

EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

1.	Title of Programme(s):	BSc (Hons) in Public Health Nutrition BSc in Public Health Nutrition (Exit Award) Higher Certificate in Nutrition (Exit Award)				
2.	School / Centre:	School of Science & Computing				
3.	Duration:	4 years Level 8 (3 years Level 7 Exit Award) (2 years Level 6 Exit Award)				
4.	NFQ Level:	Level 8 (Level 7 exit award) (Level 6 exit award)				
5.	Type of Review:	New Programme:	Yes:	X	No:	
		Differential Validation:	Yes:		No:	X
6.	Date of Review:	15 th February 2017				
7.	Delivery Mode:	Full-time	X	Part-time		Blended
8.	Panel Members:	Mr Tom Cullivan, Retired Secretary of HETAC, Chair Dr Miriam Clegg , Oxford Brookes University, UK Dr Edel Keaveney, Athlone IT Dr Aileen McGloin, Safefood Ms Carmel Brennan, GMIT, Secretary				
9.	Proposing Staff:	Dr Lisa Ryan Dr Seamus Lennon Ms Maria McDonagh Dr Francesco Noci Dr Sheila Faherty Dr Yvonne Slattery				

10	<p>Programme Rationale:</p>	<p>Public Health Nutrition focuses on the promotion of good health through nutrition and the primary prevention of nutrition-related illness in the population. Public Health Nutritionists develop, implement and evaluate nutrition policies and programmes, generating the evidence base and applying scientific knowledge to ensure understanding of the impact of food and diet on health and wellbeing of people and communities, and improving the diet, nutrition and health of people and communities. The proposed programme is designed to provide students with a sound grounding in the scientific method in the context of nutrition and public health. The aims of this course are for students to develop as public health practitioners who will be equipped to fill public health nutrition roles and advocate better health through diet and nutrition. With the increased number of the population suffering from, or at risk of developing, lifestyle-related chronic diseases(1), more individuals require assistance with nutritional management. As a result, there is an urgent need for suitably qualified individuals to work in the health sectors. Public health nutrition has been gaining popularity as an area of study to meet this growing demand.</p> <p>Within the past decade there has been a marked growth in the career opportunities available for public health nutritionists (e.g. community nutrition, health promotion programmes, teaching in further higher education, food safety and clinical roles (dietetic assistants) in hospitals and medical organisations). Coupled with such growth has also been <i>an increased need for appropriately qualified and accredited individuals</i> to undertake such roles. While there is currently no developed Irish standard, the Association for Nutrition (AfN) has developed procedures for the accreditation of suitably experienced individuals which are recognised internationally(2). The Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition therefore seeks to provide students with an opportunity to study at an undergraduate level to fulfil the initial requirements for AfN Accreditation, to develop their knowledge of public health nutrition and to increase their skills in applying such knowledge in a healthcare setting.</p>
11	<p>Potential Demand for Entry:</p>	<p>It is proposed to initially offer 16 places on the programme.</p>
12	<p>Stakeholder Engagement:</p>	<p>Public health experts were contacted to discuss the outline of the programme as well as the graduate profile; in particular the desirable characteristics of the graduate, as they see it. A consistent key message emerging from the consultation process was the lack of access to public health nutrition in the West/North West region. Given the current demographic, there is an urgent</p>

		<p>need for public health nutritionists to provide support in community nutrition as well as being involved in health promotion strategies aimed at preventing non-communicable diseases.</p> <p>A number of individuals involved in different areas of public health in Ireland (representatives from The Irish Section of the Nutrition Society and the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI), the Health Service Executive (HSE) as well as local GPs) and internationally were contacted to provide feedback on the proposed programme. Qualified public health nutritionists capable of working as part of health promotion and disease prevention programmes was seen as an area that would see considerable growth over the next few years as the country struggles with the increasing levels of obesity and obesity-related co-morbidities. During the consultation process they highlighted the need to not only develop public health nutrition graduates but also to ensure the quality and standard of the teaching as well as a high level of practical experience throughout the course of study.</p>
13	Graduate Demand:	<p>Career opportunities in this field are developing rapidly for graduates with an understanding of the connections between nutrition and public health. Specific job opportunities for public health nutrition graduates have included health improvement, addressing inequalities in nutrition and health, nutrition advocacy, the prevention of non-communicable diseases, developing/commissioning and implementing policies and programmes, monitoring, evaluation and assessment of diet in groups/communities, education and generating research evidence linking food/nutrients and health across a range of employers. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advisory positions in weight management, healthy eating or similar • advisory positions in food safety and health, e.g. Food Safety Authority of Ireland • broader roles in health promotion and health improvement • project delivery or advisory work with government agencies, e.g. HSE, local authorities • research and data analysis at public health observatories and various higher education institutes • work in food industry, e.g. Kellogg's; Nestle; Danone, Glanbia • food in schools initiatives • national nutrition assessment groups • infant and maternal nutrition, e.g. UNICEF, Healthy Start • international work in public health, e.g. World Food Programme, World Health Organisation.

14	Entry Requirements:	Access to the programme will be in accordance with Code of Practice No. 4, "GMIT Policies - Access, Transfer and Progression". It is anticipated that the majority of students will enter through the CAO system but there is also an opportunity to explore articulation arrangements from Further Education in line with Institute policy.
15	Programme Structure:	<p>The programme structure revolves around four themes outlined below, and includes a work placement in semester 6.</p> <p>Theme 1 <i>Personal development and professional practice</i>: This theme focuses on development of personal and professional attributes which enable transition from student to public health nutritionist. Related modules include:</p> <p>Theme 2 <i>Determinants and influences of population health on Nutrition</i>: This second theme focuses on developing and understanding the ability to interpret and apply community and population issues relating to health and nutrition.</p> <p>Theme 3 <i>Principles of Nutrition in health and disease</i>: This theme provides the fundamental scientific theory that underpins public health nutrition</p> <p>Theme 4 <i>Food science and systems</i>: This theme focuses on all developing all aspects of knowledge in food from a scientific, cultural, political, environmental, political, personal and public health perspective.</p>
16	LTA:	<p>Pedagogically, the design features of this programme and its constituent modules may be represented thus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lectures will be designed to provide the student with the fundamental knowledge of the given syllabi • practical classes will provide the student with the opportunity to apply the theory, concepts and principles in practice • group work, workshops and discussions will facilitate peer-supported learning and team-working • projects, scenarios and case studies will provide the student with the opportunity to gain an understanding of the practical application of theory in a cross-functional setting • student presentations will facilitate the building of student confidence and self-esteem through the deployment of effective communication techniques <p>The learning and teaching strategies employed by the programme team will aim to help students achieve module and programme learning outcomes. Inevitably, there will be variations in the methodologies employed by lecturers; however the common theme will be interactive, student-centered approaches. Each lecturer</p>

		<p>strives to motivate students to learn, and plans and organises their teaching to guide and assist student learning. Students are informed of the context of what they are studying and what they aim to achieve in the class session, with material linked to any prior learning if relevant. Methodologies include traditional lecturing, practical tasks, discussions, and presentations as appropriate to the topic / discipline. Increasingly, lecturers are using technology to enhance student learning. For example, lecturers use Moodle to direct students to learning resources, and use online quizzes to motivate learning providing near-instant feedback.</p> <p>Each module normally contains an element of ‘continuous’ assessment in addition to a terminal examination. Both methods of assessment are of equal validity, and are subject to quality assurance in accordance with Code of Practice No. 3. This assessment strategy is prepared by the Programme Board, and will be the subject of regular review.</p>
17	ATP:	Students enrolling on to the first year of the Public Health Nutrition programme will be eligible to transfer into the Sport and Exercise Science programme upon successful completion of the first year and provided that places are available. Graduates will be eligible to pursue research MSc/PhD programmes in Nutrition and related areas as well as taught master’s programmes in cognate areas.
18	Resource Implications:	<p>The programme has been designed so that Year 1 and Year 2 use a number of existing modules with the addition of two new modules only and therefore could commence with the addition of one staff member. Year 3 would require one additional staff member and year 4, a further additional staff member.</p> <p>Library resources need to be updated to include relevant journals and the texts relevant to each module.</p>
19	Synergies with existing programmes:	A number of modules are common with existing approved programmes within the School of Science and Computing.
20	Findings and Recommendations:	The panel are recommending approval of the proposed programme, subject to the following recommendations.
		<p>Special conditions attaching to approval (if any):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

		<p style="color: red; text-align: center;">Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an audit of public health nutritionists to determine the areas they are working in. (This could be done through the Nutrition Society mailing list.) The findings should influence the content of the programme and its modules, preparing graduates for relevant careers. • Consider including detail in relation to the IELTS requirement for international students in light of the AfN requirement for English language attainment. • Review the Health Promotion module to reduce the health policy element and fully reflect the complexity of food behaviour and change. Consider expanding the content in relation to the theories of behaviour change, basic psychology, behavioural economics, and the importance of the environment. • Expand the detail provided for the Personal and Professional Development for Nutritionists module to focus on generic competencies. • Expand the digital health content in the programme. • Consider whether there are more appropriate modules which could replace Biomechanics and Anatomy, possibly in the areas of food behaviour and marketing. Alternatively, consider how the module can best support students taking the Public Health Nutrition degree. • Expand the learning outcomes and enhance the detail provided in the Food Science modules to clarify the content of the modules. Ensure that the basics of food microbiology, food borne diseases and new product development are adequately covered within the modules. • Review all modules to ensure module learning outcomes and syllabi are comprehensive, remove typos and improve layout where relevant, and ensure that all module descriptors are complete. • Ensure that the first member of staff to be recruited is AfN accredited or are eligible to be so, to meet the professional body requirements.
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22	FAO: Academic Council:		
		Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary