



**Date of Seminar:** (MM/DD/YYYY) 21/9/2011

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**Time** 14:00-16:00

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**Location** German Jordanian University

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### 3. Seminar Agenda

The talk will present the experience of Dublin City University's (DCU) major curriculum transformation process – The Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI). It will be organised as follows:

1. Context and Background of Irish Higher Education
    - a. The two higher education sectors with a focus on accreditation, quality assurance, funding and regulation
    - b. The adoption of the Bologna Agreement
    - c. The establishment of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI)
    - d. The development of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
    - e. Implementation of the NFQ in the two HE sectors
    - f. Issues associated with the NFQ
    - g. Current status of Irish HE *wrt* Bologna alignment
    - h. The Framework Implementation network
  2. Curriculum matters in Higher Education
    - a. Debates and discussions
    - b. Curriculum Models
    - c. Issues with Curriculum Development
      - i. Showing need
      - ii. Academic Freedom/Autonomy
      - iii. Lack of formal pedagogic/curriculum development training
      - iv. Catering to disciplinary differences
      - v. Appropriate Quality Assurance measures
      - vi. Perceptions by different cohorts
  3. End to End Curriculum Development (Whole Institution Reform)
    - a. Prompts for Curriculum Development
      - i. Internal – Strategy; Review; Expansion; Contraction; Innovation
      - ii. External – Demand (e.g. Economic Growth Area) /Regulation (e.g. Bologna)
    - b. Approaches to Curriculum Reform
      - i. Top Down
      - ii. Bottom Up
      - iii. Voluntary compliance
    - c. Programme Level Curriculum Reform
      - i. Engagement
      - ii. Academic ownership/buy-in
      - iii. Intrinsic motivation
      - iv. Building on disciplinary beliefs/philosophy/norms
      - v. Well understood curriculum development model
  4. Case Study: DCU's Academic Framework for Innovation (AFI)
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- a. Initial development of the AFI
  - i. Alternative approaches considered
- b. Approach to taken – Top Down (NFQ Award Descriptors -> Programme Outcomes -> Module Learning Outcomes -> Assessment)
  - i. Project teams
  - ii. Initial launch – ‘Learning Outcomes Week’
    1. Seminars, keynotes, clinics, workshops, debates
  - iii. Programme Outcomes
    1. Support process
    2. Verification process
  - iv. Module Rewrite
    1. Supports/Training/Guidelines
    2. Module Database System
    3. Process followed
    4. Approval processes
- c. Critique
  - i. Current Status
  - ii. What worked?
  - iii. Unanticipated outcomes
  - iv. The role of funding (positive and negative)
  - v. What is outstanding?
  - vi. What would be done differently?
- d. Advice/Recommendations

#### 4. Notes

Dr. Hughes presented the following key points

- Irish Higher Education System
- Ireland and the Bologna Process
- Curriculum matters in Higher Education
- Curriculum Reform – The Dublin City University Experience

#### **Bologna Process:**

- European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010
- Stated Intention to:
  - System of easily readable and comparable degrees
  - Two main cycles (undergraduate/graduate)
  - System of Credits (such as ECTS)
  - Promote mobility
  - Promote European co-operation in QA
  - Promote a European dimension in HE
  - Use Learning Outcomes as the mechanism for describing student learning



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#### **Bologna: How it works:**

- **Voluntary** process with shared ownership: academic institutions and staff; governments; EU institutions; practice networks; students; other social partners
- Driven to some (large?) extent by **ministerial communiqués** and Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG); but all actors feed in to developments and the texts of communiqués, especially through representative bodies (EUA, EURASHE, ESU etc)
- Similar structures operate at **national level**, e.g. National Steering Committee, IHEQN (all involve Government departments, agencies, Institutions [IUA, IOTI, HECA], Students)

#### **National Framework of Qualifications**

- Qualifications Framework launch in 2003 – verified as compatible with Bologna Framework in 2006; 1 of 6 thus far
- Ostensibly, Ireland well-advanced in this area
- But we are not perfect!!
- Learning outcomes being gradually rolled out as part of embedding of NFAQ –
  - very uneven (advanced in some institutions, barely started in others) – some collaborative initiatives e.g. SIF projects; FIN
  - not very visible

#### **Issues of Ireland HE with Bologna:**

- No formal curriculum perspectives or approaches in university sector
- Variable 'programme' perspectives, especially programmatic review, outside of professional body recognition processes
- Programmes and especially modules very much linked to academic freedom and autonomy
- Learning Outcomes paradigm not universally welcomed or understood

#### **Curriculum Reform**

- Much debate about the curriculum in HE
  - No agreed definition
  - Tacit understanding(s)
  - Differing understandings especially amongst different interest groups
    - Students
    - Academics
    - Institutions
    - Policy makers
  - Fuzziness' wrt Curriculum
    - Concepts of Core Curriculum/Open Curriculum/Hidden Curriculum
  - Where does curriculum start and end?
    - Limited view
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- Intended educational experience
  - Lecture hall; Lab; Seminar room;
- Wider view
  - 'Hidden' curriculum
    - Library; Placements; Study room; Student's own qualities & approaches
- To what extent does curriculum only exist when it is realised and engaged in by students?
- Objectives
  - Meeting legal requirements of Bologna by 2010
  - Enabling inter-institutional collaboration
  - Widening student choice (in terms of mode of study)
  - Fostering flexible approaches to programme development (which will enable opportunities for student choice to be increased)
  - Accommodating diverse student backgrounds/needs
  - Improving academic achievement while supporting retention

#### **Curriculum Models**

- How a curriculum is planned, implemented and evaluated
- Technically useful but often overlook the human dimensions – attitudes, feelings, values
- Not a recipe – need to use professional and personal judgement

#### **Role of Assessment:**

- For students, assessment defines the curriculum (Biggs, 1999, McInnes, 2001, Ramsden, 2003)
  - Certain things may be seen as more important than other simply because they are easier to assess
  - For academics they sometimes feel forced to 'teach to the test'
- Formative and Summative assessment have a role
  - Assessment as/for learning Vs assessment of learning

#### **Lessons learned**

- Visibility, transparency, consistency of module and programme information
- Language, culture and perspectives on curriculum
- Outstanding questions
- Ambiguity and some confusion between 'project' and 'normal business'
- Need to continually re-energise
- Ongoing curriculum development model
- Foundation for flexibility

Requirements for new processes and procedures

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## 5. Biography of Speaker

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Institution</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Biography</b>	

Dr Jean Hughes is based in the Office of the Vice President for Learning Innovation in Dublin City University. Jean graduated from NIHE Dublin (now DCU) in 1988, with a degree in Computer Applications and subsequently completed an MBA in DCU in 1994. She completed a Doctorate in Education with Queen's University, Belfast in 2010, her thesis focusing on New Public Management drivers of quality assurance and accountability in Irish universities.

Jean joined DCU in 2005 as Head of the Learning Innovation Unit (Centre for Teaching and Learning) with responsibility for academic development in teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum design, as well as for the university's e-learning and learning technologies. In 2008 she was seconded as Director of SIF Programmes to lead DCU's involvement in the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) projects, in particular the Enhancement of Learning (EOL) strand of activities, which she chairs. In 2009, for a 12 month period, Jean also acted as the Deputy Director of Oscail (DCU's distance learning centre) with responsibility for 1200 mature, distance, online students.

Prior to joining DCU, Jean worked in banking and manufacturing before moving into the other Irish higher education sector, working in two Institutes of Technology, as a lecture, senior lecturer, head of department and head of school. She was active in the initial development of IT curricula in one institute when it first opened in 1992 and has been actively involved in curriculum development since then. She has also been active in elearning development and is currently running a postgraduate accredited module in Teaching Online, delivered fully online, and involving staff from the eight Dublin-based HE institutions in the DRHEA, both as participants and as contributors. This is the first module of its type in Ireland.

Jean is interested in all aspects of pedagogy, in particular the use of reflective practice by both teachers and students. Her main research interest is in the area of managerialism in Higher Education which was the subject of her doctoral thesis, completed in 2010. She is currently editing a forthcoming DRHEA publication entitled 'The Dynamic Curriculum' which will be published in 2012, as well as authoring a chapter in this publication.



## 6. Documents Archived with the Minutes

<i>Document Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Tempus Talk1309V1.ppt</i>	Presentation