# EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

| 1. | Title of Programme(s): (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards) | BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education & Care<br><br>Embedded Awards:<br>BA in Early Childhood Education & Care<br>Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education & Care |
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| 2. | NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS: | 8<br>240 ECTS |
| 3. | Duration: | 4 years |
| 4. | ISCED Code: | 0112 |
| 5. | School / Centre: | Mayo Campus |
| 6. | Department: | Department of Nursing, Health Science and Social Care |
| 7. | Type of Review: | New Programme |
| 8. | Date of Review: | 28th November 2018 |
| 9. | Delivery Mode: | Full-time |
| 10. | Work Based Learning (Work Placement/Work Based Project, No. ECTS) | Work Placement (10 ECTS in stages 1 and 2 and 4)<br>Work Based Project (15 ECTS in stage 3) |
| | Modules with Failed Elements | No |
| | Non-compensatable modules | No |
| | Award Classification | N/A |
| 11. | Panel Members: | Dr Joe McGarry, Retired THEA, Chair<br>Ms Patsy Baissangourou, Letterkenny IT<br>Ms Mary McSkeane, Dundalk IT<br>Ms Rita Melia, Tusla<br>Ms Carmel Brennan, Secretary |
| 12. | Proposing Staff: | Mr Justin Kerr<br>Ms Mary Skillington |

|     |                        | Ms Joanne Doherty<br>Dr Yvonne McDermott<br>Ms Caroline Clarke<br>Mr Declan Hoban<br>Dr Maura Fitzsimons<br>Ms Sharon Boyle<br>Dr Mark Garavan<br>Dr Janine McGinn<br>Ms Clodagh Geraghty |
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| 13. | Programme Rationale: | The BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care is designed to provide learners with a specialised education in early childhood education and care for a professional career in the field and as a basis for further academic and professional development.<br><br>The proposed programme will increase the visibility of the Institute's offering in this discipline, enhancing its attractiveness to learners.  The proposed programme also responds to local requests to make available an educational progression route for appropriately qualified Early Years Educators and managers in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).  It also responds to emerging regulation of the sector and the national policy objective for increasing the professionalism, competence and capability of the sector through enhanced education. |
| 14. | Potential Demand for Entry: | Demand from current students, an anticipated larger first year intake, and the growing industry suggest that this ab initio degree will fill its 25 available places. |
| 15. | Stakeholder Engagement: | Current students were consulted in order to identify gaps in knowledge, practice and values.  Consultation also took place with early years managers, and the Mayo County Childcare Committee.  These interactions informed the design and content of the programme. |
| 16. | Graduate Demand: | The ECEC sector has been a growth area over the last ten years, as evidenced by the recent introduction by the Department of Child and Youth Affairs of a second National Free Pre-School year.  Employment opportunities appear positive with graduates having enhanced employability within the rapidly professionalising sector.  Furthermore, graduates would be well-placed to occupy supervisory functions within the sector, in accordance with new funding requirements. |

| 17. | Entry Requirements, Access, Transfer & Progression: | **Minimum Entry Requirements** |
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| | | The minimum entry requirements are those stated by the Institution in its Access, Transfer and Progression Policy at any given time.  At present they are a Grade O6/H7 or better in six Leaving Certificate subjects including English or Irish and Mathematics.  Two of the six Leaving Certificate subjects must be passed in higher level papers at Grade H5 or higher.   (Note: An F2 in Foundation Level Mathematics will be accepted as meeting the entry requirements for this programme.) |
| | | OR |
| | | Equivalent qualifications and scores from other countries which will be assessed and scored by the Institute. |
| | | OR |
| | | A Pass in any QQI FET Major Award at level 5 or 6 with distinction grade in at least three components or a UK/International equivalent which appear in the DCYA list of Early Years recognised qualifications. |
| | | OR |
| | | A Pass in a QQI FET Foundation Certificate, the NUIG/GMIT Foundation Certificate or any Foundation Certificate delivered by the regional cluster (GMIT, NUIG, IT Sligo or IT Letterkenny). |

**Mature Applicants**

Applications from mature applicants (aged 23 on or before 1st January of the course commencement year) are welcomed by GMIT.  A quota of places is reserved for mature applicants.  These applicants do not have to meet the Leaving Certificate entry requirements and are considered on an individual basis (previous education, work experience, and demonstration of ability and competence to undertake the programme).  They may be invited for interview.  This will be used to rank applicants where demand exceeds the available places on a programme.

**English Language Requirements**

English Language Requirements will be as determined by GMIT and as published in the Access, Transfer and Progression code.  The current requirements are as follows:

Non-EU applicants who are not English speakers must have a minimum score of 5.5 (with a minimum of 5.0 in each component) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent.  All results must have been achieved within 2 years of application to GMIT.

EU applicants who are not English speakers are recommended to have a minimum score of 5.5 (with a minimum of 5.0 in each component) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent.

**Recognition of Prior Learning**

GMIT is committed to the principles of transparency, equity and fairness in recognition of prior learning (RPL) and to the principle

of valuing all learning regardless of the mode or place of its acquisition. Recognition of Prior Learning may be used to:

   i. gain access or advanced entry to a programme at Stage 2 or higher, subject to available places. (Stage 1 entry through CAO)

   ii. gain credits and exemptions from programme modules after admission

   iii. in award years RPL will be considered, to a 50% maximum (30 credits)

Academic Code of Practice No. 6 outlines the policies and procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning.  Guidance for applicants is provided on myexperience.ie

**Advanced Entry**
Entry to year 2 requires a full award at QQI FET Level 6 in Early Childhood Education and Care or UK/International equivalents which appear in the DCYA list of early years recognised qualifications.

Entry to year 3 is available to early years educators with 120 ECTS in Early Childhood Education and Care at the appropriate level.

Entry to year 4 requires a QQI major Level 7 award or UK/International equivalent which appear in the DCYA list of early years recognised qualifications.

**Applications**
Applications for year one of this programme are made through the Central Applications Office (CAO).  Applications for all other stages are made directly to the Institute.

**Selection**
Standard CAO applicant selection is based on applicants meeting the stated minimum requirements and on points which are calculated in accordance with CAO guidelines.  Where applicants exceed available places, applicants are ranked in order of points.

| 18. | Programme Structure: | The programme consists of a mixture of semesterised and year-long modules delivered over four years, with a practice placement included in each year.  The final year allows students to pursue an elective stream depending on their interest – school age children, enterprise or research. |
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| 19. | Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategies: | Through collaborative processes the programme content will be delivered through a combination of lectures, tutorials, workshops, readings, class discussions, ICT, group work and case-studies.  Learners will be encouraged to participate in the classroom and to relate concepts to actual situations.  Case studies will be encouraged, particularly as a mechanism |

| | | for developing learners' team-working, problem solving, communication skills and the integration of theory to practice.<br><br>A diverse range of assessments will be used in this programme based on the learning it is designed to assess. |
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| 20. | Resource Implications: | 9 hours of additional academic staff are required for delivery of this programme.  In addition, a specialised demonstration pre-school room with appropriate equipment is required.  The reading materials listed in modules needs to be made available to students. |
| 21. | Synergies with Existing Programmes: | Years 1 to 3 are common with the approved BA in Early Childhood Education and Care. |
| 22. | Findings and Recommendations: | General:<br>The programme was approved subject to the following conditions (6) and recommendations (15):<br><br>Special conditions attaching to approval (if any):<br>1. Ensure that students on this programme are competent in recognising and being able to articulate the elements of a quality childhood education and care practice.<br>2. The following topics, which are included within the programme, should be made more visible throughout the programme: quality, child's rights, wellbeing, leadership and pedagogical documentation.<br>3. International perspectives on early childhood dducation and care should be visible in the final stage of the programme, including within a module title.<br>4. The 'Leadership and Governance in ECEC Settings' module should revised as a level 8 module.<br>5. Rename the 'Literacy and Numeracy in ECEC' module to fully reflect its content.<br>6. It is strongly recommended that there should be a literacy and numeracy module in the early stages of the programme to include play-based exploration in its learning outcomes.<br><br>Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:<br><br>7. Clarify how all members of the programme team will be made aware of the core values and principles of the programme. |

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| | | 8. Support students to get a wide variety of experience across all age groups, especially under 3s, whether through site visits or placements. |
| | | 9. Ensure that entry requirements listed in the second document are correct and reflect those in the first document. |
| | | 10. The 'Play and the Arts' module title should reflect the complexity of the module and should include terms such as innovation and/or creativity. |
| | | 11. Consider including 'child development' as a module title or within a module title in stage 4. |
| | | 12. Consider reframing and renaming the 'Relationships in Early Childhood Education and Care' module with emphasis on quality and leadership. |
| | | 13. Ensure that the 'Digital Technology and Digital Childhoods' module learning outcomes and content examines not just the use of technology, but also its impact on children. |
| | | 14. Include biodiversity and universal design in the module content of 'Nature and Place'. |
| | | 15. Consider renaming 'Business Management Skills for Early Years Leaders' as 'Business Management for the Early Years Leader' and ensure that the module is contextualized for this programme. |
| | | 16. Revise the assessment strategy for 'School Age Childcare' to focus on an experiential or applied assignment rather than a terminal examination. |
| | | 17. Practice Placement module titles would be better if they described the emphasis of each module e.g. Practice Placement 4 could be 'Supervision and Mentoring (Practice Placement 4)'. |
| | | 18. Ensure that the content of 'Accounting for Entrepreneurs' is relevant and applied to the early childhood education and care sector. Consider renaming this module as 'Finance for Entrepreneurs' or similar. |
| | | 19. Ensure that the content of 'Enterprise Project' module is relevant and applied to the early childhood education and care sector. |
| | | 20. Ensure that book lists for all modules are up-to-date and are divided into essential and recommended reading, as appropriate. |
| | | 21. Articulate the special regulations in relation to electives, compensation and exit awards on the Approved Programme Schedule. |

| 23. | FAO: Academic Council: | Approved: | |
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| | | Approved subject to recommended changes: | X |
| | | Not approved at this time: | |
| | Signed: | | |
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| | | Chair | Secretary |