



Response to the Report of the Programme Validation Panel

Date: 29th November 2016

Named Award:	Higher Certificate
Programme Title(s):	<i>Higher Certificate in Science in Computing and Business</i>
Exit Award(s):	n/a
Award Class:	Major
Delivery Mode:	Full-time/Part-time
NFQ Level:	6
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	120
First Intake:	September 2017

Panel Members

Mr. David Denieffe	Chair	Registrar, Institute of Technology Carlow
Mr. Trevor Prendergast	External Academic	Head of Dept of Accounting and Business Computing, Athlone Institute of Technology
Dr. Brian Nolan	External Academic	Head of Dept of Computing, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Mr. Billy Doyle	Industry Expert	Manager, Dundalk Credit Union
Dr. Breda Brennan	Secretary	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Programme Development Team

Dr. Gerard (Bob) McKiernan, Head of School of Informatics and Creative Arts		
Professor Colette Henry, Head of School of Business and Humanities		
Dr. Christian Horn, Head of Dept of Computing Science and Mathematics		
Mr. Colin Cooney, Head of Dept of Business Studies		
Mr. Joe McPhail	Ms. Vicky Leahy	Dr. Sarah Tanner
Dr. Bernadette Brereton	Ms. Amanda Clancy	Ms. Lorraine Dunne
Dr. Phillip McGuinness	Dr. Peadar Grant	Mr. Mario MacBlain

1 Introduction

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

- Higher Certificate in Computing and Business

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 validation panel commends the programme development team on their engagement and congratulates them on this programme. In particular the panel welcomes the shared nature of this programme and the opportunity provided to students for a broad-based entry.

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

Higher Certificate in Science in Computing and Business

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:

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>	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

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

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

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The route for Further Education graduates into this programme should be defined.

Response:

The pathways for advance entry from further education institutions are defined within the NEFHEA. Agreements allowing the advanced entry into year 2 of the Higher Certificate in Computing & Business will be developed together with the NEFHEA partner institutions. We will do this in time for the first advanced entry due in September 2018.

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):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- Mindful that this is an access route into the Institute, progression routes from this programme into level 7 and level 8 qualifications should be developed.

Response:

There will be L7 and L8 Add-On programmes in Computing & Business. The development work on these programmes will commence as soon as the framework for the forthcoming Programmatic Review has been defined.

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? For exit award (if applicable)?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at <http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Science%20-%20QQI%20Awards%20Standards.pdf>

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- It is recommended that clarity on the mapping of learning outcomes to award standards and levels should be provided by the Registrar's Office.

Response:

Noted. We expect that clarification will be provided within the framework of the forthcoming Programmatic Review.

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):

- Clarification should be provided on the part-time operation of this programme.
- The *Computer Architecture* module should be removed from the programme as it is of limited relevance to Business Studies.
- Clarification should be provided on module prerequisites and these should be shown in the Akari programme documents where relevant.

Response:

Some of the modules are delivered in part-time mode as part of pre-existing programmes, in particular the Certificate in Programming (DK_KCEP_7) and the Certificate in Computer Hardware (DK_KCEHW_7). These programmes respect the documented dependencies between modules. We anticipate that the scheduling of the modules follows the schedule of these part-time programmes.

We have discussed the Computer Architecture module and came to the conclusion that it is adequate for the intended purpose. In particular in small companies graduates will have to deal not only with the latest equipment. We will reconsider within the framework of the next Programmatic Review which is scheduled for 2018.

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):

- None.

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):

- Clarification should be provided on re-assessment, particularly in the case of modules which are entirely continuously assessed.

Response:

We have reviewed the re-assessment sections of th modules. Where necessary the module descriptor was updated.

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):

- None.

4.11 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?
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Overall Finding:	Yes
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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):

- Ensure that modules are constructively aligned, i.e. that all module learning outcomes are assessed. Modules which need to be reviewed in this regard include:
 Chinese 1: LOs 2, 4 and 6 not assessed.
 Chinese 2: LO 1 not assessed.
 Essential Office Applications: LOs 3 and 5 not assessed.

Recommendation(s):

- Ensure that all modules comply with Institute guidelines in relation to the number of learning outcomes per module and suitable verbs for module learning outcomes. Update module bibliographies where required.
- The programme team should consider splitting the *Accounting for Business* module into two 5-credit, semester-long modules, in the spirit of modularisation, semesterisation and facilitating student workload/achievement across each semester.

Response:

We have reviewed the module descriptors and updated where necessary to correct obvious mistakes. We accept the point regarding the use of verbs. As all the modules are currently validated and actually running modules, the team decided to wait with a further update until the guidelines for the forthcoming programmatic review have been articulated.

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.

Recommendation(s):

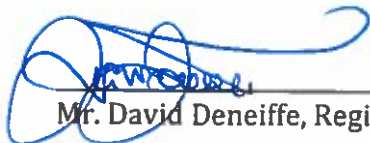
- Digital Marketing should be included in the programme.
- Mobile Web App Development should be incorporated into the programme.

Response:

Current marketing is digital marketing. And the existing module takes this into account. When taking the marketing modules, the students have already a basic knowledge of web and mobile technology, in particular HTML5, CSS and JavaScript, so the students are able to prepare on-line materials as part of their marketing module.

Response Report Approved By:

Signed:



Mr. David Deneiffe, Registrar IT Carlow.

Date:

25/1/2017