



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

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| Named Award: | Bachelor of Arts |
| Programme Title(s): | Bachelor of Arts in Art and Design Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Art Bachelor of Arts in Art and Design (Flexible Delivery Mode) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Design in Textiles |
| Exit Award(s): | None |
| Award Type: | Ordinary Degree Honours Degree |
| Award Class: | Major |
| NFQ Level: | Level 7 Level 8 |
| ECTS / ACCS Credits: | 180 240 |
| Minor Award(s): | None |
| Location: | Centre for the Creative Arts and Media |

Panel Members

| Name | Position | Organisation |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dr Joe Ryan | Chairperson | Athlone Institute of Technology |
| Aedin O hEocha | Secretary | Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology |
| Orla Flynn | IOT Member | Crawford College of Tourism & Arts |
| Stephanie McBride | University Member | Dublin City University |
| Philip Delmere | Professional Practitioner | |
| Selma Makela | Institute Graduate | |

Programme Board Team

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Cait Noone | John Brady | Fergus Delargy |
| Sarah Searson | John Langan | Treasa Ní Mhaoláin |
| Trish Bushe | Gavin Murphy | Katherine West |
| Christopher John Wallis | Petra Nelissen | Jim Vaughan |
| Hazel Walker | Tony Magner | Austin Ivers |
| John Molloy | Seamus McGuinness | Suzanne O'Shea |
| Denis Farrell | Peter Conroy | Michael Minnis |
| Deirdre O'Mahoney | Ger Leslie | Mel French |
| Cyril Briscoe | Andrew Boyle | Fiona Byrne |
| Sioban Piercy | Aidan Linehan | Blaise Drummond |
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1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on June 20th, 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

The External Peer Review Group (EPRG) met with the programme design teams and, following a wide ranging discussion, recommends the revalidation of all programmes under review subject to a number of conditions and recommendations.

As the programme teams are proposing to submit a number of new programmes for validation with a view to commencing them in September, 2015 there were no changes proposed to the existing level 7 and level 8 programmes.

The EPRG commends the programme teams for the huge amount of work that went into the preparation of the SER documents. However, the EPRG were unable to consider the validation of the proposed new programmes as part of the programmatic review process. The EPRG recommends that the programme teams continue with the proposed reconfiguration of the programmes offered by the Centre for Creative Arts and Media and suggests that the restructuring needs to be articulated much more clearly than it has been to date.

The EPRG acknowledges the positive engagement with the programme boards and commends the enthusiasm and commitment shown by them.

The EPRG commends staff of the Centre for Creative Arts and Media for their support of students and the flexibility they offer to students who require it.

The EPRG fully supports the aspirations and willingness of staff with regard to exploring the possibility of offering a new Masters/Postgraduate programme.

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

Place an x in the correct box.

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| 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). 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

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| <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 to include 1 recommendation |

Commendation:

- The EPRG commends the programme teams for the huge amount of work that went into the preparation of the SER documents.

Recommendation:

- Despite the work that went into the preparation of the SER documents, the EPRG feels that there is a lack of clarity and focus in the documents and a missed opportunity to put in place new and well-structured offerings at this time. The EPRG recommends that the programme teams work together to develop and articulate a coherent vision of where they would like to go over the next number of years. The EPRG further recommends that the programme teams agree a forum for discussion around future developments and interdisciplinary issues and that they take responsibility for the further development of the programmes on offer.

4.2 Demand

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| <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 to include 2 recommendations |

Recommendation:

- Given the falling demand for these programmes, it is recommended that the programmes boards work to develop relationships with providers in the FE sector.
- The EPRG further suggests that staff work to raise the profile of the Centre for the Creative Arts and Media nationally and to build more awareness of the work being carried out and of the programmes on offer.

4.3 Award

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| <i>Consideration for the panel:</i> | Is the level and type of the award appropriate? |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i> | Yes to include 1 recommendation |

Recommendation:

- It is clear to the EPRG that the part-time programme is valued by both staff and students. The EPRG recommends renewed efforts on the part of GMIT to discuss a range of options with regard to P/T offerings including the development of Special Purpose Awards (SPAs) which may go some way to meeting demand while also providing a viable route to a degree.

4.4 Entry Requirements

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| <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? |
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| <i>Overall Finding:</i> | Yes |
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4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

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| <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> | See recommendation below |

Recommendation:

- The EPRG fully supports the aspirations and willingness of staff with regard to exploring the possibility of offering a new Masters/Postgraduate programme. As there is currently no progression opportunities for graduates of the Level 8 programme at GMT, the panel recommends that the programme board work towards developing a Level 9 programme in the near future.

4.6 Retention

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| <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 |

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

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| <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

4.8 Programme Structure

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| <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 to include 1 condition |

Conditions:

- The deficiency in the exposure of students to digital design software must be addressed as a matter of urgency. At a minimum, an elective covering this topic must be offered to students.

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

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| <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 to include 2 recommendations |

Recommendations:

- The EPRG recognises the importance of the part-time programme. This programme cannot be seen as second class as it is a valid programme that allows students to achieve the same award as full time students, but taken in a different mode. It is a very distinctive programme as it is the only part-time programme of its kind in Ireland. It is valued by both lecturers and students.
- The EPRG strongly recommends that a part-time programme continues to be offered. The part-time programme should be afforded proper recognition within GMIT. The programme board needs to integrate and pool resources between the full and part time programmes. Under the Connacht-Ulster Alliance this programme will help contribute to the rebranding of this Institute as a Technical University.

4.10 Assessment Strategies

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| <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.

4.11 Resource Requirements

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| <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 to include 5 recommendations |

Recommendations:

- The EPRG recommends that there is more equitable access to resources for all staff and students on both the full and part time programmes.
- There should be broader open discussion with regard to access to resources, equipment and technical support across the different specialisms.
- There should be greater engagement amongst academic staff with Moodle.
- Given the falling number of students enrolled on the level 7 programmes, consideration should be given to availing of the opportunity to move the spare capacity of both academic staff and resources into the provision of a new Masters/Postgraduate programme.
- It is recommended that there is a review of how students access technical resources and equipment.

4.12 Research Activity

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| <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 |

- It was noted there is good engagement in research by lecturers in this department.

4.13 Quality Assurance

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

4.14 Internationalisation

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| <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 to include 1 recommendation |

Recommendation:

- The EPRG recommends the development of an international advisory board to raise the profile of the Centre for Creative Arts and Media. The centre and the programmes on offer should be more broadly advertised by GMIT both nationally and internationally.

4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc)

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| <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 to include 1 recommendation |

Although there is no work placement at present, it has been considered by the programme board.

Recommendation:

- The EPRG recommends that elements of work placement should be included in this programme. Students indicated that even a short placement would help them in developing a context for their work and how it might be applied in the real world.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Conditions:

- The EPRG formally requests that the programme boards revisit the reading lists included in the Module Descriptors with a view to updating them as they are currently out of date.

Recommendation:

- The EPRG recommends that visiting lecturers, e.g. designers, graduates and local stakeholders, are invited to speak with students on a variety of topics. This would assist students in establishing links, which is very important and can be difficult to achieve.

Module Assessment Strategies

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

6.0 Student Findings

Nine students attended the meeting. There were seven full time students and one part time student from the Centre of Creative Arts and Media campus and also one part time student from the Mayo Campus. They were from a mix of years, from 1st year to 4th year (full time students) and 5th year (part time students).

The Galway part time student was passionate about this programme and enjoyed it immensely. She felt that the part time programme should be branded and marketed as it is unique in Ireland and there are always people interested in the programme when they hear about it. She also felt that the fee was very reasonable and the college could reassess this with a view to increasing the fee should the facilities and access to resources improve as there was a lack of equipment available.

The Mayo Campus part time student said that the use of Moodle was not straightforward due to the technical glitches that occurred regularly. One of the best things about the programme was the interaction between students and lecturers and the great facilities at the Mayo Campus. The student felt, however, that there were very rigid rules being implemented by management and the budgetary constraints prevented field trips etc. Also there were meetings scheduled where the lecturers had to attend which took away from class time.

One full time student also felt that staff meetings interfered with student access to lecturers and with class time. He said that five students in his year alone would complete a Masters here if it was available.

Students felt that work placement would be hugely beneficial (for example to see how a studio operates) and visiting lecturers would be a brilliant idea to get a greater insight into the industry.

One student had entered her textile design at an RDS show and got a lot of great comments. However, people seemed to be totally unaware that GMIT offered an Art and Design programme and its standing nationally appears to be very low.

The students felt that there was a lack of technical support available for various types of equipment. It was suggested that if students were required to take a and a safe pass course then they would be able to handle most equipment themselves without the need for the assistance of technicians.

One student commented that the textile lecturers should be up skilled on the use of new technology including Photoshop and Illustrator as they are an integral part of design and required within industry.

Recommendation:

The EPRG discovered from talking to students, that their college lives were disrupted during the SER process when lecturers had to attend meetings. This was especially evident for part time students who only attend classes one day per week, when these classes were cancelled a number of times.

The SER process must be made more efficient in the future as the college is responsible for the quality it delivers to its students.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

With regard to the stakeholder engagement, the EPRG indicated that it was great to see the links to external examiners reports included in the SER document.

8.0 Future Plans

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| <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 to include 3 recommendations |

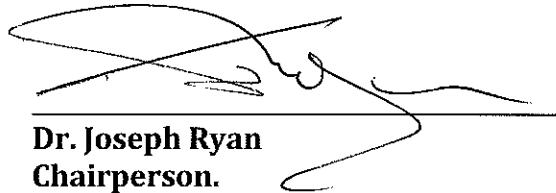
Recommendations:

- The EPRG recommends that the programme board create a forum for discussing interdisciplinary developments as they need to take responsibility for their future. The programme teams should have more confidence in the decision making processes of the institute in getting the programme to the next phase. The panel urges the programme board to communicate openly with GMIT and to discuss the sustainability and viability of a new Masters/postgraduate programme. The panel fully support this prospect and believes that it will benefit the Centre in the future.
- The EPRG recommends that the Bachelor of Arts in Art and Design and the Bachelor of Arts in Film and Documentary become more integrated. The panel feels that there is a huge opportunity for the development of interdisciplinary programmes and this should be reviewed by the programme board.
- The EPRG found that the students were very proud of these programmes and the CCAM but realised that it does not have a national profile. There is an enormous opportunity to position this Centre for the Creative Arts and Media on a national platform and this will help it gain the respect it deserves in industry and across the

country. The panel acknowledges that this is a young organisation at the start of something and so time is needed to expand and develop a known profile.

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:



**Dr. Joseph Ryan
Chairperson.**

Date:

23.7.15.