



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

<b>Named Award:</b>	Bachelor of Business
<b>Programme Title(s):</b>	Bachelor of Business (Honours) Bachelor of Business
<b>Exit Award(s):</b>	Higher Certificate in Business
<b>Award Type:</b>	Degree & Honours Degree
<b>Award Class:</b>	Major
<b>NFQ Level:</b>	Level 8 Level 7
<b>ECTS / ACCS Credits:</b>	240, 180
<b>Locations:</b>	Mayo
<b>Minor Award(s):</b>	N/A

### Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Billy Bennett	Chair	LYIT
Sarah Searson	GMIT (Secretary )	GMIT
Damien Courtney	IOT Member	CIT
Chris Barry	University Member	NUIG
Tom Canavan	Professional Practitioner	Self Employed
Michael Baynes	Institute Graduate	Graduate

### Programme Board Team

Janine Mc Ginn	Deaglan O'Riain	David Cashman
Michael Gill	Celene Dunphy	Brian Mulhern
Shane Byrne	Declan Hoban	Egbert Polski
Caroline Clarke	Jessica Lysaght	Niamh Hearn
Hugh McBride	Clodagh Geraghty	Deirdre Garvey

## 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

After review and discussions the External Peer Review Panel have approved the programmes, with some recommendations for improvements. The Panel have noted a number of commendations for the Programme Boards (PBs). There have been no conditions made for the reaccreditation of the programmes.

The Panel were satisfied with the structure of the programmes and found combination and level of modules on offer to be an advantage. The Panel encourage the PBs to develop inter-module assessment in combination with capstone modules. The Panel strongly encourages the PBs to develop minor and special purpose awards to meet local and regional needs. The Panel also recommends that the programmes further embed, broaden and make more explicit the modules relating to new venture development.

The Panel commended the PBs on their work and found the documentation clear and strong and subsequent interview/meeting to be open and cohesive. The Panel acknowledged that the Campus underwent a Programmatic Review two years ago, and the PBs was well prepared for this review which now synchronises the programmes with all programmes across the Institute.

Having considered the documentation and discussed it with the Programme Boards and students, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

### Bachelor of Business (Honours)

#### Bachelor of Business

*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 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 documents that takes account of the 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 Boards 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

##### **Commendation(s):**

- The Panel commend the Programme Board Teams on the quality of the SER documentation
- The Panel commend the Programme Board Teams on the range of assessment methodologies employed in different modules. The Panel noted that the issue of timely feedback on C. A. has been addressed in recent years. The Panel also noted that students all receive assessment schedules at the beginning of the year.
- The panel noted that the programmes has undergone a Programmatic Review in 2012, and the PBs has made proposals for further changes. The Panel strongly support the development of new Work Experience module.
- The SER has clearly identified challenges, including changes in the learner profile, declining numbers on some programmes and improved promotion.

##### **Recommendation(s):**

- The panel support the aspiration to develop an ab initio L8 programme in parallel with L7 entry. The proposal should take cognisance of competitive offerings, including offerings in the Galway campus with the GMIT Business School and in the CUA and other HEIs.
- The panel strongly support the inclusion of the new Work Experience module. The programme teams should adopt or adapt a detailed work experience manual or handbook. The Erasmus work placement module also offers useful opportunities.

## 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

The PBs are confident in the structure and programmes they deliver within the resources available to them, students are progressing to level 9.

Overall student feedback was positive in terms of the programmes and their recognition.

## 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):

- Groupings of electives could form the basis for a named award specialisation e.g. – Digital Marketing/Entrepreneurship/Language.
- Consider offering named awards to reflect specialisations which may be built into stage 3 and 4 of the programmes.

## 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

Students who entered the programme after completing the Foundation Course found it prepares them for learning, particularly for those out of education for a period of time. Many of these students go on to level 8.

### Recommendation(s):

- The programme should enhance entry opportunities by maximising marketing efforts, including:
  - Develop a distinctive, identifiable Web presence for the Mayo campus and specifically for its programmes.
  - Establish relationships with business, civic and community leaders
  - Increase school visits
  - Open days.

## 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

### Recommendation(s):

- The panel recommend that the Department should develop minor awards; Special Purpose Awards (SPAs) to meet continuing professional development and civic needs of region, and should include civil engagement opportunities for students.

#### 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

Small class sizes are a very positive element in this programme. Tutors are assigned by specific years, they operate an open door policy and counsellors, chaplains and workshops are available and staff are very much aware of the student needs and provide learning support.

In relation to the BB programme and incoming numbers the Department is making a conscious effort to engage with secondary schools, and increase visibility and understanding of the programme especially in the Leaving Certificate bracket.

#### Commendation(s):

- The panel welcome retention and recruitment initiatives in place, including the programme focus on induction, withdrawal forms, exit interviews and the tutor system.

#### 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)?  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](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

#### Commendation(s):

- The panel commend the programme board on the extent of module sharing, and the common first year model adopted.
- The Panel overall was satisfied with the structure of the programmes reviewed.

**Recommendation(s):**

- The panel strongly support the introduction of the new Work Experience module. The programme team should revise or develop a detailed work experience manual or handbook to support this. It was noted the Erasmus work placement module also offers useful opportunities and should be explored. Consider extending the pilot to become a core part of the programme.

**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

E-Learning is very evident, moodle is used throughout the programme.

**Commendation(s):**

- The panel commend the programme review board on the level of engagement they had with the panel, conducted in a spirit of enhancement and collaboration.

**Recommendation(s):**

- The panel encourages use of moodle to support learning and enhance student feedback.
- The panel encourages further analysis of retention (e.g. by time of year, reasons for leaving)

**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

First year students were happy with the break-down for requirements between continuous assessments and exams, the time allocated and the percentage allocated.

Award year students however, expressed a desire for more study time nearer exam times and found continuous assessment deadlines were too close to exams, adding to the study workload.

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

<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

However the PBs commented that a number of classrooms do not have multi-media facilities.

#### 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

International links have been developed with Spain and there is a greater opportunity to offer Erasmus.

#### Recommendation(s):

- The panel recommend that the Programme Boards consider how the programmes can better facilitate entry & integration of International students.

#### 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

**Commendation(s):**

- The Panel noted that the Department has undergone a Programmatic Review in 2012, but has made some proposals for further changes. The Panel strongly support the development of the new Work Experience module.

**5.0 Module-Level Findings: General**

**Recommendation(s):**

- The panel suggest the Programme Boards consider introducing further larger modules (10 ECTS) to be delivered in a single semester. Consider introducing capstone modules in semester 6 and /or semester 8, for example – Business Planning Project; Enterprise Development. This could also facilitate increased cross-modular integrated assessment.
- The panel suggest the Programme Boards should broaden the scope of the “new venture creation” module to a wider vision of entrepreneurship.
- Students recommend that the following modules should be core/mandatory:
  - Employment Law (instead of small business management)
  - Personal Finance.

**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**

**6.0 Student Findings**

**6 Students**

The student panel offered a good representation of age and gender. Some of them had taken part in focus groups for the programmatic review.

They found the programme challenging. Students commented that coming from the Foundation Programme gave them good preparation for full time studies. The part-time and mature students didn't do the Learning to Learn module.

Continuous Assessment spread throughout the year is positive. Students felt getting the dates for completion early in September would be helpful for time-management.

Students are keen that work experience be embedded early in the programme to assist them in deciding in potential pathways and directions as there was a wide variety of modules on offer. They suggested that marketing and digital marketing could be developed as one module, it would be useful for their CV, also offering a module similar to 4<sup>th</sup> year Strategic Management, new venture development demonstrated skills to prospective employers.



## 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.*