VALIDATION REPORT

1.	Title of Programme(s): (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)	Certificate in Blockchain for Business Special Purpose Award
2.	NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS:	8 30 ECTS
3.	Duration:	1 year
4.	ISCED Code:	0688
5.	School / Centre:	School of Business
6.	Department:	Department of Enterprise and Technology
7.	Type of Review:	Special Purpose Award
8.	Date of Review:	22nd November 2019
9.	Delivery Mode:	Online, Part-time
10.	Panel Members:	Mr Des O'Reilly (Chair) Dr Carina Ginty Dr Martin Kenirons Mr David Roche, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Pramerica Ms Carmel Brennan (Secretary)
11.	Proposing Staff:	Prof Graham Heaslip Mr Eamon Walsh Dr Trevor Clohessy Dr Amaya Vega Mr Phelim Murnion
12.	Programme Rationale:	The programme aims to provide students with a specialised education in blockchain, which will provide students with the knowledge, skills and techniques to be able to evaluate and consider blockchain in their own discipline. According to the Expert Group on Future Skills 'it is forecast that the worldwide blockchain market will grow by a CAGR of 79.2% from 2017 to 2021, to reach €8.8 billion. The European blockchain market will grow from €182 million in 2017 to €1.6 billion in 2021 – a CAGR of 72.9%.' The strong interest in blockchain has created high demand for skills. According to Upwork Skills Index' blockchain and bitcoin developers were in the top 3 skills demanded in Q3 2017 – only behind robotics skills.'

		The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has identified that the aforementioned technologies "can accelerate digitisation and have an immediate impact on competitiveness in sectors such as eHealth, intelligent transport systems, connected/automated vehicles, smart homes and cities, and advanced manufacturing" [2]. Yet, many Irish businesses are poorly equipped to consider adopting blockchain technologies and lack the soft business skills (e.g. business models, digital transformation) and hard technological skills (e.g. programming languages) and competencies to manage it [5]. Furthermore, the Expert Group on Future Skills in March 2019 identified skills shortages in many areas related to blockchain development, blockchain management, cryptocurrency development, ledgers and consensus methods.
13.	Potential Demand for Entry:	50 places are available on this programme. Enquiries to date suggest strong demand.
14.	Stakeholder Engagement:	In May 2019, GMIT School of Business hosted a seminar entitled "Demystifying Blockchain: platforms, tokens, identities, supply chains and Business Models" in partnership with the Irish Institute of Digital Business based in DCU. This was well attended, and it was clear from engagement with presenters and attendees that the level of Blockchain interest and activity in Ireland is very high.
15.	Graduate Demand:	This programme is designed as an upskilling programme, primarily for those who are in work so that they can bring additional skills to their companies.
16.	Entry Requirements, Access, Transfer & Progression:	A bachelor award at level 7. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used to gain entry or exemption from this programme in line with GMIT's policy. English language requirements are those stated in GMIT's access policy at any given time.
17.	Programme Structure:	The programme consists of six 5 ECTS modules, half of which will be delivered in each semester.
18.	Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategies:	This programme will be delivered online. Teaching materials will be provided online, and the primary method of delivery is asynchronous online videos. Interaction with the lecturer will be facilitated through a range of online mechanisms. Authentic assessments will be used where possible.

19.	Resource Implications:	This will be a self-financing programme. It will be delivered by existing staff.
20.	Synergies with Existing Programmes:	None.
21.	Findings and Recommendations:	General: The panel welcomed the proposal for a programme in this evolving discipline and were appreciative of the professional documentation received. The panel have approved the programme subject to the condition (1) and recommendations (9) below which aim to further enhance the programme. Special conditions attaching to approval (if any): 1. Refer to blockchain implementation strategy rather than blockchain implementation in the Programme Learning Outcomes. Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought: 2. Clearly articulate the knowledge and skills that graduates will have at the end of the programme so that the aim and content of the programme is unambiguous to potential applicants. 3. Review the volume of assessment in the programme and whether there are opportunities to include integrated assignments ensuring that the student assessment workload is appropriate. 4. Revise the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme to ensure that it fully reflects the online delivery of the programme and appropriate approaches to teaching, cognitive and social presence. 5. Review Programme Learning Outcomes combining outcomes where appropriate. 6. Consider liaising with the Teaching and Learning Officer in relation to online student induction resources. 7. Review all modules to - ensure module learning outcomes are written appropriately in all instances. - enhance the description of the assessment strategy. - include journal resources. 8. Review the module learning outcomes for the Blockchain Technology module. 9. Consider whether the repeat mechanism for the two FinTech modules are appropriate and add FinTech Weekly as a student resource. 10. Review the programme document removing any typos.

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