



Institute of Technology Sligo
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA SLIGEACH

PROGRAMME VALIDATION REPORT

Date of Evaluation: May 13th 2019

Programmes Evaluated:

1. Master of Science in Bioprocessing
2. Post Graduate Certificate in Science in Bioprocessing

Unique Programme

Reference Number PRN:

Panel of Assessors:

Mr Tom Cullivan
(Chairperson)

Retired HETAC Secretary

Mr John Behan

Head of Department of Applied Science.
Technological University of Dublin, Tallaght campus

Dr Olivia Mc Dermott

Lecturer
NUI, Galway

Ms Geraldine Gallagher

Sophia Quality Solutions
Foxford, Co Mayo.

Dr Michele Glacken

Assistant Registrar
Institute of Technology Sligo

Declaration Regarding Any Conflicts of Interest

The members of the Panel signed a form confirming that they did not have any conflict of interest.

Master of Science in Bioprocessing
Post Graduate Certificate in Science in Bioprocessing

Meeting with Institute, Faculty, Department and Programme Management

Attendees:

- Mr Colin Mc Clean Registrar, VP of Academic Affairs
- Dr Jerry Bird (Head of Faculty of Science)
- Dr James Brennan (Head of Department of Life Sciences)
- Dr Sharon Barrett (Programme lead)

The Registrar introduced the session and detailed to the panel the Institute's participation in the first of QQI's cyclical review periods, the CINNTE review cycle in April 2018. He shared with the panel the positive outcome. He also made reference to the Institutes strategic plan (2018-2022) in relation to student numbers and mode of programme delivery. The Institute's status in relation to the TU metric of research was also shared.

The Head of Faculty informed the programme team of the diverse offerings of the Faculty at NQF level 6-9, the changing profile of students in the Faculty in relation to programme delivery (Full time 1050: Online/part time 1100), the catalyst for developing programmes such as the Master of Science in Bioprocessing and the need to develop a range of programmes to meet the employment needs of the expanding regional Bio Pharmacy and Bioprocessing industry. The programme is built on the Faculty's expertise and reputation in the area of bioprocessing. The Faculty's links with NIBRT were outlined for the panel. The Head of Department shared with the panel their links with *Fanshaw College of Applied Arts & Technology*, Ontario, Canada and how the partnership will realise students for the programme.

Dr Bird assured the panel that the staffing resource to deliver the programme has been considered and posts are currently being advertised to meet the identified deficit.

Dr Barrett gave a short presentation on the origins of the programme, the differing foci of the online and the fulltime programmes, the industrial links, laboratory delivery, the content and the distribution of ECTS across the programme and the duration of the programme (See attached).

The panel explored whether students can opt to base themselves in industry in order to undertake an industry based project and were informed that they could, and would be provided with supervision in that context, but the programme team believed that most would undertake on campus lab based projects for the moment. The prospect of students being supported by staff of NIBRT was a real possibility in the future.

This concluded this session.

Meeting with Programme Team

Attendees:

- Dr James Brennan (Head of Department of Life Sciences)
- Dr Sharon Barrett
- Dr Stephen Daly
- Dr Eva Campion

The Chair welcome the team. Team and panel members introduced themselves.

The panel explored with the team the activities of students' one day visit to NIBRT and the response satisfied the panel that the students were provided with the opportunity to undertake lab based activities that IT Sligo's laboratory facilities cannot provide (e.g. process-scale column packing). The

opportunity for students to go on other industrial site visits was discussed. The team shared exemplars of same. The panel sought clarification on whether undergraduates accessing the programme would have had a work placement experience and confirmation was given that all science graduates would have, but not necessarily other potential graduates. The panel felt this experiential knowledge would be very beneficial to students. The option of some potential applicants being able to undertake some existing online bridging modules to address deficits in their knowledge base was welcomed by the panel. The rationale for the proposed concurrent mode of delivery of laboratory based practicals and theory was justified for the panel.

The panel ascertained if the content and assessment load was reduced commensurate with the reduction in ECTS. Assurances were given that it was. The assessment load for practicals was explored with the team as was the issue of 75% lab based attendance.

The panel sought clarification if *sterility testing of pharmaceutical products* was covered in the programme. The team informed the team it was not currently, but they were happy to include it.

The arrangements for thesis supervision in terms of hours' allocation and during the third trimester were discussed and found to be supportive and student focused. The teams view on providing a progression route for graduates of the programme was discussed with the team indicating that they were very receptive to the development of a progression route.

The Chair thanked the team for their full participation.

Decision of the Validation Panel

Master of Science in Bioprocessing (90 ECTS)

Post Graduate Certificate in Science in Bioprocessing (Exit award) (30 ECTS)

The validation panel recommend the programme for approval to Academic Council.

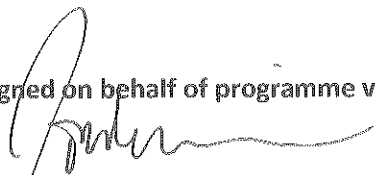
Commendation

1. The programme validation panel commended the team for the development of a NQF level 9 programme that will address the recognised research and development needs of the Bioprocessing industry and has the capacity to develop graduates who will contribute to the industry internationally, nationally and regionally.
2. The programme validation panel commended the team for responding to graduates and industries identified need for a full time structured programme with a significant research component.

Recommendations:

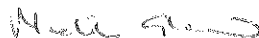
1. The programme documentation should reflect the role of NIBRT in relation to the practical provisions of the programme.
2. The assessment grids (p.11 & 12) need to be modified to specify and quantify the weighting of the practical assessments.
3. The tradition where research originally intended to lead to the degree of Master can be redirected for structured Doctorate programmes should be given serious consideration by the Academic Council.
4. Bridging modules should be available as deemed appropriate for specific cohorts of applicants (e.g. non-science graduates and international students)

Signed on behalf of programme validation Panel



Mr Tom Cullivan
Chairperson

Date: 22/05/19



Dr Michele Glacken
Recording Secretary

Date: 14/5/19