

EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

1.	Title of Programme(s): (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)	Certificate in Sales, Customer Service with a Language (French or Spanish) (Special Purpose Award, 50 Credits)					
2.	NFQ Level(s):	6					
3.	Duration:	1 year					
4.	ISCED Code:	0414					
5.	School / Centre:	Mayo Campus					
6.	Department:	Department of Business, Humanities & Technology					
7.	Type of Review:	New Programme:	Yes:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Differential Validation:	Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8.	Date of Review:	13 th June 2017					
9.	Delivery Mode:	Full-time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blended	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Panel Members:	Mr Gerry O'Neill, Chair Mr Colm Kelleher Mr Tomas Mangan Mr Klaus Gottsche, Wayfair Mr Mark Jennings, Wayfair Ms Monica Nielsen, Special Advisor Ms Carmel Brennan, Secretary					
11.	Proposing Staff:	Mr Michael Gill Ms Celene Dunphy Mr Egbert Polski Ms Maria Daley Mr Deaglain O'Riain Ms Sinead Kilgallon Ms Mary Nestor Ms Janine McGinn					
12.	Programme Rationale:	<p>The proposed programme seeks to address the needs of industry for staff with sales/customer service skills and the ability to function in a professional business environment and in an international context.</p> <p>The need for professional sales, customer service and language skills has been repeatedly identified at national level by The Expert Group of Future Skills Needs (EGFSN). In 'Key Skills for Enterprise to Trade Internationally' (Forfás,</p>					

		<p>2012), key recommendations included building-up a cadre of international sales professionals, enhancing international customer service/support skills and building-up a multi-lingual workforce for an increasingly globalised marketplace.</p> <p>More recently, in the National Skills Bulletin, September 2016 (page 134), The EGFSN identified continuing shortages of employees with sales and customer care skills with a foreign language, stressing the need for improved communication skills, cultural awareness and foreign languages. “Associate professional sales, customer service and marketing skills are critical in Ireland’s efforts to increase the global market share for its exports. Almost all job announcements in 2015 have sales and/or customer care roles mentioned as part of their overall recruitment requirement. (e.g. Apple, Microsoft, Vodafone, Zimmer, indeed.com, Sage, Dairymaster, Slane Distillery, O’Hara’s Brewery, LinenCare). Proficiency in foreign languages is becoming an important part of the skill set in relation to sales and other roles... “</p> <p>The Department of Education and Skills Action Plan For Education 2016-2019 (page 25), highlighted the need to increase the diversity and provision of foreign language learning opportunities, which are of relevance to rapidly growing economies of the future. It committed to the implementation of a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy.</p> <p>The requirement for multilingual customer support staff is also reflected at regional level. This was highlighted in Labour Market Overview of the Western Region, “West: Labour Market Overview”, (Jasmina Behan, Labour Research Unit (SLMRU), SOLAS).</p>
13.	Potential Demand for Entry:	<p>The programme will be of interest to job seekers in the region needing to up-skill and will also target homemakers wishing to return to the workplace, a group now eligible for Springboard. The programme will offer 24 places.</p>
14.	Stakeholder Engagement:	<p>Telephone interviews were held with regional employers from different sectors including manufacturing (Nomadic Display and Portwest), tourism (Hotel Westport), wholesale and retail (Correy Trading). These employers identified the importance to their business of having highly trained staff in</p>

		customer facing roles. They need staff who understand the importance of customer service and can deliver it consistently and reliably. These companies operate internationally and put a value on staff who can operate, at least to some extent, in a second language. Good IT skills are also judged an absolute requirement for customer facing staff.
15.	Graduate Demand:	<p>The proposed programme will address the needs of industry for staff with sales/customer service skills, the ability to function in a professional business environment and a basic ability to communicate in a modern European language. As already discussed, the need for professional sales, customer service and language skills has been identified at both national and regional level.</p> <p>For students who are eligible for the Springboard funding, this programme will offer a current, accredited qualification that will augment their employability in sales or associated roles. Examples from consultations with employers are listed below.</p>
16.	Entry Requirements:	<p>Students will have to meet the entry requirements as indicated in GMIT's Academic Code of Practice No. 4 (Access, Transfer and Progression), at any given time.</p> <p>At present the entry requirements for this programme will be the minimum entry requirements for a level 6 programme i.e. Grade O6/H7 or better in five Leaving Certificate subjects including Mathematics and English or Irish with a minimum of 160 points. A Foundation Studies Certificate or any FETAC Level 5/6 award will also meet the minimum entry requirements.</p> <p>Mature applicants (EU nationals aged 23 on or before January in the year of entry) do not have to meet the Leaving Certificate entry requirements. Applicants applying on 'mature' basis may be required to undergo an interview and information and advisory session with the Head of Department or his/her delegate. These sessions will be used to assess suitability for the programme and to rank applicants for offer of places where the number of applications exceeds the special reserve of places.</p>

		<p>Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used to gain entry to the programme, or gain exemptions in accordance with Code of Practice No. 6 (Policy and Procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning). Prior learning can be certified or experiential, and will be assessed in accordance with the code. Individual applicants will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with GMIT's RPL policy. The School also engages with GMIT's International Office as required to map progression from partner colleges abroad.</p> <p>Candidates applying for this programme under Springboard must meet Springboard entry requirements.</p>
17.	Access, Transfer & Progression:	<p>Students who have completed the programme may be eligible for exemptions from programmes of further study at GMIT Mayo Campus or elsewhere.</p>
18.	Programme Structure:	<p>The programme will focus on providing students with skills in three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - selling and customer service skills required to work successfully in a business environment. - use of PC applications (word-processing, spreadsheets, presentation and desktop publishing) in a business context. - communication skills in either Spanish or French. In Spanish, which will be delivered ab-initio, these communication skills will be sufficient to carry out routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on routine matters. In French, where candidates will be expected to have a basic level of language (A1) before starting the programme, communication skills acquired will be sufficient to carry out slightly more complex tasks requiring a higher level of information exchange on routine matters. <p>Delivery will be 17 hours per week for a full academic year i.e. 26 weeks. The programme will be timetabled between 9 am and 1pm over 4/5 days per week. The work experience element will be at the end of the academic year. It is a 6-week commitment but can be delivered flexibly to facilitate both learners and employers if it involves a minimum of 125 hours of work on tasks relevant to programme content.</p>

19.	Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategies:	The programme will consist of six 5 credit modules and two 10 credit modules. It will be structured around lectures, group work, presentations, skills based activities and practical work experience. The work experience element will be in a sales or customer service role, if possible with a language element. Integrated learning will be encouraged and cross-modular assessment will facilitate learners in relating material learned in one topic to other areas of content.
20.	Resource Implications:	This programme will be offered on a self-financing basis. It will utilise existing staff with teaching capacity. No additional resource requirements were outlined to the panel.
21.	Synergies with Existing Programmes:	45 credits are pre-approved modules, but it is not planned to co-deliver these modules with other class groups due to the planned integration of modules and assessments.
22.	Findings and Recommendations:	<p>General:</p> <p>The panel welcomes the development of a sales programme and the enthusiasm of the programme team in their engagement with the validation process.</p> <p>It was explained at the outset that the development of the SPA was in response to a successful proposal made to Springboard.</p> <p>The panel recommends approval of this programme for delivery for one year only.</p>
		<p>Special conditions attaching to approval (if any):</p>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional sales content must be integrated into the programme. The AQA2 should clearly outline the sales content in the programme and where this is included throughout all modules. 2. The AQA2 must be substantially revised to articulate the integrated nature of the delivery and assessment of the programme evinced at the review. 3. Elaborate the access requirements to specify the interview requirement, and correct the entry requirements for FE students.

		<p>4. Reduce the volume of programme learning outcomes and revise the mapping of module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>5. Amend the APS to show the supervision hours associated with the Work Experience model.</p> <p>6. Revise language modules to reflect the delivery of the modules in one semester, and showing the correct delivery hours on the APS.</p>	
		<p>Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:</p>	
		<p>7. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of German language in the programme.</p>	
23.	FAO: Academic Council:		
		Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary