



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

Named Award:	Bachelor of Arts
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources Management
Exit Award(s):	None
Award Type:	Ordinary Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 7
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	180
Location:	Mayo
Minor Award(s):	None

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Billy Bennett	Chair	LYIT
Gerry Talbot	Secretary	GMIT
Damien Courtney	IOT Member	CIT
Michelle O'Sullivan	University Member	UL
Pauline Brennan	Professional Practitioner	Western Care Association
Eva Nechanska	Institute Graduate	NUIG Researcher

Programme Board Team

Janine McGinn (Not Present)	Niamh Hearn (Not Present)	Maureen Melvin (Via Video Conference)
Michael Gill	Clodagh Geraghty	Joe Farrell (Via Video Conference)
Shane Byrne	Declan Hobin	Caitlin Ni Ghabhain (Via Video Conference)
Caroline Clarke	Noel Harvey (Via Video Conference)	

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on Wednesday 28th May 2014.

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

After discussions the panel have decided to approve the programme with some recommendations and commendations, and one condition. The panel congratulated the Programme Board for the quality of their SER document. The Campus underwent a Programmatic Review two years ago and was conducted again to synchronise with all programmes across the Institute.

Observation:

- The Panel noted that no changes to the programme were proposed arising from this review process. The Panel also noted that the institute has proposed a new learn to learn module – learning and innovation.

Individual panel members who were part of SER reviews over two days would like to have seen this included in all of the SER submissions.

Additional note: At the time of the preparation of the SER documentation staff had not been notified of the change to the “Learning to Learn” module and for this reason the change is not reflected in the SER documentation.

Condition:

- The Panel formally request that the programme board submit a revised programme schedule to reflect the changes to the programme arising from the programme board’s consideration of the stakeholder and student engagement processes and recommendations from the E.P.R. Panel.

Commendation:

- The panel commends the programme team on their clear commitment and positive engagement with the panel.

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

Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management

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 takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined below and a response document describing the actions of the Department 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 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

Condition:

- The Panel formally request that the programme board submit a revised programme schedule to reflect the changes to the programme arising from the programme board's consideration of the stakeholder and student engagement processes and recommendations from the E.P.R. Panel.

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

Commendation(s):

- The panel commends the programme team for offering a programme which appeals to part-time learners. Individual modules may be also appropriately packaged as minor/SPAs.

- The panel commends the programme team offering this programme collaboratively across two campuses.

4.3 Award

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

Recommendation(s):

- The panel suggests that the two departments should consider packaging relevant elements of the programme as minor / SPA's to meet HR CPD needs. There seems to be an existing demand for single modules.

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

Recommendation(s):

- The panel suggests that the Institute should consider reviewing the costing model for this programme, to ensure this programme can be offered at a competitive market rate.

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 HEA and as contained in the Institute's Quality assurance Framework (QAF) COP No.4?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

The panel met with the programme board in the Mayo campus and video link to the Galway campus as this is a joint delivered programme. The programme board committee were commended on their SER document, but there was uncertainty about some of the statistics presented. There was no intake of first year students in September 2014. Students from Y2 continued to Y3 it was appropriate to let the cycle run. The feedback was satisfactory. It is hoped to offer 1st year in 2014/15.

The majority of students completed Level 7 and some progressed to Level 9 e.g. in University of Limerick. A Level 8 programme should be available and marketed effectively to ensure its viability.

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

Recommendation(s):

- The panel suggests that an analysis of retention should show numbers per year of the programme. Aggregated statistics do not allow for full review or analysis of retention or attrition

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 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

Observation:

- Panel noted that the institute has proposed a new learn to learn module - learning and innovation.
Individual panel members who were part of SER reviews over two days would like to have seen a module descriptor for this module included in all of the SER submissions.

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):

- The panel would like to commend the programme team on the quality of their SER documentation.
- The panel would like to commend the programme team on the positive feedback from students / graduates in relation to delivery, content and relevance of programme.

Recommendations:

- The panel suggests that the programme team should review the structure of year 1 to ensure that students are exposed to some HR modules in semester 1 - for example, HRM Fundamentals could be delivered in semester 1.
- Consider offering some 10 ECTS credit modules in one semester.

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 supports Student Centred Learning (SCL)? Evidence of consideration of flexible delivery methods including eLearning?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

There is joint delivery between Galway and Mayo – there are two modules delivered on line Thursday evening from Galway which works very well and is being continuously monitored and developed. The exam paper is shared between the two campuses.

Commendation(s):

- The panel would like to commend the programme team on the programme being delivered collaboratively across two campuses of GMIT
- The panel would like to commend the programme team for the use of joint/online delivery of three modules on the programme

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.

Recommendations:

- Review assessment schedules to ensure continuous assessment is appropriately spread over the semester/year
- Ensure that on-line delivery is complemented by appropriate feedback mechanisms and interaction. This is particularly important for modules which are interactive in nature.

4.11 Resource Requirements

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

4.12 Research Activity

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

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

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

It was noted that there could be a possible video link with other colleges

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

- The panel suggests that the programme board should consider introducing a work based experience and / or Erasmus placement module on the programme. Ensure that feedback from industry feeds fully into module content and delivery.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here.

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

Recommendation(s):

- The panel suggests that the board include elements relating to strategic HR within existing modules.
- The panel suggests that the programme board should ensure IR and negotiation skills are adequately addressed in the programme (based on feedback from students).

- The panel suggests that the board should consider the totality of the quantum of business modules (e.g. Accounting) covered on the programme.

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

5.2.1 Module (Communications for HR):

Recommendation:

- The panel suggests that the programme board consider replacing the 'Communications for HR' module with CIPD module ('Reflecting as a HR Practitioner')

5.2.2 Module (Introduction to Statistics)

Recommendation:

- The panel suggests that the programme board consider moving this module to Year 2

5.2.3 Module (Legal Environment for Business)

Recommendation(s):

- The panel suggests that the programme board could review this module to make it more HR focused – for example include Contract Law.

6.0 Student Findings

2 Students

Students felt the on-line element worked well in some cases. There were 4 hour blocks with 2 hours dedicated for on-line – this is not the best when sharing a lecturer. They were a bit lost at the beginning in relation to course content. Class participation would help. They believed that you only retain between 40% and 60% through a video screen and that long lectures never work. Generally on-line is not interactive. One student felt that work placement module would be useful and that a lot could be learned by going out into the workplace. Another student felt it would not be of any use at all. A reflective log of experiences would be helpful also.

One student thought there was a big emphasis on marketing and that accountancy was beneficial – the other student thought financial accounting was a challenging'. Both felt there was a lot of pressure to cover all the modules.

Both students said that "The Learn to Learn" module was too long but beneficial for those out of education for a while. The academic writing was good and statistics was a tough module. Negotiations were through a mock interview and industrial relations was light. Training and Development was beneficial.

One student felt the course was fantastic and gave him grounding to go on to UL. In many cases it led to great progression opportunity.

The students suggested that the workload could be better balanced and spread out over one year. They both mentioned the negative point to the course is the price of doing it and wondered if maybe employers would buy into it.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here.

Condition:

- The panel formally request that the programme board should submit a revised programme schedule to reflect the changes to the programme arising from the programme board's consideration of the stakeholder and student engagement processes and recommendations from the E.P.R. Panel.

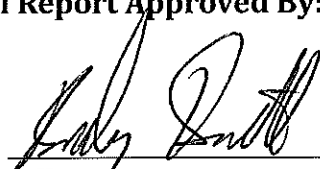
8.0 Future Plans

Overall findings of the panel should be documented here.

<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:



Billy Bennett,
Chairperson.

Date: 24 April 2015