

VALIDATION REPORT

1.	Title of Programme(s): (incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)	BA in Religious Studies
2.	NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS:	180 ECTS
3.	Duration:	3 years
4.	ISCED Code:	0221
5.	School / Centre:	Galway International Hotel School
6.	Department:	Department of Heritage and Tourism; Humanities, Applied Languages and Communications
7.	Type of Review:	Differential Validation
8.	Date of Review:	8 th June 2021
9.	Delivery Mode:	Full-time
10.	Panel Members:	Dr Seamus Lennon (Chair) Dr Trish O'Connell Mr Ivan McPhillips Dr Michael Howlett, Retired Head of Department of Applied Arts, Waterford Institute of Technology Ms Carmel Brennan (Secretary)
11.	Proposing Staff:	Mr Barry McMillan Dr Pauline Logue
12.	Rationale and Proposed Changes	<p>In the mid-1990s, in response to expressed need, a course in Religious Studies for mature learners was first offered by GMIT. This was subsequently developed into the current GMIT level 7 and level 8 degree programmes. Student feedback on the degree programmes has always been extremely positive.</p> <p>However, in the last few years the programmes have struggled to attract sufficient numbers of applicants to meet the Institute's operational quota. Given the programmes' acknowledged strengths, consultation with graduates and</p>

		<p>with applicants was conducted to explore reasons which might explain this shortfall. The following emerged as factors warranting consideration by the Programme Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local challenges of getting to the Institute for onsite delivery, for working people travelling from a range of locations; • The regularity and time commitment required by fixed scheduled delivery; • The long-term commitment from the outset required by a three- or four-year programme. <p>To attempt to address the above issues the Programme Board Proposed the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approval of stage one of the existing level 7 BA in Religious Studies programme as a level 7 Diploma in Religious Studies programme with 60 ECTS. • The addition of blended and online delivery modes to the previous onsite-only delivery mode. • The revision of the structuring of and diversity of assessments—to better implement scaffolded, incremental learning and to better facilitate breadth of learning and learning styles. • The updating of the bibliographies on all four modules.
13.	Resource Implications:	<p>There are no additional resource implications (from its originating programme) for this remodelled programme.</p> <p>The programme will be offered on a self-financing basis.</p>
14.	Findings and Recommendations:	<p>Overall Findings</p> <p>The panel commended the programme team for their efforts to sustain such a valuable and interesting programme.</p> <p>The panel recommend approval of the proposed changes including the approval of a level 7 Diploma in Religious Studies (60 ECTS) subject to the following conditions (0) and recommendations (7):</p> <hr/> <p>Conditions</p> <p>None</p>

		<p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elaborate on the delivery of the programme using each of the delivery modes for which approval is being sought. The teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme should reflect the proposed delivery modes and reflect how the discursive nature of the programme will be supported in online and blended delivery. 2. Consider whether face-to-face delivery can be incorporated into the planned delivery of the programme through block teaching to maintain the social element of programme delivery. 3. Review each module as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the module description is publishable. - Review the module learning outcomes to ensure that they commence with a measurable active verb. - Ensure that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies articulate the intended delivery and assessment of the module. - Ensure each module has a clear repeat assessment strategy. 4. Understanding Faith and Culture – consider whether there is a more appropriate descriptor than ‘Draft essay’ in the assessment breakdown. 5. Consider linkages with other similar programmes throughout the country which may provide mutual benefit. 6. Work with the Institute’s marketing function to devise a promotional campaign for this programme to incorporate social media and more traditional channels e.g. through the various churches and interfaith groups. 7. Remove reference to the Higher Certificate in the Module Manager document. 	
22.	FAO: Academic Council:	Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary