GMIT

INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EO
GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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

Named Award:	Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Business
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hotel and Catering Management Bachelor of Business in Hotel and Catering Management – Block Release Bachelor of Business in Hotel and Catering Management Higher Certificate in Arts (Hospitality Studies)
Exit Award(s):	Higher Certificate
Award Type:	Higher Certificate, Ordinary Degree, Honours Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 6, Level 7 and Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	120, 180, 240
Location:	Galway
Minor Award(s):	N/A

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Ann Campbell	Chairperson	DKIT
Dr Larry Elwood	Secretary	GMIT
Dr Sean Duffy	IOT Member	LYIT
Philip Smyth	University Member	Shannon Catering College
Mr Michael Vaughan	Professional Practitioner	Irish Hotel Federation
Aidan Ryan	Institute Graduate	Royal Marine Hotel, Dublin

Programme Board Team

John Carty	Margaret Gannon Mullins	Marie Burke
George Finnegan	Jacinta Dalton	Shane Durcan
Francesco Noci	Colin Gilligan	Dympna Griffin
Diarmuid O'Conghaile	Helen Scully Owens	Maria Murphy
Helen Delargy Boyle	Tom Conlon	Anne Brindley
Deirdre Mc Mahon	Frank O'Connor	Tom Edwards
Mary Healy	Clare Gilsenan	Elizabeth Fox
Beatrice Calleran	Sally Reidy	Paul V. Dunne
Richard Nielsen	Deirdre Fahy	

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on:
Bachelor of Business in Hotel and Catering Management
Bachelor of Business in Hotel & Catering Management – Block Release
Bachelor of Arts in Hotel & Catering Management
Higher Certificate in Arts (Hospitality Studies)

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 above programmes have been approved with the following condition:

- Separate assessments must be provided for exams for level 6, level 7 and level 8, as they are leading to different awards. In the longer term the college of Tourism and Arts, should consider development of one common award to deal with this issue. *

In addition the programme name change to Higher Certificate in Hotel & Hospitality Operations has been approved.

Concerns were raised in relation to the phasing out of the block release programme, especially from an industry perspective as it was seen as the backbone of all the courses over the years. Unfortunately this is down to a funding issue.

The team were commended in terms of aligning modules and linking with the school of business. They were also commended on the employment of the "team contract" in the Strategic Management for Hospitality Module. Students feel that they are gaining experience on real life experiences such as bankrupting a business, devising a team contract etc.

Field trips were seen to be a big part of the learning process, and staff are very enthusiastic about this. There are however challenges in relation to the funding and resources available for such trips.

The work placement is seen as a massive part of the course. It was a suggestion of the Panel that the placement be designed as a Special Purpose Award. It should be made clear that the work placement is not a barrier for progression. A proposal will need to be brought to the standards committee/ academic council for discussion and advice.

* AC considered this condition and agreed on the recommendation of the Registrar to set this condition aside.

The lack of interest in languages was also noted.

There appears to be more of an operational focus on the Bachelor of Business, and a more academic focus on the Bachelor of Arts programme.

In general the student feedback was very positive in terms of their GMIT experience and supports available.

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

Bachelor of Business in Hotel &Catering Management, L7 (3 years) L8 (+1 year)
Bachelor of Business in Hotel & Catering Management (Block Release)
Bachelor of Arts in Hotel & Catering Management
Higher Certificate in Hospitality Studies
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

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

Commendation(s):
- The programme board were commended in terms of taking on board feedback from stakeholders, students.
- The programme board were commended on the employment of the "team contract" in the Strategic Management for Hospitality Module.
- Teaching and Learning – good team work and the team spirit is commendable – good collaboration with the business school in terms of aligning modules.

Condition(s):
- Separate assessments / exams for level 6, level 7 and level 8, as they are leading to different awards. Consider in the long run one common award.

Recommendation(s):

- Review the management of the work placement. Use the introduction of the 12 week work placement as a foundation to the 30 week placement. Ensure that the work placement is around the students own career and development needs.
- Ensure clear signposting for each programme.
- Suggest down the line a common award
- Continue to monitor retention
- Review the Approved Programme Schedules for clarity
- The Panel recommend the development of a Special Purpose Award available to industry in a Train the Trainer module.
- Suggest retitling the Revenue Management and Marketing Principals, to Sales and Marketing 1 and 2
- Review the practical elements of the Management and Management Skills in terms of presentation and IT skills.
- Ensure more detailed feedback to students re their continuous assessment results and scheduling of same.
- Review the focus of the language module as it seems to be excessively culturally based.
- Ensure students are given training on interview skills
- Keep up to date with changes in the industry
- Ensure group assessments are marked fairly
- More training in Excel
- That strategy is monitored and modified accordingly
- Propose name change for French For Foodies, in the Higher Certificate in Arts

4.2 Demand

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

Note: During the discussion, the panel were informed that they cannot meet the demand from industry for student placement. This was offered as strong demand for the programme.

4.3 Award

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

Commendation(s):
- None
Condition(s):
- None.
Recommendation(s):

- Ensure clear signposting for each programme.
- Suggest down the line a common award

Note: A level 6 award is seen to have a more skilled and practical focus. The programme board are proposing that the Higher Certificate in Arts (Level 6) is to be used as a foundation for specialisation into the degree. The level 8 programme is geared to management roles.

4.4 Entry Requirements

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

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

Consideration for the panel:	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?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.6 Retention

Consideration for the panel:	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?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- None
Condition(s):
- None.
Recommendation(s):
- Monitor Retention

Note: Learning to Learn, suggest that interview skills could be added to that.
It is planned that the current induction week is rolled out over several weeks.

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

Consideration for the	Does the proposed programme meet the required award standards

panel:	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)?
Overall Finding:	Yes

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

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None

Recommendation(s):
- Consider a common award

4.8 Programme Structure

Consideration for the panel:	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?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Ensure clear signposting for each programme.
- Review the Approved Programme Schedules for clarity.

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	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?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- Teaching and Learning, it is evident that there is good team work and the team spirit is commendable. In addition there is good collaboration with the business school in terms of aligning modules.

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Ensure students are given training on interview skills
- More provision of excel to students
- That teaching and learning strategy is monitored frequently.

4.10 Assessment Strategies

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

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

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

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- Ensure more detailed feedback to students re their continuous assessment results and scheduling of same.
- Ensure group assessments are marked fairly
- That teaching and learning strategy is monitored frequently.

4.11 Resource Requirements

Consideration for the panel:	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme?

Overall Finding:	Yes

Note:
- Challenges in funding and resources in the facilitation of field trips
- Lots of computers, however not all have the relevant software.

4.12 Research Activity

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

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- The panel recommend to further developing the link with industry to see what research projects they would like, and to review how this can be progressed.

4.13 Quality Assurance

Consideration for the panel:	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?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.14 Internationalisation

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

Note: Students have the option to work abroad for their work placement.

4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc)

Consideration for the panel:	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?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):
- None

Recommendation(s):
- Review the management of the work placement. Use the possible introduction of the 12 week work placement as a foundation to the 30 week placement. Ensure that the work placement is around the students own career and development needs.

   Noted:
- Arising from expressed disappointment by the industry member that the block release programme is being phased out, it was recommended that a similar programme would be developed in the future.
- Most stakeholders commented on the fact that students need more relevant industry skills
- If there is a problem with the work placement there is a protocol in place via the links office and generally 95% of issues are resolved.
- Some work placement come from Alumni – consider building and developing these relationships.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Review the modules for commonality. In addition, review the elective and mandatory modules as some are seen as core. Suggest using industry for their input. Consider more communication, IT, social media and public speaking modules as there is an expectation in industry that these skills have been acquired. Review the language module as the focus appears to be on the cultural side rather than the language skills. Suggest a module that covers Opera.

Commendation(s):
- There appears to be a good link with the business school in terms of aligning modules.

Condition(s):
- None.

Recommendation(s):
- None.

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

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

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

5.2.1 Module (Train the Trainer)

Commendation(s):
- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The Panel recommend the development of a Special Purpose Award available to industry in a Train the Trainer module.

5.2.2 Module (Revenue Management and Marketing Principals)

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Suggest retitling to Sales and Marketing 1 and 2
- More of a focus on Sales

5.2.3 Module (Management and Management Skills)

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Review the practical elements in terms of presentation and IT skills

5.2.4 Module (Ethics and Governance)

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Consider implementing it as a mandatory subject.

5.2.5 Module (French for Foodies)

Commendation(s):

- None

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Consider changing this title

6.0 Student Findings

A mix of seven students took part in the feedback. The Block placement feedback was excellent. In general it was felt that the main work placement should be centred more on the students own career and development needs, and ideally that expectations and learning outcomes were agreed in advance. They did feel that it wasn't very clear from the outset the difference between the Bachelor of Business and the Bachelor of Arts.

Lecturers were seen to be flexible and approachable in terms of requesting changes to the assessment schedules. They did feel that there were some issues with the group work and the allocation of marks.

Students would have liked more communication / public speaking skills, as there is an expectation in the industry that these skills have been acquired, in addition, to IT and social media skills. Greater exposure to excel would also have been beneficial; however most found that they improved following their work placement.

They did commend the lecturers on their feedback, and overall students felt that their experience in GMIT was very worthwhile, and that they were well supported throughout the programme.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

No concerns were raised in relation to the stakeholder engagement. Consider getting input from industry in terms of module content. A general comment from industry was the fact that students need more industry relevant skills.

8.0 Future Plans

The programme board envisage over the next five years that the student experience will become more relevant to industry norms and needs. Students will be able to adapt to changes in the industry. The programme board are proposing that the Higher Certificate in Arts is to be used as a foundation for specialisation into the degree. It is also planned that the current induction week is rolled out over several weeks.

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

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

Ann Campbell
Chairperson

Date: 23. 4. 2015