

Response to Report of Programme Validation Panel

Date: Thursday 5th May 2016

Validation Type:	Differential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach delivery of DkIT programme at Cork College of Commerce
Named Award:	Bachelor of Arts
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Studies
Exit Award(s):	Not applicable
Award Type:	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	7
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	180
First Intake:	September 2016

Panel Members

Mr Michael Hannon	Chair	Registrar, Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)
Ms. Fiona Healy	External Discipline Expert	Co-ordinator, Meath County Childcare Committee
Dr. Máire MhicMhathúna	External Discipline Expert	Assistant Head of School, Dublin Institute of Technology, (DIT)
Dr. Patricia Moriarty	Secretary	Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

Programme Development Team

Dr. Edel Healy	Head of School of Health & Science	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Dr Mr. Myles Hackett	Head of Dept. of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Studies	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Dr. Geraldine O'Connor	Head of Section Part time courses/Lecturer	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Ms. Mary McSkeane	Programme Director Early Childhood Studies /Lecturer	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Ms. Ann Corcoran	Head of Adult Education	Cork College of Commerce

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 deliver the following programme:

- *Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Studies*

This is a differential programme validation. A differential validation can be used in instances where a change(s) to a programme may be such as to allow the findings of the original validation process to be reused. The amendment in this instance is the introduction of outreach delivery to Cork College of Commerce.

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

Approval granted, highly commended the work carried out by the development team.

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

Bachelor of Arts in 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	
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>	Currently huge demand for this programme, 200 students currently on site interested in undertaking the programme so its provision is addressing an immediate need.

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 engagement (local and international) embedded in the proposed programme as appropriate?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes. DkIT as part of its strategic compact with HEA, have committed to significantly increase part-time provision. This differential validation is an important element of that strategic plan.

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, advanced entry assumed for this programme is appropriate.

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Include Exit Award availability for an additional Level 6 (120 ECTS) qualification. Should be included as an additional marketing ploy.
- **School Response**
The School will consider this. It is unlikely however that the sector will require such an award at Level 6 as only Level 7 and higher qualifications qualify for higher capitation payments from the Department.

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for
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	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, pleased to see that there is planned progression to a level 8 in the future.

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>	Need to identify access to facilities.

Condition(s)

- DkIT should address the period of notice required of any termination of lease arrangements with Cork College of Commerce for rooms and the use of facilities. A period of 12 months' notice should be agreed.
- **School Response:**
Cork College of Commerce agrees that in the event of rooms not being available in the college, a 12 month notice to learners and DKIT shall apply. This shall be included in the MOU which shall be signed between DkIT and Cork College of Commerce.

Recommendation(s):

- It would benefit learners to have a DkIT identity on campus at Cork College of Commerce so some appropriate signage should be considered.
- **School Response:**
Cork College of Commerce will install DkIT signage in the building where the BA in AECS is delivered.

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

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 programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes, WBL structure of the programme design is commended by the panel.

Condition(s)

- None.

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, blended learning mode of delivery being offered which is very appropriate for part time learners.

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)?
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<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Concerns about the knowledge of the difference between level 6 and level 7 programmes.
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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 (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):

- None.

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 with the exception of the Library.

Condition(s)

- The panel recommend adequate stocking of the Cork College of Commerce Library with books appropriate to Level 7 and higher.
- **School Response:**
Cork College of Commerce has committed to purchase additional early childhood academic text books, recommended by the DkIT and Cork based DkIT Early Childhood Lecturers.

Recommendation(s):

- Recommend adequate administration and IT supports at School level within DkIT to support the additional workload of this initiative.
- **School Response:**
DkIT will ensure that adequate administration and IT supports are available to support the additional workload.

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: <https://www.dkit.ie/registrar/policies/academic-quality-manual> and include approved procedures for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of Programmes.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.13 Module-Level Findings**Condition(s)**

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.14 Assessment Strategies

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

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation:

- None.

4.15 Other Findings

Links between DkIT and Cork College of Commerce faculty and management are highly commended by the panel.

Condition(s)

Recommendation(s):

- Recommend the bringing together of student cohorts in Cork and Dundalk from time to time.
- **School Response:**
DkIT and Cork College of Commerce will examine ways in which this may be achieved. Communication between the student cohort using online technologies will be encouraged.

Signed on behalf of the School:

Signed:



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

Date: 7th June 2016

Validation Panel Report & School Response Approved By:

Signed:



Mr Michael Hannon, Chairperson.

Date: 28th June, 2016