

**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 Food & Tourism
Department of Applied Social Care**

CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION3
- 2. GENERAL INFORMATION3
 - 2.1 Higher Education Provider3
 - 2.2 Programmes Evaluated3
 - 2.3 External Programmatic Review Panel of Expert Assessors.....4
 - 2.4 Institute Staff.....4
 - 2.5 Selected Stakeholders5
 - 2.6 Documentation5
- 3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW PANEL7
 - 3.1 Main Findings7
 - 3.2 Condition.....7
 - 3.3 Recommendations7
 - 3.4 Commendations and Observations9

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 April 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:	Food & Tourism Applied Social Care Flexible Learning
Date of Review/Visit:	April 13 th / 14 th 2015
Venue:	Board Room, Moylish Park Campus Board Room, EAC Building

2.2 Programmes Evaluated

Department of Food & Tourism

Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Supervision (*add on* Level 7)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Hospitality Studies (Level 6)
Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts (Level 7)
Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts (Level 6)
Higher Certificate in Business in Hotel Front Office Management (Level 6)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Tourism Management (Level 8) - **Existing Title**
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management (Level 8) - **Proposed Title**
Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism (Level 7) (Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism (Level 6)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Event Management (Level 8)
Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with Events (Level 7) (Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Business Studies with Events (Level 6)

Department of Applied Social Care

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care (Level 8) - **Existing Title**
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care Work (Level 8) - **Proposed Title**
Bachelor of Arts in Social Care Work (Level 7) (Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Studies (Level 6) (Embedded Award)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social and Community Studies (Level 8)
Bachelor of Arts in Social and Community Studies (Level 7) (Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Social and Community Studies (Level 6)
Master of Arts in Social Care Management (Level 9)
Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care Management (Embedded Award)

Department of Flexible Learning

Special Purpose Awards

Working Positively with Behaviours that Challenge (Level 9 - 10 credits)

Health Advocacy and Community Development (Level 6 - 10 credits)

Supervision Theory and Practice (Level 7 - 5 credits)

Leadership and Management in Education (Level 7 - 10 credits)

2.3 External Programmatic Review Panel of Expert Assessors

Mr. Dermot Finan, Chairperson

Institute of Technology Sligo (formerly)

Dr. Frank Cullen,

Dublin Institute of Technology

Dr. Sean Duffy

Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Dr. Margaret Linehan

Cork Institute of Technology

Dr. Perry Share

Institute of Technology Sligo

Mr. Bill Hamill

Tusla

Mr. John O'Hara

Athlone Institute of Technology (formerly)

Ms. Claire Whyte

Inishbofin Hotel

2.4 Institute Staff

Dr. Maria Hinfelaar, President

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

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

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

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

Mr. Eoghan Sadlier, Head of Department of Business

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

Department of Food and Tourism

Mr. Alan Carr

Mr. Michael Conway

Ms. Brid Crotty

Mr. Michael Dillane

Ms. Eithne Gavigan

Ms. Majella Golden

Ms. Margaret Hogan

Ms. Sara-Jane Kickham

Ms. Mary Kiely

Ms. Marie Mitchell

Mr. Joe Mulcahy

Mr. Martin Neville

Ms. June O'Byrne Prior

Dr. Noelle O'Connor

Dr. Sinead O'Leary

Ms. Karen O'Neill

Mr. James O'Meara

Mr. Ken Switzer

Ms. Laura McInerney

Department of Applied Social Sciences

Ms. Agnes Bouchier-Hayes
Ms. Carmel Bracken
Mr. Alan Carr
Ms. Catherine Carty
Ms. Patricia Cremen
Dr. Martin Fitzgerald
Dr. Eleanor Fitzmaurice
Mr. Michael Greaney
Ms. Cathy Jones
Mr. Paul Keating
Ms. Bridget Kirwan

Ms. Geraldine Maughan
Ms. Sinead McMahon
Ms. Jennifer Moran Stritch
Mr. Alan Murphy
Ms. Catherine Ann O'Connell
Ms. Michelle O'Flanagan
Dr. Michael Ryan
Ms. Lisa Scott
Ms. Karen Sugrue
Ms. Maire Walsh

2.5 Selected Stakeholders

2.5.1 Employers/Industry & Alumni Representatives

Mr. Juan Carlos Azzopardi	Limerick City Community Development Project
Ms. Catherine Doyle	Tipperary Regional Youth Service
Ms. Catherine Donaghy	Tipperary Regional Youth Service
Ms. Leonie Kerins	Doras Lumni
Mr. Michael Quinn	Rehabcare
Ms. Julie White	Spafield Family Resource Centre Cashel
Ms. Nicola Chou	Alumnus
Ms. Chloe Hogan	Alumnus
Ms. Aileen McGrath	Alumnus/Postgraduate Research Student
Ms. Emma Nash	Alumnus/Postgraduate Research Student
Ms. Jillian Robinson	Alumnus

2.5.2 Current Students

Food & Tourism	Applied Social Studies
Ms. Ruth Cunningham	Ms. Lucie Clement (Video Link)
Ms. Maebh Hurley	Ms. Caoimhe Guinnane
Ms. Carol Kenny	Ms. Ann Lanigan (Video Link)
Ms. Rachel Leahy	Ms. Deirdre Leahy
Ms. Robyn Merrick	Ms. Lorraine Morrissey (Video Link)
Ms. Nicola McNamara	Ms. Rebecca O'Mara
Ms. Eileen O' Donoghue	Mr. Eoin Riordan
Ms. Shannen O' Dwyer	Mr. Jonathon Shinnors
Ms. Joanne O' Meara	Ms. Isabella Szlathta
Mr. Tamer Salem	Mr. Daryl Walsh (Video Link)
Mr Páraic Togher	Mr. Derek Walsh

2.6 Documentation

- 2.6.1 Critical Self-Study
Faculty of Business & Humanities,
- 2.6.2 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care (Level 8) – Existing Title,
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care Work (Level 8) – Proposed Title,
Bachelor of Arts in Social Care Work (Level 7) (Embedded Award),
Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Studies (Level 6) (Embedded Award),
Department of Applied Social Sciences,
- 2.6.3 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social and Community Studies (Level 8),
Bachelor of Arts in Social and Community Studies (Level 7) (Embedded Award),
Higher Certificate in Arts in Social and Community Studies (Level 6),
Department of Applied Social Sciences,
- 2.6.4 MA of Arts in Social Care Management (Level 9),
Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care Management (Embedded Award),
Department of Applied Social Sciences,
- 2.6.5 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Event Management (Level 8)
Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with Events (Level 7) (Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Business Studies with Events (Level 6)
Department of Food and Tourism,
- 2.6.6 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Tourism Management (Level 8) - Existing Title
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management (Level 8) -
Proposed Title
Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism (Level 7) (Embedded Award)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism (Level 6)
Department of Food and Tourism,
- 2.6.7 Higher Certificate in Business in Hotel Front Office Management (Level 6)
Department of Food and Tourism,
- 2.6.8 Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Supervision (*add on* Level 7)
Higher Certificate in Arts in Hospitality Studies (Level 6)
Department of Food and Tourism,
- 2.6.9 Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts (Level 7)
Higher Certificate in Culinary Arts (Level 6)
Department of Food and Tourism,
- 2.6.10 Special Purpose Awards
Department of Flexible Learning

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 relevant recommendations. The postgraduate Social Care Management programmes are subject to the following condition and relevant recommendations.

3.2 Condition

3.2.1 The learning outcomes of the postgraduate Social Care Management Programmes should meet all of the learning outcomes as prescribed in the national standards for Level-9 in a new document. The document should be subject to an external review.

3.3 Recommendations

- 3.3.1 A consistent approach to semesterisation should be adopted across the newly-formed faculty. The adoption of semesterisation facilitates internationalisation, exchanges and transfer. The panel is particularly supportive of the adoption of full semesterisation throughout programmes. The programmes considered in the programmatic review lend themselves to full semesterisation. A single faculty-wide policy should be formulated and should replace the diverse Programme Board policies.
- 3.3.2 The Critical Self Study should include recognition, analysis and references to national policy. The proliferation of programmes is, for example, contrary to national policy. Non-denominated entry points should be developed, particularly for programmes with a substantial number of common modules. These shared modules should be charted to facilitate identification of potential non-denominated entry points. Consistent with national policy, there should also be a greater focus on transition to higher education, including recognition of the special needs of mature students, for example.
- 3.3.3 Benchmarking exercises within the Institute and University sectors, nationally and internationally, should be conducted and evidenced in the Critical Self Study.
- 3.3.4 The Critical Self Study should include a five-year forward-looking emphasis. Anticipated changes and the proposed faculty responses should be documented. Irish higher education is currently in a period of dramatic change.
- 3.3.5 The Critical Self Study should include information and statistics on RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) within the faculty.
- 3.3.6 The Critical Self Study should include information on international links and arrangements. (Some information was provided during the panel visit.)
- 3.3.7 The recommendations of a programmatic review panel or an internal preparatory panel should be thoroughly considered and implemented as appropriate (e.g. assignment calendar). The documented responses should be clear and unambiguous. The follow-ups should be referenced in the Critical Self Study.

