



lyit

Institiúid Teicneolaíochta
Leitir Ceanainn

Letterkenny Institute
of Technology

LETTERKENNY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PERIODIC PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Report of the External Expert Group

PART 1 **GENERAL INFORMATION**

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: School of Business

DATE OF VISITATION: 18 and 19 May

MEMBERS OF EXTERNAL EXPERT GROUP (EEG):

David Denieffe, Registrar, IT Carlow (Chair)

Roger Sherlock, Head of Department of Marketing Studies, Dublin Institute of Technology

Dr Áine Ryan, School of Languages Literatures and Culture, National University of Ireland Galway

Dr Alice Diver, Edge Hill University

Paschal McGuire, Enterprise Ireland

Joseph Gallagher Manager Aurivo / Homeland and CloudRanger

Mr Klavs Ciprikis, PhD student, DIT

Ms. Marian Duggan, Head of School of Business & Humanities, Limerick IT

Mary Avril Gillan, Head of First Year Art and Design, National College of Art and Design,

Joe Lambe, IFAC Accountants

Dr Freda Grealy Law Society of Ireland

Nevil Walsh, Programme Chair of the Creative Design Programme IT Sligo

Gary Bates, Big Fish

Michael Cooke, Coach Education and Club Development Officer in NW for Sport NI

SECRETARY TO EEG: Dr Gertie Taggart, Dr Louise Mc Bride and Dr Joanne Gallagher

INSTITUTE STAFF:

Michael Margey, Head of School of Business; Ms. Patricia Doherty, Head of Department of Business Studies, Dr. Ann Burke, Head of Department of Law and Humanities, Ms. Nollaig Crombie, Head of Department of Design and Creative Media, Paul Tracey, Paul McDevitt, Dr. Sarah Diffley, Ultan Faherty, Ms. Grainne Boland, Dr. Isobel Cunningham, Paul McClusker, Ms. Yvonne McCallion, Ms. Vicky O'Rourke, Ms. Eugenia Moran, Ms. Meadhbh Ruane, Ms. Kathleen McGettigan, Ms. Deirdre Casey, Michael Farren, James Kearns, Paul O'Sullivan, Paul McGuckian, Dr. Simon Stephenson, Dr. Deirdre McClay, Ms. Rosemary Blaney, Patrick Campbell, Joe Coll, Ms. Crona ODonoghue, Ms. Kelda Gibson, Sean Grant, Paul Marley, Ms. Sharon Maxwell, Matt McDonagh, Ms. Claire McLaughlin, Joshua McNutt, Cormac OKane, Padraic Lynch, Ms. Fiona O'Reilly, Mark Cullen, John McCloskey and Thomas McLaughlin, Ms. Florence Burke, Ms. Maryrose Bourke, Dr. Una Carthy, Ms. Caitlin Conluain, Ms. Bronagh Heverin, Ms. Siobhan Cullen, Ms. Nancy O'Donnell, Cormac Conaghan, Dr. Sharon McLaughlin, Ms. Marianne Dee, Ms. Maria Sandilands, Ms. Suzanne Kennedy, Ronan Doherty, Humphrey Murphy, Dr. Maria Faulkner, Dr. Deirdre McClay, Joanne Enright, Dr. Brian McGonagle, Ben George, Ms. Andrea Carlin, John Kearns

Note: it is Institute policy that all New Programme Validations are published on the LYIT website.

PART 2

FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL EXPERT GROUP

The External Expert Group is satisfied that the self-study and revised programmes adequately addresses the following criteria:

(1) Academic Processes

A fundamental review of the programmatic area is clearly set out in the self-study document.

The self-study demonstrates how the Institute's Quality Assurance procedures have been properly applied in the development of the self-study and in revising the programmes taking cognisance of the relevant QQI standards, and that satisfactory procedures exist for the ongoing monitoring of these programmes.

(2) Student Throughput

Enrolment and examination statistics are adequately addressed and details are presented of appropriate special initiatives in relation to admissions e.g. broadening access, mature students, facilitating gender equality.

(3) Review of Course Design

A sufficient description of the revision of each programme, highlighting any changes implemented or proposed, has been provided. In addition, the course schedules in operation at the time of the previous review together with course schedules proposed as part of the current PPE are presented.

(4) Assessment

Procedures in place for the assessment of learners are documented. The methods for assessment of learners (i) are fair and consistent and comply with standards determined by QQI, (ii) are in keeping with the National Framework of Qualifications, (iii) are effective in measuring the students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes, (iv) contribute to the total learning experience, and (v) encourage creativity and originality in demonstrating achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

(5) Employment and Further Studies of Awardees

Employment gained and further studies undertaken by awardees is appropriately detailed and analysed in comparative tabular format.

(6) National and International Transfers

Evidence of commitment to co-operation with inter-institutional linkages, both national and transnational, is set out, including the structures in place to facilitate these arrangements.

(7) Review of Laboratory, Workshop, Studio and Other Facilities

The necessary facilities available in terms of accommodation, equipment, and library and information technology resources are satisfactory to support the revised programmes.

(8) Deployment and Development of Academic Staff

The staffing levels are appropriate and the levels of qualifications and competence of the staff is sufficient to deliver the programme.

(9) Links with Industry, Business and the Wider Community

Evidence is presented that the School/Department actively engages with the world of work and the wider community in order to maintain a high degree of relevance in its programmes and in its research activity. The procedures and processes used to establish and maintain these links are described.

In particular the means by which School/Department elicits from industry, educational interests, public bodies and professional bodies how well the programmes meet their demands is included. The School/Department also examines its programmes against the relevant offerings of other higher education institutions.

(10) Research

The self-study documents postgraduate research carried out by learners in the previous five years together with School/Departments plans for the next five years.

Research conducted by staff since the previous review is also detailed together with plans for the next five years.

(11) Course Delivery Methodologies

Evidence is provided of innovation in relation to teaching, such as the use of new types of educational technology, teaching strategies and methodologies.

(12) Adult and Continuing Education

Information is presented in relation to adult education provision which has evolved in the Institute over the previous five years in response to the perceived needs of industry and the local community.

(13) Academic Regulations

The self-study sets out the form of regulations made by the Governing Body on the advice of the Academic Council.

(14) Development Plan

A coherent plan for the School/Department for the succeeding five years is included.

(15) Programme Documents

Revised programmes are fully justified in terms of their approach to teaching and learning, alignment with the relevant QQI standard, programme content, and assessment methods.

QQI Standards: QQI determines, for each named award, the specific standard of knowledge, skill and competence that must be acquired by the learner before that award can be made. The learning outcomes of the programme are stated in such a way that the compliance with the appropriate QQI standard is demonstrated.

Revised Programme Titles and Award Titles: Any revised award titles are consistent with the named awards determined by QQI. The programme titles are clear, accurate, succinct, and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.

Access, Transfer and Progression: Revised programmes incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by QQI and are consistent with the policy of QQI, awards accommodate a variety of access and entry requirements.

General Recommendations and Conditions:

The External Expert Group (EEG) commend:

1. The comprehensive documentation provided to the panel. It clearly demonstrated critical reflection highlighted innovative practices.
2. The agility of the School, Department and Programme Teams in reacting to the needs of their region and their learners.
3. The engagement with the EEG by the School, Department and Programme Teams in an open constructive manner.

The External Expert Group in acknowledging the initiatives clearly evident across the School and Departments, work undertaken and ongoing, the improvement plan and the alignment of School and Institute strategy recommend:

1. The development of a formal employer engagement framework building from current successes.

The School will follow through with the development of an employer engagement framework/model, which will be informed by the Institutes' new Innovation and Engagement strategy (which is currently in a draft format)

2. Exploit the Alumni by bringing them back to talk to first and second year students; possibly set-up a virtual forum for alumni;

The School will formally integrate/embed the profiling and engagement of alumni across all programmes in terms of supporting our key two transitions, namely from second level to third level and from third level to employment. The Institute is currently recalibrating its approach to schools engagement and alumni development and the School will take cognisance of the new developments emerging at Institute level.

3. The ongoing benchmarking of the School, Department and programme provision and practices against similar nationally and internationally.

The school will continue to look for opportunities and data to support appropriate benchmarking as a key aspect of quality improvement. The issue of availability of benchmarking data has been raised at a national level with the HEA, in terms of data definition, data collection and availability of reports.

4. Further focus on enhancing completion and throughput rates of students with particular emphasis on later years of study.

This aspect has been recognised as a key priority for our incoming School improvement plan for 2017 and beyond, and was also a consideration for programme re-design across the departments in the current PPE. The School will intensify efforts to find initiatives and tools, which prove successful in improving retention.

5. Consideration of development and provision of new apprenticeships.

The School is actively considering the opportunities for new apprenticeships and also traineeships via ETB's. We are currently progressing a stage two-apprenticeship programme in accounting at masters level through the department of business studies

6. Ongoing marketing to recruit international students particularly from the North American market.

The School has a close working relationship with the development office where the Institute is actively targeting both Asia and North America. The Institute's strategy has proved successful in Asia, where over half of fee-paying students reside in the School of Business. The School plans to leverage recent engagements around the

golden bridge diaspora initiative in Boston and more recently the Victory Scholars Sports for Life scholarship programme between Ireland and North America.

7. Cross-pollination across departments within School and across Schools e.g. Design with Computing;

The School is actively progressing the development of the digital and technology agenda across all programme and research areas. Through the DICE concept (Design, Innovation, Creativity and Enterprise) the School will look to embrace the scope for future collaboration on a trans/inter disciplinary basis to actualise any and all growth opportunities between Schools and departments.

At Institute level, a new academic programme plan will be developed for the incoming academic year where prospective synergistic opportunities aligned with the Institute's Strategy plan can emerge, the School will take cognisance of any future opportunities.

The School seeks to engage opportunities across the academic Schools within LYIT, the School of Business in collaboration with the School of Science developed a collaborative programme in food science and business management during the last PPE, but unfortunately recruitment was unsuccessful.

8. FE-HE links very good with North West Regional College Derry but to extend it to FE colleges in Donegal and throughout Ireland;

The School intends to increase engagement with respective FE colleges, in particular Donegal ETB, where as a consequence of our MOU between Donegal ETB and LYIT, the mapping of progression routes for all Donegal ETB FE programmes is a priority for the incoming academic year.

9. Capturing of Civic and Social not doing enough to capture all that you are doing in this area; or capturing what you are doing e.g. could be captured in staff CVs;

Similar to no.2, the School will map out our respective civic and community engagement across programmes and staff, on foot of an agreed strategy at Institute level. The Institute's Innovation and Engagement Strategy is currently in a draft format.

List of Programmes Department of Business Studies:

Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting (Ab Initio)
Bachelor of Business (Hons) (Ab Initio)
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Marketing
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Administration and IT
Master of Arts/ Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting
Master of Science/ PGDip in Marketing Practice
Master of Science/ PGDip in Management Practice
Cert in Computerised Accounts, Payroll and IT Applications
Certificate in Innovation & Creativity at Work
Certificate in Business in Managing & Mentoring People
Higher Certificate in Business (Supervisory Management)
Certificate in Digital Marketing and Business Skills
Certificate in Online Marketing
Certificate in Social Media Applications
Cert in Developing and Delivering WBL Programmes
Bachelor of Business in Retail Management Practice
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Retail Management Practice

Bachelor of Business (Hons) (Ab Initio) Lifelong Learning
Certificate in Mainframe Technologies
HDIP in Mainframe BIS & Infrastructure

For the attention of the Academic Council:

The External Expert Group advises the Academic Council that the Institute and the School/Department should take cognisance of following recommendations:

Full-time and Part-time

- Monitor closely new common entry programmes and evaluate impact on pathways;
- Continue to focus on programme outcomes in years 2 and 3 especially in light of common entry;

The Department of Business Studies will closely monitor the new BBus Common Entry programme and the pathways students take. The Department will continue to closely monitor the performance of all 2nd and 3rd year students and are hopeful that the new programme will result in an improvement in performance and progression rates.

- Continue to explore the work placement options on the undergraduate programmes;

The Department will continue to explore opportunities for work placement opportunities whether they take the form of a) work placements, for credits, embedded within programmes, b) paid project / part-time work during the academic semester, or c) paid internships outside of the academic year.

- Within accounting domain evaluate IT skills;

As part of the PPE process the Accounting programme was revised and now includes the following IT related modules:

- *Learning to Learn & ICT – 5 ECTS*
- *Business Information Systems – 10 ECTS*
- *Computerised Accounts – 5 ECTS*
- *Digital Business – 10 ECTS*

Students who progress on to the MA in Accounting will also complete the IT Applications for the Professional Accountant module which has received very positive feedback from accounting practices.

- Acknowledge the range and quality of exemptions in regards to accountancy bodies;

The department of business studies will actively promote and explicitly acknowledge the range of exemptions available from the accounting programmes. The Institute is expected to launch its new website in the next academic year, where attention have been given to explicitly increasing the profile of professional accreditation's and work placements.

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
 - excellent range of innovative assessments strategies being used;
 - Very well codified group assessment methodologies and feedback mechanisms;

The School and Institute have developed a series of best practice special interest groups where our aim is maintain the momentum of innovation and sharing of best practice.

- Ensure 1st years and 2nd years get access to industry or graduates;

Department of Business Studies lecturers have always welcomed guest speakers and external experts to meet with our students (see Table 9.3, Part A). The Department will endeavour to ensure that all students (including 1st and 2nd year students) continue to have this opportunity.

- Develop and leverage alumni;

As per Point 2 above - General Recommendations.

- Maintain supports for returning students in LLL programmes;

The Department of Business Studies is cognisant of the additional supports required by those returning to education. All students returning to study on our BBus LLL and BBus Retail Management Programmes experience an enabling semester where a structured approach to induction is embedded in the Learner Development & Study Skills module. All students are introduced to the Learning Support Unit (The Curve) at the start of their programme. The Curve work with the learners to ascertain their individual Learning Style and any issues with literacy and numerical skills are identified. Supports are then put in place for individual students as required.

Postgraduate Programmes

- Very good innovations evident at postgrad such as work-based learning work placement, projects and dissertations these fit well with the research strategy;

The School and Institute have developed a series of best practice special interest groups where our aim is maintain the momentum of innovation and sharing of best practice. Increasing alignment between research and postgraduate programmes is a key aspect of the new research plan.

- Continue to work with all stakeholders to maintain demand for programmes;

The Department of Business Studies will continue to work closely with all stakeholders particularly prospective students, employers and the Professional Bodies (including the Marketing Institute, ACA, ACCA, CIMA and CPA) to ensure continued demand for our PG programmes. Similarly, we will continue to work closely with our partner UU to ensure continued demand for our joint Masters programme, and, work closely with our alumni and industry partners to ensure the continued success of our Executive MBus in Innovation and Leadership.

- Focus more on SMEs in the accounting Masters FRS102;

FRS102 is still evolving for SMEs. Section 1A has yet to be implemented as has the new FRS105. Both of these will have an impact on SMEs. The programme team will review all implications on the recommendation of the professional bodies (as syllabi are closely aligned with professional body requirements). However the programme team will continue to highlight to students where there is a difference between FRS102 and the IAS.

SPAs

- Close management of the delivery of this portfolio is needed so that it is responsive to industry needs and requests;

The Department of Business Studies will continue to work closely with the Development Office, the North West Regional Skills Forum Manager, Skillnets, Professional Bodies and existing industry partners to ensure we remain responsive to both current and future needs.

Masters by Research

- Activate the research plan to build on the success to date and develop an outward facing identity for research;
- Continue to explore all funding opportunities;
- Keep the focus on the thematic areas identified to build capacity and output;
- Leverage academic networks and industry networks to further the research agenda;
- Maintain focus on quality outputs (e.g. ABS research metrics);
- Continue to support staff in pursuing research doctoral studies;
- Explore opportunities for postdoc activity/research release by utilising the School's income streams such as LLL and executive programmes;

The primary objective for the School and departments for 2017/18 is the implementation of the research plan, which includes the following component actions:

- *External Branded research identity based in Colab Building*
- *Work in collaboration with Development Office to expand funding*
- *Promote alignment under the agreed thematic groupings*
- *Develop a network of professional and industry capital to sustain research development*
- *Benchmark performance against agreed metrics in institute research strategy.*
- *Maintain supportive and flexible environment for staff undertaking research*

The Head of School will promote the issue of seed funding for postdoc activity/research release by utilising the School's income streams such as LLL and executive programmes at executive board level.

The External Expert Group advises the Academic Council that approval of the programmes subject to general conditions of approval together with the following additional conditions:

None

List of Programmes Department of Design and Creative Media:

Higher Certificate in Photography
Bachelor of Arts in Fashion with Promotion
Bachelor of Arts in Animation
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Animation
Certificate in Fashion Fundamentals
Certificate in Digital Photography
Certificate in Basic Web Design and Development
Higher Diploma in Arts in 3D Modelling and Animation

The External Expert Group advises the Academic Council that the Institute and the School/Department should take cognisance of following recommendations:

- Acknowledge the work that is being done by the Department staff
- Acknowledge the challenges that are being faced by the Department

The Panel of Assessors advises the Academic Council that the Institute and the School/Department should take cognisance of following recommendations:

- With regards to programme choice - ensure that the pathways of progression on to each programme is made explicit to the student, and that there is a clear process in place with which to manage the process. Ensure clarity and transparency of process.

The programme teams are satisfied that learners on this programme will be informed clearly of their options and will be given every opportunity to pursue their chosen field of study. Additionally, the Institute will be launching its new website in the next academic year, where programme choice, options and follow-ons programmes are much better identified than previously.

- Recommend that learning spaces are retained.

Staff in the department of design and creative media welcome this recommendation. Our proposed growth in programme diversity relies heavily on all current resources.

- Promote cross year discipline activities – student societies, joint trips and joint lectures and guest lecturers

Staff in the department of design and creative media have already met post following the PPE visit to discuss such opportunities for next academic year. To date, we have engaged with local, national and international practitioners. With the increase in common modules, joint trips and lecturers will certainly be more achievable.

- UX, UI interface with the computing Department encourage cross-pollination between Departments.

The department is always open to collaboration with other departments and schools, and will consider opportunities in light of revised and new programmes, where they offer additionality to our programme offering.

The External Expert Group advises the Academic Council that approval of the programmes subject to general conditions of approval together with the following additional conditions:

None

List of Programmes Department of Law and Humanities:

Higher Certificate in Sports Studies

BA in Law with Criminal Justice OR French/German/Irish/Spanish
 BA (Hons) in Law with Criminal Justice OR French/German/Irish/Spanish
 LLB (Hons) (Ab Initio)
 BA (Hons) in Business with French/German/Irish/Spanish (Ab Initio)
 Certificate in Preparatory Studies
 Cert in Essential Workplace, Community & Education Skills
 Certificate in Civic Engagement in Action
 Certificate in Elementary Spanish
 Certificate in Elementary Mandarin Chinese
 Certificate in Employability Studies
 Certificate in Sports Nutrition
 Diploma in Sports Coaching
 Higher Diploma in Arts in Governance & Compliance in Financial Services
 Certificate in Research Practice
 Master of Arts / Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching

The External Expert Group advises the Academic Council that the Institute and the School/Department should take cognisance of following recommendations:

Recommendations:

- Year Leads and programmes leads for all programmes, as to role will support the HOD and pastoral care role, monitoring and attendance and supporting progression.

The Institute will deploy several SL1 posts across the Institute during the next academic year to provide greater support to the School with a view to driving forward strategic priorities, additionally the Institute is discussing the re-designation of the hours more generally with the prospective of addressing some of the aspects outlined above.

- Refresher courses will be used for progressing student for academic writing, references from the staff and student support services.
- Review induction process for first years regards content and duration for example 6 week extended aspects of induction.
- Review the induction process in terms of tying in with mentor/peer support programmes on a more formalised format.

The introduction of more formal mentoring, facilitation and support structures will be reviewed going forward. The Department of L&H is very supportive of formalising these structures and will work with students and staff to develop these further. Academic writing classes will be offered to all students across all years and programmes. The department of Law and Humanities fully endorses the proposal that the induction process be extended over 6 weeks.

- Review the three hours block on timetables
- Review timetables in general to ensure they are learner friendly.
- Review the continuous assessment elements to promote attendance example assessed attendance.

Timetables will be reviewed to make them as learner friendly as possible subject to timetabling pressures across the Institute. The allocation of 3 hour teaching blocks will be re-examined and every effort will be made to reduce three hour blocks where appropriate and feasible. The Department of Law and Humanities

would agree with the panel, that opportunities for linking Continuous Assessment to attendance at tutorials should be availed of where feasible

- Identified first mentoring programme as positive and to involve all years of the programmes in a more formalised manner.

The Department will consider how best this recommendation can be accommodated within existing programme and departmental structures. An initiative to introduce a mentoring programme will be explored along with staff involvement.

- Train the trainer proposal to offer the modules on a stand- alone bases, as Special purpose awards.

The department and school will be developing a response to the Institute's new Academic plan, where the development of additional special purpose awards to enhance/maximise marketability and accessibility of programmes/modules to other learner segments will be a priority.

- HC Sport Studies review title in light of panel discussion.
- Review the title Bachelors of Business as a BA in marketing.
- Consider offering Level 8 in Law and Criminal Justice (ab-initio).
- Consider the use of ab-initio elective languages module across the college and all schools and department as an elective. With business students joining year 2 post leaving cert.

Due consideration will be given to changing the title from a HC in Sport Studies to a HC in Sport and Exercise and/or exploring alternative names following additional research and soundings with key stakeholders including annual career guidance teachers meeting at LYIT. The current Bachelor of Arts in Business with language in its current format proves difficult to change to a Bachelor of Business as there are not enough core business modules in the programmes to meet the requirements of a Bachelor in Business designation. This option has been considered previously. Due consideration will be given to introducing a Level 8 in Law with Criminal Justice (ab-initio) – however given the increase in 1st preference (Level 7 Law with Criminal Justice) in this Year's CAO there is still a clear need for a Level 7 law programme particularly for those students with lower points. It is an institute consideration to offer languages as an elective across the Institute.

- Recommend use of role models and advocates of past graduates for promoting all programmes.

This is something that is important and has been highlighted with greater profile on the new institute website, where we are endeavouring with the Marketing Officer to make greater use of social media and testimonies to market programmes going forward. Similar to No.2 above.

- Use of social media and testimonies to market programmes.

This is something that is important and has been highlighted with greater profile on the new institute website, where we are endeavouring with the Marketing Officer to make greater use of social media and testimonies to market programmes going forward. Similar to No.2 above.

- Recommend the possibility of meeting Teacher Council requirements in terms of literature so students have option of pursuing career a second level teacher.

The language modules in Year 4 will be revised to incorporate literature in the core module content, in the due course of transitioning to the revised programme.

- Accreditation for TEAL by liaising with outside agency /bodies similar to Sports programmes by providing students with additional accreditation.

The possibility of offering accreditation for the module “introduction to the teaching of English” will be explored, and is in keeping with our aims to maximise the marketability of our programmes.

- Review the part time Special purpose awards in languages (Chinese and mandarin) in terms of marketing and promoting e.g. two streams and options of taking examines or not.

The department will work with the development office and the marketing officer to re-envisage the marketing of these programmes and students will be given the option of electing for accreditation

- Promote access to SPA in terms of teaching and learning modules on the MALT programmes.

The department of law and humanities will work to increase the profile and exposure of the marketing these SPA’s outside the MALT cohort so there are increased options of running a number of electives, subject to establishing minimum students for viability, such as when modules are already running.

- Recommend a designated link/ liaison/ mentor person for all Department Law and Humanities students on placement the partner institution abroad.

A mentor on all foreign work placements will be identified.

The External Expert Group advises the Academic Council that approval of the programmes subject to general conditions of approval together with the following additional conditions:

None