

**Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Luimnigh
Limerick Institute of Technology**

**Dámh an Ghnó agus Daonnachtaí
Faculty of Business & Humanities**

Report of Peer Review Panel

Programmatic Review 2015

of the

**Faculty of Business & Humanities
Department of Business
Department of Sports & Finance**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the programmatic review in the Faculty of Business and Humanities and the findings of the External Peer Review Group in June 2015. The programmatic review was undertaken in accordance with Section 3.8 of the LIT document 'Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2014/2015: Part 1' (ACRP). The report of the Programmatic Review Panel is the academic judgement of a peer group on the academic standard and quality of the programmes of the Faculty. It confirms to the Institute the standard of the programmes in a publicly accountable manner.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Higher Education Provider

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Institute: | Limerick Institute of Technology |
| Faculty: | Faculty of Business and Humanities |
| Departments: | Business Sports and Finance |
| Date of Review/Visit: | June 14 th , 15 th and 16 th 2015 |
| Venues: | Board Room, Moylish Park Campus Training Restaurant, Moylish Park Campus |

2.2 Programmes Evaluated

Department of Business

Higher Certificate in Business in Marketing & Management (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business in Marketing & Management (Level 7 - add-on)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing & Management (Level 8 - add-on)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing & Management (Level 8 - ab-initio)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Entrepreneurship (Level 8- ab-initio) - *Existing Title*
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Enterprise and Innovation (Level 8- ab-initio) - *Proposed Title*
Higher Certificate in Business in Entrepreneurship (Level 6) - *Existing Title*
Higher Certificate in Business in Enterprise and Innovation (Level 6) - *Proposed Title*
Master of Business in Marketing & Management Strategy (Level 9)
Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing & Management Strategy (Level 9 - Embedded Award)
Higher Diploma in Business Management (Level 8)
Higher Certificate in Business (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business (Level 7)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) (Level 8)
Higher Certificate in Business in Legal Studies & Taxation (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Law & Taxation (Level 8 - ab-initio)
Bachelor of Business in Law & Taxation (Level 7 - Embedded Award)

Department of Sports and Finance

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting & Finance (Level 8)
Higher Certificate in Accounting & Finance (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Finance (Level 7 - Embedded Award)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting & Finance (Level 8)
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sports Strength & Conditioning (Level 8)
Bachelor of Science in Sports Strength & Conditioning (Level 7 - Embedded Award)

Higher Certificate in Sports Strength & Conditioning (Level 6 - Embedded Award)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Sports Management (Level 8)
Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with Sports (Level 7 - Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Business Studies with Sports (Level 6 - Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Sports Development & Coaching (Level 6)

2.3 External Programmatic Review Panel of Expert Assessors

Mr. Dermot Finan, Chairperson
Institute of Technology Sligo (formerly)

Dr. Phil Mulvaney,
Institute of Technology Tallaght

Ms. Grainne Callanan,
Waterford Institute of Technology

Mr. Edward Daly,
Red River Studio

Ms. Anne Higgins,
Institute of Technology Sligo

Mr. Michael Margey,
Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Mr. Val McDermott,
Accountant

Mr. Ger O'Donovan,
Cork Institute of Technology

Mr. Paddy Redmond,
DAS Legal Expenses Insurance

2.4 Institute Staff

Dr. Maria Hinfelaar, President

Mr. Donnacha McNamara, Joint Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities

Ms. Marian Duggan, Joint Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities

Mr. Terry Twomey, Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Registrar

Mr. James Collins, Head of Department of Sports and Finance

Mr. Eoghan Sadlier, Head of Department of Business

Dr. Catriona Murphy, Head of Department of Food and Tourism

Ms. Cathy Jones, Head of Department of Applied Social Sciences

Mr. Seamus Hoyne, Head of Department of Flexible Learning (absent on days)

Department of Business

Ms. Fiona Browne
Ms. Marion Carroll
Ms. Gillian Clogan
Ms. Gillian Cuneen
Ms. Laura Dargan
Ms. Anne-Marie Dooley
Ms. Emma Dillane
Ms. Gillian Dooley
Mr. Pat Fitzgerald
Ms. Tara Frawley

Ms. Geraldine McGrath
Dr. Catriona Ni Chasaide
Ms. Louise Nugent
Mr. Ken O'Brien
Mr. Ronan O'Brien
Ms. Frances O'Connell
Ms. Nicola O'Connell
Ms. Edith O'Leary
Mr. Pauric O'Rourke
Ms. Patricia Quigley

Dr. James Griffin
Ms. Sara-Kate Hurley
Ms. Sharon Lucey
Ms. Sheila McCarthy

Dr. Eileen Reedy
Mr. PJ Ryan
Mr. Eoghan Sadlier

Department of Sports and Finance

Ms. Elaine Barry
Ms. Claire Brady
Mr. Richard Boylan
Mr. Seoirse Bulfin
Ms. Helen Chadda
Ms. Patricia Cooney
Mr. Eoin Everard
Mr. Conor Foley
Ms. Jean Forbes Cooke
Mr. Tim Galvin
Ms. Marion Geary
Mr. Keith Hennessy
Mr. Philip Hennessy

Dr. Niamh Kitching
Dr. Derek McInerney
Mr. Dermot Maleney
Ms. Theresa Norton
Ms. Kathleen O'Shea
Ms. Margaret O'Sullivan
Ms. Caroline Shanley
Mr. Michael Sheehan
Mr. John Quigley
Ms. Marie Quirke O'Gorman
Mr. Damien Young
Mr. Graig Walters

2.5 Selected Stakeholders

2.5.1 Employers/Industry & Alumni Representatives

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr. John Brennan | Munster GAA |
| Mr. Liam Cantwell | Limerick Sports Partnership |
| Mr. Barry Coleman | LIT |
| Ms. Gillian Horan | The Pudding Branding Agency |
| Mr. Kevin Koyce | Dell EMEA |
| Ms. Rachel Meehan | Gerard J Meehan & Co. Solicitors |
| Ms. Joy Neville | LIT/IRFU |
| Ms. Aisling O'Brien | OBI Accountants |

2.5.2 Current Students

Business

Ms Edel Barrett
Ms Aisling Burke
Mr Dean Dawson
Mr Joseph Ifelaja
Mr Jason Kearney
Ms Philomena Maher
Ms Georgina Toderas

Sports and Finance

Mr. Gearoid Barry
Mr. David Carroll
Mr. Kenneth Ellis
Mr. Richie McAuliffe
Ms. Laura McCormack
Mr. Keith McNicholas
Ms. Ann McPartland
Ms. Elena Zvirbrinska

- 2.6 Documentation
- 2.6.1 Critical Self-Study
Faculty of Business & Humanities,
- 2.6.2 Higher Certificate in Business in Marketing & Management (Level 6),
Bachelor of Business in Marketing & Management (Level 7 - add-on),
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing & Management (Level 8 - add-on),
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing & Management (Level 8 - ab-initio),
Department of Business,
- 2.6.3 Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Entrepreneurship (Level 8- ab-initio) – Existing Title,
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Enterprise and Innovation (Level 8- ab-initio) – Proposed Title,
Higher Certificate in Business in Entrepreneurship (Level 6) – Existing Title,
Higher Certificate in Business in Enterprise and Innovation (Level 6) – Proposed Title,
Department of Business,
- 2.6.4 Master of Business in Marketing & Management Strategy (Level 9),
Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing & Management Strategy (Level 9 - Embedded Award),
Department of Business,
- 2.6.5 Higher Diploma in Business Management (Level 8),
Department of Business,
- 2.6.6 Higher Certificate in Business (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business (Level 7)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) (Level 8)
Department of Business,
- 2.6.7 Higher Certificate in Business in Legal Studies & Taxation (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Law & Taxation (Level 8 - ab-initio)
Bachelor of Business in Law & Taxation (Level 7 - Embedded Award)
Department of Business,
- 2.6.8 Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting & Finance (Level 8)
Higher Certificate in Accounting & Finance (Level 6)
Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Finance (Level 7 - Embedded Award)
Department of Sports and Finance,
- 2.6.9 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting & Finance (Level 8)
Department of Sports and Finance,
- 2.6.10 Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sports Strength & Conditioning (Level 8)
Bachelor of Science in Sports Strength & Conditioning (Level 7 - Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Sports Strength & Conditioning (Level 6 - Embedded Award)
Department of Sports and Finance,
- 2.6.11 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Sports Management (Level 8)
Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with Sports (Level 7 - Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Business Studies with Sports (Level 6 - Embedded Award)
Department of Sports and Finance,

2.6.12 Higher Certificate in Arts in Sports Development & Coaching (Level 6)
Department of Sports and Finance.

3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW PANEL

3.1 Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends the on-going approval and re-validation for a further five years of the submitted programmes and associated amendments in the Faculty of Business and Humanities, subject to the following recommendations.

3.2 Recommendations

- 3.2.1 A consistent approach to semesterisation should be adopted across the faculty. The panel is particularly supportive of the adoption of full semesterisation throughout programmes. A single faculty-wide policy should be formulated. The panel specifically referenced the semesterisation of the Accounting and Finance programmes.
- 3.2.2 Benchmarking studies should be undertaken and documented nationally and internationally for comparison purposes. The benchmarking should include both broad and narrow (e.g. semesterisation) comparisons.
- 3.2.3 A five-year forward-looking strategic plan should be developed for the faculty, including likely developments and expected responses by the faculty. The panel noted the importance of confidentiality in a highly competitive marketplace, but on balance recommended the preparation of a clear future-oriented document.
- 3.2.4 A range of potential international developments and linkages should be identified and pursued without delay. The potential for Erasmus exchanges should be exploited.
- 3.2.5 An organisational culture of research and knowledge transfer should be fostered and detailed. Suitable metrics and targets should be identified and disseminated among members of staff.
- 3.2.6 A detailed SWOT analysis should be conducted in all of the programmes of the faculty. The results should be used to inform future planning.
- 3.2.7 Programme Boards should consider the inclusion of a work placement module into programmes where feasible and appropriate. It may be mandatory or an elective in a programme. Typically, the module should be offered in stage (year) three or stage four of a programme. An Erasmus study-abroad experience might be offered as a suitable alternative for example. The provision of a work placement module was supported by employers and students. (The local university offers students a co-op.) The credit allocation may vary (e.g. thirty or ten credits), or a separate 'industrial diploma' for summer work might also be considered.
- 3.2.8 The presence of transferable skills within the programmes should be highlighted. Such skills promote the employability of graduates. The panel noted that employer feedback favoured good interpersonal and problem-solving skills.
- 3.2.9 An annual review of engagements with industry should be conducted and documented. The engagements should include meetings of industrial forums and other interactions.
- 3.2.10 The alignment of programme and module learning outcomes with assessments should be more clearly documented in the programmes' documentation.

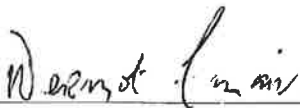
- 3.2.11 If a recommendation from an external panel is not adopted by the Institute, a clear rationale should be provided for the non-adoption. Similarly the feedback from external examiners should prompt a considered response from the Institute.
- 3.2.12 To facilitate cohesion and team identity within the new departments of the faculty, suitable accommodation should be provided. (The panel specifically mentioned Sport and Finance in Moylish for example.)
- 3.2.13 The substantial bank of modules within the faculty should be used to develop a number of special purpose awards. (The potential for Thurles and Clonmel for such awards was specifically identified.)
- 3.2.14 Academic policy and protocols for student group work and assessment should be developed and approved. The panel noted that student feedback favoured the provision of additional group work.
- 3.2.15 At least two external examiners should be appointed for each programme. The importance of having one external examiner from industry was emphasised.
- 3.2.16 Given the existing and expected growth in student numbers, additional resources should be provided for the programmes. Appropriate members of staff and facilities should be made available to maintain academic quality.
- 3.2.17 The potential for common modules and shared syllabi should be exploited. (Micro-economics was referenced, for example.) The adoption of semesterisation across the faculty would significantly improve the potential for shared modules, and transfers between locations if necessary. Some video-casts might also be appropriate.
- 3.2.18 The library service at Clonmel should be reviewed to improve the faster delivery of books and other materials when requested by students.
- 3.2.19 A more balanced emphasis should be placed between team and individual sports. (There seems to be an undue emphasis on elite sports.)
- 3.2.20 Responses to issues and concerns, raised by students, should be provided more expeditiously.
- 3.2.21 A clear and comprehensive full-programme assessment matrix and assessment calendar should be provided annually to students on each programme at the start of the academic year. Deliverables and due dates should be clearly identified. Overloads and bottlenecks should be avoided. The transparent matrix and calendar should be agreed by the programme board. The matrix should ideally include a mix of assessment strategies. Integrated assessments should be considered. (The professional exemption requirements may limit the mix.)
- 3.2.22 Appropriate sports facilities to support the sports programmes at the Moylish site should be provided.
- 3.2.23 Appropriate accommodation for stage-four Accounting and Finance should be provided. Directing potential employers to a prefab classroom is not desirable.
- 3.2.24 The arrangements for class timetables should, where possible, reflect the needs of the student cohort. For example, a more condensed timetable might suit a class of mature students with young families.
- 3.2.25 The arrangements for examination timetables should, where possible, reflect the needs of the student cohort. For example, a less condensed arrangement might be appropriate for some groups.

- 3.2.26 Additional time should be allocated for the individual programme review during the programmatic review process. (An hour was suggested by the panel.)
- 3.2.27 The technological university model should be considered throughout the faculty, particularly the engagement with industry provisions.
- 3.2.28 The Institute should celebrate and broadcast its very many successes. These successes should be publicised and shared with the general public. "Share some of the magic!"
- 3.2.29 Guest lecturers from industry should be routinely engaged. (The process also facilitates students' contacts.)
- 3.2.30 Student choice through electives should be available in the programmes of the faculty.
- 3.2.31 The development of streams within programmes and common entry (common first year) should be considered. Streams within a single sports award should be considered in the near term.
- 3.2.32 As a good practice, active verbs should normally be used in the formulation of learning outcomes.
- 3.2.33 Consideration should be given to offering the three-year Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting & Finance (Level 8) programme internationally and/or online. A market should be identified and developed for this exceptional programme.
- 3.2.34 Evidence of formative assessment should be stronger in the documentation, particularly in the sports programmes.
- 3.2.35 As module descriptors are becoming public documents, special care should be taken to ensure accuracy and completeness and to avoid typographical errors. The module descriptors should be distributed to students during induction.
- 3.2.36 Module titles should reflect the module learning outcomes and associated indicative content (e.g. the title of the Decision Making Techniques & Applications module should perhaps be 'Management and Cost Accounting' in the Sports Management programme, or the Venture Management module should perhaps be Entrepreneurship in the Sports Strength and Conditioning programme).
- 3.2.37 Modules titles should not be unduly specific to a programme as it limits module sharing (e.g. the Human Resource Management for Sports module in the Sports Management programme should perhaps be re-titled 'Human Resource Management').
- 3.2.38 Duplication of module content within a programme should be avoided (e.g. the Marketing & Management & Marketing Fundamentals module and the Marketing Principles module in the Sports Management programme). (Perhaps the Management & Marketing Fundamentals module should just focus on management and be re-titled accordingly.)
- 3.2.39 The amount of indicative content within a module should broadly be related to the credit weighting. (Perhaps the proposed indicative content in the Sports Coaching Law module in the Sports Development and Coaching programme should be reviewed.)
- 3.2.40 Programme delivery should be appropriate for the 'digital natives', namely the students who have grown up in a digital world.

