DUNDALK
INSTITUTE of TECHNOLOGY

Report of Programme Validation Panel
SCHOOL RESPONSE

Date: 29th March 2017

Named Award:	Bachelor of Science (Honours)
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food Production
Exit Award(s):	Bachelor of Science in Agri-Food Production
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	8 (Exit Award Level 7)
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	240 (Exit Award 180 ECTS)
First Intake:	September 2017

Panel Members

Dr David Denieffe	Chair	Registrar, Institute of Technology Carlow
Dr Seamus Lennon	External Academic	Head of Department, School of Science and Computing, GMIT
Dr Jesus Maria Frias Celayeta	External Academic	Environmental Sustainability and Health Institute, DIT
Mr. Justin Carton	Industry Expert	Projects Director, Manor Farm, Clonee, Co. Meath
Dr Breda Brennan	Secretary	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

Programme Development Team (in attendance)

Dr Edel Healy (Head of School)	Mr. Joe McKeever
Dr Arjan van Rossum (Head of Department)	Mr. Richard Crowley
Dr Siobhan Jordan (Programme Director)	Mr. John Kelly (Ballyhaise College)
Mr. Eamon Mullen (Programme Director)	Ms. Tara Fitzsimons (Ballyhaise College)
Dr Gerard Corkery	Dr. Valerie McCarthy

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 Health and Science at Dundalk Institute of Technology to design the following programmes:

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food Production
- Bachelor of Science in Agri-Food Production (Exit Award)

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 development team on the programme and their engagement with the validation process.

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

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food Production
- Bachelor of Science in Agri-Food Production (Exit Award)

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

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):

- The panel encourage the School to increase student intake both to first year and through advanced entry.

School Response:
The Head of School shall continue to request additional resource requirements (staff, equipment, space) at Executive Board in order to facilitate increased student intake as evidenced by demand. Furthermore this is in line with the DkIT Strategic Plan where one of the targets is to increase the level of STEM programme provision.

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

Validation Criterion:	Is the proposed programme aligned to the Institute's strategy?
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

Validation Criterion:	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression 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

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)? For parent award? For exit award (if applicable)?
Overall Finding:	Yes

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at http://www.nfq-qqi.com/index.html

Condition(s):

- The programme learning outcomes should be re-written so that they are programme specific and aligned to the graduate attributes and to the appropriate national award standards and levels.

School Response:
The Programme Learning outcomes have been amended and are provided in the updated Programme Document.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.7 Programme Structure

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.

Recommendation(s):

- As part of the current programmatic review, the programme team should consider including more Food Science and in particular Food Chemistry in the early stages of the programme. Consideration should also be given to integrating the food regulatory and safety issues with Microbiology.

- The programme team should review the class contact hours, particularly in the later stages of the programme. Students in the final year should be given more time to work independently.

School Response:

The programme team shall take account of this recommendation regarding programme content during its review of the curriculum in the upcoming programmatic review (2017/2018). The class contact hours shall also be reviewed in particular in the later stages of the Programme and in line with sectoral norms.

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 Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013)
Overall Finding:	

Assessment strategies are required in line with QQI's Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines and should form a substantial part of the documentation to be considered by the programme validation panel. http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers,%20Revised%202013.pdf

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):

- The panel encourage the programme team to consider the use of integrated assessments.

School Response:
The programme team shall take account of this recommendation regarding integrated assessment during its review of the curriculum in the upcoming programmatic review (2017/2018).

4.10 Resource Requirements

Validation Criterion:	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- None.

4.11 Quality Assurance

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.

Recommendation(s):

- The programme team should consider integrating an option for Lean Sigma belt accreditation (e.g. yellow or green) as part of the *Lean Manufacturing and Business Excellence* module, possibly linking this to the stage 3 internship.

- The module learning outcomes for the modules *Applied Food Processing* and *Agri-Food Internship* should be revised so that they are more appropriate for modules at level 8.

- Electronic tracing, and in particular the GS1 standard, should be included explicitly in the content of the *Food Chain Integrity and Logistics* module.

School Response:

1. The programme team have considered this proposal to integrate the option for Lean Sigma Belt accreditation as part of the *Lean Manufacturing and Business Excellence module*. A programme in Lean Six Sigma is currently being delivered by the Life Long Learning Centre in DkIT. Discussions shall take place with the team involved in the delivery of this programme to see if there will be the option for students on the Programme to obtain this belt accreditation if they so wish to pursue. ✓

2. The module learning outcomes for the modules *Applied Food Processing* and *Agri-Food Internship* have been revised and are attached in the updated Book of Modules. ✓

3. Electronic tracing, and in particular the GS1 standard, has been included explicitly in the content of the Food Chain Integrity and Logistics module, attached updated Book of Modules.

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):

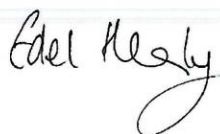- None

4.14 Other Findings

Condition(s)

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- The programme team are encouraged to consider increasing the level of Internationalisation on the programme, e.g. though links with other HEIs abroad and availing of Erasmus opportunities.

School Response:

The programme team shall investigate opportunities for increased links with other HEIs abroad.
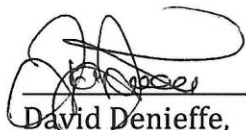
Signed:

Edel Healy

Dr. Edel Healy
Head of School of Health and Science 24th May 2017

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

David Denieffe,
Registrar, IT Carlow.

Date: <date> 29/5/2017