



School Response to the Programme Validation Panel Report

Panel Visit: Tuesday 10th May 2016

Named Award:	Certificates
Programme Title(s):	Programming Web Development Database Development Universal Design OO Development Computer Hardware Networking Systems Administration Computer Services Management
Exit Award(s):	N/a
Award Type:	Special Purpose
Award Class:	Minor
NFQ Level:	7 and 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	10-30
First Intake:	September 2016

Panel Members

Dr. Michael Mulvey	Chair	Registrar, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
Mr. Thomas Dowling	External Academic	Head of School, Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LyIT)
Dr. Padraig Kirwan	External Academic	Head of Department, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)
Dr. Breda Brennan	Secretary to Panel	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

Programme Development Team

Dr. Gerard Bob McKiernan	Dr. Ronan Lynch	Mr. Stephen Larkin
Dr. Christian Horn	Dr. Phillip McGuinness	Mr. Peter Gosling
Dr. Brendan Ryder	Ms. Amanda Clancy	Mr. Martin McCourt
	Dr. David O'Keeffe	Mr. Niall McGuinness

	Mr. Enda Finn	Dr. John Loane
	Dr. Peadar Grant	Mrs. Elizabeth Rooney
	Ms. Jackie Jolliffe	Ms. Margaret Ryan
	Mr. Frank Keenan	Ms. Ciara O'Shea (Disability Officer)

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 Informatics and Creative Arts at Dundalk Institute of Technology to design the following programmes:

Certificate in Programming
Certificate in Web Development
Certificate in Database Development
Certificate in Universal Design
Certificate in OO Development
Certificate in Computer Hardware
Certificate in Networking
Certificate in Systems Administration
Certificate in Computer Services Management

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 Validation document and individual programme submissions for more detailed information.

3 General Findings of the Validation Panel

The panel congratulate the programme development team on their initiative in developing these programmes which are derived from existing successful undergraduate Computing provision.

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

All above programmes

Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review,	
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- *For each of the programmes we have developed a text that will be used as part of the advertisement material for the part-time programmes. This text has been included in the programme report documents.*

4.8 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):

- A full-time member of academic staff should be appointed as the Programme Director for all part-time programmes.

Response:

- *Initially the Programme Director for the parent programme will be responsible for the part-time programmes. With the phased introduction of additional part-time programmes the departments will ensure that the recommendation is implemented.*

4.9 Assessment Strategies

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI/HETAC Assessment and Guidelines, 2009)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	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.

Recommendation(s):

- A summary of Section 8 from the Programme Validation document should be included, and tailored where appropriate, in each programme document.

Response:

- *This has been addressed in each of the programme documents.*

4.10 Resource Requirements

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

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The student support strategy should be articulated in the Programme Validation document, including technical support, learning support and other facilities.

Response:

- *This is currently being dealt with under the leadership of the Life Long Learning Centre and is documented in the Part-Time Prospectus. With an increasing number of part-time students in Computing we will have to develop a support strategy specific to Computing which will be determined as we phase in the new part-time programme offerings.*
- *The departments will revisit this recommendation during programmatic review in two years time.*

4.11 Quality Assurance

	For exit award (if applicable)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	The level is appropriate for most of the programmes

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):

- The award level may not be consistent with the programme learning outcomes and/or the stage at which the modules are delivered for the following programmes:
Certificate in Programming
Certificate in Computer Hardware
Certificate in OO Development
Certificate in Universal Design

This issue should be considered by the Programme Development Team in the context of Institute policy.

Response:

- *The Institute is currently in the process of revisiting it's policy regarding the relationship between programme and module levels. It is anticipated that this will be finalised in time for the coming programmatic review. The department has developed in parallel a Higher Certificate in Computing & Business using year 1 computing modules. Once the new policies are enacted, we will revisit the Certificate in Programming and the Certificate in Computer Hardware and redesignate these as Level 6 Programmes.*

4.7 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

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- In each programme document there should be a 1-2 page narrative clearly describing the rationale for and objectives of the programme and how these are met with this particular combination of modules. This should include the career opportunities and prospects for successful graduates.

Response:

4.4 Entry Requirements

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Condition(s):

- The entry requirement for each individual programme should be specified in the relevant programme document.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

Response:

- *This has been addressed in each of the programme documents.*

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

Condition(s):

- Access, transfer and progressions procedures should be specified in each programme document.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

Response:

- *This has been addressed in each of the programme documents.*

4.6 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)? For parent award?
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Recommendation(s):

- In promoting programmes, the Department should articulate the supports available to part-time students.
- In light of the large number of programmes the panel recommends that these are offered on an phased basis.

Response:

- *The Life Long Learning Centre produces the yearly Part-Time Prospectus. The prospectus gives a good overview about all the services available in DkIT for part-time students. With an increasing number of computing courses on offer, there will be a specific need for technical support and learning support that will be addressed over time.*
- *The delivery of the programmes will begin with the following programmes:*
 - *Certificate in Programming;*
 - *Certificate in Computer Hardware.;*
 - *Certificate in Universal Design.*

4.2 Award

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Is the level and type 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. This initiative responds to the Institute's goal to offer more part-time programmes.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

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:

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

<i>Validation Criterion:</i>	Is there a convincing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	The panel accepts reassurance of programme team that there will be a demand, based on their experience of full-time provision and the current demand for full-time programmes.

Condition(s):

- None.

<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.

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.12 Module-Level Findings

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.13 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(s):

- None.

4.14 Other Findings

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

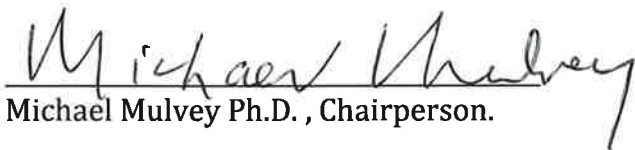
School Response Report Approved By:

Signed:

Dr Gerard McKiernan, Head of School

On behalf of the validation panel

Signed:


Michael Mulvey Ph.D. , Chairperson.

Date: