

EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

1.	Title of Programme:	BB (H) in Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness (four year ab-initio degree), L8 BB (Ordinary) in Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness (three year ab-initio degree), L7 HC in Business in Agriculture (two year certificate) L6				
2.	School / Centre:	School of Business and the Department of Management in association with the Mounbellew Agricultural College.				
3.	Duration:	4 years, 3 years and 2 years.				
4.	NFQ Level:	Level 8, Level 7, and Level 6.				
5.	Type of Review:	New Programmes:	Yes:	√	No:	
		Differential Validation:	Yes:		No:	
6.	Date of Review:	Thursday 18 th June 2015				
7.	Delivery Mode:	Full-time	√	Part-time	√	Blended
8.	Panel Members:	Dr Frank McMahon (chair) Dr Marie Mahon, NUIG Dr Maura Farrell, NUIG Peter Melinn, AIT Dr Eoin Finneran, Agriculture Consultant Dr Edna Curley, NUIG Michael Hannon, Registrar, GMIT				
10	Programme Rationale:	There are four prime reasons why these programmes should be offered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increasing demand for agricultural education and training in expanding agricultural, applied environmental, agribusiness and agri-service areas. • The continued and increasing demand for existing programmes offered and the value of these programmes to the BMW Region and beyond. • The requirement to develop programmes that address the training needs of new technologies in the industry and to develop programmes that enable graduates to innovate and be competitive in the industry. • The necessity to adapt/adjust existing modules in programmes or to add additional modules in order to satisfy criteria for identified job opportunities and careers for graduates of programmes and to develop a level 8 ab-initio degree. 				
11.	Potential Demand for Entry:	40 students will be admitted to this programme.				

12.	Stakeholder Engagement:	<p>As part of the new programme development process the programme board consulted with industry/employers and graduates of the programme. A number of representatives of industry were invited to partake in a focus group for both BB Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness and BSc Agriculture and Environment Management programme suites. The representatives that were able to attend the consultation forum were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oliver Burke – Teagasc (Business Unit Manager – Roscommon and Longford) • Michael Owens – Drystock Farmer • Joe Naughton – Aurivo Co-operative • Stephen Lee – Dairy Farmer • Cathal McCormack – Alltech (Animal Feed, Nutrition & Health
13.	Graduate Demand:	<p>There is a demand locally and nationally and internationally for graduates of agriculture-based degrees who have the necessary skills to work in agriculture-based industries. This programme is designed to address these needs. Demand for agricultural programmes is soaring in Ireland at present, with the number of learners stating first preferences for agriculture and horticulture programmes rising from 606 in 2007 to 1409 in 2013.</p> <p>Due to a myriad of environmental challenges agriculture in the future will be more diverse, knowledge intensive and more green. Hence this programme places a strong emphasis on sustainable agriculture and sustainable development. There is an increasing demand for graduates with skills in applied ecology, and this revised programme places a major emphasis on this area.</p> <p>Current Government policy, as outlined in the Harvest 2010 document, indicates a growth in employment in all major areas of Agriculture and the Agri Food sector over the next decade.</p>
14.	Entry Requirements:	<p>Students will have to meet the entry requirements as indicated in GMIT's Academic Code of Practice No 4 (Access, Transfer and Progression).</p>
15.	Programme Management:	<p>The programme will be offered as a full-time programme. Students who wish to take the programme on a part-time basis will be facilitated to do so.</p>
16.	Module syllabi:	<p>Deemed appropriate but refer to section 19 below for any specific findings and recommendations</p>
17.	Learning Teaching & Assessment (LTA):	<p>Student centred learning is achieved by various means, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratory sessions with an approximate 16:1 student: staff ratio. Such sessions allow for interaction between the lecturer and the student on a one to one basis and thus greatly facilitate communication between students and staff.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The year 4 project allows the student to analyse various work tasks and problems, design and execute a specific project, and to present this work as a thesis. The project thus allows the students to excel in a particular area, and to communicate their results to others. This is the epitome of student-centred learning, where students are facilitated to work on their own, to manage a major project, and to present their findings. • The industrial placement in year 2 allows the student to apply the knowledge and skills in an industrial setting. The students are given the skills required to be successful in the workplace, and to plan and execute the various work tasks presented to them. • Many of the assignments completed as part of the continuous assessment of a module feature outcomes such as individual or group presentations. • Use of in-class activities to encourage active learning. • Pedagogic approaches which encourage students to facilitate their own learning. • A range of different teaching methodologies are used throughout the programme and this helps students with different learning styles.
18.	Access Transfer and Progression (ATP):	As per GMITs Code of Practice No 4 on Access, Transfer and Progression
19.	Findings and Recommendations:	<p>Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:</p> <p>The panel are pleased to recommend for approval all three programmes as presented subject to the following recommendations with no special conditions attaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the proposal of allowing bi-directional transfer with the related science programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The details to be worked out with the Registrar and approved through Institute procedures. • Research methods should be incorporated into the L7 programme. • Ensure reading material is up-to –date. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Danger of over-reliance on core-Teagasc manuals ○ More emphasis on peer-reviewed journals and international literature where relevant. ○ Engagement with more recent rural literature. • Panel supports the transition to grading placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Should develop a rubric for assessing this module. • Change title to: “Rural Resource Planning, Management and Agricultural Research”. • Consider the ratio of CA to terminal exams, currently CA is 30%, recommend going to 40%. • Panel encourage the proposers to build on relationship with NUIG for postgraduate progression. • Consider the extent to which the curricula and /or experience can be internationalised.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to offering a supplementary award to graduates to obtain the Glas Advisor recognition.
		<p>Special conditions attaching to approval (if any):</p> <p>None</p>
20.	Resource Implications:	As these programmes will be replacing existing programmes, they will be delivered within existing resources in the main. The four year ab-initio honours award is a new addition to the suite of programmes on offer by the School of Business in conjunction with the Mountbellew Agricultural College. There will be additional teaching resources required for years 3 & 4. The School of Business will need approximately half a post for additional teaching in year 3 and 4 of the proposed programme.
21.	Synergies with existing programmes:	<p>Synergies with existing programmes:</p> <p>First years of these programmes are common with the BSc in Agriculture & Environmental Management with BSc (H) in Agriculture & Environmental Management and with HC in Agriculture.</p> <p>Some year 4 modules are common with the Bachelor of Business programme.</p>
22.	FAO: Academic Council:	
		<p>Approved:</p>
		<p>Approved subject to recommended changes:</p>
		<p>Not approved at this time:</p>
		<p>√</p>

Signed:

Dr Frank McMahon
(Chair)

Mr Michael Hannon
(Registrar)