

## EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

1.	<b>Title of Programme:</b>	BA in Early Childhood Education and Care				
2.	<b>School / Centre:</b>	Mayo Campus				
3.	<b>Duration:</b>	3 years				
4.	<b>NFQ Level:</b>	7 Exit Award: Higher Certificate Level 6				
5.	<b>Type of Review:</b>	<b>New Programme:</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	X	<b>No:</b>	
		<b>Differential Validation:</b>	<b>Yes:</b>		<b>No:</b>	
6.	<b>Date of Review:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2016				
7.	<b>Delivery Mode:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	X	<b>Part-time</b>		<b>Blended</b>
8.	<b>Panel Members:</b>	Dr Dermot Douglas (Chair) Dr Mary McSkeane, Dundalk IT Ms Rita Melia, Early Childhood Ireland Ms Carmel Brennan (Secretary)				
9.	<b>Proposing Staff:</b>	Dr Deirdre Garvey Mr Justin Kerr Dr Sheila McArdle Ms Joanne Doherty				
10	<b>Programme Rationale:</b>	<p>This programme aims to provide learners with an education for professional practice in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The proposed programme responds to a direct invitation from the Child and Family Agency (formerly the Health Service Executive's Early Years Services) and from service providers in County Mayo. The programme plans to make available an educational progression route for appropriately qualified Early Years Educators and managers in ECEC, and to provide a qualification in ECEC in Co Mayo for those who wish to gain employment in this field of work.</p> <p>There is an identified regional need for graduates with a Level 7 QQI qualification given the recent change to the government funding strategy. This programme also responds to the emerging regulation of the sector, combined with the national policy objective for increasing professionalism, competence and capability within the sector through enhanced education.</p> <p>The CoRe report (2011) indicates a desired target that 60% of practitioners in the sector would be holders of a Level 7 award. At the time of the report, 11.8% of Early Years Educators in Ireland possessed a Level 7 qualification, thus indicating a significant gap existed that needs to be addressed.</p>				
11.	<b>Potential Demand for Entry:</b>	<p>An annual intake of 30 learners is envisaged.</p> <p>Initially, it is planned to offer years 2 and 3 to those already working in the ECEC sector, who wish to upskill and obtain a level</p>				

		<p>7 qualification. The ECEC sector has been a growth area over the last ten years. Driving expansion of the sector is the recent introduction by the Department of Child and Youth Affairs of a second National Free Pre-School year.</p>
12.	<b>Stakeholder Engagement:</b>	<p>Consultation with employers and regulators took place during the programme design phase. Feedback suggested significant existing and increasing future demand for an award such as this.</p>
13.	<b>Graduate Demand:</b>	<p>Demand for graduates will increase as there is a national policy objective of increasing the professional competence and capability of the sector through enhanced education. The government has proposed that a far greater number of degree-level Early Years Educators be employed within the ECEC sector and that, in particular, managers of services hold recognised degree-level qualifications.</p> <p>Graduates will be well-placed to occupy supervisory functions within the sector, in accordance with new funding requirements. The Pobal report (2015) outlines that the ECCE programme funding for the National Free Preschool ‘incentivises pursuit of higher qualifications by attaching a higher capitation rate to services with leaders qualified to Level 6 or higher’.</p>
14.	<b>Entry Requirements:</b>	<p><b>Year 1</b>  Minimum entry requirement, for 2016, is a pass (grade D3) or better in five Leaving Certificate subjects including Mathematics and English or Irish with a minimum of 140 points.  Note: An equivalent entry standard will be adopted by GMIT for 2017 in light of the changed points system for entry through the CAO.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A pass in a QQI Vocational Award (or former FETAC) major award at level 5.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Entry as a mature student in accordance with GMIT policy.</p> <p><b>Year 2</b>  Existing Early Years Educators with NFQ Level 6 relevant to ECEC must have completed 264 hours practice/work hours confirmed by their employer.</p> <p>All existing Early Years Educators must have Garda Clearance and furnish to GMIT a copy of their clearance. In the future, all new entrants and applicants will be required to apply for Garda Clearance as part of the application process. Garda Clearance specific to this course is required for all applicants as part of the application process.</p>

15.	<b>Programme Structure:</b>	<p>This programme incorporates an embedded exit award of Higher Certificate (QQI, level 6), on successful completion of years 1 and 2 (120 credits).</p> <p>The programme consists of a mixture of 10 credit year-long modules and 5 credit semester long modules.</p> <p>The Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood and Care sector (DJELR, 2002) accords priority to practical experience detailing that the 'Experienced Practitioner' should have 'supervised practical experience amounting to a minimum of 500 hours in an ECCE service. There is no detail provided in relation to the practice/work hours for the 'Advanced Practitioner' so the programme design team have used the guideline for social care which is 800 hours. Thus placement for learners in an ECEC setting is 40% of the programme.</p>
16.	<b>Module syllabi:</b>	See Approved Programme Schedule.
17.	<b>LTA:</b>	<p>Transformational pedagogy is traditionally underpinned by the theoretical concepts of Friere and Gramsci. Through dialogue, consciousness raising, critical thinking and problem-solving learners are encouraged to see some aspect of their world in a new way.</p> <p>Through collaborative processes, the programme content will be delivered through a combination of lectures, tutorials, workshops, readings, class discussion, ICTs, group work and case studies. Learners will be encouraged to participate in the classroom and to relate concepts to actual situations.</p> <p>Graduates will have a comprehensive understanding of their discipline and professional knowledge and skills appropriate to their award. The learning outcomes of this programme are designed to achieve this and the teaching and assessment strategy is aligned with this learning outcomes. Students will be developed as autonomous, lifelong learners, and teaching strategies used will ensure this. A diverse range of assessment types will be used to measure learning outcomes appropriately.</p>
18.	<b>ATP:</b>	<p>Upon successful completion of Stage 1 and 2 the learner may choose to exit with the embedded award of a Higher Certificate (NFQ, level 6) or progress to stage 3, and on successful completion be awarded a Bachelor of Arts (NFQ Level 7).</p> <p>In the future it is envisaged that GMIT will develop a level 8 programme in ECEC to allow progression for level 7 graduates. Progression opportunities are also available to level 8 programmes in other institutes.</p>

19.	<b>Programme Management:</b>	This programme will be managed within the framework specified by GMIT's Code of Academic Practice No. 2 (GMIT 2013b) and the management structure within the Mayo Campus. Primary responsibility rests with the Programme Board comprising all staff teaching on the programme, the Head of Department, Head of Campus and two student representatives. A lecturer acts as Programme Chair for Programme Board meetings, which are normally held once every term. Programme Boards have responsibility for dealing with matters of an academic nature relating to the particular programme including: ensuring that the aims and learning outcomes are achieved; programme structure and syllabus modifications; delivery of the programme; integrity of the assessment process including final examinations; identification and specification of resource requirements; monitoring students' progress, attendance, course work, projects; and maintenance of award standards. Issues relating to additional resource requirements are referred to the Head of Department and/or School.
20.	<b>Resource Implications:</b>	In September 2016 one qualified Assistant Lecturer (18 hours) is required. Thereafter, lecturing capacity will be required for the roll-out of the programme. This will be off-set, to some extent, by inputs from existing Applied Social Studies/Care, Nursing, Art and Design and Outdoor Education academic resources. It should also be noted that the work-based learning needs to be resourced in terms of site visits.
21.	<b>Synergies with existing programmes:</b>	All of the proposed modules are new with two exceptions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning &amp; Innovation Skills</li> <li>2. Organisational Behaviour</li> </ol>
22.	<b>Findings and Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>Commendations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The panel commended the programme team for their enthusiasm, professionalism, openness and engagement with the validation process.</li> <li>2. The team were commended on the innovation of introducing within the programme design, the 0 – 3 years module and the researching with children module.</li> </ol> <p><b>Conditions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entry requirements need to be revised. Entry requirements for year 1 need to be stated as the standard GMIT minimum requirements for standard Leaving Certificate entrants, mature students and holders of QQI Vocational Level 5 awards.</li> <li>2. The entry requirements also need to be expanded to articulate entry requirements using the new Leaving Certificate points system. Entry requirements for stage 2 of the programme should be rewritten to require applicants to have completed (1 year) 264 hours of</li> </ol>

placement in an ECEC setting, and to have written confirmation of same.

3. All required staffing resources must be in place prior to registration of students.
4. The title of the level 6 Higher Certificate Award should be generic in line with the national convention for the naming of level 6 exit awards e.g. Childhood Studies. The QQI standards used for the Programme Learning Outcomes should be the generic award standards.
5. New document must address inaccuracies, typographical errors and current legislation and policy.

#### **Recommendations**

1. It should be clarified in the programme document, that the classification of the award is based solely on the 60 credits taken in the award year.
2. In the preamble to the final programme document there should be reference to the recent new regulatory structure.
3. It should be made clear to students who decide to apply to exit with the Higher Certificate exit award that the DCYA will not recognise generic exit awards.
4. The programme document needs to be correct and consistent in a number of regards e.g. clarify in the document that the programme relates to 0 – 6 years, replace FETAC with QQI vocational award
5. Clarify in the document the criteria that will be used to determine acceptable placement sites i.e. registered with Tusla.
6. Consider expanding the Programme Learning Outcome relating to nutrition to a broader outcome e.g. based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
7. This programme should have a defined space simulating an ECEC setting. Equipment for various teaching methodologies should be acquired over time.
8. The programme document should clarify the journey students and graduates take towards becoming an experienced practitioner.
9. More detail should be provided in the programme document on the assessment marking scale that it is intended to use.
10. The programme document, including APS, should be generated using Academic Module Manager.
11. The hours shown on the APS for Practice Development should be lecturer contact time. The number of hours students are required to complete on Practice Development should be included in the module descriptor.
12. As described in the module descriptors, the total weekly learner workload should reflect total student workload,

		<p>not just the class contact hours. The credit system prevailing in HE is ECTS. This involves a minimum of 20 to 30 notional student effort hours per credit (to include all institutional delivery, assessments, assignments, and examinations, together with a realistic quantification of independent learner effort required to achieve each of the module learning outcomes). Without this, the credit values shown in the proposed Approved Programme Schedules have no standing. The total learner effort as indicated in the current module descriptors is significantly less than is required for 5 and 10 credit modules as it only describes Institutional input.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>13. In light of fact that this is a fast developing area the panel recommends that the CPD requirements of staff be addressed in the continuing delivery and development of the programme.</li><li>14. The programme board should review the assessment strategy, particularly in relation to the number of terminal examinations that are being utilised, in what is, essentially, an experiential programme. The review should also examine multiple assessing of the same module learning outcomes (MLOs), unless assessing different elements of same MLOs. If this is the case it should be clarified in the module assessment strategy.</li><li>15. Review module learning outcomes. Ensure there is an appropriate number of measurable MLOs and that they are at the appropriate level. They should be succinctly written statements of specific learning outcomes rather than statements combining multiple learning outcomes. Indicative syllabus should be aligned with module learning outcomes.</li><li>16. Resources for each module should be reviewed to ensure that they mention the latest editions of books and that the Aistear /Siolta guide 2015 is included in the resource list for all relevant modules.</li><li>17. The programme board need to consider induction for advanced entry students, and providing them with Learning &amp; Innovation Skills resource, particularly in regards plagiarism, referencing and academic writing.</li><li>18. It is recommended that</li><li>19. 'Leadership and Governance', 'Organisational Behaviour' and 'Creative Facilitation' be merged, taking the essential elements of each. This will make room for a new module on Outdoor Play.</li><li>20. The leadership and governance aspect of the module should be more applied to ECEC.</li><li>21. The following recommendations were made in relation to individual modules:</li></ol>
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**Play, Creativity and Language**

Refer to communicating rather than communication. It was suggested that the 10 credit module Play, Creativity and Language should be divided into two 5 credit modules, the first on play and the second on creativity and language, or Alternatively, divide the module earning outcomes to reflect the fact that module is about more than creative arts i.e. there is a focus on play. In addition to creative play, manipulative, constructive, small world, exploratory play etc needs to be evidenced, and be considerate of both Aistear and Siolta.

**Building and Managing Interpersonal Relationships.**

Include care of self and well-being. Should also include quality and use of reflection as a tool for learning and development.

**Exploring Curriculum**

Need to include educational inspection and using pedagogical documentation. Needs to make more explicit how what practitioners are doing links with the national framework. Include Irish context educational inspections and Aistear. Learning outcomes should be explicit in stating that a number of methodologies (Montessori, Steiner, Froebel, Highscope, Reggio Emilia etc.) will be explored. Should not be limited to Highscope.

**Pedagogy in ECEC**

Pedagogical framing should be included in the Learning Outcomes. Include the role of the educator, adult teaching styles, and image of the child.

**Health, Safety and Well-being**

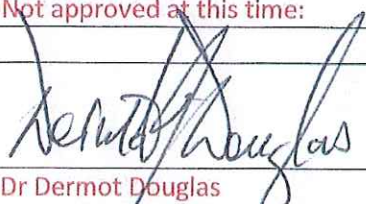

Risky play and wellbeing should be moved over into a curriculum and play module. Needs to reference new regulations, Policy, ECEC framework structures, Bronfenbrenner model, and macro /micro factors. Consider using 'Welfare' rather than 'Well-being' in the title.

**Practice Development 1**

Shouldn't state 'experienced practitioner'. Could use an Adult Style observation scale. To assess adult child interactions through observation. Placement letter to recognise the important role that the placement plays in progressing quality ECEC.

**Early Childhood Law**

Should be broader and include topics such as planning, employment law, children's rights (active citizenship and democracy) and participation.

		<p><b>Supporting Enquiry with Children</b> Module overly focusses on creative arts, to the exclusion of other aspects of play. Module should be revised to incorporate a broader focus – STEM or STEAM.</p> <p><b>Sociological Discourses in ECEC</b> Should include image of child in modern society and the role of the adult. New sociology of childhood.</p> <p><b>Diversity and Equality</b> Diversity and equality should also be included throughout other modules.</p> <p><b>Health and Physical Learning Experiences</b> Include pedagogical framing. Reconsider the title of the module as it does not reflect module content i.e. learning environments. New title could be 'Physical and Interpersonal Learning Environments' or similar.</p> <p><b>Practice Development 2</b> Consider changing title to include an extension to make the title more descriptive e.g. Linking Research to Practice.</p> <p><b>Trends in Early Childhood Education and Care</b> It is recommended that a form of assessment other than traditional examination be considered for this module.</p> <p><b>Family Centred Practice and Supports</b> The emphasis should be changed to be on partnership with parents who are the primary carers/educators of their children, rather than supporting parents. Include working in partnership with families and community.</p> <p><b>Practice Development 3 – Dissertation</b> Change module title to Action Research or similar. Given that this involves research with people outside GMIT, the process for ethics approval needs to be clarified. Include researching with children. Reference CRINI Children's Research Network Ireland and Northern Ireland.</p>	
23.	FAO: Academic Council:		
		Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
			
		Dr Dermot Douglas Chair	Ms Carmel Brennan Secretary

12/06/2016 