



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

Programme	Code	Level	ECTS	Duration	Award Type	Embedded Awards
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business	GA_BRUAG_H08	8	240	4	Major	Bachelor of Business in Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness Higher Certificate in Business in Agriculture
Bachelor of Business in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business	GA_BRUAG_B07	7	180	3	Major	Higher Certificate in Agriculture
Higher Certificate in Business in Agriculture (Exit)	GA_BRUAG_C06	6	120	2	Exit	Parent Award: Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management	GA_SAGRI_H08	8	240	4	Major	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Environmental Management
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Environmental Management	GA_SAGRI_B07	7	180	3	Major	Embedded Award: Higher Certificate in Science in Agriculture
Higher Certificate in Science in Agriculture (Exit)	GA_SAGRG_C06	6	120	2	Exit	Parent Award: Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Environmental Management

**Date of Panel:**

June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## External Peer Review Group:

Panel	
Chairperson	Dr Andy Wilcox, Head of Department of Agriculture and Environment, Harper Adams University, UK
Institute of Technology/University Representative	Mr. Eamon Mullen, Lecturer, Department of Agriculture, Food and Animal Health, Dundalk Institute of Technology
Institute of Technology/University Representative	Dr Siobhán Jordan, Programme Director - Sustainable Agriculture, Dundalk Institute of Technology
Industry Representative	Mr. Frank Murphy, Curriculum Development & Standards Manager, Teagasc.
Graduate Representative	Mr. Paul Clabby, Project & Programme Management, Mayo County Council
Secretary	Ms. Carmel Brennan, Assistant Registrar (Quality) (Secretary)

### 1 Introduction to Programmatic Review

Programmatic review involves a periodic, formal, systematic, comprehensive and reflective review and evaluation of each programme and award offered by the Institute for purposes of programme development, quality enhancement and revalidation. It is an important means of ensuring and assuring, *inter alia*:

- that required academic standards are being attained;
- that programmes and awards remain relevant and viable;
- that student needs, including academic and labour-market needs, are addressed;
- that the quality of programmes and awards is enhanced and improved;
- public confidence in the quality of GMIT's programmes and awards.

GMIT last conducted Programmatic Review in 2014 and was due to undertake it again in 2019/20. The process was delayed until this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of a programmatic review is to review the development of the programme over the previous five to seven years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality. The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes' responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria and relevant awards standards. In particular, a programmatic review seeks to confirm that the promise evidenced at the original validation (or since the last programmatic review) in terms of academic quality, relevance and viability has been realised, and that the programme is adapting appropriately to evolving circumstances.

The specific objectives of a programmatic review are, *inter alia*, to:

- analyse and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, including details of student numbers, retention rates and success rates;
- review the development of the programme in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments;
- evaluate the response of the programme to regional and societal requirements and to educational developments;
- evaluate the feedback mechanisms for students and the processes for acting on this feedback;
- review the feedback from students relating to the student experience of the programme

- evaluate stakeholder engagement including links and collaboration with industry, business and the wider community;
- review feedback from employers and graduates;
- evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme;
- review any research activities in the field of learning in the disciplinary areas and their impact on teaching and learning;
- consider likely future developments in the disciplinary areas;
- make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules, and to discontinuing programmes or parts of programmes.

Academic Council identified three themes to be specifically addressed during the 2021/22 Programmatic Review namely:

- Assessment – ensure the assessment strategy and methodology are appropriate and aligned with learning outcomes and that students are not over-assessed.
- Employability – ensure that students develop career skills necessary to prepare them for employment. Embed professional practice (e.g., work placement, work-based projects in the programme, ensuring that there is an appropriate plan for their management)
- Sustainability – review modules and learning outcomes to ensure that the sustainability agenda is addressed, debated, and applied within student learning and assessment, as appropriate.

## 2 Methodology

The programmatic review process involves a self-evaluation by each programme board followed by an external peer review. The Programme board engaged in a process of the collection and review of data related to the programme and feedback from stakeholders including students, graduates and industry. The overall programme and each individual module have been reviewed and recommendation(s) for updates made as required.

The External Peer Review Group (EPRG) received a copy of the Self Evaluation Review documentation and the programme documentation including any proposed changes. The EPRG then met the Programme Board (Appendix A) to discuss the programme and the documentation provided, as well as meeting a representative sample of students (Appendix B). The schedule for the review visit is contained in Appendix C.

## 3 Background to Programme(s) Being Reviewed

### **Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business and Embedded Awards**

This programme was approved in 2007 to replace previous programmes in the School of Business. This programme is offered in conjunction with Mountbellew Agricultural College and the School of Science in ATU Galway-Mayo. The Institute has a successful history of providing programmes in conjunction with Mountbellew Agricultural College. The ESRI has shown in studies conducted for Teagasc that farmers and agricultural workers were at the lower end of the education bracket nationally in Ireland. Almost all other professions now have third level programmes and academic progression routes to the higher end of the NQAI framework. Many farmers who receive their initial training in agriculture become part-time farmers with a variety of second professions. This programme was designed to meet their needs as well as maintain viable rural communities with a good quality of life, making sustainable use of local resources, protecting the environment, and producing quality and safe food for the region and the wider population.

### **Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management and Embedded Awards**

The former Department of Life & Physical Sciences at GMIT had previously delivered a Higher Certificate in Agriculture Science and a one-year add-on Diploma in Agriculture Science & Environment

Management. This evolved to a BSc Agriculture & Environment Management, and then to Level 8 degree, the BSc Rural Enterprise & Environment Management in 2009. The outcome from the Programmatic Review of 2014, stated that while both programmes were positive there was one common theme identified in that there was a very strong recommendation by all parties consulted that the amount of science and environmental-related modules be increased significantly in the programme. As a result of this feedback, the programme team met on several occasions in 2014 to design a revised programme which contained significantly more science and environmental modules than the current programme. However, as the revised programme was significantly different from the current programme, it was decided that the best approach was to manage the new revised programme through the Institute’s quality procedures for new programme development, and the programmatic review panel concurred with our approach in June 2014. This new programme commenced in September 2015 (Level 7 only), with the first level 8 graduates completing the new programme in 2019. The review period for this self-evaluation review, therefore, covers the academic years from 2015/16 until 2019/20. Given the specific remit of the Technological University Sector in relation to applied programmes, of regional significance, and the importance of the wider Agri-Food sector to the region, the new programme will continue to be of strategic relevance to the university. For example, ATU is placing significant emphasis on education for sustainability and climate change, both of which underpin various aspects of the revised programme

#### 4 General Findings of the External Peer Review Group

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the Programme Board, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

Accredited until the next programmatic review	
Accredited until the next programmatic review subject to conditions and/or recommendations <sup>1</sup>	X
Re-design and re-submit to the same External Peer Review Group after additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

#### 5 Programme-Level Findings Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business and Embedded Awards

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes

<sup>1</sup> **Note:**

Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined in the report and a response document describing the actions to address the conditions and recommendations made by the External Peer Review Group (EPRG). 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 next delivery 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.

Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards <sup>2</sup> )? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g. content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff:student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g. Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

The philosophy of the programme is to educate those from farming background, not only to manage their own farms but to work in wider agriculture sector. The programme has 3 strands – agriculture, business and science. There is a large practical component to the programme. In reviewing the programme, the Young Trained Farmer scheme was an important consideration. Whilst the primary target for the programme is young people who have a farming background, others who have an interest in the environment and rural life do apply. Anecdotally, the latter is increasing. A discussion took place about the potential of targeting this cohort explicitly, particularly given there is increased interest in topics such as organic farming, veganism and sustainability.

<sup>2</sup> GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available [HERE](#).

The programme is structured such that stage one is common with the Agriculture and Environment Management programme which allows students to change stream in second year. The division in student numbers between both programmes is fairly even in year 2. The programme is primarily based in Mountbellew Agricultural College (MAC) in the first two years, and ATU Galway for stages 3 and 4. Numbers on the programme are based on safe group practical sizes and laboratory capacity in the School of Science. 4 to 6 students across both programmes exit at level 7 for a variety of factors e.g., struggling with programme or with to leave for personal reasons. Most students apply for the level eight programme. Whilst very few students use the level 6 exit route it is important to retain this for those who need it. There was a query as to whether there should be a common entry route to highlight the flexible pathways available. There was some discussion on this with opposing viewpoints. The issue of the title of a common pathway was highlighted, as the title 'Agriculture' might mislead potential applicants.

The issue of managing level 7 and 8 students was discussed. It was clarified that there is no distinction made for the first three years, and that most level 7 students progress to the final stage of the level 8 programme. Students are supporting in choosing their stream at the end of stage 1, and retention is quite strong. Some of the modules on the programme are shared with other business programmes, whilst others are taught separately including those that require a specific agri context.

The rationale for the programme's assessment strategy was discussed. There are a variety of weightings of assessment elements used, and this is influenced by student feedback. Students tend to favour coursework. Assessment is used to develop transversal skills e.g., critical thinking, presentation, reflection. Concern was expressed about the use of MCQs limiting students' ability to show their strengths. It was suggested that the marketing module utilise a variety of modes of assessment rather than relying on three MCQs. It was explained that the MCQ assessments contains some short questions, and this mode of assessment helps focus students. It was proposed that it would be useful to analyse students' performance and whether it is influenced by the mode of assessment methodology. Furthermore, it was proposed that the Programme Board should identify the skills that graduates should have and design assessments to assist in their development. The programme aims to develop graduates who are confident and flexible, with good communication, teamwork and entrepreneurial skills. Whilst the Programme Board meets at the start of each semester to consider assessment methodologies and scheduling, a more strategic approach should be taken.

A review of modules suggested that the wording was not specific enough in all instances, and that there was opportunity to reflect the inclusion of sustainability more explicitly. In general, there seemed to be a lack of consistency between modules, for example in relation to the length of the module description, referencing and student contact hours. It was agreed by the Panel that an edit of modules is required. It was suggested that food production within the programme is directed towards larger companies, and that there is room for more artisan food production.

The inclusion of physics and chemistry relate to the requirements of the Teaching Council and jobs in the Department of Agriculture. Whilst biology isn't specifically included as a module, year 1 covers plant and animal science in line with Teaching Council requirements. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to include genetics in a module title. The panel were of the opinion that module titles which included numbers were not useful to prospective employers looking at transcripts of results and that more specific titles would be better. The programme should identify and package its unique elements for marketing purposes.

The panel considered that work placement is very beneficial for students. Given new variations in structuring the common placement module has been replaced with specific ones, but further tailoring of each to its individual programme is required. Students on this programme will take undertake modules for 6 weeks in semester 4 prior to commencing placement. This needs to be articulated clearly and the student workload in terms of classes and assessment mapped out.

Farm Safety is a very relevant topic for graduates of both programmes and deemed to be insufficiently visible. More module learning outcomes are required to enhance the study of this topic. Graduates should be able

to complete safety statements and do safety audits. Ideally this content should be front loaded into stages one and 2 so that would have Green Cert before they leave.

The programme design and content aims to address the 70 ECTS required for the Young Trained Farmer Scheme. Further consideration needs to be given to the point at which the programme can be listed. The material is integrated across the four stages of the programme but may be sufficiently covered at the end of stage 3.

The panel met a number of students from both programmes. The students reported that they enjoyed the practical elements of the programme delivered in MAC and the work placement and found the market research module and studying online during the Covid pandemic challenging. They expressed a preference for more coursework. Students also stated that year heads and lecturers were generally approachable and friendly, but in the broader sense of knowing who to go to if problems were encountered students were less sure. Each class has class representatives who take part in Programme Boards. Opportunities are afforded to provide feedback on modules at the end of each stage, and this is acted on in some instances. Whilst there is good access to journals, there is not a good selection of books related to specific topics covered in final year projects. It was agreed that the programme opens a lot of career opportunities and that generally students were very positive about the programme.

The primary changes proposed for the programme involved the restructuring and sequencing of modules and the introduction of new modules replacing others. The increase in agricultural content was reflected in updated programme learning outcomes. All changes as outlined in Appendix D were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the conditions and recommendations below.

#### **Commendation(s):**

1. The partnership between Atlantic Technological University and Mountbellew Agricultural College, with each party providing complementary skills which allows for a clear progression from practical skills to underpinning theory.
2. The positivity of students about the programme and the diverse graduate opportunities it provides.
3. The engagement with Teagasc benefits the university and its students, and in particular the preparation of students for Young Trained Farmer Status.

#### **Condition(s):**

1. The Programme Board is required to undertake revisions to the course documentation as outlined within points below:
  - i. Review each programme specification to ensure that any typographical and formatting errors are corrected.
2. The Programme Board is asked to undertake revisions to the module descriptors in relation to the specific issues discussed and agreed during the Programmatic Review Event for each course:
  - i. Module titles should be reviewed so that module content is more appropriately represented.
  - ii. Overlap between module content should be minimised.
  - iii. The indicative content should accurately reflect the module learning outcomes.
  - iv. Contact time with students should accurately reflect the level and credit value of the module.
  - v. The relevant sustainability content should feature explicitly in all relevant modules.
  - vi. The verbs used in the module outcomes should be reviewed against the module level and revised where necessary.
  - vii. Failed elements should be articulated clearly in the assessment strategy of module descriptors.
  - viii. References should be edited so that they are presented in a consistent format throughout and reading resources should be reviewed to ensure that they are reasonably current.
3. The assessments within each programme should be reviewed thoroughly to ensure that the assessment diet is appropriate and relevant to identified graduate outcomes. This should include a

number of assessments per module, the assessment component weighting, and the type of assessment instruments.

4. The points of contact for student issues (academic, pastoral, or other) should be clearly identified and articulated to students.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. The agricultural book-based resources should be updated at ATU library in accordance with the reading lists.
2. The presence of waste management within the curriculum should be made more explicit within the Agriculture and Environmental Management course suite.
3. To meet the requirements of DAFM and Revenue schemes, farm safety content needs to be explicitly included across both programmes.
4. The panel recommends that resources for each course are procured in accordance with the SER documentation.
5. The requirements for entry into the second year of both programmes should be reviewed.
6. Revise the work placement module to ensure that it is written in the context of each programme.
7. Ensure that the modules delivered in semester 4 have the correct duration specified. Revise the placement module to ensure that it is written in the context of each programme and in the case of the Bachelor of Business in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business clarify the delivery of the taught modules and assessments preceding the placement in semester 4.
8. Highlight Artisan Food Production Content and ensure it is explicit in relevant modules
9. To ensure each course remains viable, the panel recommends that a marketing strategy is developed and implemented to appeal to the wide variety of opportunities available to graduates for example, secondary school teaching, Teagasc and Young Trained Farmer scheme.
10. The Programme Board should also consider explicitly targeting students from non-farming backgrounds and whether there should be a common entry offered under CAO.
11. The panel recommends that formal channels of communication are established between all stakeholders responsible for delivering the programme.

**6 Programme-Level Findings Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management and Embedded Awards**

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards <sup>3</sup> )? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)?	Yes

<sup>3</sup> GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available [HERE](#).



For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g. content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff:student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g. Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

This programme is focussed on agricultural science and environmental science, but graduates will also have sufficient knowledge of business to contribute to the agri sector generally. It primarily targets those from a farming background, but also targets those interested in environmental science. The programme structure is influenced by the Young Trained Farmer scheme, and the requirements for FAS advisors and the Teaching Council. Student feedback influenced the sequencing of some modules.

Advanced entry for graduates of FE level 6 full awards is facilitated, with such students entering into stage one and being exempted from stage 2. A mapping has not yet been undertaken to identify the feasibility or route for advanced entry into the new structure.

The transition from Mountbellew Agricultural College (MAC) into ATU Galway can be challenging, but measures have been taken to ensure that the transition is smoother and less stressful for students. There are strong lines of communication between MAC and ATU, with the Head of Department and Principal working closely together with the year coordinators. There is one Programme Board for the programme incorporating staff and students from MAC and ATU. It is recognised that there needs to be closer links with the Rural Enterprise and Agri-business programme in the future and a mechanism to achieve this is planned i.e. business rep sits on the science board and vice versa.

Students did not seem sure about formal points of contact. It was explained that there are year coordinators and during induction students are told about the points of contact in addition to being informed about student services and how to access them. There was surprise about the feedback from students on formal points of contact and it was suggested that as students haven't been on campus as much as normal due to

Covid it could have impacted on their knowledge of points of contact. There is no counselling service in MAC, but students to have access to the service in the Galway campus. Staff in MAC are being trained in relation to dealing with students in crisis. Students have access to academic support at Institute level and in MAC.

The resources available to teach the programme were discussed. There are two farms in MAC (dairy and dry stock) and livestock and machinery for practicals. Students on the farm, have access to all farm data, and are involved with farm decisions. MAC is used as the basis for science experiments. Fieldtrips will allow visits to outreach farms. MAC being embedded in Signpost will also be very beneficial to the programme. MAC have started a number of small research projects. The data from these can be used by students in their final year projects. The Programme Board were encouraged to provide additional opportunities for students e.g., optional grass discussion groups in the evenings for those interested. Laboratory resources are sufficient, but ideally there would be more space and a list of required equipment was provided in the documentation provided to the panel. Students are provided with a bus to and from MAC and ATU.

A discussion took place on the final project and the preparation and support provided to students. Students may choose their final projects and statistics clinics are proved. Consideration had been given to starting preparation for the module in year 3 but it was deemed inappropriate for the level of the module. The project is broken down into key milestones. As a trial students had access to Teagasc advisors for the beef projects and there is potential to expand this to other areas. Academic Integrity is covered in the Academic and Professional Skills module in stage one and reinforced in stages three and four.

There is scope to include further sustainability content in the programme. It was explained that whilst waste management is not a stand alone module that it is covered in the programme at a level appropriate to the level of the degree. In one module students undertake a mini project on producing biofuel from algae. Concern was expressed that the number of contact hours allocated to the physics module were low for a 10 ECTS module.

The differentiating features of this programme is its practical nature. It is an applied programme underpinned by science. MAC have sister colleges in Kenya, and it is hopes to have an elective or summer module with overseas placement, as another unique feature of this programme.

The panel met a number of students from both programmes. The students enjoyed the practical elements of the programme delivered in MAC and the work placement and found the market research module and studying online during the Covid pandemic challenging. They expressed a preference for more coursework. It would be useful if there was more assistance in relation to topic identification for the project in stage 4, and that this process should commence earlier. The topics that could be chosen were influenced by the timing of the project. Students felt well supported in completing the project. Year heads and lecturers were generally approachable and friendly, but in the broader sense of knowing who to go to if problems were encountered students were less sure. Each class has class representatives who take part in Programme Boards. Opportunities are afforded to provide feedback on modules at the end of each stage, and this is acted on in some instances. Whilst there is good access to journals, there is not a good selection of books related to specific topics covered in final year projects. It was agreed that the programme opens up a lot of career opportunities and that generally students were very positive about the programme.

The primary changes proposed for the programme involved the restructuring and sequencing of modules and the introduction of new modules replacing others. The increase in agricultural content was reflected in updated programme learning outcomes. All changes as outlined in Appendix E were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the conditions and recommendations below.

**Commendation(s):**

1. The partnership between Atlantic Technological University and Mountbellew Agricultural College, with each party providing complementary skills which allows for a clear progression from practical skills to underpinning theory.
2. The positivity of students about the programme and the diverse graduate opportunities it provides.
3. The engagement with Teagasc benefits the university and its students, and in particular the preparation of students for Young Trained Farmer Status.

**Condition(s):**

1. The Programme Board is required to undertake revisions to the course documentation as outlined within points below:
  - ii. Review each programme specification to ensure that any typographical and formatting errors are corrected.
2. The Programme Board is asked to undertake revisions to the module descriptors in relation to the specific issues discussed and agreed during the Programmatic Review Event for each course:
  - ix. Module titles should be reviewed so that module content is more appropriately represented.
  - x. Overlap between module content should be minimised.
  - xi. The indicative content should accurately reflect the module learning outcomes.
  - xii. Contact time with students should accurately reflect the level and credit value of the module.
  - xiii. The relevant sustainability content should feature explicitly in all relevant modules.
  - xiv. The verbs used in the module outcomes should be reviewed against the module level and revised where necessary.
  - xv. Failed elements should be articulated clearly in the assessment strategy of module descriptors.
  - xvi. References should be edited so that they are presented in a consistent format throughout and reading resources should be reviewed to ensure that they are reasonably current.
3. The assessments within each programme should be reviewed thoroughly to ensure that the assessment diet is appropriate and relevant to identified graduate outcomes. This should include a number of assessments per module, the assessment component weighting, and the type of assessment instruments.
4. The points of contact for student issues (academic, pastoral, or other) should be clearly identified and articulated to students.


**Recommendation(s):**

1. The agricultural book-based resources should be updated at ATU library in accordance with the reading lists.
2. The presence of waste management within the curriculum should be made more explicit within the Agriculture and Environmental Management course suite.
3. To meet the requirements of DAFM and Revenue schemes, farm safety content needs to be explicitly included across both programmes.
4. The panel recommends that resources for each course are procured in accordance with the SER documentation.
5. The requirements for entry into the second year of both programmes should be reviewed.
6. Revise the work placement module to ensure that it is written in the context of each programme.
7. Ensure that the modules delivered in semester 4 have the correct duration specified. Revise the placement module to ensure that it is written in the context of each programme and in the case of the Bachelor of Business in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business clarify the delivery of the taught modules and assessments preceding the placement in semester 4.
8. Highlight Artisan Food Production Content and ensure it is explicit in relevant modules

9. To ensure each course remains viable, the panel recommends that a marketing strategy is developed and implemented to appeal to the wide variety of opportunities available to graduates for example, secondary school teaching, Teagasc and Young Trained Farmer scheme.
10. The Programme Board should also consider explicitly targeting students from non-farming backgrounds and whether there should be a common entry offered under CAO.
11. The panel recommends that formal channels of communication are established between all stakeholders responsible for delivering the programme.

**Validation Panel Report Approved By:**

**Signed:**



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Dr Andy Wilcox  
Chairperson

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## Appendix A Programme Board Members

The panel met with the following staff:

Name	Position
Dr Des Foley	Head of School of Science and Computing
Dr Seamus Lennon	Head of School of Business
Dr Ian O'Connor	Head of Dept. of Natural Resources and The Environment
Dr Edna Curley	Principal, Mountbellew Agricultural College.
Dr Meghann Drury-Grogan	Head of Dept. of Enterprise and Technology

The panel met with the following Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business Academic Staff

Ms. Laura Hegarty	Ms. Eilis McNulty	Mr. Francis Curran
Mr. Martin Mulkerrins	Ms. Carmel Sweeney	Mr. Myles McHugh
Dr Edna Gibney	Dr Conor Graham	Ms. Lorna Moynihan
Dr James Moran	Mr. Kevin McDonagh	Ms. Marie Murphy
Dr Jorge Mendes	Dr Jose M. Fariñas-Franco	Mr. Ivan McPhilips

The panel met with the following Agriculture & Environmental Management Academic Staff

Mr. Martin Mulkerrins	Mr. Ivan McPhilips	Ms. Jacinta Ryan
Dr Edna Gibney	Dr Conor Graham	Dr Jean Raleigh
Dr James Moran	Mr. Myles McHugh	Ms. Eilis McNulty
Dr Jorge Mendes	Dr Jose M. Fariñas-Franco	Dr Eamon Haughey
Mr. Kevin Derrane		

## Appendix B - Student Representatives

The panel met with the following student representatives:

Student Name	Programme	Stage
Ms. Lauren McDermott	Bachelor of Business in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business	3
Mr. David Conneely	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management	4
Ms. Andrea Glennane	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management	3
Ms. Louise Payne	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management	4
Mr. Cristoir Connolly O' Conghaile	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Environmental Management	3
Ms. Saoirse Fox	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Environmental Management	3

## Appendix C - Schedule of Meetings

Agenda	
Date:	June 7th, 2022
9am	Panel Meet
9.45am	Meeting with BB Programme Board(s)
12pm	Coffee Break
12.15am	Meeting with Students
12.45pm	Lunch

13.45am	BSc Agriculture and Environmental Management
15:45pm	Break
4pm	Private Deliberations
5pm	Initial Feedback
The Agenda may be subject to slight alteration on the day.	

## Appendix D - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	General Update	to reflect the increased level of Agricultural modules in the programme.
Overall Contact Hours	N/A	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	Outlined below	
Addition of New Module(s)	Stage 2: Organic Agriculture Soil and Analytical Chemistry  Stage 3: Advanced farm planning and management Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Advanced Grassland Management.  Stage 4: Eco & Social Enterprise People Management	
New APS Regulations	n/a	
Minimum Entry Requirements	n/a	
Changed transfer or progression routes	n/a	
Teaching & Learning Strategy	n/a	
Assessment Strategy	n/a	
<b>Module Changes</b>		
<b>Stage 1</b>		
Chemistry & Soil Science	split into two 5 credit modules – <i>Chemistry 1.1</i> and <i>Soil Science</i> .	
Learning & Innovation Skills	Renamed to <i>Academic &amp; Professional Skills</i>	Institute wide change
Management accounting	Move from semester 2 to semester 3	
Farm management safety and law	Move from semester 3 to semester 2	
<b>Stage 2</b>		
Business Information Systems	renamed <i>Management Information systems</i>	
Introduction to Marketing	renamed <i>Principles of Marketing</i>	
Work Placement	reduced to 12 weeks	allowing for the teaching of some extra modules at the start of Semester 4

Advanced Dairy Production	Changed from elective to mandatory	
Advanced Dry Stock Production	Changed from elective to mandatory	
Animal and Plant Science	Changed from elective to mandatory	
<b>Stage 3</b>		
Food Science, Technology	discontinued	
Quality Assurance	discontinued	
Rural Development	renamed <i>Rural Development and Agriculture Policy</i>	
Operations Management	discontinued	
International Economic Policy	discontinued	
<b>Stage 4</b>		
Irish Economic Policy	Discontinued	
Rural Resource Planning, Management and Agricultural Research	Replaced with <i>Rural Resource Planning</i>	
Rural and Agribusiness Dissertation	Split into two 5 credit modules: <i>Research Methods</i> and <i>Project</i> .	

### Appendix E - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Environmental Management and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	wording has been revised	to better reflect the new program structure
Overall Contact Hours	n/a	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	<i>Computer Applications</i> moves from semester 2 to semester 1	reflects feedback from students as computer skills are required in semester 1
	<i>Macroeconomics</i> moves from semester 2 to semester 1	to accommodate moving <i>Computer Applications</i>
	<i>Farm Management Safety and Law</i> moves from semester 3 to semester 2	to facilitate the introduction of <i>Physics</i> into stage 2
	<i>Introduction to GIS</i> moves from semester 5 to semester 6	reflect student feedback
	<i>Advanced GIS</i> moves from semester 8 to semester 7	reflect student feedback
	<i>Sustainable Agriculture</i> (now renamed <i>Integrated Sustainable Agriculture</i> ) has moved from semester 6 to semester 8	reflects the change in the learning outcomes
Addition of New Module(s)		
	Advanced Grassland Management	Reflect industry feedback
	Physics	student feedback Department of Agriculture food and the marine requirement Programme board recommendation
	Agricultural Diversification	reflecting industry feedback
	Agricultural Policy	reflecting industry feedback
	Advanced Farm Planning and Management	reflects a requirement for graduates to obtain a working knowledge of techniques and principles

	Woodland And Forestry Management	
	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation	reflecting relevant issues
	Organic Agriculture	links to other new modules: <i>Agricultural Diversification</i> and <i>Advanced Farm Planning and Management</i>
	Introduction To Data Management and Analyses	reflect student feedback
	Integrated Sustainable Agriculture	a holistic approach to agricultural planning towards a more sustainable enterprise
New APS Regulations	All Science subject modules on the programme will have FEs (failed elements) include	As several learning outcomes in science modules can only be assessed by continuous assessment due to their practical nature, these science modules have FEs associated with them. The current programme shares several modules with the current Rural Enterprise & Agri-Business programme. However, the Agri-Business programme approved programme schedule does not contain FEs. However, joint discussions between programme boards have resulted in agreement that all relevant science modules will have FEs in the new programmes
Minimum Entry Requirements	n/a	
Changed transfer or progression routes	n/a	
Teaching & Learning Strategy	Refer to Section 9 on SER	
Assessment Strategy	Incorporation of more diverse assessment types to achieve QQI Indicators relevant to each programme level.	
<b>Module Changes</b>		
<b>Stage 1</b>		
Soil Science & Chemistry	split into two separate 5 credit modules: <i>Soil Science</i> , and <i>Chemistry</i>	Provides for the distinctness of the two topics, scheduling
<b>Stage 3</b>		
Applied Ecology & Environmental Management 1	split into two separate 5 credit modules: <i>Introduction to Agroecology</i> and <i>Aquatic Ecology &amp; Catchment Science</i>	better reflects the nature and context of the content.
Rural Research, Planning, Management & Agri Research	change from a ten-credit module delivered yearlong in stage 4, to a 5-credit module delivered in semester 8.	Reflect student feedback