# Response to Report of Programme Validation Panel

## Date: Wednesday 18th May 2016

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|---|---|
| **Named Award:** | B.A. (Hons) |
| **Programme Title(s):** | Public Relations |
| **Exit Award(s):** | No |
| **Award Type:** | Honours Bachelor Degree |
| **Award Class:** | Major |
| **NFQ Level:** | 8 |
| **ECTS / ACCS Credits:** | 60 |
| **First Intake:** | 2016 |

## Panel Members

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mr. Billy Bennett | Chair | Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) |
| Ms. Lisa Clancy | External Discipline Expert | Managing Director - Clansult |
| Ms. Edel Griffin | External Academic | Course Director, University of Ulster |
| Ms. Carmel Brennan | External Academic | Head of Dept. Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) |
| Dr. Breda Brennan | Secretary | Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) |

## Programme Development Team

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Paula Mullen (Programme Director) | Ciara O'Connor | Vicky Leahy |
| John Sisk (Programme Director) | Tara Kinney | Catherine Staunton |
| Shane Hill (Head of Department) | Paula Browne | Annmarie McHugh |
| Dr. Collette Henry (Head of School) | Seamus Rispin | Pat McArdle |
| Brian Boyd | Helen White | Siobhan Duffy |
| Fiona Oster | Bobby Arthur | David Coggans |
| Maeve McArdle | Johdi Quinn | Colin Cooney |

# 1   Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on a proposal from the School of Business and Humanities at Dundalk Institute of Technology to design the following programme:

B.A. (Hons) Public Relations

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

See programme submission for more detailed information.

# 3   General Findings of the Validation Panel

The panel congratulate the team on the innovative programme presented, the level of engagement with the panel and in particular the applied nature of the programme.

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

**B.A. (Hons) Public Relations**

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|---|---|
| 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 | |

**Note:**

- Conditions and recommendations described for the parent award apply equally for the higher certificate as appropriate.

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 |

**Condition(s):**

- None.

**Recommendation(s):**

- None.

## 4.3  Institute Strategy Alignment

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|---|---|
| *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 |

**Condition(s):**

- None.

**Recommendation(s):**

- None.

## 4.5  Access, Transfer and Progression

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|---|---|
| *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 |

**Condition(s):**

- None.

**Recommendation(s):**

- None.

## 4.6  Standards and Outcomes

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|---|---|
| *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)?<br><br>For parent award?  Yes<br>For exit award (if applicable)?  n/a |
| *Overall Finding:* | |

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:

The Institute should review the approach to writing programme learning outcomes.  These should be tailored specifically to the programme and mapped to the appropriate award standard.

**This recommendation is acknowledged and will be discussed with the Office of Registrar at DkIT.**

## 4.7  Programme Structure

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|---|---|
| *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 |

### Condition(s):

- None.

### Recommendations:

1. Review the contact hours for the programme with a view to reducing formal contact hours, reflecting increased independent learning.

   **This has now been done.**

2. Replace the *Contemporary Irish Politics* module with a broader module on Politics, Lobbying and Public Affairs.

**The programme development team acknowledges this and will revisit the Module (pre-approved) at Programmatic Review**

3. Ensure that ethics is adequately addressed in the programme and integrated across the modules.

**The team supports this recommendation and will ensure Ethics as a theme will be prevalent across the programme.**

## 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 |

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.

**Recommendations:**

Review the programme assessment strategy as follows:

 a) Review the approach to assessing group projects to ensure individual as well as group/peer assessment. The is particularly important for large projects, e,g. *MarComm Agency Lab.*

  **<span style="color:red">The programme team endorses the above and is developing appropriate assessment initiatives. In this regard, the comprehensive work of the Centre of Teaching and Learning at DkIT (CELT) will be utilised.</span>**

 b) Review the balance between continuous assessment and final exams.

  **<span style="color:red">This has now been completed</span>**

 c) Review the assessment workload to ensure there is not assessment overload and consider further opportunities for integrated assessments.

  **<span style="color:red">The programme team has examined the above and is developing appropriate joint assessment initiatives accordingly.</span>**

## 4.10 Resource Requirements

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| *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

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| *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.

**Recommendations:**

- Revise module learning outcomes and ensure they have measurable active verbs, avoiding non-measureable verbs such as 'understand', 'appreciate', etc.   Ensure that all outcomes are reflective of level 8 standard.

   **This has now been completed**

- In the case of modules with *MarComm* in the title, use the full title: *Marketing Communications*.

   **This has now been completed**

- Review the title of *PR Specialisms* to better reflect the content of the module, e.g. *PR Strategy and Context.*

   **This has now been completed**

## 4.13 Assessment Strategies

| *Validation Criterion:* | Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in the proposed programme? |
|---|---|
| *Overall Finding:* | Yes |

**Condition(s):**

- None.

**Recommendation(s):**

- None

## 4.14 Other Findings

**Condition(s)**

- None.

**Recommendations:**

- Given the nature of the programme, ensure that platforms used to promote the programme reflect current technology (e.g., mobile responsive website).

  <span style="color:red">**The programme development endorses this recommendation and will make every effort to ensure contemporary communication platforms are fully exploited.**</span>

- Panel encourage formal links with professional bodies, and professional body accreditation/recognition. Also encourage further use of guest lecturers on the programme.

  <span style="color:red">**The programme development endorses this recommendation and will further develop linkages with professional bodies (for example PRII, MII). Guest lecturers will be an integral part of programme deliverance.**</span>

**Validation Panel Report Approved By:**

**Signed:**

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Billy Bennett, Chairperson.

**Date:**            26 July 2016