- 3.2.41 The preparation of students for employability and progression opportunities after graduation should be included in the programme documentation.
- 3.2.42 The panel suggested the movement of some modules between stages.
- 3.2.43 The panel suggested that the titles of both the Entrepreneurship programmes should be reassessed, and that perhaps 'Enterprise Development' could be considered as a possible alternative.
- 3.3.44 Some of the elective modules should perhaps be mandatory.
- 3.3 Commendations and Observations
- 3.3.1 The panel complimented the President and management on the leadership provided during the period of 'huge change', particularly during the integration of the former Tipperary Institute (TI). The process was impressive and a tribute to all concerned.
- 3.3.2 The panel were particularly impressed by the student examination statistics in the programmes. "Other institutions would be quite envious of such good results."
- 3.3.3 The panel complimented the participation of the staff throughout the programmatic review process and particularly during the panel visit. Suggestions for improvement were welcomed. The exchanges were open, courteous and frank, and positions were rationally defended. The overall work contribution from the members of staff was exceptionally high and very professional.
- 3.3.4 The panel lauded the student engagement during the programmatic review and also paid tribute to the contributions from alumni. The panel particularly noted the exceptionally strong endorsement by the students and graduates of the LIT experience. The students enthusiastically praised the members of the academic staff for their commitment, interactions and professionalism. The student-centred approach within LIT is very commendable.
- 3.3.5 The panel were impressed by the various student learning supports available within LIT (e.g. Learning Support Unit, mentoring).
- 3.3.6 The panel were very positive about the role of peer learning and support within the programmes.
- 3.3.7 The panel noted with pleasure the community engagement throughout the sports-related programmes.
- 3.3.8 The panel praised the LIT Market Link initiative.
- 3.3.9 The panel commended the programmatic review documentation provided by the Institute, and its timely delivery.
- 3.3.10 The panel strongly commended the high level of professional exemptions associated with the programmes. These exemptions are attractive to both students and potential employers (particularly the smaller professional practices). The exemptions offer a real competitive advantage to graduates.
- 3.3.11 The panel noted the strong programme ownership, the commitment to academic excellence, the exceptionally strong statistics (examination, retention and employability) and the concentration on student career advantage by the programme teams. The members of staff are "doing a great job." The adage, 'if it is not broken, do not fix it', is also applied in some cases.

- 3.3.12 The panel were impressed by the Institute facilities. They are well managed and maintained.
- 3.3.13 The panel congratulated the Institute on the exceptional successes of the students on the programmes.
- 3.3.14 The panel acknowledged the constraints due to the economic downturn, the state of the public finances and the Employment Control Framework (ECF). The dearth of adequate accommodation within the LIT Moylish campus was also recognised.
- 3.3.15 The panel particularly commended the exceptional three-year (180-credit) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting & Finance (Level 8) programme on the LIT-Tipperary campus. The panel were especially impressed by the Personal, Professional & Career Development module in semester five.
- 3.3.16 The panel noted the links with the University of Limerick for level-10 awards. The local cluster (LIT, UL, MIC) was also acknowledged.
- 3.3.17 The panel praised the flexibility and adjustments demonstrated by the programme teams in the rapidly changing environment.
- 3.3.18 The panel was concerned that the number of employers, who actually employ LIT students and graduates, was small at the programmatic review session with 'employers'.
- 3.3.19 The panel were impressed by the interdisciplinary approach within the Marketing programme and with the connections and site visits to multi-national employers (e.g. Google).
- 3.3.20 The panel lauded the engagement with local and community organisations including the University of Limerick and the local Chamber of Commerce. The knowledge transfer to community groups is particularly impressive.
- 3.3.21 The panel welcomed the proposed development of online and blended-learning offerings in the Department of Flexible Learning.
- 3.3.22 The panel acknowledged the challenges involved with the projected growth in student numbers of 7.5 per cent.
- 3.3.23 The panel acknowledged the typical profile of the incoming student in the IoT sector. The student is typically in the mid-range in CAO points. The sector also has a high percentage of mature students.
- 3.3.24 The panel noted the importance of staff development for the sector in the current dynamic and changing environment.
- 3.3.25 The panel noted that details of students engaged in postgraduate research were not provided by the faculty.
- 3.3.26 The panel agreed that the integration of the disciplines across the different geographic locations of the faculty offered exciting possibilities for synergies and the cross fertilisation of ideas.
- 3.3.27 The panel commended the inter-faculty cooperation (e.g. LSAD and the faculty on the IFIL project).
- 3.3.28 The panel welcomed the development of a single Institute-wide academic calendar through consultation and agreement.

- 3.3.29 The panel congratulated the programme team on the development of a substantial business alumni network.
- 3.3.30 The panel were impressed that members of staff engaged in external consultancy with various stakeholders.
- 3.3.31 The panel were concerned that recommendations from the last programmatic review had not been appropriately addressed.
- 3.3.32 The panel lauded the inclusion of opportunities for parallel credentials in the sports programmes (e.g. UKSCA).
- 3.3.33 The panel welcomed the reported transfer arrangements between the further education sector and the Institute.
- 3.3.34 The panel were supportive of the proposal to develop an add-on level-7 award in sports development.
- 3.3.35 The commended the introduction of the semesterised structure in a number of programmes.



Signature of Chairperson and Date

10.07.2015