mc Caffrey

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 38

In Favour: 38

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

(E) Consortium Agreement between DkIT and Hebei University of Engineering (HUE), China (AC:DOC:194:07:05)

Motion 194.15

That the Academic Council approves the Consortium Agreement between DkIT and Hebei University of Engineering (HUE), China for the programme Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in International Civil Engineering in the School of Engineering.

Proposed by: Dr. Breda Brennan

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

This motion was withdrawn

The President requested that this motion be withdrawn with a view to revisiting it early in the new Academic Year. He asked that the supporting documents be noted. Dundalk Institute of Technology have had several meetings with Hebei University of Engineering (HUE), China with a huge amount of work carried out. Dr. Breda Brennan outlined details of a recent visit to Dundalk Institute of Technology by a delegation from Hebei University of Engineering (HUE), China. Dr. Brennan acknowledged the work of Dr. Brendan Ryder.

Additional Extension of 15 Minutes

Proposed by: Mr. Pat Mc Cormick

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

194.8.1 Student Expulsion

Any member who has a conflict of Interest or who has had any dealings with this case was asked to absent themselves from this part of the meeting.

(A) Due to the highly confidential nature of this case; the supporting documentation was available to read from the paper file only. That file was available for viewing in Registrar's Secretary's Office on several dates.

Motion 194.16

That the Academic Council upholds the findings of the Disciplinary Committee meeting on 13th February, 2024 and of the Appeal Submission Hearing on 12th April, 2024 and agrees under Sections 10(1) and (3) of the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 (as amended by section 11 of the Institutes of Technology Act 2006) to the exclusion of Students :-

1. D00246120
2. D00256312
3. D00257502

Proposed by: Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 35

In Favour: 29

Against: 0

Abstention: 6

At the beginning of the discussion the President, Dr. Diarmuid O' Callaghan excused those who had been involved with the case at any stage due to a conflict of interest. The President then proceeded with a short briefing of the process and the timelines involved. It was confirmed that this is a permanent expulsion.

(B) Forwarding Motion to Governing Body**Motion 194.17**

That Motion 194.16 will be forwarded to the next meeting of the Governing Body, for its immediate attention.

Proposed by: Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan

Seconded by: Dr. Brendan Ryder

Votes: 34

In Favour: 31

Against: 0

Abstention: 3

194.9.1 A.O.B.

No A.O.B.