



Report of External Peer Review Group for the Programmatic Review of:

Named Award:	Bachelor of Science (Ordinary) and one year add-on Bachelor of Science (Honours)
Programme Title(s):	B.Sc. in Business Computing and Digital Media B.Sc. Honours in Information Technology for Business
Exit Award(s):	N/A
Award Type:	Ordinary Degree, Honours Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 7 and Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	Level 7 – 180; and Level 8 (add-on) 60
Location:	Galway
Minor Award(s):	N/A

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Dermot Douglas	Chairperson	Higher Education Consultant
Carmel Brennan	Secretary	GMIT
Bryan Duggan	IOT Member	IOT
Michael Lang	University Member	NUIG
John Gavin	Professional Practitioner	Hewlett Packard
Angela Forde	Institute Graduate	Open Jaw Technologies

Programme Board Team

Naomi Hurley	Sabrina Kirrane
Deirdre O'Donovan	Michael Fitzgerald
Valerie Butler	Dr Owen Foley
Gabriel Hicks	John Farrell
Annette Cosgrove	Liam Kissane

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on B.Sc. in Business Computing and Digital Media and B.Sc. Honours in Information Technology for Business

The report is divided into the following sections:

- Background to Proposed Programme
- General Findings of the Validation Panel
- Programme-Level Findings

- Module-Level Findings

2 Background to Proposed Programme

See Programme Self Evaluation Report (SER) for more detailed information.

3 General Findings of the External Peer Review Group

The panel have agreed to approve the programmes, the title change, and are also agreeing all the updating and new module titles.

It was noted that the programme board are of the opinion that this is a unique programme.

It was also noted that the SER document needs revision as a number of errors were evident in the document.

Retention on the currently validated programmes is approximately 60%. The programme board engage in mentoring, and a buddy system; the PASS initiative is proving successful, and lecturers meet student groups to discuss any issues relating to difficulty with the programmes. Retention in Year 1 has improved from the last Programmatic Review in 2008 to present (see SER).

The rationale behind the proposed title change relates to a decrease in business content and the addition of digital media and software development content. The Programme Board view the change as being responsive to feedback, and the positioning of this programme in the Institute's suite of computing offerings.

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

- B.Sc. in Computing and Digital Media and
- B.Sc. (Honours) in Computing and Digital Media (1 year add-on)
- B.Sc (Honours) in Computing and Digital Media (4 year *ab initio*)

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Place an x in the correct box.

Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner	
Accredited subject to conditions and/or recommendations	X
Re-designed and re-submitted to the same External Peer Review Group after additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

Note:

Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that addresses all conditions and takes account of the recommendations outlined below. A response document describing the actions of the Department to address the conditions and recommendations made by the External Peer Review Group (EPRG) must be agreed by the External Review Panel. In this report, the term Condition is used to indicate an action or amendment which in the view of the EPRG must be undertaken prior to the commencement of

the programme. Conditions are mandatory if the programme is to be approved. The term Recommendation indicates an item to which the Programme Board should give serious consideration for implementation at an early stage and which should be the subject of on-going monitoring.

4 Programme-Level Findings

This section of the report addresses the following programme level considerations:

- Evidence of reflection by the programme board to include, where relevant evidence of collaboration and engagement with other programmes from a similar discipline area within GMIT
- Demand
- Award
- Entry requirements
- Access, transfer and progression
- Retention
- Standards and Outcomes
- Programme structure
- Learning and Teaching Strategies
- Assessment Strategy
- Resource requirements
- Research Activity
- Quality Assurance
- Internationalisation
- Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internship etc)

4.1 Reflection, including internal and external engagement

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Is there evidence of reflection in the SER of how the programme performed since the last programmatic review.
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- Forensically edit and correct errors and omissions in the programme schedules.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.2 Demand

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Is there a need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.3 Award

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Is the level and type of the award appropriate?
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<i>panel:</i>	
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Programme Board should review its proposal to run the level 8 *ab initio* degree in light of the stated resourcing issues.
 - Consequent on resourcing issues raised at the meetings with the Department management and staff, The panel recommend that, as a matter of urgency, the department engages with Senior Management to address any resourcing issues that compromise the delivery of these programmes.
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4.4 Entry Requirements

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate? Is there a relationship with this programme and further education?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the QQI and as contained in the Institute's Quality assurance Framework (QAF) COP No.4?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.6 Retention

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Are both elements of the First Year Experience {(i) Learning to Learn (now Learning and Skills Innovation) and (ii) PASS} embedded in this programme? Evidence of other retention initiatives?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme meet the required award standards for programmes at the proposed NFQ level (i.e. conform to QQI Award
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	Standards)? For parent award? For exit award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)? For Special Purpose Award (if applicable)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol01.htm

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- Ensure consistency in module titles in final programme documents and APSs.
- Map programme learning outcomes against the QQI National Standard for Computing for each of the programmes i.e. level 7 and level 8.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.8 Programme Structure

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Is the programme structure logical and well designed and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes in terms of employment skills and career opportunities be met by this programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- None.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Consider making digital photography mandatory in semester 3 and removing Financial Information Systems from the curriculum.
- Consider removing language as an elective from all stages of the programme.
- The panel recommends that the Programme board reviews all module specifications for completeness
- The panel recommend the programme board reviews the effectiveness of student participation on programme boards and how this can be improved to ensure appropriate feedback to and from students and to address student issues in the management and resourcing of modules.
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Note: Ensure clear learning outcomes in relation to group work.

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the proposed programme that support Student Centred Learning (SCL)? Evidence of consideration of flexible delivery methods including
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	eLearning?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Consider encouraging students to present their work to the public e.g. through project fairs.

4.10 Assessment Strategies

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI/HETAC Assessment and Guidelines, 2009)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Assessment strategies are required in line with HETAC’s Assessment and Standards and should be considered by the programme EPRG. See (HETAC (2009) Assessment and Standards, Section 4.6.1, page 33). Accordingly the assessment strategy should address the following (See (HETAC (2009) Assessment and Standards, Section 2.2.5, page 13) :

- Description and Rationale for the choice of assessment tasks, criteria and procedures. This should address fairness and consistency, specifically their validity, reliability and authenticity;
- Describe any special regulations;
- Regulate, build upon and integrate the module assessment strategies;
- Provide contingent strategy for cases where learners claim exemption from modules, including recognition of prior learning;
- Ensure the programme’s continuous assessment workload is appropriately balanced;
- Relate to the learning and teaching strategy;
- Demonstrate how grading criteria will be developed to relate to the Institutional grading system.

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Ensure that within the assessment of group projects individuals are graded fairly and consistently as required under quality assurance agreements with QQI.
- The panel recommend the programme board develop departmental procedures to improve and ensure the timeliness and quality of feedback to students on assessments and to introduce mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of those procedures.

4.11 Resource Requirements

<i>Consideration for the</i>	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver
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<i>panel:</i>	the proposed programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Review the proposal to run an *ab initio* Level 8 programme and as a matter of urgency engage with senior management to address any resource issues that might compromise the delivery of these programmes.

4.12 Research Activity

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Evidence that Learning & Teaching is informed by research? Number of staff engaged in institutional/pedagogical research?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Note: Three members of staff have completed their PHD, and two others are finalising their thesis.

4.13 Quality Assurance

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the Institute's quality assurance procedures (QAF) have been applied and that satisfactory procedures exist for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Consider the effectiveness of student input into programme boards and how this can be improved to ensure appropriate feedback to and from students, and also to address issues in the management of resourcing of modules.

4.14 Internationalisation

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the syllabi represent an international dimension? Is there evidence of approaches to induct international students?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc)

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Does the proposed programme incorporate professional practice as per the Institute's policy on professional practice (PP)? If not, is there evidence that PP is under consideration by the programme board?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Note: the module title 'Industry Project' has been changed to 'Professional Practice'.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Review currency of reading lists and learning materials specified in module descriptors.
- Review and revise all module descriptors for completeness and accuracy.

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in each Module Descriptor?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

6.0 Student Findings

Three final year students took part in the student feedback. They felt that more programming was required; modules should be more specific and entrepreneurship was more suited to 2nd year than 4th year.

They agreed that the dropping of the business component would improve the programme, and welcomed the proposed module changes. They commended the group work in the final year and said that they found that it worked really well. They also felt that there was good engagement with the lecturers.

Access to facilities was an issue, as they only had access to a room one morning a week; in addition, they shared machines with software students. They also felt that they did not get enough career direction and preparation for work.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

It is evident that there are close relationships with many local IT industries. In addition, former graduates are employed in almost all of the local IT companies.

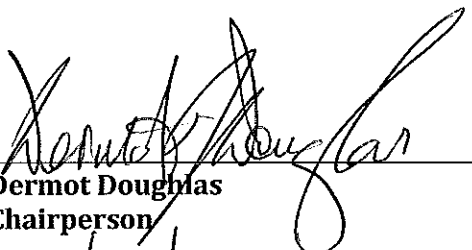
8.0 Future Plans

It is proposed to change the name of the programme to B.Sc. in Computing and Digital Media and B.Sc. (Hons) in Computing and Digital Media for the one year add-on programme. It is proposed to introduce a four year ab initio B.Sc. (Hons) in Computing and Digital Media.

<i>Consideration for the panel:</i>	Evidence that the programme board considered and identified opportunities and signalled proposals for related new programme and award development.
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:


Dermot Douglas
Chairperson

Date:

23/04/2015