GMIT

INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EO
GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Report of External Peer Review Group for the Programmatic Review of:

Named Award:	Bachelor of Arts
Programme Title(s):	BA (Hons) in Heritage Studies BA in Heritage Studies
Exit Award(s):	BA (Hons) in Heritage Studies BA in Heritage Studies
Award Type:	Ordinary Degree & Honours Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 7 Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	180, 240
Location	Galway
Minor Award(s):	None

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Dr. John McDonagh	Chair	NUIG
Carmel Brennan	Secretary	GMIT
Dr. James Hanrahan	IOT Member	IT Sligo
Diarmuid Scully	University Member	UCC
Marie Mannion	Professional Practitioner	Galway County Council
Dr. John Towler	Institute Graduate	Graduate

Programme Board Team

John Tunney	Cian Marnell
Cillian Roden	Paul Gosling
Gerry O'Neill	Mark McCarthy
Cait Noone	Suzanne O'Shea

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on Wednesday 4th June 2014

The report is divided into the following sections:

- Background to Proposed Programme
- General Findings of the Validation Panel
- Programme-Level Findings
- Module-Level Findings

2 Background to Proposed Programme

See Programme Self Evaluation Report (SER) for more detailed information.

3 General Findings of the External Peer Review Group

After discussions the panel have decided to approve the programme with some conditions and recommendations.

Condition(s):

1. While the External Peer Review Group are of the view that all modules are current and up-to-date, they have been unable to view the documentation to verify this. Therefore the panel requests that hard copies of all module descriptors be sent to External Peer Review Group before they submit their final report. All descriptors should be complete and up-to-date.
2. The External Peer Review Group can see the merit of changing the title of the programme, and of attaining Teaching Council recognition for the subject areas of history and geography. However, if the name of the programme is to be changed to BA in Heritage Studies (with History and Geography), the programme board will need to considerably increase the amount of physical geography content and ensure that staff with appropriate expertise are available to deliver this content. Given the level of change required, this change should go through the new programme approval process or differential validation, as appropriate.
3. The External Peer Review Group does not approve the proposal relating to a 50% mark requirement for progression from level 7 to level 8.
4. The External Peer Review Group believe that calculations of the classification of level 7 awards should be on the basis of the higher of the year 3 result or a combination of year 2 and 3 results. The contribution of marks from year 2 should not be more than 30% of the overall marks. The calculation of the award should be noted on the Approved Programme Schedule.

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme board, the panel recommends that the:

Bachelor of Arts in Heritage Studies, Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Heritage Studies
Place an x in the correct box.

Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner	
Accredited subject to conditions and recommendations	X
Re-designed and re-submitted to the same External Peer Review Group after	

additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

Note:
Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined below and a response document describing the actions of the Department to address the conditions and recommendations made by the External Peer Review Group (EPRG). The term Recommendation indicates an item to which the Programme Board should give serious consideration for implementation at an early stage and which should be the subject of on-going monitoring.

4 Programme-Level Findings

This section of the report addresses the following programme level considerations:

- Evidence of reflection by the programme board to include, where relevant evidence of collaboration and engagement with other programmes from a similar discipline area within GMIT
- Demand
- Award
- Entry requirements
- Access, transfer and progression
- Retention
- Standards and Outcomes
- Programme structure
- Learning and Teaching Strategies
- Assessment Strategy
- Resource requirements
- Research Activity
- Quality Assurance
- Internationalisation
- Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internship etc.)

4.1 Reflection, including internal and external engagement

Consideration for the panel:	Is there evidence of reflection in the SER of how the programme performed since the last programmatic review.
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- External Peer Review Group would like to commend the Programme Board on the quality of documentation, which is clear and concise. It clearly reflected the high level of reflection and effort of the Programme Board in preparing for Programmatic Review.
- The External Peer Review Group also noted that the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff is very evident.

4.2 Demand

Consideration for the	Is there a need for the programme and has evidence been provided

panel:	to support it?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should clearly define and articulate the purpose of the programme, and develop a profile of graduate opportunities.
- The Programme Board should develop a marketing strategy to raise the profile of the programme which would help attract increased student numbers.

4.3 Award

Consideration for the panel:	Is the level and type of the award appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should consider accreditation of modules to be offered to external markets as single subject certificates or special purpose awards.

4.4 Entry Requirements

Consideration for the panel:	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate? Is there a relationship with this programme and further education?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the HEA and as contained in the Institute's Quality assurance Framework (QAF) COP No.4?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should explore and document the potential opportunities for meaningful collaboration between the Programme Boards on the Galway and Mayo campuses with a view to enhancing both.

4.6 Retention

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years?

	Are both elements of the First Year Experience {(i) Learning to Learn (now Learning and Skills Innovation) and (ii) PASS} embedded in this programme? Evidence of other retention initiatives?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme meet the required award standards for programmes at the proposed NFQ level (i.e. conform to QQI Award Standards)? For parent award? For exit award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)? For Special Purpose Award (if applicable)?
Overall Finding:	Yes

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol01.htm

4.8 Programme Structure

Consideration for the panel:	Is the programme structure logical and well designed and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes in terms of employment skills and career opportunities be met by this programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- The External Peer Review Group commend the Programme Board on the decision to increase the tourism content of the programme which will increase employment opportunities for graduates, and is appropriate given the programme's new location in the College of Tourism and Arts.

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the proposed programme that support Student Centred Learning (SCL)? Evidence of consideration of flexible delivery methods including eLearning?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group commends the Programme Board on the relevance of the programme which is enhanced with the inclusion of digital heritage. The programme board is encouraged to maintain the programme's currency.
- The External Peer Review Group is complimentary of the teaching methodologies of the board, and the emphasis placed on important academic skills such as literacy, academic writing, debate and personal expression.
- One of the strengths of the programme is the wide range of subject areas taught, and the interdisciplinary approach to teaching. This is remarkable given the small cohort of staff in this discipline.

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should establish a steering committee of the Heritage Studies Programme Boards as suggested in the Self Evaluation Report.
- The Institute should rethink the level of supervision afforded to students undertaking undergraduate dissertations. The ratio (currently at 8 students per hour) should be more in line with other institutes to accurately reflect staff input into the process.

4.10 Assessment Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI/HETAC Assessment and Guidelines, 2009)?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Assessment strategies are required in line with HETAC's Assessment and Standards and should be considered by the programme EPRG. See (HETAC (2009) Assessment and Standards, Section 4.6.1, page 33). Accordingly the assessment strategy should address the following (See (HETAC (2009) Assessment and Standards, Section 2.2.5, page 13) :

- Description and Rationale for the choice of assessment tasks, criteria and procedures. This should address fairness and consistency, specifically their validity, reliability and authenticity;
- Describe any special regulations;
- Regulate, build upon and integrate the module assessment strategies;
- Provide contingent strategy for cases where learners claim exemption from modules, including recognition of prior learning;
- Ensure the programme's continuous assessment workload is appropriately balanced;
- Relate to the learning and teaching strategy;
- Demonstrate how grading criteria will be developed to relate to the Institutional grading system.

4.11 Resource Requirements

Consideration for the panel:	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should ensure that reading list materials are easily accessible through GMIT library or as electronic downloads.

4.12 Research Activity

Consideration for the panel:	Evidence that Learning & Teaching is informed by research? Number of staff engaged in institutional/pedagogical research?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend the Programme Board on the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff which was evident to the Panel. The panel commends the time, energy and commitment of the Programme Board in working with students, and in particular in supervising research.
- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend the level of research and publications undertaken by the programme board, particularly in light of staff's heavy teaching load.
- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend The Programme Board's focus on developing students' research skills in this discipline, and taking them through to Masters and PhD level studies.

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should consider the conflicts that may arise in the necessary promotion of staff developing specific research specialisms and the broad teaching they undertake, and how this may be more closely aligned. One step may be to consider limiting the choice of dissertation topics afforded to students and align these more closely to staff expertise.
- The Institute should Review the QQI system of classifying research used in the SER template, as it did not always give staff due credit for research undertaken e.g. a staff member who published a monograph.

4.13 Quality Assurance

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the Institute's quality assurance procedures (QAF) have been applied and that satisfactory procedures exist for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.14 Internationalisation

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the syllabi represent an international dimension? Is there evidence of approaches to induct international students?

Overall Finding:	Yes

4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc.)

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme incorporate professional practice as per the Institute's policy on professional practice (PP)? If not, is there evidence that PP is under consideration by the programme board?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend the Programme Board on the inclusion of a work placement element which will enhance the employability of graduates and the marketability of the programme.

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board should consider offering the work placement as a mandatory module and increasing the number of ECTS attached to it.
- The Programme board should document the fact that students can gain exemptions from the work placement module through Recognition of Prior Learning, and that work placements can be in the voluntary community sector in addition to businesses.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Commendation(s)
- There is great breadth and depth to the modules on offer.

Recommendation(s):
- The Programme Board needs to clarify the special regulations on the APS, particularly with respect to grouped electives.
- The Institute should ensure that any future Programmatic Review panel has access to complete module details in sufficient time to give them due consideration, and to consider extending the length of time afforded to panel visits.
- While some modules are very detailed and contain up-to-date source lists, others need considerable updating including Heritage Tourism, Natural Heritage & Geography 2, Rural Field Studies and Rural Development. All modules should be reviewed and updated in this regard.

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in each Module Descriptor?

Overall Finding:	Yes

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

6.0 Student Findings

3 students presented representing 4th year, 3rd year and 1st year. All three were mature students.

All students enjoyed the programme and found it interesting, although it was also perceived as challenging. It was suggested that students would benefit from a resource room. Other suggestions for improvement were the inclusion of beginners Irish in year 1, the introduction of a work placement, and improved communication in relation to learning assistance, the mature student scholarship and library facilities.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement
The Programme Board participated in the College of Tourism and Arts focus group and also held meeting with heritage personnel in the region. A questionnaire was conducted with students in the College of Tourism and Art.
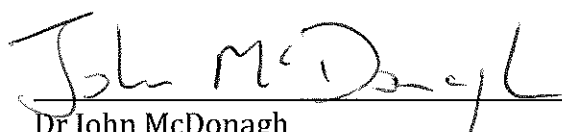
8.0 Future Plans

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here.

Consideration for the panel:	Evidence that the programme board considered and identified opportunities and signalled proposals for related new programme and award development.
Overall Finding:	Yes

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

Dr John McDonagh
Chairperson

Date: 27/4/2015