



**Institute of Technology Sligo
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA SLIGEACH**

PROGRAMME VALIDATION REPORT

Date of Evaluation: May 15th 2019

Programmes Evaluated:

- 1. Master of Science in Health Promotion Practice**
- 2. Master of Science in Health Promotion and Project Management**
 - Post Graduate Diploma in Science in Health promotion and Project Management**
 - Post Graduate Certificate in Science in Health Project Management**
 - Post Graduate Certificate in Science in Health Promotion & wellbeing**
- 3. Higher Certificate in Health and Exercise Science**

Unique Programme

Reference Number PRN:

Panel of Assessors:

Mr Stephen Mc Manus
(Chairperson)

Retired Registrar (DKIT)

Ms Briega King

Lecturer, Dept. of Nursing, Midwifery and Early years,
Dundalk Institute of Technology

Dr Paula Rankin

Head of Department of Science & Health,
Carlow Institute of Technology.

Ms Fiona Falvey

Health Promotion Officer, HSE Health & Wellbeing Division,
Galway

Dr Michele Glacken

Assistant Registrar
Institute of Technology Sligo

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

Meeting with Institute, Faculty and Department Management

Attendees:

- Mr Colin Mc Lean VP for Academic Affairs & Registrar
- Dr Jerry Bird, Head of Faculty of Science
- Dr Tomas Smyth

The Registrar provided an overview of the Institute in terms of its strategic plan, facilities, proposed infrastructural developments, TU ambitions and the required research metrics for attainment of same. Reference was made to the current HEA compact document (2018-2022) and the Institutes participation in the first of QQI's cyclical review periods, the CINNTE review cycle in April 2018. The student population was referred to in terms of regional demographics, numbers (current and proposed) and status ratio (full time: part time).

The Head of Faculty shared with the programme team the developmental history of the Faculty, which has led to the construction of the current suite of Masters' Programmes.

Staffing

The panel sought confirmation of the Institute's commitment to the provision of additional appropriately qualified staff to assist the current compliment of staff deliver the programmes. The panel were assured that there was a commitment to recruit and the process has commenced. The panel felt that the additional staffing requirement and the commitment of the institute to provision of the staffing should be part of the programme submission. The panel explored the manner in which academic staff are supported to remain current in their field of expertise, conduct research and engage in CPD. A number of exemplars of support strategies were provided (e.g. Conference funding, CELT seminars).

Programme management and quality assurance

The resources in relation to online delivery and the time allocation for lecturing staff to engage in same were explored. The hour allocation to staff was indicated. The panel were satisfied with the team's response. The panel felt that the ideal of a 'structured' master's programme was an excellent innovation and were keen to support it. The supervision of the 55 credit research module was an item of some concern to the panel. A research piece of this size acquired some of the characteristics of a full master's thesis. It should attract some additional supervisory support by associating an additional supervision to each student. (*This could be achieved by associating pairs of students with a pair of staff each with that standard allocation of time but split into a major and minor supervisory role.*)

Meeting with Programme Leads & Head of Department

Attendees:

- Dr Tomas Smyth
- Ms Maire Mc Callion
- Mr Kiernan Tobin
- Ms Margaret Mc Loone
- Ms Emer Donnelan

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Rationale

The programme team were asked to share with the panel; the rationale behind the development of the programmes. The team detailed various Government and policy initiatives such as the *Healthy Ireland Framework*, *Schools for Health in Ireland Framework*, the *National Physical Activity Strategy* and proposed structural/delivery changes in health care delivery such as that detailed in *Slainte Care Action Plan 2019*. The programme team informed the panel that they had engaged in widespread cross sectoral discussions to ascertain what type of programmes were required to provide persons impacted by the above changes with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to assist them respond proactively. The programme team were asked to justify their decision to develop two distinct programmes, instead of one programme with a series of electives. The team's response was acceptable to the panel. The team also justified the various exit points on the Master of Science in Health Promotion and Project management programme and how this configuration made the programme and its components attractive to a wider pool of applicants.

Objectives of the programme

The programme submission contained a set of programme outcomes that were generic and the panel felt that those objectives could be applied to any level 9 programme. The panel was anxious that the programme team should formulate, at this late stage a set of objectives for the programme that specifically described the programme and its purpose within the economy and its instrumental value to its participants.

Programme learning outcomes

The programme learning outcomes were not supplied in the programme submission. The programme team used the Level 9 science QQI standards of Knowledge, skill and competence as a proxy for the outcomes.

Programme learning outcomes are a tailored and specific implementation of the standards. They should be a series of statements indicating the particular knowledge, skills and competencies that the programme participants will achieve. They should be matched to the level 9 standards. It would appear that the module building software is determining a bottom up approach to programme design. The suite of modules determine the high level outcomes. Best practice design procedures would ensure that the necessary programme outcomes determine the modules and their content.

Programme title

The panel also shared with the team their concerns about the programme titles. The team explained the reasons for the two titles. The panel felt that the titles could be confusing. It recommended that the team reconsider the titles of the programme following the exercise to redefine the objectives and outcomes.

Employment opportunities

The panel requested the team to convey to them the potential jobs that graduates of the programmes may have access to, on programme completion. The team detailed a number of potential employment opportunities. The panel felt that these job titles or job areas should be part of the programme submission.

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Higher Certificate in Health and Exercise Science.

The rationale behind the development of the proposed *Higher Certificate in Health and Exercise Science* instead of developing an exit route on their equivalent level 7 programme was explored with the team. The team shared with the panel their perception that there was a market for a two year programme (in the absence of an exit route from their level 7 equivalent programme) that would serve as a platform for students who wish to pursue a professional health care programme in the U.K. The programme is going to have a minimum entry requirement of 350 points. The students will share lectures with level 7 and level 8 students. The team do not foresee a challenge with this combination as the minimum point's requirement will mean the students are as academically able as their level 7/8 counterparts.

Meeting with Programme team & Head of Department

Attendees:

- Dr Tomas Smyth
- Ms Maire Mc Callion
- Mr Kiernan Tobin
- Ms Margaret Mc Loone
- Ms Emer Donnelan
- Mr Kieran Tobin
- Dr Ken Monaghan
- Ms Edina O Malley
- Ms Iil Rudden
- Ms Victoria Stevens
- Ms Azura Youell
- Ms Joanne Regan

Master of Science in Health Promotion Practice

Master of Science in Health promotion and Project Management

Programme Structure

Delivery type

The proposed online delivery mode was explored with the team. The team were informed of the manner in which staff are prepared/ educated to develop online instructional material and the suite of ongoing educational resources available to them. The supports to the students were also detailed. The panel sought clarification on aspects of the approved programme schedule and what constituted the weekly online delivery hours. The variety of teaching and learning strategies deployed in the online educational environment were explored as was the manner in which the academic staff developed a community of learning in the online space. The experience of the team in the online learning environment was evident through their responses.

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Assessment

The detail of the proposed assessments strategies were discussed with the team with the panel making some suggestions that the team could consider. The marking strategies deployed for group projects with considerable weighting attached was teased out with the team.

The rationale behind the 55 ECTS thesis on the Master of Science in Health Promotion Practice programme was explored, as was the student and supervisory expectations. The team were informed that it was hoped that 12 students would opt to take this programme. The team believed that the research conducted would be practice based. The panel shared their views on each module of the two programmes, sought clarification where required and provided the team with potential content/assessment ideas. The panel examined the module learning outcomes. In some cases, the outcomes as stated did not exhibit Level 9 characteristics. The panel felt that the modules outcomes should be re-examined to ensure that they were at level 9 and that they were written in a way that indicated that they were measurable.

Higher Certificate in Health and Exercise Science

The panel discussed the manner in which some of the module learning outcomes were constructed and the need for them to be stated in a measurable format. The team enquired would any additional resources be required to deliver the programme and were assured there was none except some new equipment which has been funded. The assessment load of the programme was explored with the team and their use of integratory assessments. The team shared how they counteracted potential content overlap by regular meetings.

The team discussed their requirement for a pedagogical suite, to facilitate the recording of particular assessments in some of the programme modules and for quality assurance purposes. The panel shared their views on each of the programme's modules and sought clarification where required and provided the team with potential content/assessment ideas.

Decision of the Validation Panel

The validation panel recommend all programmes for approval to Academic Council.

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Master of Science in Health Promotion Practice

Conditions

1. The programme team need to make the programme aim and objectives, programme specific. In their current form they are too generic.

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2. The programme team need to ensure the programme learning outcomes align to the science standards at level 9 and the module learning outcomes.
3. The programme learning outcomes need to be explicit in relation to the competencies, knowledge and skills the student should have on programme completion.
4. Upon completion of the above 3 conditions, the programme team need to revisit the title of the programme to ensure it aligns to the programme outcomes.
5. The programme team need to examine the learning outcomes at modular level to ensure they are NQF level 9.

Recommendations

1. The programme team should consider reviewing the assessments related to the modules titled *Quantitative Research Methods* and *Qualitative & Mixed methods research* so they serve as a developmental platform for the student's thesis.
2. The quantum of allocation to supervision should ensure that the student has access to the expertise of other supervisors when necessary (e.g. Analysis support).
3. The students should be provided with support for their thesis throughout the academic year.
4. The team should consider the individual modular comments shared with them during the validation session.
5. That the expected employment opportunities for graduates be indicated in the submission.

Master of Science in Health Promotion and Project Management

Conditions

1. The programme team need to make the programme aim and objectives programme specific. In their current form they are too generic.
2. The programme team need to ensure the programme learning outcomes align to the science standards at level 9 and with the module learning outcomes.
3. The programme learning outcomes need to be explicit in relation to the competencies, knowledge and skills the student should have on programme completion.
4. Upon completion of the above 3 conditions, the programme team need to revisit the title of the programme to ensure it aligns to the programme outcomes.
5. The programme team need to examine the learning outcomes at modular level to ensure they are NQF level 9.

Recommendations

- 1 The team should consider the individual modular comments shared with them during the validation session.
- 2 That the expected employment opportunities for graduates be indicated in the submission.

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Higher Certificate in Health and Exercise Science

Conditions

1. The programme team need to make the programme aim, objectives and outcomes specific to the programme.

Recommendations

1. The programme team need to ensure that there is a sufficient range of e-journals to support the programme.
2. The Institute should consider the need for a pedagogical suite, to facilitate the recording of particular assessments for quality assurance purposes.
3. The programme team should consider the introduction of additional integratory assessments to reduce the planned assessment load.
4. All modular learning outcomes should be restated in a measurable format.

Signed on behalf of programme validation panel



Mr Stephen Mc Manus
Chairperson



Dr Michele Glacken
Recording Secretary

Date: 27/05/19

Date: 27.5.19

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