

1.	Title of Programme(s): (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)	Certificate in Peer Support Practice Special Purpose Award
2.	NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS:	8 30 ECTS
3.	Duration:	1 year
4.	ISCED Code:	0910
5.	School / Centre:	Mayo Campus
6.	Department:	Nursing, Health Sciences and Social Care
7.	Type of Review:	New Programme Validation
8.	Date of Review:	20 th November 2020
9.	Delivery Mode:	Full-time, Part-time
10.	Panel Members:	Dr Joe McGarry, Educational Consultant (Chair) Dr Pauline Logue-Collins, Lecturer GMIT/Academic Council Dr Eleanor Rainsford, Lecturer GMIT/Academic Council Mr Clement McLoughlin, OT Manager CHO2 + HSE Peer Support Work Services Ms Carmel Brennan, GMIT Assistant Registrar (Secretary)
11.	Proposing Staff:	Mr Justin Kerr Rosaleen Murray Dr Mark Garavan Dr Carmel Heaney Siobhan Lynch Dr Sean Foy Michael Ryan, Head of Mental Health Engagement & Recovery, HSE
12.	Programme Rationale:	This Special Purpose Award (SPA) aims to provide students with an education for professional practice in peer support work. Quality assured accessible learning and education, for those seeking a role in peer support work in general or specifically mental health care, is a priority for the HSE. The HSE has specified that a level 8 SPA award in peer support work is a requirement for employment within its services. The programme also has potential application in other domains such as dementia and neuro-diverse care settings where lived

		<p>experience and peer support interventions can be deployed to great effect.</p> <p>There is an emerging international consensus as to the centrality of peer support working and lived experience in modern mental health care services and the need for a common set of practitioner competencies (https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers/core-competencies-peer-workers), which in turn complements agreed national guidelines for peer support services (https://inaops.org/nationalstandards).</p> <p>Peer support education continues to evolve in Europe also, as evidenced by new training programmes for peers, including, for example, those identified by the European Union’s Compass Consortium 4 as a best practice, as well as higher education programmes, such as a two-year Associate Degree course in “Experts by Experience” at Hanze University in the Netherlands. Peer support may be formally defined as <i>“offering and receiving help based on shared understanding, respect and mutual empowerment between people in similar situations”</i> (Mead <i>et al.</i> 2001).</p> <p>Peer support roles are based on the simple premise that humans can afford one another friendship and shared coping strategies in the face of adversity (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 2012). Peer support training is an attempt to combine and explore the basic concepts and principles that underpin peer support working in the mental health service and in primary care. Peer support working has been identified as the key recovery-focused organisational change driver (Shepherd <i>et al.</i> 2010).</p> <p>Good peer support working is based on developing sound reciprocal recovery promoting relationships. Peers from user-led groups when interviewed have indicated that peer relationships were more satisfying and effective if these relationships were reciprocal and sufficient distance and objectivity from personal predicaments had been achieved so as to facilitate solution-focused work rather than simply giving advice (Faulkner and Kalathil 2012). This underscores the need for high quality training and support for those seeking to work as peer supports.</p> <p>Apart from the health dividend in terms of reduced re-admission, reduced coercion and less physical restraint (Trachtenberg <i>et al.</i> 2013; Ashcraft & Anthony 2008) there are multiple advantages that can be described in terms of personal recovery. Research into the impact of peer support involving randomised controlled trials and other qualitative studies bear witness to a range of benefits including greater self-esteem, better problem-solving skills, increased self-agency and improved access to work and education.</p>
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13.	Potential Demand for Entry:	20 students are targeted for entry per annum. This is viewed as achievable given the interest displayed at an open information evening held in November 2019.
14.	Stakeholder Engagement:	The proposed SPA was developed in direct partnership with the HSE mental health services and the HSE Office for Mental Health Engagement and Recovery.
15.	Graduate Demand:	Qualified Peer Support Workers will be eligible to take up peer support roles in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector. There will also be opportunities in recovery education with the HSE and NGOs and other organisations. Graduates of the course will also be able to input into service improvement processes in the HSE, NGO's consultancy organisations etc. Peer support workers will also be equipped to work in health and wellbeing settings across a range of community and other settings.
16.	Entry Requirements, Access, Transfer & Progression:	<p>Entry requirements as submitted are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each applicant for admission will be assessed according to three recognised standards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. that they have direct lived experience or family experience of specific health and well-being challenges ii. that they have integrated that experience into a personal recovery orientation, and iii. that they have a readiness to enter into an appropriate peer-support practice. 2. Each applicant will be examined on a case-by-case basis for academic eligibility and professional suitability. 3. The assessment regarding eligibility and suitability will be informed by a direct interview and the submission of a portfolio of experience which will include a detailed personal statement. 4. All applicants must complete Garda Vetting. This will be assessed in accordance with GMIT's Garda Vetting Policy. 5. Each applicant must have secured a peer support professional practice placement to permit application of learning and reflection on practice. This placement will be verified by the Programme Board for suitability in achieving the learning outcomes required in the Understanding Peer Support module. <p>Note: A condition attached to the validation of the programme requires an amendment to the stated minimum entry requirement.</p>
17.	Programme Structure:	The programme consists of three mandatory modules and allows students to choose one elective module. The programme is delivered on a semesterised basis over two semesters.
18.	Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategies:	The Pedagogical approach to be followed in the SPA is informed by recovery and adult education principles. This will primarily involve a facilitative experiential approach incorporating co-delivery

		<p>principles that is interactive and focused on core skills that include active listening, problem solving, fostering a recovery promoting relationship, wellness and personal recovery planning, managing challenge, observing codes of conduct, team working and narrative inquiry. This pedagogical philosophy is grounded in the award's adherence to a wider humanistic, person-centred and developmental perspective. The perspective will be derived from a philosophy of practice that is person-centred, developmental and facilitative, rather than in a medical, dependency or deficit model.</p> <p>The key to good peer support is the willingness and capacity to enter into real and authentic relationships. The pedagogical approach, underpinned by the person-centred philosophy, will be developmental, recognising the student as a co-learner and possessor of knowledge and wisdom in their own right. Emphasis will be placed on the processes of transformative learning, critical thinking and consciousness-raising. Assessment is held not as a test or examination of knowledge but as a mode of learning in itself. Assessments forms an integral component of the student's learning. Hence, the assessment strategies reflect the award's core philosophy.</p>
19.	Resource Implications:	<p>This programme will be self-financing. Most modules are already being delivered and therefore will not require additional resources. 3 hours per week over the academic year will be required to deliver the new modules, and guest lectures will be required to supplement this to provide expertise through the lived experience.</p> <p>Additional library resources are required i.e. the reading lists as included in each module descriptor.</p>
20.	Synergies with Existing Programmes:	<p>Five of the seven modules on this programme are already validated and being delivered on other programmes. Joint teaching is envisaged.</p>
21.	Findings and Recommendations:	<p>General:</p> <p>The panel approve the programmes with the commendations (3) listed below and subject to the following condition(s) (5) and recommendation(s) (5):</p> <p>Commendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The partnership with the HSE in the development of this programme was welcomed. 2. The panel feel that this is an innovative programme proposal that can make an important contribution to the region. 3. This programme brings an innovative service user centred approach to the health and social care fields.

		<p>Special conditions attaching to approval (if any):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimum entry requirements should align with the Institute’s admissions policy. The Institute’s policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning may be considered, where appropriate, for applicants not meeting the academic entry requirements for the programme. 2. Clearly articulate how common delivery to the two different cohorts (full-time degree and part-time Certificate students) will operate and the benefits and challenges arising from same. 3. Articulate clearly the proposed delivery modes ensuring that they are appropriately reflected in the delivery hours in each module descriptor, the APS and the teaching and learning strategies. In particular, if blended delivery is proposed this should be clearly and consistently reflected throughout the documentation and specifically in the programme and module level teaching and learning strategies. 4. Provide further clarity in relation to the role of the peer support practice placement in the programme, and how this will be vetted, validated and assessed. 5. Review, revise and reduce the number of Programme Learning Outcomes, ensuring that they are written appropriately in all instances. 	
		<p>Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the teaching and learning strategies for each module to ensure that that they reflect the chosen philosophy for the programme and are appropriate for a blended learning approach. 2. Further articulate the assessment strategy for modules ensuring that they are clear and well thought through. 3. Consider the additional supports which will be needed for students to engage in reflective, critical and academic writing. 4. Revise module learning outcomes to ensure they are appropriately written for the level of the module. 5. Review the reading lists for each module to ensure that they are up to date in each case. 	
22.	FAO: Academic Council:	Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary