Report of Programme Validation Panel

Date: 12th December 2014

Named Award:	Not applicable
Programme Title(s):	Certificate in Contemporary Palliative Care Practice
Exit Award(s):	Not applicable
Award Type:	Certificate
Award Class:	Special-Purpose
NFQ Level:	8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	10
First Intake:	September 2014

Panel Members

Mr Billy Bennett	Chair	Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT)
Dr Suzanne Denieffe	External Discipline Expert	Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)
Dr Kevin Connaire **(via teleconferencing)**	External Discipline Expert	Director of Education, St. Francis Hospice
Dr Brendan Ryder	Secretary	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

Programme Development Team

Dr Edel Healy, Head of School of Health and Science	Eileen McGuigan	Margaret Cotter
Mr Myles Hackett, Head of Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies	Mark Cunningham	Jean Carragher
Ann Everitt-Reynolds	Kathleen Nallen	Jill Atkinson
Ailish McArdle		

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on a proposal from the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies in the School of Health and Science at Dundalk Institute of Technology to design the following programme:

- *Certificate in Contemporary Palliative Care Practice*

The evaluators would like to thank the members of the development team for engaging generously and openly with the review process.

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

Palliative care is an approach to care that improves the quality of life of people and their families facing problems associated with life limiting illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychological and spiritual. It is a vital and integral part of all clinical practice, whatever the illness or stage, informed by a knowledge and practice of palliative care. Palliative care is not defined by any place, illness or age but with due regard to the individualised needs of patients and their families. All health and social care professionals working with people with life-limiting conditions are involved in providing palliative care. For many people with life limiting conditions, palliative care delivered by their usual treating team is sufficient to meet their needs (generalist palliative care), however for others the severity and complexity of their problems may exceed the resources of the primary team and require referral to the specialist Palliative Care Team (specialist palliative care).

Palliative care, both generalist and specialist, is provided in all care settings including the community, nursing homes, hospitals and specialist palliative care units. In 2013 the HSE and the National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care developed a Palliative Care Competence Framework for health and social care professionals working in various healthcare settings. This framework aims to provide core competencies in palliative care whilst outlining individual competencies for each health and social care discipline. The National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care proposes to use the Palliative Care Competence Framework as a catalyst to incorporate discipline specific competencies in staff education and practice in order to put palliative care at the heart of the healthcare service.

The Palliative Care Needs Assessment Guidance (2014) document recently published by the National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care aims to help healthcare professionals to facilitate people with life-limiting conditions to experience the best quality of life. The guidance outlined in the document is intended to aid professionals in assessing the current and future palliative care needs of patients with life limiting conditions and in deciding when it is appropriate to refer to a specialist palliative care service. The guidance and frameworks

outlined in this document will be used to inform the theoretical and practical elements of the Certificate in Contemporary Palliative Care Practice.

Aim of the Programme

The aims of this programme are:

1. To facilitate nurses and midwives in the development of an appropriate level of knowledge, skill, and attitude in the core principles of palliative care.

2. To build palliative care capacity among nurses and midwives to respond confidently and in a timely manner to the palliative care needs of patients and their families in the healthcare setting.

See programme submission for more information.

3 General Findings of the Validation Panel

The Panel would like to congratulate the programme development team on the quality of the programme documentation presented. The team is to be commended for providing ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for the nursing profession. There is a clear rationale for providing the programme and its introduction is timely given the issues that have been identified recently in the healthcare environment. The Panel note the blended learning approach proposed for the delivery of the programme which will provide flexibility for prospective students. The engagement and commitment of the team was clearly evident on the day of the panel.

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the validation panel recommends the following:

Certificate in Palliative Care

Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner	
Accredited subject to conditions and/or recommendations	X
Re-designed and re-submitted to the same validation panel after additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

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 programme validation panel. In this report, the term Condition is used to indicate an action or amendment which in the view of the validation panel must be undertaken prior to the commencement of the programme. Conditions are mandatory if the programme is to be approved. 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:

- Demand
- Award
- Institute strategy alignment
- Entry requirements
- Access, transfer and progression
- Standards and Outcomes
- Programme structure
- Teaching and Learning Strategies
- Assessment Strategy
- Resource requirements
- Quality Assurance.

4.1 Demand

Validation Criterion:	Is there a convincing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.2 Award

Validation Criterion:	Is the level and type of the award appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The Panel noted that the programme is targeted specifically at nurses and endorse the plans to ultimately extend this to become an interdisciplinary programme. The panel recommends interdisciplinary input in the delivery of the programme.

4.3 Institute Strategy Alignment

Validation Criterion:	Is the proposed programme aligned to the Institute's strategy and are the strategic themes of entrepreneurship, sustainability and internationalisation embedded in the proposed programme as appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.4 Entry Requirements

Validation Criterion:	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes (see Section 4.5 also)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the NQAI and does it accommodate a variety of access and entry requirements?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Formal Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes should be used to facilitate access to the programme for nurses who do not have a Level 7/8 award. The panel suggest that the team could consider the use of an equivalence assessment when determining eligibility for the programme.

4.6 Standards and Outcomes

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme meet the required award standards for programmes at the proposed NFQ level (i.e. conform to QQI Award Standards)?
Overall Finding:	Yes The learning outcomes for the programme are consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications NFQ) award standards for Level 8 programmes in Science.

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at
http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol01.htm

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.7 Programme Structure

Validation Criterion:	Is the programme structure logical and well designed and can the stated proposed programme outcomes in terms of employment skills and career opportunities be met by this programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes (single 10 credit module only)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.8 Teaching and Learning Strategies

Validation Criterion:	Have appropriate teaching and learning strategies been provided for the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.9 Assessment Strategies

Validation Criterion:	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI/HETAC Assessment and Guidelines, 2009)?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Assessment strategies are required in line with HETAC's Assessment and Standards and should form a substantial part of the documentation to be considered by the programme validation panel. 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 teaching and learning strategy;
- Demonstrate how grading criteria will be developed to relate to the Institutional grading system.

The Institute resource entitled Assessment and Learning: A Policy for Dundalk Institute of Technology (Nov 2010) (https://www.dkit.ie/celt/documents-and-policies/assessment-and-learning-guidelines-dundalk-institute-technology) should also be consulted.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The programme development team need to provide additional detail on the assessment of the single module on this programme keeping in mind that the students are not over assessed.

  This should include:

  - o Details on the scale of the written assignment.
  - o Nature and scope of the presentation.
  - o Clarification on how the technology-enhanced learning activities are to be assessed. Clear guidelines for students need to be provided.

- The requirement to complete the *HSE Palliative Care Needs Assessment* module should be included as a special regulation on the approved programme schedule (APS).

- The programme re-assessment strategy needs to be amended to reflect the actual re-assessment strategy (in accordance with DkIT Academic Council policy).

4.10 Resource Requirements

Validation Criterion:	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.11 Quality Assurance

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the Institute's quality assurance procedures have been applied and that satisfactory procedures exist for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes?
Overall Finding:	Yes

The Institute's Quality Assurance Procedures are published in the Academic Quality Assurance Manual available at: https://www.dkit.ie/registrar/policies/academic-quality-manual and include approved procedures for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of Programmes.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.12 Module-Level Findings

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.13 Assessment Strategies

Validation Criterion:	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Note(s):

- This is covered in Section 4.9 as the programme is comprised of a single module.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- See Section 4.9.

4.14 Other Findings

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

_____

Mr Billy Bennett, Chairperson.

Date: 22 January 2015

Response to the Report
of the Programme Validation Panel

Date: 12ᵗʰ December 2014

Named Award:	Not applicable
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Exit Award(s):	Not applicable
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Award Class:	Special-Purpose
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First Intake:	September 2014

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Ailish McArdle		

1 Introduction

The following report is the School response to the expert panel of assessors report on a proposal from the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies in the School of Health and Science at Dundalk Institute of Technology to design the following programme:

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The evaluators would like to thank the members of the development team for engaging generously and openly with the review process.

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The aims of this programme are:

1. To facilitate nurses and midwives in the development of an appropriate level of knowledge, skill, and attitude in the core principles of palliative care.

2. To build palliative care capacity among nurses and midwives to respond confidently and in a timely manner to the palliative care needs of patients and their families in the healthcare setting.

See programme submission for more information.

3   General Findings of the Validation Panel

The Panel would like to congratulate the programme development team on the quality of the programme documentation presented. The team is to be commended for providing ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for the nursing profession. There is a clear rationale for providing the programme and its introduction is timely given the issues that have been identified recently in the healthcare environment. The Panel note the blended learning approach proposed for the delivery of the programme which will provide flexibility for prospective students. The engagement and commitment of the team was clearly evident on the day of the panel.

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the validation panel recommends the following:

Certificate in Palliative Care

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- Standards and Outcomes
- Programme structure
- Teaching and Learning Strategies
- Assessment Strategy
- Resource requirements
- Quality Assurance.

4.1 Demand

Validation Criterion:	Is there a convincing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.2 Award

Validation Criterion:	Is the level and type of the award appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The Panel noted that the programme is targeted specifically at nurses and endorse the plans to ultimately extend this to become an interdisciplinary programme. The panel recommends interdisciplinary input in the delivery of the programme.

School Response

- The School shall engage a number of guest lecturers to ensure interdisciplinary input in the delivery of the programme.

4.3 Institute Strategy Alignment

Validation Criterion:	Is the proposed programme aligned to the Institute's strategy and are the strategic themes of entrepreneurship, sustainability and internationalisation embedded in the proposed programme as appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.4 Entry Requirements

Validation Criterion:	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?
Overall Finding:	Yes (see Section 4.5 also)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the NQAI and does it accommodate a variety of access and entry requirements?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Formal Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes should be used to facilitate access to the programme for nurses who do not have a Level 7/8 award. The panel suggest that the team could consider the use of an equivalence assessment when determining eligibility for the programme.

4.6 Standards and Outcomes

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme meet the required award standards for programmes at the proposed NFQ level (i.e. conform to QQI Award Standards)?
Overall Finding:	Yes The learning outcomes for the programme are consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications NFQ) award standards for Level 8 programmes in Science.

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol01.htm

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.7 Programme Structure

Validation Criterion:	Is the programme structure logical and well designed and can the stated proposed programme outcomes in terms of employment skills and career opportunities be met by this programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes (single 10 credit module only)

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.8 Teaching and Learning Strategies

Validation Criterion:	Have appropriate teaching and learning strategies been provided for the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.9 Assessment Strategies

Validation Criterion:	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI/HETAC Assessment and Guidelines, 2009)?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Assessment strategies are required in line with HETAC's Assessment and Standards and should form a substantial part of the documentation to be considered by the programme validation panel. 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) :

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- Describe any special regulations;
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- Provide contingent strategy for cases where learners claim exemption from modules, including recognition of prior learning;
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- Demonstrate how grading criteria will be developed to relate to the Institutional grading system.

The Institute resource entitled Assessment and Learning: A Policy for Dundalk Institute of Technology (Nov 2010) (https://www.dkit.ie/celt/documents-and-policies/assessment-and-learning-guidelines-dundalk-institute-technology) should also be consulted.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The programme development team need to provide additional detail on the assessment of the single module on this programme keeping in mind that the students are not over assessed.

  This should include:

- o Details on the scale of the written assignment.
- o Nature and scope of the presentation.
- o Clarification on how the technology-enhanced learning activities are to be assessed. Clear guidelines for students need to be provided.

- The requirement to complete the *HSE Palliative Care Needs Assessment* module should be included as a special regulation on the approved programme schedule (APS).

- The programme re-assessment strategy needs to be amended to reflect the actual re-assessment strategy (in accordance with DkIT Academic Council policy).

School Response

- The requirement to complete the *HSE Palliative Care Needs Assessment* module will be included as a special regulation on the approved programme schedule (APS).

4.10 Resource Requirements

Validation Criterion:	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.11 Quality Assurance

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the Institute's quality assurance procedures have been applied and that satisfactory procedures exist for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes?
Overall Finding:	Yes

The Institute's Quality Assurance Procedures are published in the Academic Quality Assurance Manual available at: https://www.dkit.ie/registrar/policies/academic-quality-manual and include approved procedures for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of Programmes.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.12 Module-Level Findings

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.13 Assessment Strategies

Validation Criterion:	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes, with recommendation(s)

Note(s):

- This is covered in Section 4.9 as the programme is comprised of a single module.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- See Section 4.9.

4.14 Other Findings

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

Signed on behalf of the School:

Signed:

_____
Dr Edel Healy,
Head of School of Health and Science.

Date: 22nd January 2015

Validation Panel Response Approved By:

Signed:

_____
Mr Billy Bennett, Chairperson.

Date: 16 February 2015