

Response to the Report of the Programme Validation Panel

Date: 29th February 2016

Validation Type:	New
Named Award:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Early Childhood Studies
Exit Award(s):	Not applicable
Award Type:	Honours Bachelor Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	60
First Intake:	September 2016 (TBC)

Panel Members

Mr Billy Bennett	Chair	Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT)
Ms Majella McBride	External Academic	Department of Nursing and Health Studies, Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT)
Ms Martina Coombes	External Academic	Department of Humanities, Blanchardstown Institute of Technology (ITB)
Ms Breda McKenna	Practitioner/Industry Representative	Co-ordinator, Monaghan County Childcare Committee
Dr Brendan Ryder	Secretary	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

Programme Development Team

Dr Edel Healy, Head of School of Health and Science	Ms Mary McSkeane	Dr Philomena Smyth (by conference call)
Dr Myles Hackett, Head of Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies	Dr Geraldine O'Connor	Mr Gerry Gallagher, e-Learning Co-ordinator (DkIT)
Ms. Lynda Smyth (Apologies)		

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 deliver the following programme(s):

- *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Early Childhood Studies*

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

Rationale:

Early Childhood generally refers to the care and the education of children aged 0-6 years. The Early Childhood professional educator needs to understand many facets of the young child's development and how best to plan and implement programmes that address the child's needs in a holistic way. The BA (Hons) in Applied Early Childhood Studies is designed for people who are working in the early years sector and already hold a relevant academic qualification at Level 7.

It will be suitable for:

- Early year educators / practitioners working in full day-care, sessional preschool services, school age childcare services, special education services and childminding settings;
- Managers of full day-care, sessional pre-school services, school age childcare services and special education services;
- Early childhood practitioners in the Health Services Executive County Childcare Committee members and staff;
- Practitioners in the child and family support sector.

It is in response to national strategies in the early year's sector which has identified the need to up skill the workforce in this sector. The programme will nurture students' personal, social and professional development with a view to producing a highly competent professional educator committed to providing high quality services to babies, young children and their families based on the contemporary principles of best practice as determined by Aistear and Siolta.

Employer Demand

In Spring 2012 the Department of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Studies circulated a survey to County Childcare Committees (CCCs) in the North East region to ascertain the level of interest

in a part time Early Childhood programme at Level 7 or Level 8. The CCCs circulated the survey to their respective Early Years services and a total of 184 responses were received.

The following are the key points of note:

- 81.4% of respondents were managers in Early Years Services
- 60.8% were interested in a Level 8 programme.
- 71.9% favored the use of flexible learning techniques e.g. blended learning
- 57.4% and 55.9% said that they would prefer weekday evening and weekend delivery.
- 91.1% would be self-funding

Louth County Childcare Committee in 2013 completed a training needs analysis of all of the employees in the Early Years Sector in Louth. A total of 612 employees were surveyed. It is very interesting to note that only 4.7% and 1% of employees have a Level 7 and Level 8 qualification in Early Childhood Studies. These figures represent those reported at a national level in the 'Pobal Annual Survey of the Early Years Sector 2014' (4.8% at Level 7 and 9.2% at Level 8). Since this survey was carried out in Louth, the Louth CCC has used the Leaner Fund to support the workforce to attain QQI Level 5 and 6 qualifications. Currently in Louth alone there are 23 staff and 52 staff being supported on Level 5 and 6 training respectively indicating the importance which is being attributed to upskilling of this Sector in the region.

As part of the April 2009 Budget, the Irish Government announced a new programme which came into effect from January 2010. The programme is administered by the Childcare Directorate of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, with the local operation of the programme managed by the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs). The objective of the ECCE programme, which is open to both community and commercial service providers, is to benefit children in the key developmental period prior to starting school. Budget 2016 contained an important measure to extend the free pre-school year (from 1 September 2016). Payment under the ECCE programme is by way of capitation fees which are paid directly to the service provider. A capitation fee is payable in respect of each child enrolled in the free pre-school year. A higher rate of capitation is payable in respect of sessional playschool services with highly qualified staff. Under the ECCE programme, participating childcare services are paid a capitation in respect of each child. There is therefore a financial incentive for Early Years Services to increase their number of staff with Level 7 or Level 8 qualifications.

Rationale for the outreach delivery of the BA (Hons) in Applied Early Childhood Studies

The BA in Applied Early Childhood Studies (Level 7) outreach provision was validated in May 2015 allowing for the delivery of the Level 7 programme to Cavan Institute and Monaghan Institute. It is hoped to commence this in September 2016.

This curriculum document also proposes a possible outreach delivery of the BA (Hons) in Applied Early Childhood Studies, subject to demand in outreach sites such as FE colleges.

A very important context and background to the current proposal is the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA). This is a major regional higher and further education initiative involving higher and further education colleges in the North East and led by DkIT. The alliance involves DkIT, Drogheda Institute of Further and Higher Education, Monaghan Institute, Cavan Institute, Dunboyne College and O Fiaich College of Further & Higher Education. The alliance was formed in 2007 and is under-pinned by a Memorandum of Understanding. It works to enhance progression of students from further to higher education,

collaborate on course design and development relevant to regional needs and share expertise and resources. The NEFHEA Alliance has been working to enable more students from Further Education Colleges to join DkIT academic programmes

Student demand for the Programme

The development of this programme is a response to student demand for a level 8 progression route from current students on the BA in AECs (Level 7). Students in stage two (15) currently enrolled and stage three (25) recently graduated on the level 7 Applied Early Childhood Studies indicated that they wish to progress to a level 8 programme in DkIT. In December 2015, a survey was conducted among the 27 stage 3 students, who were nearing completion of the Level 7 BA in AECs programme. 17 of these students indicated their interest in continuing onto a level 8 programme.

In addition, the survey referred to in the section on 'Employer Demand' (above) indicates that there is significant demand for this programme from potential students in the region. A number of Level 8 programmes are available nationally but none in the North East Region. This proposed Programme shall meet the clear demand that exists in the Region that DkIT serves namely Louth, Cavan, Monaghan, Meath and North County Dublin.

Secondary research in relation to demand

This programme is very much aligned with the current DkIT strategic plan (2011-2016) as follows:

- Goal 1 Learning and Teaching: Placing focus on the learner to fully realise their potential through the provision of high quality relevant programmes.
- Goal 2: Flexible Delivery: To systematically embed blended learning and technology enhanced learning within the Institute.
- Goal 6: Regional Community Development: Developing, supporting and actively engaging with the community in the North East region.
- Goal 7: Access and Participation: Opening pathways of opportunity and engaging new learners.

The National Strategy for Higher Education (2011) outlines the requirements for a modern, flexible and responsive higher education system that is ready to meet the new challenges of the next twenty years in supporting Ireland's economic renewal and growth. It envisages a system that is more accessible to a much greater range of people, is more engaged with the enterprise and research as its hallmark. This proposed programme which shall be delivered in a blended learning framework addresses these requirements.

In recent years there has been much progress in the early years sector in Ireland. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) was established in 2011. The Department brought together a number of key areas of policy and provision for children and young people including the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). An Early Years Education Policy Unit (EYEPU) was established within the OMCYA and co-located within the Department of Education and Skills (DES). This unit manages the development of policies and provision for Early Childhood within an overall strategic policy framework (DCYA, 2012).

In addition to these significant strategic changes in Government policy, other noteworthy policies have been developed including: Siolta (2006); Aistear, (2009); ECCE Scheme, (2010); Workforce Development Plan, (2010) and there has been an increase in research from an Irish perspective in the Early Childhood sphere.

Recent policy developments have contributed to an increased societal understanding of the importance of early childhood as a unique time in the lives of our youngest children. The imminent publication of Ireland's First National Early Years Strategy endorses that commitment. In addition, the work of Start Strong (coalition of Early Childhood organisations and individuals seeking to advance high quality) in advocating for the highest International standards for our Early Childhood services, provide a continued impetus for the delivery of the degree level programmes in Early Childhood Studies.

Many of the responsibilities placed upon Early Childhood educators are complex, non-routine and require specialised skills and knowledge (Moss 2006; Peeters, 2008; Sylva et al., 2010). The introduction of Siolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006) and Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) are important milestones for Early Childhood educators in Ireland. Aistear is Ireland's first national curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. When Aistear is used simultaneously with Siolta, it illustrates the highly complex and challenging nature of the work involved in their joint functioning to promote and enhance quality provision. The increasingly complex role of the Early Childhood educator in Ireland has been recognised by the ECS team and both frameworks are embedded in all modules of the programme.

