VALIDATION REPORT

1.	Title of Programme(s): (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)	Higher Diploma in Science in Cybersecurity Risk and Compliance (Level 8, 60 ECTS)
2.	NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS:	8 60 ECTS
3.	Duration:	1 year Full-time
4.	ISCED Code:	0610
5.	School / Centre:	Mayo Campus
6.	Department:	Department of Business, Humanities & Technology
7.	Type of Review:	External Panel
8.	Date of Review:	27th October 2020
9.	Delivery Mode:	Full-time, Online, Blended
10.	Panel Members:	Dr Terry Twomey, Registrar, Limerick IT (Chair) Mr Craig Andrews, Senior Penetration Tester, CMA Consulting, Toronto Mr Tom Davis, Information Technology Lecturer, School of Engineering and Information Technology, Limerick Institute of Technology. Mr Connor McEnroy, Cybersecurity Risk and Compliance Analyst, HP Enterprises, Galway Ms Carmel Brennan, Assistant Registrar (Quality), (Secretary)
11.	Proposing Staff:	Prof Neville McClenaghan Mr Michael Gill Mr Mark Frain Ms Noreen Henry Dr Seamus Dowling Mr Brian Mulhern Ms Clodagh Geraghty Dr Deirdre Garvey Ms Sinead Kilgannon Mr Pearce McDonnell
12.	Programme Rationale:	The programmes presented for validation are part of a suite of programmes in this discipline that have or are being developed to meet a recognised market need. The Higher Diploma provides a conversion programme for applicants wishing to reskill in the discipline of cybersecurity risk and compliance. National and international reports identify the importance of securing networks

and information systems. The programme aims to educate in relation to the legal, technical and best practice concepts surrounding the implementation of cyber security risk and compliance within organisations. Graduates will be educated in risks associated with protecting an organisation against cyber-attacks. Risk and compliance are key components of cybersecurity as organisations implement the necessary governance to fulfil its obligation to legal and ethical laws. IT and data security are realised through ongoing robust security measures implemented at the network and operating system level. Just as important is the protection of an organisation's data. As well as the theoretical components of cybersecurity governance, techniques, standards, frameworks, data law and ethics, successful applicants will work to develop a risk compliance program for an organisation.

13.	Potential Demand for Entry:	24 students per annum
14.	Stakeholder Engagement:	The awards were developed in partnership with Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE) Cyber Defence Center. Development meetings highlighted major skills shortages in cybersecurity and identified how GMIT could address these shortages. HPE collaborators identified risk and compliance with project and operations knowledge as essential skills for graduates and security personnel. An industry consultation event was also conducted at the Mayo Campus with representation for diverse companies and organisations based in the county. In addition, industry leaders in Cybersecurity were contacted and meetings with these reviewed discussion documents and proposed programme structures.
15.	Graduate Demand:	There is strong evidence in the jobs market of availability of positions related to cybersecurity. This is backed up by evidence gleaned from stakeholder engagement.
16.	Entry Requirements, Access, Transfer & Progression:	Minimum entry requirement is a level 8 major award or equivalent with evidence of a working knowledge of IT. English language requirements are per GMIT code on Access, Transfer and Progression. RPL in line with GMIT policy can be used to gain access to or exemptions from the programme. Students may apply for progression to relevant cognate level 9 awards.
17.	Programme Structure:	The programme consists of five yearlong modules and one semesterised module. The Research Method in IT module aims to give students the research knowledge and skills required to undertake the Cybersecurity Risk and Compliance Project and there will be integrated assessment between both modules.
18.	Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategies:	This programme will be delivered on a blended basis with attendance on campus one day per month approximately. The programme is also approved for online delivery which may be the mode of delivery during the current pandemic. A VLE will be used

		as the platform for delivering resources, engaging and communicating. Collaboration and interaction will be facilitated and encouraged. Assessment will be varied and appropriate to each module and will be scheduled in a student-centred way.
19.	Resource Implications:	These programmes will be self-financing. 30 ECTS are already approved and funded through Springboard. No additional staff are required to deliver these programmes. Online and blended delivery requires an IAAS platform to facilitate remote access to lab equivalents. The approximate cost of this for 24 students would be €17,000. Specialised online labs are required to deliver these programmes, at an annual cost of €17,500. Resources required for the delivery of these programmes, other than staff costs, will be shared across a number of programmes (approved and seeking validation) in this discipline area. Staff upskilling will be required to ensure that staff stay up to date with this fast-moving discipline. It is proposed that four staff will engage in programmes through Sans.org costing in the region of €24,000. This will provide staff with knowledge and skills not only for the proposed programmes, but other programmes in this discipline area.
20.	Synergies with Existing Programmes:	None
21.	Findings and Recommendations:	General: The panel approve the programmes with the commendations listed below and subject to the following condition(s) and recommendation(s): Commendations: The panel commended the programme development team on their flexible response to industry needs within their region. The panel commended the programme staff on their positive and collegiate engagement in the validation process. Special conditions attaching to approval (if any): None

		Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:	
		1. As referred to by the internal preparative panel, reconsider the imbalance in weighting of student workload between the two semesters. 2. Infrastructure as a Service or Immersive labs should be available to students completing this programme. 3. Remove section 6.3 as unnecessary given the programme does not contain a work placement.	
22.	FAO: Academic Council:	Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary