



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

Named Award:	Bachelor of Business, Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Business, Administration & Information Systems Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Information Systems Management
Exit Award(s):	None
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
Billy Bennett	Chair	LYIT
Gerard MacMichael	Secretary	GMIT
Damien Courtney	IOT Member	CIT
Dr. James Cunningham	University Member	NUIG
Eddie Morris	Professional Practitioner	SAP
Liam Forde	Institute Graduate	Fidelity Investments

Programme Board Team

Dr. Sean Duignan	Dr. Noel Harvey	Deirdre McHugh
Carmel Brennan	Maureen Melvin	Ivan McPhilips
Marie Finnegan	Carol Killarney	Lucia Cloonan
Monica Nielsen	Kevin McDonagh	Joe Farrell
Dr. Owen Foley	Phelim Murnion	Clare O'Grady
Clare O'Connor	Rona Mac Gearailt	David Palcic
Isabel Buchan		

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on the 18th 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 External Peer Review Group recommend validation of the programme for one additional intake (September 2014), with some recommendations.

The External Peer Review Group noted that a replacement programme, Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Business Information Systems, has now been approved by the Academic Council. The Bachelor of Science is scheduled to commence in September 2015.

Overall the External Peer Review Group noted that there was a limited self-evaluation review process undertaken and that this reflected in the SER.

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group strongly recommends that transition / bridging arrangements be put in place to facilitate students commencing the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Information Systems Management in September 2014 transferring to the new programme. *Note: The Head of School confirmed that they did not propose that students will transfer to the new programme. The old programme will be phased out so the recommendation is not necessary.*
- The External Peer Review Group recommend that the programme panel should ensure that future External Peer Review Groups have the opportunity to meet in person with a group of students.

Commendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend the enthusiasm of staff and level of engagement with the External Peer Review Group.

The External Peer Review Group noted that the newly validated replacement programme had addressed many of the issues raised by the panel.

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

Bachelor of Business, Administration & Information Systems Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Information Systems Management

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 a condition 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). In this report, the term Condition is used to indicate an action or amendment which in the view of the EPRG must be undertaken prior to the commencement of the programme. Conditions are mandatory if the programme is to be approved. 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

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

4.2 Demand

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Is there a need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.3 Award

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

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group recommend the Programme Board consider opportunities for development of part-time programmes (minor/SPA) in B.I.S.

4.4 Entry Requirements

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

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.6 Retention

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group noted that first year retention was identified as a problem on the programme. The Programme Board should prioritise retention initiatives, particularly focusing on first year retention. The External Peer Review Group also noted that the title of the new programme is a good descriptor of the new programme outcomes and hence addresses the issue of prospective students' understanding of what the programme is about.

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

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

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group took note that student feedback was positive in relation to the approachability of staff.

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group recommends that the Programme Board should review how blended / e-learning can enhance the learning experience of students, leveraging the experience of experienced users of Moodle.

4.10 Assessment Strategies

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

Commendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend the Programme Board on the use of a range of assessment instruments and innovative continuous assessment, and the move away from reliance on terminal exams. This is the reflective of International best practice in Business schools

4.11 Resource Requirements

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

4.12 Research Activity

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

4.13 Quality Assurance

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.14 Internationalisation

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the syllabi represent an international dimension? Is there evidence of approaches to induct international students?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group noted the view of the Programme Board that the newly validated BSc (Hons) will be more attractive to the International Market. The External Peer Review Group strongly endorses the Internationalisation of the programme curriculum.

4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc)

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group recommends that the Department / School should develop an accredited and resourced Work Placement module. The Work Placement model should be benchmarked against relevant models used in other colleges. External Peer Review Group members from Industry stressed the importance of Internships and of on-going industry engagement.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Commendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group would like to commend the Programme Board on the development of 'Transition to Work' module on the new programme and a wide range of electives.

Recommendation(s):

- The External Peer Review Group recommend that the programme board should ensure that new technologies are addressed in module content and delivery and are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

(The following are comments from the student group)

- Electives in Year 4 need to be appropriate to graduates of the BB in Administration and IS Programme. Would prefer IT options rather than HR and Marketing options.
- Need to manage co-ordination where more than one lecturer is delivering the module.

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in each Module Descriptor?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules (The following are comments from the student group)

5.2.1 Module (DBMS 2)

Recommendation(s):

- DBMS 2 is very theoretical in nature and some of the content could have been addressed in DBMS 1.

5.2.2 Module (Visual Design)

Recommendation(s):

- Visual Design should be in Year 1 instead of Year 3.

6.0 Student Findings

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here. Include overall number of students and numbers from different stages.

3 Students were interviewed by phone:

The *first student* has just completed year 3. He said it was a good programme and there was a good mix of IT and Business. At the end of the course, the degree was quite similar to a business degree. He thought a broader IT programme would have been more beneficial.

DBMS 1 was ok and most of the students were new to it, but most of his classmates found DBMS 2 a massive jump in year 3, most of the students struggled and felt they should have learned the basics of DBMS 2 in Y2.

In Y4 electives are not what they really hoped for – for example for Service Marketing the students have not a suitable background. People Management is a HR module. They suggest an IT module to pick from would be more beneficial.

There was a student rep elected in this group each year and there were meetings with the programme board in relation to feedback from students.

The *second student* has just completed year 3. She said she enjoyed this course very much. She liked the theory and practicals of all the modules. She would have liked more projects and individual work. She really liked the DBMS module and found it interesting. She would like to have had 'Visual Design' in Year 1 instead of Y3. She was aware of a student rep who could represent her at programme board level.

The *third student* has just completed year 1 and came in through the Galway Rural Development scheme as a mature student. She initially found the experience daunting but with the support from the GRD she came in well prepared.

When asked about the high number of drop-outs she thinks that younger students did not come from a working background and were not used to committing to early mornings like the mature students. There was a good mix of mature and L.C. students in her class.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here.


8.0 Future Plans

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here.

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

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:



Billy Bennett,
Chairperson.

Date:

24 April 2015.