



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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Named Award:</b>         | Bachelor of Business  |
| <b>Programme Title(s):</b>  | Bachelor of Business L7 (3 years) L8 (+1 year)<br>Bachelor of Business (Honours) L8 (4 years) |
| <b>Exit Award(s):</b>       | Higher Certificate in Business  |
| <b>Award Type:</b>          | Ordinary Degree<br>Honours Degree   |
| <b>Award Class:</b>         | Major   |
| <b>NFQ Level:</b>           | Level 6<br>Level 7<br>Level 8   |
| <b>ECTS / ACCS Credits:</b> | 120<br>180<br>240   |
| <b>Minor Award(s):</b>      | None  |
| <b>Location:</b>            | Galway  |

### Panel Members

| Name             | Position                  | Organisation                          |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Billy Bennett    | Chairperson               | Letterkenny Institute of Technology   |
| Des Foley        | Secretary                 | Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology   |
| Damien Courtney  | IOT Member                | Cork Institute of Technology          |
| James Cunningham | University Member         | National University of Ireland Galway |
| Liam Bluett      | Professional Practitioner | Ballybane Enterprise Centre           |
| Mary Frain       | Institute Graduate        | University Hospital Galway            |

### Programme Board Team

|                     |                |                 |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Noel Harvey         | Marie Finnegan | David Palcic    |
| Ivan McPhillips     | Sean Duignan   | Evelyn Moylan   |
| J Farrell           | Kevin McDonagh | Carol Killarney |
| Maureen Melvin      | Monica Nielsen | Feargal McHugh  |
| Isabel Buchan       | Lorna Moynihan | Richie Hoare    |
| Ronan MacGearailt   | Clare O'Grady  | Colm Kelleher   |
| Caitlín Ní Ghábháin | Delma Carey    | Anthony Duggan  |
| Patricia McCann     | Nicholas Canny | Deirdre Lusby   |
| Deirdre McHugh      |                |                 |

## 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 Business

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 (EPRG) has decided to validate this programme for one additional intake in September 2014, subject to a number of recommendations that apply to both this programme and to the proposed new replacement programme.
- The EPRG acknowledge that the programme board have recognised the weakness of the existing Bachelor of Business programme (Levels 7 & 8) and the necessity to develop a new programme offering to replace it from September 2015.
- The EPRG commends the enthusiasm and positive engagement that the programmatic board have shown in their engagement with the panel.
- The EPRG commends the positive alliance between this Department and NUIG, whereby the graduates of the Level 8 programme at GMIT can progress to the Level 9 Masters programme at NUIG. This aligns with the West/North West Regional Cluster formation which is promoted by the HEA.

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

### Bachelor of Business

*Place an x in the correct box.*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner |   |
| Accredited for one additional intake in September 2014, subject to 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 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   |

Overall the EPRG noted that there was a limited Self Evaluation Review process undertaken on the above programme and that this is reflected in the SER document.

The programme board noted that a large volume of work has gone into the proposed new programme offering and this is evident in the new documents for that offering.

**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 to include 1 recommendation   |

**Recommendation:**

- The panel noted that the recruitment onto the Business programme has been challenging in recent years. The Department should endeavour to maximise its marketing efforts, including increased school visits, new social media and marketing.

**4.3 Award**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Consideration for the panel:</i> | Is the level and type of the award appropriate? |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i>             | Yes to include 1 recommendation                 |

**Recommendation:**

- The EPRG recommend that the programme board endeavour to explore seeking Professional Body Accreditation (For example from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) for the Human Resource modules).

**4.4 Entry Requirements**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Consideration for the panel:</i> | Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?<br>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>             | To include 1 recommendation   |

**Commendation:**

- The EPRG commends this department for its successful link with the Further Education providers Galway Technical Institute (GTI) and suggest that this and other potential links may be exploited further in the future.

**Recommendation:**

- The Department has no live plans for Level 9 activity of any type. The ERPG suggest that the School/Department should actively consider developing some progression opportunities for the Level 8 business graduates.

**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?<br>Are both elements of the First Year Experience {(i) Learning to Learn (now Learning and Skills Innovation) and (ii) PASS} embedded in this programme?<br>Evidence of other retention initiatives? |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i>             | Yes to include 1 recommendation  |

**Recommendation:**

- The programme team should prioritise retention initiatives, particularly focusing on first year retention (for example, extended induction; PASS initiative; follow up meetings with students; mentoring of students; small group activities and tutorials)

**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)?<br><br>For parent award?<br>For exit award (if applicable)?<br>For Minor Award (if applicable)?<br>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](http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol01.htm)

**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>             | To include 4 recommendations  |

**Recommendations:**

**The following recommendations should be considered in the light of the new programme development which is already underway.**

- The EPRG recommend that the programme board consider offering some larger modules (example 10 ECTS credits) within a semester and a capstone module(s) in the award year(s).
- The EPRG recommend that Technology should form a more significant component of this programme (for example, include accountancy packages)

- Practical elements are included within this programme, however, practical activities appear to be lacking in the earlier stages of the programme. The EPRG recommend that the programme board review this going forward.
- The EPRG recommend that the programme board increase the emphasis on entrepreneurship and small business management within the programme.

#### 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 to include 1 recommendation   |

#### Recommendation:

- The programme board should review how blended/e-learning can further enhance the learning experience of students.

#### 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.

#### 4.11 Resource Requirements

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Consideration for</i> | Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary |
|--------------------------|---|

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>the panel:</i>       | 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?<br>Number of staff engaged in institutional/pedagogical research? |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i>             | To include 1 recommendation  |

##### Recommendation:

- The EPRG noted that the School of Business no longer have QQI approval for Research Level 9. The Department should develop a research strategy to grow the research activity within the school and department.

#### 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?<br>Is there evidence of approaches to induct international students? |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i>             | Yes to include 1 recommendation  |

##### Recommendation:

- The EPRG recommends that in developing new programmes, the programme board should take cognisance of opportunities for developing programmes which will appeal to International students.

#### 4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc)

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Consideration for the panel:</i> | Does the proposed programme incorporate professional practice as per the Institute's policy on professional practice (PP)?<br>If not, is there evidence that PP is under consideration by the programme board? |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i>             | To include 1 recommendation below  |

##### Recommendation:

- The Department should develop an accredited and resourced work placement module. The work placement model could be benchmarked against resource models used in other colleges. This was strongly supported by the student group who met with the panel. The panel were of the view that this could be a useful differentiator for the programme.

## 5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

### Recommendations:

- The EPRG recommends that with regard to elective streams, specialist electives should become available earlier in the programme. This was recommended by the students.
- The EPRG recommends that the programme board introduce a Digital Marketing/Social Media module and also increase the amount of Internet Technology content in the e-business module.

## 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  |

## 6.0 Student Findings

Four students and two graduates attended the meeting. Three were currently in 3rd year and one was in 4<sup>th</sup> year. Two of the students had studied at GTI and entered into Year 2 of the programme.

One student said he was very interested in the HR stream so he went that route but his issue was that there was no recognition/accreditation from CIPD.

One student said she did the e-business module and thought that there should be Digital Marketing, Social Media and Internet Technology included in the programme.

All of the students would have liked to have work placement included in this programme. They felt that the practical projects were extremely beneficial to their learning.

One student said that the Learning to Learn module could have a lot more potential if the groups were smaller. The students from GTI thought that the transition to GMIT was seamless and they felt well prepared for this programme.

All of the students felt that the lecturers were there to talk to and very helpful when any student was in need.



**Commendation:**

- The EPRG found that the feedback from students was very positive regarding the support and interaction with lecturers.

**7.0 Stakeholder Engagement**

It was noted that the programme board had focus groups with industry and students and also met with Enterprise Ireland, regarding the current programmes and the proposed new programmes. This gave very relevant feedback which is being incorporated into the proposed new offering. It also helped the programme board develop programmes to meet the needs of the region and of industry.

**Recommendation:**

- The EPRG noted that guest speakers are used widely on some modules and to a lesser extent on other modules. They recommend that the programme board ensure that students are exposed to appropriate industry experts and guest speakers across all modules of this programme.

**8.0 Future Plans**

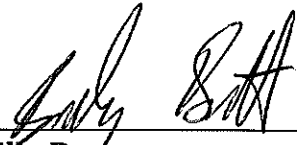
|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Consideration for the panel:</i> | Evidence that the programme board considered and identified opportunities and signalled proposals for related new programme and award development. |
| <i>Overall Finding:</i>             | Yes to include 4 recommendations   |

**Recommendations:**

- The EPRG strongly recommends that the programme board should develop transition or bridging arrangements to allow students on this Bachelor of Business programme to take years 2 to 3 (Level 7) and years 2 to 4 (Level 8) on the proposed new Bachelor of Business programme(s).
- The EPRG recommends that the proposed new programme(s) should be structured using a clear grouped elective model based around named streams.
- The EPRG feels that in developing new programmes, this department should take cognisance of opportunities for developing cross discipline programmes (For example, Business with Science/Engineering).
- The EPRG indicates that the programme board should consider developing a generic Level 8 programme in Business with named award streams, rather than introducing a large range of separate Level 8 programmes. This was a view that came strongly from the six students with whom the panel met. Decisions in this regard should be evidence based and should include analysis of market demand.

**Validation Panel Report Approved By:**

**Signed:**



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**Billy Bennett,  
Chairperson.**

**Date:**

24 April 2015