The Revised Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations (2006) provides further challenges to the pedagogical ability of the Early Childhood educator. Article 5 of the revised Regulations (2006) places a strong emphasis on the needs of the child which implicitly requires the educator to be well trained and qualified to comply with the complexities of this particular regulation. In 2013 the DYCA published an eight point pre-school quality agenda to develop quality and standards in the sector requiring the inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills to lead and organise focussed inspections in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. A key aim of the inspections will be to embed a culture of self evaluation and continuous improvement in early year's care and education settings.

The Workforce Development Plan (2010) provides a focus for ensuring that early childhood educators have the appropriate training and skills needed to provide best quality experiences for babies and young children. A key objective of this Workforce Development Plan is to ensure that all staff engaged in the provision of early childhood care and education services for young children and their families are appropriately qualified for their role and responsibilities (DES, 2010). It stresses the need for practitioners to have a clear educational progression path making reference to a life long learning continuum particular from further education and training to higher education and training programmes. That is what is being proposed in this draft programme. [On September 24th 2013 the Cabinet approved a number of legislative proposals brought forward by the then Minister Frances Fitzgerald which will strengthen the registration, regulation and enforcement of pre-school services. This legislation provided a statutory basis for registration of pre-school services and will introduce a new range of enforcement powers for inspectors at pre-prosecution level. In this legislation, from 1st September 2014 for new services and from 1st September 2015 all staff must have a Level 5 FETAC qualification in early childhood care and education and team leaders will be required to have a Level 6 FETAC qualification. This was extended to September 2016 to allow

more staff time to complete training to meet these requirements. A 3M Learner Fund was announced in 2014 which provides a subsidy towards the cost of such training and qualification. Minister Reilly in the budget 2016 announcements indicated in relation this learner fund that 'further investment in the learner fund will help Ireland's childcare sector to move towards the professionalised workforce that characterises high quality childcare systems'. It is anticipated that this Learner fund may extend to provide funding to financially support the childcare workforce accessing Level 7 and 8 qualifications.

In October 2013 the then Minister Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs launched 'Right from the Start', the report of the Expert Advisory Group established to make recommendations for Ireland's first-ever Early Years Strategy which is currently being prepared by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The report comprises 10 themes which are critical for the Early Years Strategy, with core recommendations presented under each theme. The 10 themes are:

- Economic rationale for increased investment
- Supporting families
- Health and well-being
- Access to services and inclusion
- Quality in services and supports
- Training and professional development
- Regulation and support
- Governance
- Information, research and data
- Implementation

Of particular relevance to this programme is the 'Training and Professional Development' theme. The report stresses that the delivery of high quality services depends, above all, on the skills and competencies of those working with young children and their families. The Expert Advisory Group had particular concerns around levels of staff training and professional development in the area of early care and education services. They indicated that ensuring high professional standards at all levels of service delivery requires that individuals not only have appropriate initial training, but also that they have access to continuing professional development throughout their career. They make reference to the EU CoRe report on Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care (University of East London et al, 2011) which has set an international benchmark that at least 60% of those working in early care and education services should be graduates. The CoRe report calls not just for 'competent practitioners', but for a 'competent system', which requires a qualified workforce at all levels, which includes trainers, managers and inspectors. In addition, it requires a workforce of motivated early childhood professionals with a clear professional identity, actively engaging in continuous development and innovation to support children's positive learning and development. Currently, only 14% of those working in early childhood care and education services in Ireland have Degree-level qualifications (Pobal, 2014). The majority of qualifications are at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications.

The Expert Advisory Group recommends that the Early Years Strategy should:

- Implement the recommendations of the recent CoRe report, in particular through moving to a situation in which at least 60% of those working in preschool early care and education

services are qualified to Degree-level, including equally those working with under-3s and those working with over-3s.

- Introduce a training fund to enable those working in early care and education services to gain additional training and provide for regular, funded non-contact time to ensure staff can engage in continuing professional development.
- Undertake and follow through on a review of the extent to which Ireland has a 'competent system' in early care and education, including in relation to training requirements for service managers (leadership and management) and in relation to the qualifications and training of trainers themselves (teaching as well as early education qualifications), with a view to ensuring a systemic approach to achieving higher quality standards.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (DCYA, 2014) is the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people (aged 0-24 years), developed and led by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Almost all policy areas have a direct or indirect effect on children and young people's lives. The purpose of this framework is to coordinate policy across Government to achieve better outcomes. In it a commitment to the expansion of universal pre-school provision and investment in early years care and education during the first six years will work to support parents (as a child's first teacher) and will enable children to grow, develop and prepare for a life of learning. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs established the Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) in January 2015 to identify and assess options for improving the affordability, quality and supply of early years and school-age care and education services in Ireland. This covers the 0-12 year age group, who use preschool, after-school and out-of-school services. The Minister's initiative follows widespread concerns about the affordability of childcare and whether the current system of supports is properly geared to meeting the needs of children and their parents. In the report that was launched in July 2015, professionalisation of the workforce was identified as a key proxy for quality in terms of the international evidence. The need for a better recognised and qualified workforce was a common theme across the parental and public consultation processes. It was recommended that a programme of annual investment in CPD is required to encourage and enable participation in appropriate activities. This will be required for both staff in centrebased settings and for childminders.

The development of the national strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (DES, 2011) is specifically significant to the Early Childhood sector as it takes cognisance of the emergent skill development that occurs from birth. Reflective practice for educators is regarded as central to ensuring high standards of quality provision in early years care and education settings and is a core component of the professional practice standard within Siolta (2006). This concept is embedded in a number of modules in the proposed programme. Accordingly, the graduate from the ECS programme should emerge as a reflective practitioner with an in-depth understanding of the holistic needs of young children and families and the role of early years services in the broader community and policy context having engaged in reflective practice throughout the three years of the programme.

In any preschool classroom, the needs of children can be very diverse, and some young children can be more challenging to engage than others. The 'Learning Language and Loving It' Hanen Program was designed to provide early childhood educators with practical strategies for helping all children (inclusive of any special needs) in the classroom to build on their language and social skills. The 'Learning Language and Loving It' Program provides educators with practical, research-based strategies for:

- Promoting every child’s language development using natural everyday activities, routines and play
- Becoming attuned to children’s interests so that the educator can follow their lead, which is known to foster language development
- Adjusting the way the educator talks and speaks to help children develop more advanced language skills
- Promoting interaction among the children themselves
- Facilitating language-learning in pretend play
- Fostering emergent literacy skills

The Hanen Certificate is incorporated into this proposed degree programme. The team believe that this will offer students the opportunity to acquire a recognised professional qualification whilst also facilitating more practical application of theory on interactions which form the core skill of all work with babies and young children.

See programme submission for more detailed information.

3 General Findings of the Validation Panel

The panel would like to commend the programme development team for actively responding to the needs of the early childhood sector in the region and for building on their Level 7 programme offering, providing pathways and opportunities at Level 8. The panel further acknowledge the range of programmes being delivered in the school in blended, flexible and part-time modes which are contributing to the Institute’s part-time strategy . The panel also welcome innovative approaches to assessment that are creative, challenging and authentic.

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

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Early Childhood Studies

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:

- Rationale and Demand
- Award
- Institute strategy alignment
- Entry requirements
- Access, transfer and Progression
- Protection of the Enrolled Learner
- Standards and Outcomes
- Programme structure
- Teaching and Learning Strategies
- Assessment Strategy
- Resource requirements
- Quality Assurance.
- Module-Level Findings.

4.1 Rationale and Demand

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Is there a convincing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes, extensive rationale and demand provided in the programme submission and also provided verbally during the site visit.

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.2 Award

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Is the title, level, type and classification of the award appropriate?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.3 Institute Strategy Alignment

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes (pg. 32 of programme submission main document)

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.4 Entry Requirements

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes, with condition(s) and/or recommendation(s)

Condition(s)

- The programme development team need need to modify the entry requirements to ensure that they stipulate a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 7 in Childcare or an equivalent cognate discipline (e.g. the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) guidelines can be used in this regard) and the requirement for Garda Vetting by the Institute.

School Response

- **The entry requirements have been amended accordingly and are included in the attached updated Curriculum document. They also have been amended to state that applicants may be interviewed. The original version had indicated all students. This will not be necessary in all cases.**

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes. Progression opportunities presented in Section 3.11 of the programme submission main document (pg. 7)

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.6 Protection of Enrolled Learners

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Does the provider have arrangements in place which make provision for learners in the event that it ceases to provide the programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes.

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Does the proposed programme meet the required award standards for programmes at the proposed NFQ level (i.e. conform to QQI Award Standards)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes. Standards are mapped to the QQI award standards at NFQ Level 8.

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the **NFQ Framework** can be found at <http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Active-NFQ-Standards-for-HE.aspx>.

