



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

Named Award:	Bachelor of Science
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Science in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying (Hons), L8 (4 years) Bachelor of Science in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying, L7 (3 years) L8 (+1 year) Higher Certificate in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying L6 (2 years)
Exit Award(s):	Higher Certificate in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying
Award Type:	Higher Certificate Ordinary Degree Honours Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 6 Level 7 Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	120 180 240
Minor Award(s):	None
Location:	Galway

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Maria Kyne	Chairperson	Limerick Institute of Technology
Dr Seamus Lennon	Secretary	Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology
Dr Alan Hoare	IOT Member	Dublin Institute of Technology
Dr Declan Phillips	University Member	University of Limerick
Tom Whelan	Professional Practitioner	Purcell Construction
Aaron Falconer	Institute Graduate	

Programme Board Team

Gerard MacMichael	Siobhan Cawley
Mary Rogers	Elisha McNamara
Seán Canney	Fiona Watson
Catriona O'Regan	Patrick Ryan
Lisa Dooley	Evan Duggan
Tomás Murphy	Wayne Gibbons
Dr Mark Kelly	John Hanahoe

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on the approval of the programme Bachelor of Science in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying.

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 External Peer Review Group has come to the conclusion that they approve the programme for a further five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner, subject to 2 conditions and a number of recommendations.
- The External Peer Review Group stated that the interest the programme board had shown in its student's educational welfare was commendable.
- The External Peer Review Group found that the engagement with stakeholders was excellent.
- The SER report was very well presented and the information was clear to all of the External Peer Review Group. However there is a condition regarding the Level 6 course documentation included in the SER report and this is laid out below under heading 4.1

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

Bachelor of Science in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying

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 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 to include 1 condition

Condition:

The EPRG received comprehensive SER documents for Level 7 & Level 8 programmes. They request that a Level 6 document be developed in line with the Level 7 & Level 8 documents if the Level 6 programme is to be offered separately by the CAO.

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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

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 HEA and as contained in the Institute's Quality assurance Framework (QAF) COP No.4?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes to include 2 recommendations

Recommendations:

- The EPRG advise that the programme board should provide clarity in regards to the issue of transfer to the final year 4 for Level 7 graduates who achieve less than 60% in their 3rd year examinations. There are different rules for students doing the Level 8 programme as they only need to achieve 40% to progress.

- In light of the above the panel recommend developing a bridging mechanism (the timing and structure of the bridging programme needs to be specified) for students who achieve below 60% in their 3rd year exams. This should allow them an extra 5 to 10 credits upon completion. This would not necessitate the student taking a year out before progressing to 4th year.

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>	Year 1 retention is less than the Institute target of 70%. Retention at subsequent years is satisfactory.

Recommendation:

- The EPRG support and encourage that there be continued efforts to improve and increase retention rates. There should be systems in place to monitor the retention initiatives set out and to improve their effectiveness.

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 to include 1 recommendation

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

Recommendation:

- The EPRG recommend that the programme board apply for further accreditation from the Chartered Institute of Civil Engineering Surveyors (CICES)

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?
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External Peer Review Group Report

Overall Finding:	Yes to include 1 condition
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Condition:

- The EPRG have reviewed the contact hours as suggested in the SER report and find that they exceed the sector norm and therefore express their opinion that the contact hours of years 1, 2 & 3 should be revised to the following

Year 1 to consist of 24 contact hours
Year 2 to consist of 22/23 contact hours
Year 3 to consist of 22 contact hours

This will be left to the programme board to decide how to implement.

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 eLearning?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

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 to include 2 recommendations

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:

- The EPRG note that there are no special regulations for this programme and recommend that this is reflected in the Approved Programme Schedules.
- Some modules have too many learning outcomes for the amount of credits achievable, the EPRG recommend that this should be revised.

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 to include 1 recommendation

Recommendation:

- The student findings were that there was not enough physical computer lab space. Our recommendation in relation to software licences was a proposal to facilitate students to have access to the software on their own PC's or through VPN's, that would allow them to work remotely from the physical computer lab, thus remedying the resource issue.

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

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

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 to include 3 recommendations

Commendation:

- The EPRG welcomes the proposed extension to the work placement module. This will enable GMIT and its students to collaborate with industry and build relationships which will boost student employability in the future.

Recommendations:

- The EPRG recommend that the programme board develop a work placement handbook which will specify the management and assessment of the work placement.
- The EPRG endorse the views of the programme board that visits to students on work placement are undertaken by people with expertise in the cognate area.
- A work placement diary should link the hard and soft competencies achieved by the students on work placement.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Recommendation:

- It is encouraging to see some commonality in the 1st Year modules of different programmes but there are still a high proportion of unique modules. The EPRG suggest that further common modules should be explored and introduced in relation to the BIM modules.

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 to include 2 recommendations

Recommendations:

- The EPRG finds that there are details lacking in some modules descriptors regarding assessment. The assessment of those modules which are 100% CA is not detailed enough and should be expanded. Also, the allocation of learning outcomes to the various assessment activities needs to be revised for some modules (which have all the learning outcomes assessed by each assessment). Book lists for some modules need to be revised.
- The assessment strategies should be more clearly defined and should avoid over assessing some modules.

- Where possible students should be provided with a second opportunity to be assessed in modules for the Autumn Examination Board.

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

5.2.1 Module - Public Works Module - Year 3

Recommendations:

- The EPRG recommend that the scope is increased in the Public Works module in Year 3 with regard to public and private contracts.
- They also recommend that the Public Works Contracts module takes place before the work placement for the benefit of the students.

5.2.2 Module – Building Performance Module - Year 3

Recommendation:

- The EPRG suggest that the content in Building Performance Module in Year 3 should be reviewed as it is deemed excessive for the delivery time frame.

5.2.3 Module – Building Service Module

Recommendation:

- The ERPG recommend that the focus in the Building Service module should be more aligned with measurement and cost awareness of services as opposed to the design of services.

5.2.4 Module – Research Methodologies Module Year 3

Commendation:

The EPRG regard this as very good module to help the students improve their soft skills.

Recommendation:

- The EPRG recommend that credits should be apportioned to the Research Methodologies module. They feel that students spending 2 hours in class per week should receive credits for their learning.

6.0 Student Findings

Due to the timing of the meeting, there were no students available to attend. (Section 5.2.4 of the Construction Management peer review report states that students from this programme met with the EPRG group) Eight students took part in the feedback session.

These included a mix of Architectural Technology, Construction Management and Quantity Surveyor students. Overall the feedback was positive in terms of course content, job opportunities, acquiring knowledge of software packages and where appropriate, the 6 month work placement. The Work Placement proposal was seen as hugely important for self-development, acquiring new skills, and contacts.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

The EPRG found that the engagement with stakeholders was excellent and the discussions that the programme board had with external stakeholders were extremely beneficial. This enabled the programme board to propose the extension of the Work placement module to meet the current demand of industry requests for longer periods of placement.

8.0 Future Plans

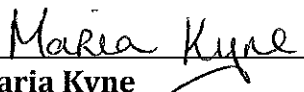
Recommendation:

The EPRG identified that the title of the programme does not fully relate to the programme content due to the lack of Construction Economics included. Therefore the panel considers that the name could be changed to reflect this. Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying would be a more appropriate title.

<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:



Maria Kyne
Chairperson

Date:

