



**School Response to Report of Programme
Validation Panel
Date: 19th June 2017**

Named Award:	Certificate
Programme Title(s):	International Foundation Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Certificate in Foundation Studies with Intensive English</i> • <i>Certificate in Preparation for Higher Education</i> • <i>Certificate in Pre-Sessional English</i>
Exit Award(s):	n/a
Award Class:	Special Purpose Awards
NFQ Level:	6
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	60/60/30
First Intake:	September 2017

Panel Members

Dr. Brendan O'Donnell	Chair	Registrar, IT Tralee
Mr. Michael Johnson	External Discipline Expert	CEO, Microfinance Ireland
Mr. John Weir	External Academic	School of Engineering and Design, IT Sligo
Mr. Michael Kenny	External Academic	Senior Lecturer, Department of Adult and Community Education, NUI Maynooth
Dr. Breda Brennan	Secretary to Panel	Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

Programme Development Team

Professor Colette Henry, Head of School of Business and Humanities		
Dr. David Getty, Head of Department of Humanities		
Ms. Brianain Erraught, Head of Department of Hospitality Studies		
Ms. Cathriona Conor, Programme Director		
Ms. Linda Graham	Ms. Mary Kennedy	Ms. Noreen Carney
Ms. Ping Cao	Ms. Marie Bouquet	Ms. Tara Kinney
Ms. Ciara O'Connor	Dr. Edel Healy	Mr. Gerry Gallagher
Mr. Brian Woods	Mr. Colin Cooney	Dr. Peadar Grant
Mr. Pat McCormick	Mr. Andrew Wright	Ms. Angela Short
Ms. Angela Hamouda	Mr. David Coggans	

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 Business and Humanities at Dundalk Institute of Technology to design the following programmes:

Certificate in Foundation Studies with Intensive English

Certificate in Preparation for Higher Education

Certificate in Pre-Sessional English

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

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

- Certificate in Foundation Studies with Intensive English
- Certificate in Preparation for Higher Education
- Certificate in Pre-Sessional English

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):

- Provide more information on the current (and recent past) intake on the existing foundation programmes. Incorporate figures on the number of students who have participated in the QQI-FET level 5 programmes who now will be undertaking the level 6 programmes. Also provide more information as to how the demand for the new programmes over the next 2-3 years was established. Estimate the intake for each individual programme on an annualised basis.

School Response:

A new table (Table 2) has been introduced into section 8 of the revised programme document to reflect the above and to incorporate previous level 5 student numbers. A paragraph has also been inserted into this section to explain how the demand for the new programmes over the next 2 to 3 years has been established. The enrolment figures in section 6 (Table 4) have also been amended to reflect the above.

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?
<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):

- None

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 QQI and does it accommodate a variety of access and entry requirements?
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- It is strongly recommended that an internal English entry requirement is put in place for progression from foundation programmes to level 7 and level 8 programmes in DkIT which is equivalent to IELTS 5.5 or 6.0 as appropriate.
- It is recommended that all students be screened for English Language proficiency at induction. This would enable the course team to better identify which students should be put into either the Certificate in Foundation Studies with Intensive English or Certificate in Preparation for Higher Education streams.

School Response:

As in the past, prior to commencing an International Foundation Programme at DkIT, students are required to undergo an English Language Placement Test to assess their level of English proficiency. This practice will be continued in this new suite of programmes, as mentioned in the programme document (section 15), to help the team identify which programme is best

suiting to individual students' needs. The English Language team also ensures that those completing foundation programmes have acquired the appropriate level of English to enable them to pursue level 7 or 8 programmes. Again, this practice will be continued in these new programmes. An additional section (section 15.1) has been incorporated into the revised programme document in relation to English language testing.

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.nfq-qqi.com/index.html>

Condition(s):

- None.

Recommendation(s):

- List the graduate attributes for each programme in the programme document and link these to the QQI programme learning outcomes for the award standard* and to assessment. Consider more integrating of assessments.
(*Note: As it is a non-major award, not all strands or sub-strands need to be listed).

School Response:

Graduate attributes for each programme will be discussed with the programme team in September and separate ones for each programme will be identified and added to both the programme and Akari documents at that time. The team has already agreed some integrated assessments, but will explore further opportunities for more.

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):

- None.

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 Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013)
<i>Overall Finding:</i>	Yes

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):

- The number of electives presented may be ambitious. Offerings of electives must be based on a reasonable expectation of delivery. Consider offering 10 credits of electives for programmes which commence in semester 1 to facilitate integration with level 7/8 students.

School Response:

Our 'electives' strategy for this new IFP suite was determined based on feedback from agents and students; our intention was to offer students a broad choice. The particular electives were deliberately chosen as they are 'core' to other programmes in the Institute and are currently running. As it stands, only two of the programmes include electives – just one module from each of the Institute's four schools in each semester. However, based on the Panel's feedback, we have revisited the programme structure and have now removed all but one elective from Programme 3 (Certificate in Pre-Sessional English). In addition, we have amended Programme 2 (Certificate in Preparation for Higher Education) to incorporate 10 credits worth of electives in semester 1 for the January intakes. In both cases we have indicated that electives would not be running over the summer semester (i.e. June - August). We have amended both the programme and Akari documents to reflect this change.

Recommendation(s):

- Offer students the option of discipline-based streams of electives. Put in special regulations around the selection and streaming of electives.

School Response:

Feedback from students and agents, particularly from Malaysia, suggested that applicants to International Foundation Programmes wanted the opportunity to 'sample' electives from different discipline areas before deciding on their chosen path of study for their level 7 or 8 degree. For this reason, the team opted to offer free electives rather than restrict them to specific discipline areas. However, in light of the Panel's feedback, it is intended to review this approach in the context of the forthcoming Programmatic Review. In the meantime, electives will be discussed and agreed with students at the commencement of the programme, and offered subject to availability.

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?
<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):

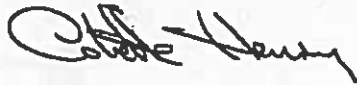
- None.

On behalf of the Programme Team, the School of Business & Humanities would like to thank the Panel Members for their valuable and constructive feedback. We are delighted that this new suite of International Foundation Programmes is recommended for validation. We look forward to offering this new programme.

I confirm that all changes (where appropriate) have been made in the programme management system (Akari Document).

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

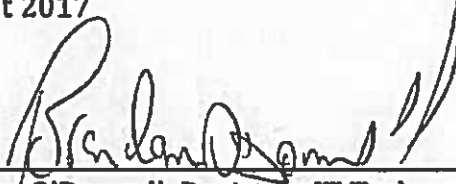


Professor Colette Henry, Head of School of Business and Humanities

Date:

28th August 2017

Signed:



Dr. Brendan O'Donnell, Registrar IT Tralee

Date:

<date>

05/09/2017