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.8 Programme Structure

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	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
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	programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	

Condition(s)

- Reduce the weighting for **Early Years: Research Dissertation** (Stage 1, Semester 2) and **Early Years: Applied Research Proposal** (Stage 1, Semester 1) modules by 5 ECTS credits each. Module learning outcome(s), contact hours and assessment should be adjusted accordingly. Consider increasing the credits for the modules **Issues Informing Contemporary Practice in Early Childhood** (Stage 1, Semester 1) and **Leadership, Mentoring and Management in the Early Years Sector** (Stage 1, Semester 2).

School Response

- **The module changes as outlined above have been made and included in the attached updated 'Book of Modules.'**

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.9 Teaching and Learning Strategies

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

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.10 Programme Assessment Strategies

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI Assessment and Guidelines, 2013)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Assessment strategies are required in line with QQI's Assessment and Standards (2013) and should form a substantial part of the documentation to be considered by the programme validation panel. Accordingly the assessment strategy should address the following:

- 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 (<https://www.dkit.ie/celt/documents-and-policies/assessment-and-learning-guidelines-dukalk-institute-technology>) should also be consulted.

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The programme development team should review the programme assessment strategy to ensure students are not over-assesed. Assessment requirements should be consistent across all modules.

School Response

- **The Programme Assessment Strategy is included in theCurriculum document. A programme board takes place at the start of each Semester to review the Assessment Schedule.**

4.11 Resource Requirements

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme (including reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The school management team should ensure the programme is anchored with a sufficient number of DkIT staff and that tutors are sufficiently qualified to deliver the programme.

- Opportunities to engage stakeholders as guest speakers should be explored by the programme team as appropriate.

School Response

- **All lecturers and tutors involved in programme delivery shall be employed by DkIT. Any additional lecturers and tutors to the team shall go through the standard DkIT recruitment procedures used for employment of academic staff. Furthermore all new staff members will be fully inducted into the Department and provided with any training which they require. Guest lecturers from the relevant stakeholders are invited in on a regular basis to the Early Childhood programmes in DkIT.**

4.12 Quality Assurance

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	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?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

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

Recommendation(s):

- The programme development team should ensure that the delivery mode(s) proposed adhere to the Institute's quality assurance in respect of policies, procedures and guidelines for collaborative provision (as appropriate). The Registrar's Office will provide follow-up guidance in this regard.

School Response

- **The School has discussed the above with the Registrar's Office.**

4.13 Module-Level Findings

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The programme development team should review module learning outcomes and programme learning outcomes to ensure they are written at the appropriate NFQ level and include measurable and active verbs.

School Response

- **All modules have been reviewed and amended as required. They are included in the attached updated Book of Modules.**
- **Communication, Language and Interactions-Hanen Certificate:**
 - Include elements relating to second language acquisition.
 - Elements that are work placement should be specified.

School Response

- **The module has been updated accordingly.**
- **Issues Informing Contemporary Practice in Early Childhood:**
 - Social justice and anti-bias curriculum.
 - Include stakeholders and legislative requirements (e.g. Department of Education Inspectorate, etc.)
 - Indicate how group work is managed.

School Response

- **The module has been updated accordingly.**
- **Early Years: Applied Research Proposal:**
 - The panel were concerned that students would be over-assessed in this module (i.e. word count of 4,500 words). The programme development team should re-consider the word limit for the proposal.

School Response

- **This module has been removed.**
- **Leadership, Mentoring and Management in the Early Years Sector:**
 - Include supervision and legislative requirements.

School Response

- **The module has been updated accordingly.**
- **Early Years: Research Dissertation:**
 - Include guidelines document for dissertation.
 - Ensure data collection training is provided (e.g. SPSS training).
 - Outreach centre access to relevant software should be articulated in the submission documentation.
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School Response

- **A guidelines document will be provided to the students.**
- **Data collection training is provided as part of the module.**
- **Students will be able to gain access to relevant software on their personal PCs.**

4.14 Assessment Strategies

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in the proposed programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation:

- None.

4.15 Other Findings

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- A revised interview scoring sheet and CV's were tabled on the day of the site visit. Both should be incorporated into the programme submission documentation as appropriate, incorporating feedback from the panel.

School Response

- **The above has been included in the attached updated Curriculum document.**

Signed on behalf of the School:

Signed:



Dr Edel Healy,
Head of School of Health and Science

Date:

Validation Panel Response Approved By:

Signed:



Mr Billy Bennett, Chairperson.

Date: