

## EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

1.	<b>Title of Programme(s):</b> (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)	MSc in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (90 ECTS)  Exit Awards: Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (60 ECTS) Certificate in Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (30 ECTS)					
2.	<b>NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS:</b>	Level 9 90 ECTS					
3.	<b>Duration:</b>	1.5 years (3 semesters)					
4.	<b>ISCED Code:</b>	0510					
5.	<b>School / Centre:</b>	School of Science and Computing					
6.	<b>Department:</b>	Department of Natural Sciences					
7.	<b>Type of Review:</b>	<b>New Programme:</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<b>Differential Validation:</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.	<b>Date of Review:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2018					
9.	<b>Delivery Mode:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Part-time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Blended</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10.	<b>Panel Members:</b>	Dr Joe McGarry, Chair (Higher Education Consultant) Dr Nicole Burns, NUIG Dr Patricia Heavey, Athlone IT Mr Marcus Shortall, IRFU Ms Carmel Brennan, Secretary (GMIT)					
11.	<b>Proposing Staff:</b>	Dr Lisa Ryan Ms Nora Ní Fhlanagáin Mr Ed Daly Mr John David Duggan Dr Evelyn Hannon Dr Robert Mooney Mr Luke Smyth					

12.	<p><b>Programme Rationale:</b></p>	<p>Within the past decade there has been a marked growth in the career opportunities available for sport and exercise nutritionists as well as an enhanced interest in nutrition to complement other existing job roles in the sport and exercise science field. Coupled with such growth has also been <i>an increased need for appropriately qualified and accredited individuals</i> to undertake such roles</p> <p>Sport and Exercise Nutrition is one area where the work of both dietitians and nutritionists cross over. The Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register (SENr)(4) has been established and developed a competency framework for graduates and practitioners in the field. The SENr has been designed by both registered dietitians and nutritionists to recognise the required standard for both groups to work in the field. While both dietitians and nutritionists require registration with their respective professional bodies, to recognise the unique skill set required for Sport and Exercise Nutrition, the SENr was established and the current course has been developed to fulfil requirements for SENr accreditation. Postgraduate education is the minimum level of education required to register with the SENr.</p> <p>Additionally, as there is currently no developed Irish standard for nutritionists specific to sport and exercise, the Association for Nutrition (AfN) has developed procedures for the accreditation of suitably experienced individuals which are recognised internationally. The Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition therefore seeks to provide students with an opportunity to study at a postgraduate level to fulfil the initial requirements for AfN Accreditation as a Registered Nutritionist, to develop their knowledge of sport and exercise nutrition and to increase their skills in applying such knowledge in a sport and exercise setting.</p>
13.	<p><b>Potential Demand for Entry:</b></p>	<p>Giving due consideration to the predicted level of interest in the programme following the consultation process and the need to provide placement opportunities and adequate research supervision and support, a target of 16 students (FTE) is proposed.</p>
14.	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement:</b></p>	<p>Sport and Exercise Nutrition experts and sport and exercise professionals in Ireland were contacted to discuss the outline of the programme as well as the graduate profile; in particular the desirable characteristics of the graduate, as they see it. A consistent key message emerging from the</p>

		<p>consultation process was the lack of access to specialised programmes in Sport and Exercise Nutrition in Ireland.</p> <p>A number of individuals involved in different areas of sport and exercise nutrition as well as public health in Ireland (representatives from The Irish Section of the Nutrition Society and the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI), the Health Service Executive (HSE) as well as local GPs) and internationally were contacted to provide feedback on the proposed programme. Qualified sport and exercise nutritionists capable of working as part of sport and exercise teams is seen as an area facing considerable growth over the next few years as the sport and health industry in Ireland goes from strength to strength. During the consultation process, the need to not only develop sport and exercise nutrition graduates but also to ensure the quality and standard of the teaching as well as a high level of practical experience throughout the course of study was highlighted.</p>
15.	Graduate Demand:	<p>Sport Ireland, a government agency, was established on 1st October 2015. This body has the responsibility for the development of Irish Sport and will also provide employment opportunities. Aside from Sports-related posts, large food companies, such as Glanbia seek graduates especially in relation to sport specific foods, supplements and ingredients. Data analysis also appears as a common theme, linked to industry, research centres and groups.</p> <p>Career opportunities in this field are developing rapidly for graduates with an understanding of the connections between nutrition and sport and exercise performance. Specific job opportunities for sport and exercise nutrition graduates include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sports nutrition,</li> <li>• performance nutrition,</li> <li>• athlete development,</li> <li>• health improvement,</li> <li>• addressing inequalities in nutrition and health,</li> <li>• nutrition advocacy,</li> <li>• developing/commissioning and implementing policies and programmes,</li> <li>• monitoring, evaluation and assessment of diet in individuals/teams,</li> <li>• education</li> <li>• generating research evidence linking food/nutrients</li> </ul>

		and sport and exercise performance across a range of employers.
16.	<b>Entry Requirements, Access, Transfer &amp; Progression:</b>	<p>The entry requirement for undertaking the programme is an Honours Degree (H2.2) in any science or related health discipline.</p> <p>It is a requirement that all students for this programme are Garda vetted by GMIT on commencement of their studies.</p> <p>Applicants may use Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a means of accessing the programme. They can also use RPL to gain exemptions. RPL can be either certified or experiential. The validity of this RPL will be in accordance with the Code of Practice No. 6. Furthermore, the programme makes allowances for the entry of international students holding qualifications at the appropriate level. GMIT will assess individual applicants on a case-by-case basis, in line with the RPL policy. Where required, the Department of Natural Sciences will also engage with GMIT's International Office to map progression from partner colleges abroad.</p> <p>An applicant, whose First Language/Primary Mode of Expression is not English, will be required to produce evidence of English competence. Such an applicant must clarify her/his position in advance of the closing date for the year of study. The accepted form of evidence is an IELTS test. A valid IELTS of Grade 6.5 (No section less than 6.0) is required for this programme.</p>
17.	<b>Programme Structure:</b>	The programme is a 1.5-year (3 semester) programme with 30 ECTS delivered each semester culminating with the thesis in the final semester.
18.	<b>Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment Strategies:</b>	The proposed programme seeks to develop a student who is confident in her/his ability to learn. There are a number of key reports, documents and stakeholders which have been instrumental in shaping and guiding the syllabus content of this programme most notably the Competency Framework for the Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register (SENr). The competency framework document specifies the collection of competencies graduates will be expected to demonstrate in order to achieve registration to the SENr register. The educational philosophy of the programme is integral to the approaches to teaching and learning employed throughout the programme. It supports the view that the process of

		<p>learning is as important as the content itself. The emphasis, therefore, will be on approaches that are student-centred and engage the student in a critical way. Learning by 'doing' is an integral component.</p> <p>The programme duration has been considered to be optimally placed at 1.5 academic years (3 semesters) which is the minimal time permitted to achieve student outcomes and to deliver the modules in this programme. The programme delivery mode will adopt a hybrid approach which is a necessity to attract students already in the workplace. This will rely on traditional delivery methods, face to face learning, blended delivery and the use of an approved web-based learning platforms.</p> <p>The aim has been to produce a curriculum which emphasises the need for practical experience throughout. The pedagogical approach is based on valuing students as adult learners and modules are designed to reflect the balance between direct lecturing, guided study and independent study.</p> <p>The Programme Assessment Strategy is consistent with Academic Code of Practice No. 3: Student Assessment Marks and Standards, and has been designed to determine whether students have achieved the module learning outcomes and, ultimately, the programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>The majority of modules on this programme use various types of continuous assessment as the primary assessment strategy. Assessments are aligned with the module and programme learning outcomes. The assessment types are varied and include: written technical reports based on work carried out in the field, written assignments based on experimental work in the laboratory, oral presentations, technical assignments in nutrition and dietary strategies, statistical analysis, a literature review, an ethics application and a research paper for publication. The assessment strategy will be reviewed annually by the programme board. An assessment schedule will be drawn up by the programme board at the start of the semester to ensure a balanced workload for students over the entire semester. This assessment schedule will be distributed to the students at the start of the semester. Feedback on performance in their assessments will be provided to students in a timely manner.</p>
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19.	<b>Resource Implications:</b>	Delivery of this programme will require one additional lecturer and 0.5 technician. As the programme grows additional staff members may be required particularly in light of the need for research project support.
20.	<b>Synergies with Existing Programmes:</b>	None.
21.	<b>Findings and Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>General:</b></p> <p>The panel recommend the following programmes for approval</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MSc in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition</li> <li>2. Certificate in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (Exit Award – 30 ECTS)</li> <li>3. Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (Exit Award – 60 ECTS)</li> </ol> <p>subject to the following conditions (4) and recommendations (8):</p> <p><b>Special conditions attaching to approval :</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include behavioural change techniques within the programme learning outcomes and module content.</li> <li>2. Map out the structure of delivery of the programme if it were to be delivered on a part-time basis to ensure that students have the required pre-requisite knowledge.</li> <li>3. Module learning outcomes should articulate distinctly the requirements for both theoretical knowledge and practical skill.</li> <li>4. Ensure that the assessment methodology, and in particular the repeat assessment methodology, confirms that students meet both the theoretical and practical elements of the module learning outcomes.</li> </ol> <p><b>Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Include an integrated approach to physiology and nutrition throughout the programme within the learning outcomes and content of relevant modules.</li> <li>6. Include only the supervision hours for the thesis in the module descriptor.</li> <li>7. Review the assessment workload for students to ensure that students are not over-assessed. Consideration of integrated assignments may assist in this regard.</li> <li>8. All placement sites should be chosen in conjunction with the academic supervisor and assessed for suitability to ensure optimal student learning.</li> <li>9. Clarify that the laboratory techniques used in the</li> </ol>

		<p>programme become more advanced and are applied in different settings and circumstances as students progress through the programme.</p> <p>10. The new staff member should be recruited with regard to the requirements of professional registration bodies.</p> <p>11. Change name of 30 ECTS award to Certificate in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition.</p> <p>12. Change name of 60 ECTS award to Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition.</p>	
22.	FAO: Academic Council:		
		Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary