

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

Programme	Code	Level	ECTS	Duration	Award Type	Embedded Awards
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Tourism Management	GA_HITMG_H08	8	240	4	Major	Embedded Award: Bachelor of Business in International Tourism Management
						Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Business in Tourism
Bachelor of Business in International Tourism Management	GA_HITMG_B07	7	180	3	Major	Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Business in Tourism
Higher Certificate in Business in Tourism	GA_HTOUG_C06	6	120	2	Major	Parent Award: Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Tourism Management
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations	GA_OEVAG_H08	8	240	4	Major	Embedded Award: Bachelor of Business in Event Management with Public Relations
						Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Business in Event Management with Public Relations
Bachelor of Business in Event Management with Public Relations	GA_OEVEG_B07	7	180	3	Major	Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Business in Event Management with Public Relations
Higher Certificate in Business in Event Management with Public Relations (Exit)	GA_OEVEG_C06	6	120	2	Exit	Parent Award: Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Heritage Studies	GA_HHERG_H08	8	240	7	Major	Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Arts in Heritage Studies
						Embedded Award: Bachelor of Arts in Heritage Studies
Bachelor of Arts in Heritage Studies	GA_HHERG_B07	7	180	3	Major	Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Arts in Heritage Studies
Higher Certificate in Arts in Heritage Studies	GA_HHERG_C06	6	120	2	Major	Parent Award: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Heritage Studies
Ard-Diploma I nGaeilge Fheidmach & Aistriúchan	GA_HGAEG_L08	8	60	1	Major	N/A

**Date of Panel: Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

## External Peer Review Group:

Panel	
Chairperson	Mr. Damien Courtney, Fellow Emeritus Cork Institute of Technology
IoT/University Representative	Dr Anna Leigh Margey, Acting Head of Department of Humanities, Dundalk Institute of Technology  Dr Patricia Moriarty Head of School Business and Humanities Dundalk Institute of Technology
IoT/University Representative	Mr. Antaine Ó Faracháin, Lecturer, Technological University Dublin  Prof. James Deegan, Director of the National Centre for Tourism Policy Studies, University of Limerick  Dr. Adrian Devine, Dept of Hospitality & Tourism University of Ulster
Industry Representative	Ms. Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council
Graduate Representative	Mr. Eoghan Kavanagh Graduate of Tourism and Event  Mr. Caomhán Ó hÓgáin, Translator, European Council
Secretary	Ms. Carmel Brennan, Assistant Registrar (Quality) (Secretary)

## 1 Introduction to Programmatic Review

Programmatic review involves a periodic, formal, systematic, comprehensive and reflective review and evaluation of each programme and award offered by the Institute for purposes of programme development, quality enhancement and revalidation. It is an important means of ensuring and assuring, *inter alia*:

- that required academic standards are being attained;
- that programmes and awards remain relevant and viable;
- that student needs, including academic and labour-market needs, are addressed;
- that the quality of programmes and awards is enhanced and improved;
- public confidence in the quality of GMIT's programmes and awards.

GMIT last conducted Programmatic Review in 2014 and was due to undertake it again in 2019/20. The process was delayed until this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of a programmatic review is to review the development of the programme over the previous five to seven years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality. The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes' responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria and relevant awards standards. In particular, a programmatic review seeks to confirm that the promise evidenced at the original validation (or since the last programmatic review) in terms of academic quality, relevance and viability has been realised, and that the programme is adapting appropriately to evolving circumstances.

The specific objectives of a programmatic review are, *inter alia*, to:

- analyse and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, including details of student numbers, retention rates and success rates;
- review the development of the programme in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments;
- evaluate the response of the programme to regional and societal requirements and to educational developments;
- evaluate the feedback mechanisms for students and the processes for acting on this feedback;
- review the feedback from students relating to the student experience of the programme
- evaluate stakeholder engagement including links and collaboration with industry, business and the wider community;
- review feedback from employers and graduates;
- evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme;
- review any research activities in the field of learning in the disciplinary areas and their impact on teaching and learning;
- consider likely future developments in the disciplinary areas;
- make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules, and to discontinuing programmes or parts of programmes.

Academic Council identified three themes to be specifically addressed during the 2021/22 Programmatic Review namely:

- Assessment – ensure the assessment strategy and methodology are appropriate and aligned with learning outcomes and that students are not over-assessed.
- Employability – ensure that students develop career skills necessary to prepare them for employment. Embed professional practice (e.g., work placement, work-based projects in the programme, ensuring that there is an appropriate plan for their management)
- Sustainability – review modules and learning outcomes to ensure that the sustainability agenda is addressed, debated, and applied within student learning and assessment, as appropriate.

## 2 Methodology

The programmatic review process involves a self-evaluation by each programme board followed by an external peer review. The Programme board engaged in a process of the collection and review of data related to the programme and feedback from stakeholders including students, graduates and industry. The overall programme and each individual module have been reviewed and recommendation(s) for updates made as required.

The External Peer Review Group (EPRG) received a copy of the Self Evaluation Review documentation and the programme documentation including any proposed changes. The EPRG then met the Programme Board (Appendix A) to discuss the programme and the documentation provided, as well as meeting a representative sample of students (Appendix B). The schedule for the review visit is contained in Appendix C.

## 3 Background to Programmes being reviewed

### **Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Tourism Management** **Bachelor of Business in International Tourism Management** **Higher Certificate in Business in Tourism**

The aim of the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in International Tourism Management programme, is to provide learners with the knowledge, skills, and competence necessary for a management or entrepreneurial career in tourism in the public or private sectors, or in related business sectors.

The tourism industry nationally and internationally has witnessed exponential growth and advances, offering many opportunities of employment. Fáilte Ireland (National Tourism Development Authority), Tourism Northern Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media have identified several strategic sectors as potential growth areas. All these areas require tourism management professionals. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Tourism Policy Statement (2019-2021) highlighted targets to be achieved by 2025, including investment in the tourism sector, however this was in advance of the Covid 19 Global Pandemic of 2020 which had a devastating impact on the industry worldwide. It is essential that education in tourism will play a vital role in this recovery. In response, the design of the Bachelor of Business in International Tourism Management aims to address many of the challenges that the industry will face into the future.

### **Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations** **Bachelor of Business in Event Management with Public Relations** **Higher Certificate in Business in Event Management with Public Relations (Exit)**

The history of event management as an academic discipline is according to The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK) (2019) relatively new in higher education, it has emerged as an area of study and is sustained by an increasing research and publication base set against an evolving experience economy. There is a growing understanding of the knowledge base for events education and increasing recognition of events as a subject internationally. Initiatives such as the development of the International EMBOK (Event Management Body of Knowledge) seek to delineate research and understanding of the parameters of events and the knowledge, understanding and skills required by modern event management professionals.

It is important to note that public relations as a discipline is now a critical function of the modern event managers' role. Its prominence reflects the growing importance of public relations on the practice of event management. The programme provides learners with the public relation knowledge, skills and

competencies required to effectively function as an event management professional. This event management focused approach with public relations concentrates on communication skills that are verbal, written, and presentational in style, organisational and planning skills, digital and interactive media platforms plus creative thinking.

The aim of the Bachelor of Business in Event Management with Public Relations programmes is to provide learners with the knowledge, skills, and competence necessary for a management career in events and public relations in public, private or entrepreneurial industries. The rationale for the Bachelor of Business in Event Management with Public Relations is to progress event management education on a regional, national, and international basis by preparing potential graduates with the required skills, knowledge, and competencies to gain appropriate and rewarding employment in event related industries.

The event industry nationally and internationally has witnessed exponential advancement offering many opportunities of employment. In the public sector realm Fáilte Ireland (National Tourism Development Authority), Tourism Northern Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media have identified several strategic areas as potential growth areas (Fáilte Ireland Report 2020). All these areas require skilled event management professionals to realise.

### **Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Heritage Studies** **Bachelor of Arts in Heritage Studies** **Higher Certificate in Arts in Heritage Studies**

Heritage at GMIT owes its origins to the appointment in 1995 of the late poet and philosopher, Dr John O'Donoghue, to a lectureship in Humanities in what was then Galway RTC. Since the introduction of the first National Certificate in 1995, the Heritage Studies presence at GMIT has expanded considerably at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

To meet the diverse needs of students, the four-year BA (Hons) in Heritage has embedded exit awards at NFQ levels 6 and 7 which also act as entry points with progression pathways to the NFQ level 8 award and beyond (i.e., to the MA and PhD in Heritage Studies).

The justification for the programmes arises from the growth of the global heritage industry/sector since the late twentieth century and the ongoing need to meet the needs of employers seeking graduates who possess the necessary knowledge, skill, and competencies to work in this area. For over a quarter of a century, GMIT has been a recognised leader in educational offerings in the niche academic discipline of heritage studies.

### **Árd-Dipóloma I nGaeilge Fheidmach & Aistriúchan**

From the mid-1990s there has been an increased demand for professional Irish language services from Government organisations, semi-state organisations and private bodies. This demand was further increased with the establishment of Teilifís na Gaeilge, now TG4, in 1996, the enactment of the Official Languages Act of 2003 and the granting of enhanced working status to the Irish language in the European institutes as well as other favourable developments for the language. The acceptance of Government of the Twenty-Year Strategy for the Irish Language augurs well for demand into the future for highly skilled Irish language graduates.

Europus, a limited commercial company, was established in 1996 to provide professional applied Irish services in the marketplace, both state and commercial. In 2001 Europus approached Údarás na Gaeltachta for assistance in training qualified professional translators as the market required. Europus succeeded in obtaining the contract and approached GMIT for accreditation.

GMIT/Europus/Údarás na Gaeltachta have provided the Ard-Diplóma i nGaeilge Fheidhmeach agus Aistriúchán course on an annual basis from 2003. The course was provided at Údarás na Gaeltachta premises in Carna up to 2019 and moved to the Europus premises in An Cheathrú Rua where a separate, stand-alone unit of the building has been designated for the delivery of the Ard-Diplóma. Europus has built up a close relationship with TG4, Raidió na Gaeltachta, Telegael and many other stakeholders in the audio-visual industries. Employees from TG4 and Raidió na Gaeltachta frequently attend the Ard-Diplóma course. Europus has gained recognition among Government departments and state and semi state bodies as a company who delivers high level language products and services.

#### 4 General findings of the External Peer Review Group

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the Programme Board, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

Accredited until the next programmatic review	
Accredited until the next programmatic review subject to conditions and/or recommendations <sup>1</sup>	x
Re-design and re-submit to the same External Peer Review Group after additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

#### 5 Programme Level Findings Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Tourism Management and Embedded Awards

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer, and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes

<sup>1</sup> **Note:**

Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined in the report and a response document describing the actions 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 next delivery 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.

Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards <sup>2</sup> )? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning, and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g., content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff: student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g. Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

It was noted that the numbers of students have been falling in the Galway International Hotel School. To ensure viability and efficiency programmes have been revised to include cross-programme modules where appropriate and feasibility. This has the added benefit of introducing students to new areas of learning. Marketing of programmes has been weak within the school, but it is now planned that there will be a focus on those programmes which have struggled to attract numbers, with an emphasis on improving communication about the focus of these programme.

Erasmus students are a positive aspect of the school. However, it was noted that there are more incoming students than outgoing and that this balance needs to be addressed. The school has connections with several colleges including in France, Austria and Germany. Galway is an attractive destination for incoming students.

Staff shortages are prevalent within the tourism industry, with Fáilte Ireland recruiting from everywhere. Many prospective students are deterred by the terms and conditions in the industry. It was noted that Galway is one of the largest tourism regions, but further growth is needed. The National Guiding Certificate is embedded in the programme to both attract students and enhance employment opportunities for graduates.

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<sup>2</sup> GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available [HERE](#).

There are some linkages with the Mayo campus, and as the college becomes Atlantic Technological University it is hoped to work more closely with colleagues and programmes in Sligo and Letterkenny, particularly in relation to the development of special purpose awards.

Retention of students is an ongoing issue and has been particularly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Programme Board works to engage students early in their studies using field trips per example and increasing the coverage of practical material in stage 1. The Programme Board is proactive in tracking student engagement and following-up with those who don't.

Sustainability is embedded in programmes. For example, accountancy modules cover topics such as cost efficiency, energy consumption, packaging, waste management, finance goals and objectives. It was noted that educational institutions should be leading on sustainability, as this will strongly influence industry when graduates enter employment.

There is a strong equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda within the institute and school. The institute was recently awarded the Athena Swan bronze award. However, it was noted that there was more to do to embed EDI within the school.

Teaching within the programme is student-centric. Teaching, learning and assessment has all changed dramatically during the past two years, with a move to online classes and alternative modes of assessment given social distancing and periods of lockdown. Staff engagement with pedagogy upskilling has helped improve assessment.

There is currently no postgraduate progression route for students within GMIT. However, within Atlantic Technological University there is expertise in Sligo. The challenges of being research active and teaching 16 or 18 hours per week were highlighted. However, staff do undertake personal discipline specific research incorporating this into their teaching.

The programme strives to ensure that students are prepared for employment. It looks at emerging trends e.g., dark sky tourism. It also has practical modules examining the travel trade and providing Galileo training. Work placement is immersive with students concentrating on work and being supported to reflect upon their experience on return to campus.

The panel met with a number of students from this programme. Students noted that the low numbers in the class was disadvantageous and drove poor attendance and participation. It results in low standards in some instances and a lack of peer support. They also noted that the course is very Irish based and would like to see further internationalisation of the programme. Students would benefit from further assistance in securing placements and enhanced academic writing skills to scaffold placement reflections. Non-paid placements is placing a financial burden on students. There is good communication between students and academic staff, however it is not clear that the feedback loop is closed. There is room for improvement in engaging students on the Programme Board.

The Programme Board proposed award title changes. This was treated as a Differential Validation and is reported on separately. In any case the title changes were not approved, although the panel did suggest an alternative naming approach.

The Programme Board proposed a number of changes relating to Programme Learning Outcomes, sequencing of modules, new modules, special regulations and individual module amendments. All changes as outlined in Appendix D were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

**Commendation(s):**



1. The work of the team in generating economies of scale for this programme to help assure its viability is welcomed. The team have undertaken initiatives to develop common and shared modules for use across multiple programmes.
2. Notwithstanding the challenges facing the programme in attracting students, the commitment of staff is evident in the quality of documentation, interaction with the panel and strong student focus.
3. The importance of this programme in supporting Ireland's largest indigenous sector.

**Condition(s):**

None

**Recommendation(s):**

1. The Programme Board and Institute should work with other universities and institutes and the Tourism Industry to both promote careers in this discipline and enhance the employment terms and conditions within the industry.
2. Investigate the possibilities of attracting an international cohort to ensure the viability of the programme.
3. Develop a marketing plan with both a national and international focus for this and related programmes.
4. Review modules to ensure that module content is explicit in respect of sustainability.
5. Undertake a review of the student experience in relation to preparation for and administration of placement. Ensure that students receive communication in response to any feedback they give in relation to the organisation of work placements.
6. Ensure agreements with work placement employers which recognises that students are in the middle of their studies and will be returning to same. Pursue paid work placements for students, as feasible.
7. Embed internationalisation in the programme further ensuring that there is widespread use of international examples throughout.
8. The role of 'digital' in tourism should be more visible in the programme e.g., digital marketing.
9. Ensure the focus in the programme and on modules is on tourism and the experience economy rather than hospitality.
10. Devise a strategy to optimise student attendance to maximise student success. There needs to be 'value-added' for students who attend classes. Consider a stricter implementation of deadlines.
11. Devise a plan to ensure that students are appropriately scaffolded to complete academic and other writing tasks, building up to larger writing tasks with smaller assignments in lower stages.
12. Develop a strategy to further develop research in the discipline for those that wish to pursue it.
13. Consider a strategy for provision of level 9 programmes to provide progression opportunities for graduates.

**Module Recommendation(s)**

Module Title	Findings
All modules	Review modules to ensure that reading lists are current.

Social Media Fundamentals	Review module learning outcomes to ensure that module learning outcomes are appropriate to NFQ Level 6.
Regional Guiding	Review module learning outcomes to ensure that module learning outcomes are appropriate to NFQ Level 6.

<b>For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)</b>	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
<b>NB:</b> If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

## 6 Programme Level Findings Bachelor of Business Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations and Embedded Awards

<b>Consideration for the panel</b>	<b>Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially</b>
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards <sup>3</sup> )? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes

<sup>3</sup> GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available [HERE](#).

Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g., content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff:student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g. Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

The Programme Board emphasised the unique nature of this programme as no other programmes in Ireland have the unique combination of event management with public relations. Feedback from graduates support the need for public relations knowledge and skills for those working in events management.

To safeguard the sustainability of the programme it is important to broaden access e.g. international market. The programme does have links with Further Education providers for advanced entry. The Institute has recently appointed a marketing officer to work with schools to develop marketing plans.

The programme has an applied focus with students gaining practical experience through placement and live projects. A range of event types are covered including weddings, parties, conferences as are important aspects of the industry including event safety. The Links Office works with students in gaining placements. Even within Galway there are many even opportunities. Long unpaid placement can place a financial strain on students. However, it was noted that increasingly placement students are being paid, with some students opting for unpaid placement in areas of the industry that are of particular interest to them. Many students base their projects on their placement deepening the links with industry.

The number of students and retention has decreased. The Programme Board think that this is explained in part due to the impact of the pandemic, and plan to keep this under review. Students are supported in relation to maths, academic writing, study skills. However, it was noted that most students are in paid employment and work study balance is not always maintained.

A wide variety of assessment methodologies are utilised. In some instances, integrated assessments across modules are implemented, or students are given a choice of modes to articulate their knowledge. It was noted that academic writing skills can be an issue for students. The Programme Board adheres to the Institute's assessment guidelines to avoid over assessment. An assessment schedule is provided to students at the start of each semester. Alternative assessment methods were used during the pandemic.

The panel met with a number of students from this programme. Students felt that more experience in organisation of events is important to enhance student confidence to run an event. Students would benefit from further assistance in securing placements and enhanced academic writing skills to scaffold placement reflections. Non-paid placements is placing a financial burden on students. There is good communication

between students and academic staff, however it is not clear that the feedback loop is closed. There is room for improvement in engaging students on the Programme Board.

It was proposed that the title of the level 6 award would be amended and that it be approved as an entry as well as exit point. This was considered by the panel as a Differential Validation and is reported on separately.

The Programme Board proposed a number of changes relating to Programme Learning Outcomes, sequencing of modules, new modules, teaching, learning and assessment strategy, and individual module amendments. All changes as outlined in Appendix E were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

**Commendation(s):**

1. The inclusion of public relations and event management in the programme title is attractive to potential students and broadens the employment opportunities for graduates.
2. Notwithstanding the challenges facing the programme in attracting students, the commitment of staff was evident in the quality of documentation, interaction with panel and strong student focus.

**Condition(s):**

None

**Recommendation(s):**

1. Ensure the organisation and hosting of virtual events is mentioned explicitly in a relevant module.
2. Explore how the visibility of the work undertaken on placement can be raised for prospective employers e.g., awarding of digital badges.
3. Consider the necessity of reassessing learning multiple times and whether this results in over-assessment of students.
4. Devise a plan to ensure that students are appropriately scaffolded to complete academic and other writing tasks, building up to larger writing tasks using smaller assignments with lower stages.
5. Undertake a review of the student experience in relation to preparation and administration of placement. Ensure that students receive communication in response to any feedback they give in relation to the organisation of work placements.
6. Develop a strategy to further develop research in the discipline for those that wish to pursue it.
7. Consider a strategy for provision of level 9 programmes to provide progression opportunities for graduates.

**Module Recommendation(s)**

<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Work-based Learning Sports Event Management Ethics and Corporate Governance.	Review modules to ensure that reading lists are current and relevant.

<b>For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)</b>	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
<b>NB:</b> If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

## 6 Programme Level Findings Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Heritage Studies and Embedded Awards

<b>Consideration for the panel</b>	<b>Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially</b>
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards <sup>4</sup> )? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g., content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes

<sup>4</sup> GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available [HERE](#).

Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff:student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g., Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

This programme is facing challenges in relation to student numbers on the programme. It has an excellent track record in producing graduates, and the Programme Board is acutely aware of the need for a strong and vibrant undergraduate programme to sustain the programme and provide a throughput for postgraduate studies which will help achieve the Atlantic Technological University's stretch research metrics. The Programme Board suggested that the drivers of declining numbers are the government emphasis on STEM, the introduction of student fees, a reduction in mature students and increased humanities intakes in other colleges. Whilst numbers have been decreasing the most recent application figures suggest a slight increase. It is planned to increase school level marketing to promote the programme further.

There is room for further targeting Further Education and Training graduates. It was suggested that making the output of student projects public could be used as a promotional tool.

Whilst sustainability isn't very evident in module descriptors, the Programme Board provided strong evidence that it is included in many modules and covers a broad range of aspects including biodiversity, climate change, sustainable energy retrofits, and the utilisation of sustainable practices from the past.

Atlantic Technological University will provide opportunities for the development of the discipline of Heritage. For example, there is a strong team of archaeology lecturers in IT Sligo. ATU will border Northern Ireland. The Programme Board recognised that it will be important to build connections across the border and provide opportunities to fully take on the 32-county tradition e.g., musical heritage.

Lecturers are very available to students. Students respond well to fieldtrips as a form of practical experiential learning. When reviewing the programme, the Programme Board undertook measures to increase student retention including embedding field studies and guiding modules in stage two of the programme.

The programme's assessment strategy was reviewed, with less and more targeted assessment included, and some moves away from final examinations. Integrated assessment is also included in the programme.

The programme has an optional work placement module. It was suggested that consideration be given to this becoming a mandatory module. Students should be consulted in relation to this, and particular focus given to the low uptake of the current module.

The panel met a range of students from the programme who all are enjoying their studies. Undoubtedly their experience has been impacted by Covid. For example, the work placement elective became unfeasible. Students would welcome more choice, both in terms of electives and modes of representing learning. The role of students on the Programme Board is not as clear as it could be.

It was proposed that the programmes' titles be amended by removing 'studies' from them. This was treated as a Differential Validation and is reported on separately.

The Programme Board proposed a number of changes relating to Programme Learning Outcomes, sequencing of modules, new modules, and individual module amendments. All changes as outlined in

Appendix F were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

**Commendation(s):**

1. The enrichment of the programme by increasing the digital heritage content is welcome and is reflective of the needs of the target market and industry.
2. The inclusion of a strong ecological theme will enhance graduates' employability.
3. There is a well-rounded range of modules and the programme which is well thought out.
4. It is important that the Language and Culture modules are included on the programme.
5. The Programme Board were complimented on the documentation presented to the panel and there is strong evidence of the volume of work undertaken during the review process.
6. The panel noted the expertise and dedication of staff, their commitment to heritage, to the programme and their students. The panel acknowledge the work that the Programme Board are undertaking to develop and deliver this excellent programme.

**Condition(s):**

None.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. Ensure that Programme Learning Outcomes begin with an active verb appropriate to the level of the programme e.g., review Competence – Learning to Learn.
2. Enhance the visibility of climate change within the programme and module content given the importance of the topic, and the interest of the target cohort. Consider highlighting this theme in module titles.
3. Develop strong linkages with the further education sector providing progression pathways into stage 1 and/or stage 2. Ensure that the programme is structured such that further education students availing of advanced entry will meet the requirements of the Teaching Council.
4. Ensure that the required elective pathways for Teaching Council recognition are stipulated in the programme handbook or equivalent, and that the Programme Board stays up to date with Teaching Council changes.
5. Develop a plan for the marketing of this programme to enhance awareness and boost student numbers. Consider utilising the media used by the target cohort(s). Work with Guidance Counsellors and Further Education providers to promote the programme. Promote Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an entry route to this programme.
6. Develop taster programmes targeting Transition Year students as a method to promote the degree programme. Engage with students undertaking relevant projects in second level e.g. biodiversity. Consider creating connections with students studying history and geography at Leaving Certificate through the provision of revision courses.
7. Consider how community heritage groups can be targeted with introductory courses, which may lead some participants to undertake the degree programme. Consider flexible delivery of modules which will allow targeting of new cohorts e.g., digital heritage, ecology, natural heritage. Consider part-time delivery and/or development of minor awards to target cohorts other than the traditional full-time student.
8. Build in integrated assessment throughout the programme, as appropriate. Modules which are skills based should have regular low stakes assessment.
9. Review the titles of modules considering the use of explicit module titles rather than numbers, as it gives visibility to student learning for prospective employers on a transcript.
10. Consider methodologies for increasing the uptake of the work placement module, with a view to this module ultimately becoming mandatory. For example, promote the option to take the module during the term, and identify options to undertake the module online.

11. Ensure that heritage tourism is given appropriate visibility in the programme.
12. Review all modules with a view to ensuring that all module learning outcomes begin with an active verb. Review reading materials for modules ensuring that they are up-to-date and include relevant online resources. Ensure that module descriptors have an appropriate level of detail as this will be required by the Teaching Council.
13. The Institute should support staff in delivering and developing this programme.

<b>For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)</b>	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
<b>NB:</b> If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

## 6 Programme Level Findings Árd-Dipóloma I nGaeilge Fheidmach & Aistriúchan and Embedded Awards

<b>Consideration for the panel</b>	<b>Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially</b>
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	N/A
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards <sup>5</sup> )? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework?	Yes

<sup>5</sup> GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available [HERE](#).



(e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g., content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff:student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g., Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

The programme is well established and while it doesn't accommodate large numbers there are enough applications annually. GMIT market the programme through normal channels, and Europus promote it on the main Irish language platforms. Some feedback gathered during Programmatic Review found that those outside the Gaeltacht were less likely to hear of the programme and this will be considered in future marketing.

Údarás na Gaeltachta provides funding for the programme. GMIT puts out a tender, and Europus has been the successful provider. There are questions about future financing of the programme with a different funding module for such programmes being suggested. This has left uncertainty around September's intake, but discussions are ongoing. There is a fear that if fees are introduced for the programme, it will prevent students in the area from some socio-economic backgrounds partaking and will prevent others from further afield due to accommodation and transport costs.

The success of the programme was acknowledged as was the reputation of Europus for producing regular work. It is important that this programme continues as there is significant demand for interpreters and translators.

The fact that the programme is based in Ceathrú Rua is important. It creates employment in the Gaeltacht, helps keep young people in the area, but the course also prepares students to work abroad e.g., Brussels. Whilst the programme moved to remote teaching for one semester, it was not an ideal model given the practical nature of the programme.

GMIT staff sit on the Programme Board and visit the students halfway through the semester to discuss how their studies are progressing. Minor changes are regularly introduced due to student feedback.

The panel met with a selection of students, who were very positive about the course. They liked the fact that it had a broader focus than translation and included for example, radio skills. Students were positive about the location of the programme, as it allowed immersion in the language for those not from a Gaeltacht and allowed those from the region to remain based at home. Students would like further practice at sub-titling.

The Programme Board proposed a number of changes relating to the introduction of translation software, incorporating more advanced technology skills, assessment changes and individual module amendments. All changes as outlined in Appendix G were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

**Commendation(s):**

1. This is an important, interesting and valuable programme for its participants, the locality in which it is based and for the Irish language itself.
2. The hard work of the team involved in developing and delivering this high standard programme is acknowledged.
3. The involvement of a company such as Europus which is active in this industry is invaluable to the currency and applied nature of the programme.
4. The location of the programme promotes cultural sustainability. Irish is a living language, and this programme contributes to this by providing employment opportunities for those living in the Gaeltacht community.
5. The changes proposed in relation to the inclusion of technology are appropriate and relevant to the skills required by graduates.

**Condition(s):**

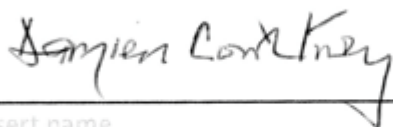
None.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. Broaden the reach of marketing to ensure that those outside of the Gaeltacht are aware of the programme.
2. In modules which are 100% Final Examination, ensure that there is ongoing formative assessment explicitly allowed for the in teaching, learning and assessment strategy within the module descriptor.
3. Clarify the status of the Teastas with the Registrar.
4. Consider providing further opportunities for students to practice sub-titling within the programme.
5. The panel was concerned about the future funding of the programme. Given the unique and invaluable nature of the programme, every effort should be made to secure the funding for this allowing it to continue in the manner it has heretofore. The Government needs to invest in this programme to assist in the development of high-level users of the language and achieve government policy in relation to the Irish language.
6. Ensure that Programme Learning Outcomes begin with an active verb appropriate to the level of the programme e.g., review Competence – Learning to Learn.

<b>For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)</b>	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
<b>NB:</b> If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

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**Validation Panel Report Approved By:****Signed:**

Insert name

Chairperson

**Date:**24<sup>th</sup> June 2022**Appendix A - Programme Board Members**

The panel met with the following staff:

Ms. Cait Noone	Ms. Deirdre Fahy	Ms. Maria Murphy
Mr. John Tunney	Dr. Orla O Doherty	Ms. Margaret Gannon
Dr. Mark McCarthy	Mr. Tom Edwards	Mr. Paul V Dunne
Mr. Cian Marnell	Mr. Tomas Mangan	Ms. Helen Delargy
Mr. Gary Dempsey	Mr. Barry McMillan	Ms. Jacinta Dalton
Mr. Fergal ODowd	Ms. Marie Burke	Dr. Laurence P. Elwood
Ms. Patricia Mulkeen	Dr. John Carty	Mr. Brian Morrissey
Ms. Michelle Glynn	Ms. Dymphna Griffin	Ms. Elizabeth Fox
Mr. George Finnegan	Dr. Suzanne O Reilly	Mr. Diarmuid OConghaile
Dr. Susanne O'Shea		

**Appendix B - Student Representatives**

The panel met with the following student representatives:

Student Name	Programme	Stage
Ms. Kerryn O'Sullivan	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations	4
Mr. Kiran Muqadas	Higher Certificate in Business in Tourism	1
Mr. Matthew Smith	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations	4
Ms. Meida Gauryte	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations	1
Ms. Vivienne Schellack	Bachelor of Business in International Tourism Management	3
Ms. Zoe Costigan	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management	3
Ms. Erin Carroll	Bachelor of Business in Event Management with Public Relations	3



## Appendix C - Schedule of Meetings

Agenda	
Date:	21st March, 2022
9am	Panel Meet
9.45am	Parallel A: Intl Tourism Mgt Programme Board
9.45am	Parallel B: Heritage Studies Programme Board
11.45 am	Break
12 noon	Meet with Students (Panel will break into small groups to meet different cohorts of students)
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	Panel Meet
2pm	Parallel A: Event Mgt with PR Programme Board
2pm	Parallel B: Ard Diploma Programme Board
4pm	Break
4.15pm	Panel - Private Deliberations
4.45pm	Initial Feedback
The Agenda may be subject to slight alteration on the day.	

## Appendix D - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Tourism Management and Embedded Awards

Programme Learning Outcomes	These have been rewritten	These have been rewritten to approve readability and take account of the new programme content and structure.
Overall Contact Hours	No change	
Sequencing of Modules	Yes	Modifications have been made to the sequencing of modules, so as to accommodate the introduction of new modules and improve the interrelatedness of the programme as a whole.

Addition of New Module(s)	Yes	to enrich programme content and to enhance our graduates' employability. 14 brand new modules are being proposed, namely: Social Media Fundamentals Information & Digital Technologies Introduction to Tourism International Tourism Geography and Travel Trade Regional Guiding Business Intelligence Tourism Impacts Management Accounting National Guiding International Tourism Travel Markets & Trends Management Challenge Tourism Transport Management Web Design & Development with E-Commerce Integration International Tourism Travel Markets & Trends
		It is proposed that some five-credit modules will be merged to streamline the programme, reflect industry developments, stakeholder feedback and/or updated GMIT Academic Policies. Descriptions of all the above modules, along with existing ones, can be found in the Module Manager Programme Documentation.
New APS Regulations	Yes	To take account of changes to the programmes
Minimum Entry Requirements	Not applicable	Not applicable
Changed transfer or progression routes	Not applicable	Not applicable
Teaching & Learning Strategy	Yes	To take account of changes to the programmes
Assessment Strategy	Yes	To take account of changes to the programmes
<b>Modules</b>		
All modules		Review modules to ensure that reading lists are current.
Social Media Fundamentals		Review module learning outcomes to ensure that module learning outcomes are appropriate to NFQ Level 6.
Regional Guiding		Review module learning outcomes to ensure that module learning outcomes are appropriate to NFQ Level 6.

## Appendix E - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Event Management with Public Relations and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	These have been amended and rewritten	These have been rewritten to approve readability and take account of the new programme content and structure.
Overall Contact Hours	None	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	Yes	To enhance commonality to facilitate multiple disciplinary delivery
Addition of New Module(s)	Yes	To enhance commonality to facilitate multiple disciplinary delivery
New APS Regulations	None	
Minimum Entry Requirements	Not Applicable	
Changed transfer or progression routes	Not Applicable	
Teaching & Learning Strategy	Amended	To take account of changes to the programmes
Assessment Strategy	Amended	To take account of changes to the programmes
<b>Modules</b>		
Work-based Learning		Review module to ensure that reading lists are current and relevant.
Sports Event Management		Review module to ensure that reading lists are current and relevant.
Ethics and Corporate Governance.		Review module to ensure that reading lists are current and relevant.

## Appendix F - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Heritage Studies and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	These have been rewritten	These have been rewritten to approve readability and take account of the new programme content and structure.
Overall Contact Hours	Three extra hours	To incorporate fieldwork time, the contact hours have been increased by one hour in Modern Irish History & Memory in Semester 3 and Research Methods in Semester 5. Furthermore, one-hour contact time has been allocated to Work Experience in Semester 5, to reflect academic workload.
Sequencing of Modules	Yes	Modifications have been made to the sequencing of modules, to accommodate the introduction of eight new modules and improve the inter-relatedness of the programme.
Addition of New Module(s)	Yes	<p>to enrich programme content (e.g., in the areas of business, digital heritage, sustainability, tour guiding, and tourism), to enhance our graduates' employability, and to satisfy Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations for teaching the curricular subjects of History and Geography at second level.</p> <p>Ten brand new modules are being proposed, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Intelligence</li> <li>Cultural Studies: Ireland</li> <li>Digital Heritage Archives</li> <li>Ecology &amp; Environment</li> <li>Geographies of Adventure Tourism</li> <li>International Tourism Markets &amp; Trends</li> <li>Regional Guiding</li> <li>National Guiding</li> <li>Sustainable Tourism &amp; Hospitality Management</li> <li>Cultural Studies: Ireland</li> </ul>



## Appendix G - Proposed Changes for Ard-Dipoloma I nGaeilge Fheidmach & Aistriúchan

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	Minor changes to PLOs (see programme document).	Addition of appropriate learning taxonomies.
Overall Contact Hours	No change.	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	No change.	
Addition of New Module(s)	Not applicable.	
New APS Regulations	None required.	
Minimum Entry Requirements	No changes to the current requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Honours Degree or its equivalent in Irish.</li> <li>Graduates of other disciplines who are native Irish speakers or of native speaker ability.</li> <li>Each candidate must attend an interview.</li> <li>Each candidate must pass a written language assessment examination.</li> </ul>	
Changed transfer or progression routes	Not applicable.	
Teaching & Learning Strategy	As detailed in programme document.	
Assessment Strategy	As detailed in programme document.	
<b>Module Changes</b>		
Teicneolaíocht an Aistriúcháin	introduction of translation software Trados shift of emphasis from basic technology skills to more advanced and specialised resources	To reflect current and evolving demands in the industry
Teoiric an Aistriúcháin	Assessment change from end of year exam to research essay	to ease the burden of end of year exams and develop report writing, research and time management skills

The main changes proposed as a result of stakeholder feedback during the current review are as follows:

- Introduction of translation software to the Teicneolaíocht an Aistriúcháin module to respond to trends, developments and demands within the industry thus improving the employment prospects of graduates and meeting the skills needs of employers.
- Moving from basic technology skills (i.e. word processing and email) in the Teicneolaíocht an Aistriúcháin module to more advanced technology skills and giving students the knowledge and know-how of when and how to use specific and specialised online terminology resources depending on the translation task at hand.
- Assessment changes to the Teoiric an Aistriúcháin module from end of year exam to research essay to ease the burden of end of year exams and develop report writing, research and time management skills amongst the students.