- 3.3.8 A research culture should be strongly adopted, supported and promoted throughout the faculty as appropriate in an institution of higher education offering levels 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 awards. A detailed research strategy should be developed and documented including various provisions (e.g. staff, students, training support, research supervision, peer support, space and facilities, research ethics, funding, research groups, future plans and targets, metrics, Shannon Consortium (LIT-UL-MIC), Limerick Graduate School, etc.). Appropriate emphasis on terminal academic qualifications and regular publications should be considered.
- 3.3.9 Dedicated space and facilities should be provided for all postgraduate research students.
- 3.3.10 The existing LIT Research Ethics Committee should be expanded to include taught postgraduate and undergraduate programmes.
- 3.3.11 Learning outcomes, consistent with the national standards, should be developed for the embedded awards.
- 3.3.12 The grading of work placement on a pass/fail basis should be adopted across the faculty. (A separate employer/academic supervision evaluation may be provided for inclusion with student résumés to promote graduate employability.) The learning outcomes should be assessed to determine a pass or a fail grade.
- 3.3.13 A uniform structure for managing work placements should be developed within the faculty. It could for example include appropriate release time (perhaps half a post) for a single academic member of staff (an academic placement officer) and thus ensure consistency of approach. (The panel were not supportive of multiple members of academic staff managing work placement.) Students should be individually and proactively matched to work placement.
- 3.3.14 Work placement in a programme should not be fragmented, but should include a suitable contiguous period of time.
- 3.3.15 There should be a strong focus on generic transferable skills throughout all programmes to promote employability and flexibility.
- 3.3.16 A formal structure for self-directed learning should be adopted, and should be reflected in the portfolio submitted by each student.
- 3.3.17 At least two external examiners (one academic and one practicing) should be employed for each programme. (The benefits for quality assurance were referenced by the panel.)
- 3.3.18 The supplied documentation should include detailed and comprehensive staff résumés.
- 3.3.19 An LIT Committee for Garda Vetting should be established. The Registrar of the Institute should be an ex officio member. (Decisions on placing individuals in particular work placements should be referred to such a committee for example.)
- 3.3.20 Progression and transfer opportunities from programmes should be documented and available to students.
- 3.3.21 The reading lists, references and support resources in various modules should be updated to reflect the current knowledge and practice. (This recommendation includes the modules in the Special Purpose Awards.)

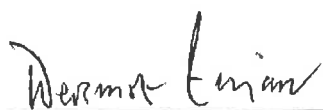
- 3.3.22 Unnecessary duplication and repetition of content within and between modules should be identified and eliminated.
- 3.3.23 Shared assessment between modules should be arranged where possible.
- 3.3.24 International bilateral agreements should be arranged, and international student experience should be promoted within the faculty.
- 3.3.25 IRAM (Internal Resource Allocation Model) (unit cost) averages should be produced for each department, and contrasted with the Institute-wide average. Unit costs should be broadly consistent with national and agreed norms.
- 3.3.26 A higher education approach should be adopted in all disciplines. (The panel acknowledged that some programmes were “born out of further education”.) The practical class contact hours in the early stages of the Culinary Arts programmes should reflect the national norms. More effective and alternative use of the available contact hours should be considered. (The HEA norm is currently not applied in Culinary Arts.) In cooking, methodology should be emphasised rather than various dishes, for example. In addition, the theory content could be separated from the practical content, expanded and delivered in joint groups, thereby increasing efficiency.
- 3.3.27 The combination of the Social Care and Social & Community Studies programmes should be considered. The latter is an excellent programme, though the viability is uncertain. A streamed approach may offer a mechanism to retain community studies. (CORU offers Social Care a sustainable competitive advantage over Social & Community Studies.) Alternatively, a postgraduate programme in Social and Community Studies should be considered.
- 3.3.28 Given the low unit cost in the Social Care programmes and the nature of the discipline, at least two visits by the academic member of staff should be considered during the work placement. One of these visits should be arranged early in the work placement.
- 3.3.29 The back-to-back work placements in Social Care should be reviewed. Theoretical input, appropriate preparation, academic development, etc. should be provided between placements.
- 3.3.30 The unique (Level-7) Hospitality Supervision programme should be promoted as a progression opportunity across the sector.

3.4 Commendations and Observations

- 3.4.1 The panel commended the programmatic review documentation. The panel were particularly impressed that the documentation was sent to the panel members about six weeks in advance of the visit. The arrangement was welcomed: “it is unusual”.
- 3.4.2 The panel thanked the President for the opportunity to participate in the programmatic review and for the hospitality.
- 3.4.3 The panel particularly complimented the engagement of the staff and students throughout the two-day visit.
- 3.4.4 The panel noted the energy and enthusiasm of all concerned. It bodes very well for future developments.

- 3.4.5 The panel congratulated the faculty on the undergraduate programmes submitted during the programmatic review process.
- 3.4.6 The panel commended the undergraduate research conferences within the Faculty.
- 3.4.7 The panel were particularly impressed by the student retention statistics. "Other institutions would be quite happy to have such good results".
- 3.4.8 The panel noted that the students were very positive about their experiences in LIT. They were articulate and enthusiastic about their studies. They engaged strongly in the work placements: the placements also facilitated vocational clarification. They were positive about the shared experiences in common modules.
- 3.4.9 The panel commended the close professional relationships between the students and members of staff. First names were used with ease. The students were very complimentary about the members of staff.
- 3.4.10 The panel particularly commended the group work module on the LIT-Tipperary campus. Perhaps the module could be incorporated into the Limerick programmes. The panel also noted the exceptional commitment in LIT-Tipperary to active learning. The panel noted the particularly creative enthusiasm of the LIT-Tipperary team.
- 3.4.11 The panel were very supportive of the inclusion of work placements in the academic programmes. The panel noted that many work placements were unpaid.
- 3.4.12 The panel commended the efforts to secure funding for postgraduate and research studies. The panel recognised that the research initiatives were at an early stage in the faculty. The panel were very supportive.
- 3.4.13 The panel was very strongly supportive of the faculty proposal to next develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the newly-formed faculty. The faculty needs to adopt a leading role within the region, with proposals for new and adapted programmes in response to the changing needs and industrial practices for example. The panel noted the commitment to provide a coherent and unified direction for the next five years. The projected role within the regional cluster (LIT-UL-MIC) needs to be clear and sustainable.
- 3.4.14 The panel acknowledged that the faculty faced many challenges and changes concurrently, and complimented all on the response in such difficult circumstances.
- 3.4.15 The panel commended the faculty on its engagement with student concerns and its willingness to respond appropriately (e.g. module on addiction studies).
- 3.4.16 The panel welcomed the IRAM (Internal Resource Allocation Model) approach across the Institute. The data should prompt more informed and appropriate responses.
- 3.4.17 The panel acknowledged the risk of over-assessment if semesterisation is improperly implemented.
- 3.4.18 The panel were very concerned about the submitted postgraduate Social Care Management programmes. The panel provided a substantial amount of comment, feedback and assistance to the team.
- 3.4.19 The panel were significantly concerned that the most recent research publication, submitted to them by the Institute, dated from 2009.

- 3.4.20 The panel were concerned that there was no representation from the hospitality industry present during the programmatic review panel visit. Hospitality students did participate in the process.
- 3.4.21 The panel were quite concerned that there was a requirement to pass practical elements independently. "There are a lot of hoops for the students." The issue of such 'failed elements' is perhaps an Institute-wide issue.
- 3.4.22 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 LIT was also recognised.
- 3.4.23 The panel welcomed parallel certification (e.g. first aid, manual handling) during the academic programmes. The panel noted that the Institute offered some Special Purpose Awards.
- 3.4.24 The panel noted the dearth of electives and the absence of languages in the programmes. The panel were supportive of developing Erasmus placements.
- 3.4.25 The panel noted that it might be appropriate for the Academic Council to consider the following question. 'Can you have an element of an award ungraded at award stage?' This would be particularly relevant when half the award stage does not contribute to the award classification (i.e. a pass/fail grade in the thirty-credit work placement).
- 3.4.26 The panel were especially impressed by the positive comments on students and graduates by the industry stakeholders during the programmatic review. The close relationship with the practitioners was lauded. Such links are an essential part of the mission of the sector.
- 3.4.27 The panel welcomes the engagement of guest lecturers for the programmes.
- 3.3.28 The panel commended the new programme titles as proposed in the programmatic review documentation.
- 3.4.29 The panel wished the senior academics well in their new responsibilities in the newly-formed faculty.
- 3.4.30 The panel was most impressed with the hospitality extended by the Institute to the panel members as well as by the excellence of the College cuisine.



Signature of Chairperson and Date

27-04-2015