



## Response to the Report of the Programme Validation Panel

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

<b>Validation Type:</b>	New
<b>Named Award:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Programme Title(s):</b>	Certificate in Psychosocial Interventions
<b>Exit Award(s):</b>	Not applicable
<b>Award Type:</b>	Certificate
<b>Award Class:</b>	Special-Purpose
<b>NFQ Level:</b>	8
<b>ECTS / ACCS Credits:</b>	20
<b>First Intake:</b>	To be decided

### Panel Members

Mr David Denieffe	Chair	Registrar, Carlow Institute of Technology
Dr Aine McHugh	External Academic	Lecturer, School Of Nursing ,Midwifery and Health Systems, University College
Mr Jimmy Lynch	Practitioner/Industry Representative	Nurse Tutor, Regional Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Education, HSE-Dublin North East Region
Dr Brendan Ryder	Secretary	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

### Programme Development Team

Dr Edel Healy, Head of School of Health and Science	Dr Myles Hackett, Head of Dept. Nursing, Midwifery and Health Studies, DkIT	Dr Geraldine O'Connor, Head of Section (Part Time Programmes), DkIT
Mr Mark Cunningham, Lecturer in Nursing, DkIT	Ms Joan Donegan, CNME	Mr John McDonald, Lecturer in Nursing, DkIT
Ms. Catherine O'Rorke, HSE	Dr Malachy Fealy, HSE	

## 1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council 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):

- *Certificate in Psychosocial Interventions*

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

Psychosocial Interventions is a term used to describe collaborative work with service users which integrate a range of medical, social and psychological evidence based interventions (Sin & Scully 2008). Psychosocial interventions can hold the key to more effective communication and engagement with clients and families. This can result in improved clinical, social and personal outcomes for service users and their families.

This programme is for registered psychiatric nurses and aims to equip them with the knowledge and skills to apply psychosocial interventions safely and appropriately with service users and their families/carers within his/her scope of nursing practice. It is envisaged that this will contribute to building confident recovery orientated practitioners.

This programme was developed in partnership with our colleagues in mental health services in the HSE Dublin North East region and in the Regional Centre for Nurse and Midwife Education, HSE Dublin North East. A groundwork survey was undertaken by the programme development team in spring 2015 to ascertain the demand for the development of a psychosocial interventions programme at DkIT. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to a selection of nurses and managers working within the partnership hospitals and services affiliated with DkIT.

### Summary of Findings

- Overall 32 questionnaires were completed (please refer to Appendix 1 for the full survey results).
- One hundred percent of respondents would be interested in learning more about psychosocial interventions, with 57% reporting they had not previously undertaken study on this topic.
- Seventy seven percent of respondents would prefer if the programme was delivered using a blended learning approach.
- Fifty seven percent of respondents would prefer if the programme was delivered at level 8, with forty seven percent requesting a level 9 programme.

- Respondents identified interest in studying all aspects of psychosocial interventions.

Currently in Ireland, mental health services are facing much change with associated unprecedented challenges. The drivers of this exceptional change are Ireland's national mental health policy document *A Vision for Change: Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy* (Department of Health & Children, 2006) and the reforming Mental Health Legislation (Government of Ireland, 2001). The core focus of these changes is the reorientation of the delivery of mental health services to community based services. It is accepted that there is the need for a new paradigm that is a partnership model with service providers working in collaboration with service users and their families. This partnership will facilitate and support service user's recovery and reintegration through the provision of accessible, comprehensive and community-based mental health services. The recovery ethos and associated principles, underpin the recommendations in *A Vision for Change* (2006). More recently *A Vision for Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing* (2012) concurs with mental health services adopting a recovery approach. This report advocates that the principles and values of the recovery approach should inform psychiatric/mental health nursing practice in all areas of care and service delivery.

Increasingly there is recognition that the education and development of the workforce is critical to the type of care that is envisioned. Having a quality, well-educated and motivated workforce is crucial for the successful implementation of the directives outlined in *A Vision for Change: Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy* (Department of Health & Children, 2006) and *The Quality Framework for Mental Health Services in Ireland* (MHC 2007). In particular Higgins et al. (2010) stated that this education should focus beyond the development of knowledge to the development of clinical competency in a number of key areas including psychotherapeutic interventions and recovery and social inclusion. Specifically Higgins et al. (2010) argue that contemporary mental health practitioners require specific knowledge and expertise in therapeutic approaches that are less dependent on the traditional model of care and more focused on recovery oriented practices.

Practitioners working with people who experience mental health problems not only require core values, attitudes, knowledge, and competencies, but they also need the ability to apply these in practice, across a range of clinical contexts. Similarly, *A Vision for Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing* (2012) recommends that in future psychiatric nurses will provide a more expanded scope of practice to increase clinical capacity and will continue to develop additional skills and competencies to provide a greater range of evidence based interventions and professional services for service users and their carers/family members. Therefore, if this modernisation agenda and the vision for quality mental health services articulated in all of the recent publications are to be realised; then the provision of quality education and training that is responsive, relevant, accessible, and evidence based is essential. Education in Psychosocial Interventions (PSI) is a programme which can prepare and equip mental health practitioners to deliver this profound change in how mental health services are delivered.

PSI is a term used to describe collaborative work with service users which integrate a range of medical, social, and psychological evidence-based interventions delivered within the recovery perspective (Sin & Scully 2008). Rossaler and Haker (2003) identify that interventions qualify as psychosocial if 'they are primarily directed towards a functional improvement: expanding the individual's opportunities to live in the community and to participate in societal life'. According to NICE (2002) PSI are integral to the design and delivery of recovery oriented evidence based mental health services for people with psychosis. Additionally, there is increasing evidence that PSI offer more positive outcomes for people with bipolar disorder

than medication and routine clinical care alone (Miklowitz, 2006; Scott & Gutierrez, 2004; Huxley, Parikh & Baldessarini, 2000). These interventions such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), solution focused brief therapy, family work, early intervention, relapse prevention and motivational interventions, delivered to individuals or through groups, have come to prominence through their effectiveness with people who experience serious and complex mental health problems and their carers. When tested in randomised controlled trials, evidence-based psychosocial interventions were found to reduce levels of affect, distress, hospital admission and relapse, and improve family functioning and quality of life (Pitschel-Walz et al 2001, Pilling et al 2002, Velleman et al 2006). Consequently these are considered core first line treatments of serious mental health problems (Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (SIGN) 1998, 2005; National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) 2002, 2009).

Psychiatric/mental health nurses are well placed to provide PSI because of the close involvement they have with the delivery of care. This is further highlighted by the critical relationship between service user outcomes and psychiatric/mental health nursing practice previously established in the literature (Rydon 2005). So it would seem that mental health practitioners and in particular psychiatric/mental health nurses who routinely incorporate psychosocial interventions into their interactions with service users will significantly influence the achievement of a quality, holistic, seamless, socially inclusive, recovery and empowering oriented mental health service, which fosters active partnerships between service users and professionals. This programme of education is designed to enable and support mental health nurses to become skilled and confident to incorporate psychosocial interventions into their practice and thereby lead out on the modernisation agenda of mental health services.

See programme submission for more detailed information.

### 3 General Findings of the Validation Panel

The programme development 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 it is a timely and appropriate response to regional needs in the mental health area. The panel acknowledge the blended learning approach proposed for the delivery of the programme, and note the structured student supports being provided, which will provide flexibility for prospective students. The panel further commend the collaborative approach taken to the development of the programme. The engagement, commitment and positivity 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 Psychosocial Interventions

Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner	
Accredited subject to conditions and/or recommendations	<b>X</b>
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. The programme is meeting a clear regional demand in the mental health area..

#### 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

### 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 conditions and/or recommendations

### Condition(s)

- None.

### Recommendation(s):

- The panel recommend that the entry requirements be reviewed periodically. They should be broadened after each iteration of the programme thus expanding the teams capability.

### School Response

- The entry requirements for the programme will be reviewed periodically. The curriculum development team are particularly mindful that the programme would be of benefit to other health care practitioners.

## 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 (see entry requirements in Section 4.4 in terms of Access)

**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

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
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	the stated proposed programme outcomes in terms of employment skills and career opportunities be met by this programme?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

**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

**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 (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

**Condition(s)**

- None.

**Recommendation(s):**

- None.

**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)

- Review the module Application of Psychosocial Interventions in Practice to ensure that it clear to the learners that the supervision is related to programme specific learning and assessment and not to their wider clinical practice.

### School Response

- In section 10.2 it is clearly stated that the aim of clinical supervision is to provide guidance, supervision and feedback to the learner and to support them in achieving the programme learning outcomes.

### Recommendation(s):

- The panel recognises the excellence available in the current supervision arrangements. However the programme development team should broaden the supervisory team to include capabilities at NFQ Level 9 in the psychosocial domain with appropriate high-level experience (Psychotherapy or Psychology).
- The programme development team should consider making Module 1 (Approaches to Psychosocial Interventions) a corequisite of Module 2 (Application of Psychosocial Interventions in Practice).

### School Response

- It is envisaged that additional clinical supervisors will be added to the programme team over the coming years. It is evident from our survey that a number of staff in the region had completed or are in the process of completing Level 9 programmes in Psychosocial Interventions. In addition, there is a Clinical Supervision in Nursing and Midwifery Project underway in the region which will add to the pool of staff with the knowledge and skills to fulfil the role of clinical supervisor.
- The Approaches to Psychosocial Interventions module has been listed as a co-requisite module of the Applications of Psychosocial Interventions in Practice module. Similarly the Applications of Psychosocial Interventions in Practice module has been listed as a co-requisite module of the Approaches to Psychosocial Interventions module.

## 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:**

- The assessment strategy in module 1 should be reconsidered. The panel were of the view that both elements should be passed.
- **The module descriptor has been amended to state that each assessment element must be passed independently in order to pass the module.**

**4.15 Other Findings****Condition(s)**

- The Institute should ensure that the learning environment in the clinical service is adequate to ensure that the learning outcomes of the programme can be achieved by the student.

**School Response**

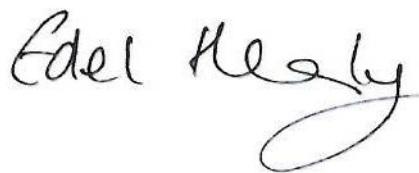
- **Students who wish to undertake this programme will be selected by the relevant Directors of Nursing. The Directors of Nursing will be made aware of the Programme and Module Learning Outcomes in advance of student selection. This will ensure that students who undertake the programme will have the necessary clinical practice experiences to complete the programme. In addition, students will also have an opportunity to highlight any concerns they have in relation to their clinical experiences during the Clinical Supervision sessions which will be facilitated by staff from the practice area and Institute.**

**Recommendation(s):**

- The programme development team should review the programme references to ensure that they encompass the broader psychosocial domain.

**School Response**

- **The reference lists for both modules have been reviewed. Please note changes on module descriptors.**

**Signed on behalf of the School:****Signed:**


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

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016

**Validation Panel Response Approved By:**

**Signed:**

  
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Mr David Denieffe, Chairperson.

28/6/2016

**Date:**