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 Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology
Exit Award(s):	Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology
Award Type:	Higher Certificate, Degree and Honours Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 6 Level 7 Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	120, 180, 240
Minor Award(s):	Higher Certificate

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Maria Kyne – Chairperson	Head of Faculty, Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology	LIT
Dermot O'Donovan	Head of Department	GMIT, Letterfrack
Dr Alan Hore	Assistant Head of School, School of Real Estate & Construction Economics	DIT
Dr. Declan Phillips	Department of Civil Engineering and Materials Science	UL
Niall Taylor	Industry Member	Taylor Architects, Co Mayo
Gerard Nicholson	Graduate	RPS, Galway

Programme Board Team

Gerard Mac Michael		
Patrick Ryan	Siobhan Cawley	Evan Duggan
Elisha Mc Namara	Shane Newell	Denise Dillon
Emer Maughan	Fiona Watson	Jim O Connor
Irene Hayden	Barry Gantly	Gundo Sohn
Mary Rogers	Malcolm Hosty	Wayne Gibbons

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on the approval of the above programmes.

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

The Programme has been approved with some recommendations.

Generally the panel felt that the Self Evaluation document was well presented; there was excellent engagement with the panel and questions were well answered. The engagement with stakeholders and focus groups was also considered very positive.

The E-portfolio proposal was commended as a great way to showcase the students work, the optional 5 credit module "The Next Step" was well received as it gave the students an insight into how to prepare a CV, a LinkedIn profile, and mock interviews. In addition it also provided an insight into the experiences of graduates in their first 100 days in a job.

No major concerns were raised, however some recommendations were suggested and these will be outlined later in the document.

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

The Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architectural Technology, the Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology and the Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology are:

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/or 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

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):

- High level of students getting jobs on completion of the course.
- E-Portfolio an excellent idea for students to showcase their work
- The Next Step Module very positive

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Building Surveying – review the title as it does not reflect the content normally included in a Building Surveying module. The Panel suggests the title "Surveying (Building)".
- Review the student workload to ensure that it is in line with the ECTS credit norm workload of 25 hours per credit
- The Panel supports the change of module title from Dissertation to Technical Report. The aim is to align the academic writing with the project work. This module would require supervision by the lecturer, and include the essentials of academic writing including a literature review, research methodology, abstract etc. The learning outcomes and assessment methodologies and weighting should be reviewed accordingly. Specifically it was felt that 40% was too large a weighting to give to the presentation.
- The Panel recommends that a Student handbook is to be prepared for the technical report which includes a detailed marking scheme and clarity around the presentation.
- Develop Report Writing guidelines for the studio modules to support students in their academic writing from year 1 to year 4.
- Based on feedback from both students and stakeholders, the Programme Board should consider introducing a meaningful work placement module
- Module descriptors for modules that are assessed through 100% continuous assessment need to provide more detail on the assessment strategy and each component of the continuous assessment
- The programme team should avoid where possible over assessing the students and not unnecessarily assess the same learning outcomes repeatedly. Recommended that the learning outcomes be made more descriptive. Also review the number of Learning Outcomes, for example 12 learning outcomes for a 5 credit module would seem excessive.
- Review module descriptors' and assessment strategies. All modules should show a reassessment strategy.
- Review reading lists and update
- Staff should all be using Moodle as a platform for delivery of the modules.

4.2 Demand

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

Commendation(s):
- Excellent Programme
- High level of students getting jobs on completion of the course.

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Work Placement – Consider the inclusion of a meaningful work placement bearing in mind feedback from stakeholders and students

4.3 Award

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

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

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

Commendation(s):
- Tutors/mentors assigned to first year students was commended by the panel.
- Lecturers engage with students as much as possible
- Regular monitoring of first years with student and other lecturers
- Studio Tutor

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- As a significant number of students may find report writing difficult, introducing report writing from 1st year is seen as a beneficial way forward, possibly included in the Learning and Skills Innovation module and studio modules
- The Panel supports and encourages staff to develop and monitor initiatives for student retention.

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

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- None.

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):
- Well Designed and Logical structure to the programme
- High level of students getting jobs on completion of the course.

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Refer to additional recommendations in 4.1. Incorporate Project Management planning into a project that students are already doing as part of the programme
- Consider having an Engineer come to the studio for initial scheme design stage of projects
- Consider more module integration and linked assessment

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

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

Commendation(s):
- Excellent exposure to CAD and BIM

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The Panel encourages the continued support of staff development, particularly for CPD and BIM training, and acknowledges the high percentage of staff with teaching and learning qualifications.
- Staff should all be using Moodle as a platform for delivery of the modules.

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.

Commendation(s):
- None
Condition(s):
- None.
Recommendation(s):
- Module descriptors for modules that are assessed through100% continuous assessment need to provide more detail on the assessment strategy and each component
- The programme team should avoid where possible over assessing the students and not unnecessarily assess the same learning outcomes repeatedly. The Panel recommends that the learning outcomes be made more descriptive. The number of Learning Outcomes need to be reviewed, for example 12 learning outcomes for a 5 credit module would seem excessive.
- Review module descriptors' and assessment strategies. All modules should show a reassessment strategy.
- Review reading lists and update

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

Commendation(s):
- Excellent use and exposure of CAD and BIM for students

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- The Panel encourages the continued support of staff development, particularly for CPD and BIM training, and acknowledges the high percentage of staff with teaching and learning qualifications.

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):
- Some students engaged in PhD research

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- A strategy should be developed to support Research. This should include staff and student research and initially linking 4th year projects to industry where appropriate.

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

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Review introducing work placement for students internationally. Feedback from the Professional Practitioner was that students/graduates still want to travel after college. In recognition of this project chosen are often European projects where students have to take into account different regulations, weather conditions, etc.

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):

- Professional practice is embedded into the studio modules particularly in 4th year, by mirroring what happens in practice.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The Programme Board should consider the introduction of meaningful work placement in the programme in light of the feedback from stakeholders.

  Note: The value of Work Placement for students cannot be underestimated in terms of self-development and experience. However there is a need to ensure that it is done properly, and planned well in advance.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The Panel recommends that the proposed name of the Building Surveying module be changed to *'Surveying (Building)'* as the content of the proposed module does not reflect the normal content of a Building Surveying module.

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

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

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):
• None.

Recommendation(s):
• Review module descriptors and assessment strategies as recommended.

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules
5.2.1 Module Title - Details and Designs

Commendation(s):
• None

Condition(s):
• None.

Recommendation(s):
• All years - Details and Designs modules renamed to Details and Design Studio

5.2.2 Module Title - Detail & Detail Studies 4

Commendation(s):
• None

Condition(s):
• None.

Recommendation(s):
• Detail & Design studies 4 – project module to be renamed to Detail and Design 4

5.2.3 Module Title - CAD 4 / BIM

Commendation(s):
• None

Condition(s):
• None.

Recommendation(s):
• Name Change CAD 4 /BIM module to be renamed to Building Information Modelling 4.

5.2.4 Module Title – Introduction to Structures

Commendation(s):
• Introduction to Structures moved from yr. 1 to yr. 2 and renamed as Structural Element Design – this change was requested by the students

Condition(s):

• None.

Recommendation(s):
• None

5.2.5 Module Title - Building Surveying Module

Commendation(s):
• None

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- The Panel recommends that the proposed name of the Building Surveying module be changed to *'Surveying (Building)'* as the content of the proposed module does not reflect the normal content of a Building Surveying module.

6.0 Student Findings

Eight students took part in the feedback session. These included a mix of Architectural Technology, Construction Management and Quantity Surveyor students. Overall the feedback was positive in terms of course content, job opportunities, acquiring knowledge of software packages and where appropriate, the 6 month work placement. The Work Placement was seen as hugely important for self-development, acquiring new skills, and contacts. However the Architectural Technical course students felt it was too short.

Fourth Year Architectural Technology was seen as hugely important. It was also noted that more achievable deadlines for assessments be introduced in advance of the examinations period, and also more time with lecturers would help. In addition, the allocation of a year 4 resource room was suggested and seen as a necessity. The access to ECDL in first year was also seen as helpful to familiarise students with the various IT packages.

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Structured Components should be in 3rd Year as well.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Commendation(s):
- Engagement with stakeholders was seen as very positive.

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- None

8.0 Future Plans

It is the intention of the programme board to further develop the E-Portfolio as it is seen as an excellent way for students to showcase their work. The continued coordination of work placement, with a view to developing a more structured plan in advance of the work placement is intended. In addition, employers should be engaged in the pre placement of students in terms of PRSI, Terms and Conditions etc.

The attrition rate will continue to be monitored. Further develop the "next steps" module for relevance after college in terms of developing skills for interviews, career planning etc. CPD also needs to be monitored.

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

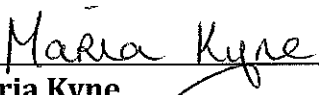**Commendation(s):**
- None

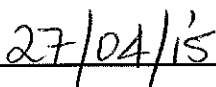**Condition(s):**
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Report writing year 1 to year 4 recommended in order to get students familiar with academic writing. Guidelines for staff and students should be prepared.
- Consider an option for meaningful work placement bearing in mind feedback from stakeholders and students.

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

Maria Kyne

Maria Kyne
Chairperson

Date: 27/04/15