INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BLANCHARDSTOWN

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS

NEW PROGRAMME VALIDATION REPORT

Higher Certificate in Business

in

Business with Information Technology

(Programme BN048)

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown,

Blanchardstown Road North, Dublin 15,

D15 YV78 | www.itb.ie

VALIDATION PANEL DATE: June 15, 2018

Introduction

The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown has the Delegated Authority from the [Quality and Qualifications Ireland](#), to; develop, validate, implement and continuously improve its existing taught higher education and training programmes up to and including programmes in Level 9 of the [National Framework of Qualifications](#).

The purpose of this document is to report on the findings of the Peer Review panel that was established to validate this proposed programme against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated in the Institute Policy Document 2MP01[1].

Programme Overview

This validation exercise is to address a Recommendation[2] from Programmatic Review 2015. The Exit Award is intended for students of ab-initio Programmes, *BN010 Bachelor of Business in Information Technology* and *BN103 Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Information Technology,* wishing to exit their studies after having successfully completed the first and second year of study, equivalent to 120 ECTS. Both the referred ab-initio programmes had been successfully revalidated to year 2020.

The aims of Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Business (Hon) with Information Technology is to produce graduates with the necessary skills to function in business roles which require an understanding of the use of Information Technology as an essential key element of the business process. Such graduates will also have the potential to function in a broad range of commercial environments where the use of Information Technology is significant. In view of the rapidly changing nature of the IT related business environment, graduates are equipped with a wide and educationally sound background in order that they may possess the flexibility and adaptability which are increasingly required in the modern workplace. As such, the courses incorporate a range of business and IT skills modules, to ensure that graduates are exposed to a wide range of software applications, systems analysis and design and programming techniques.

On completion of the 120 ECTS Credits in the proposed Higher Certificate Award (NFQ Level 6) Exit Award, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge in the broad area of business with information technology. The programme will provide them with a fundamental level of knowledge of financial and management accounting, business maths and statistics, macro and microeconomics, modern enterprise operations and management, marketing and business information systems. In business context, they will understand the synthesis that exists between the main business subject areas. With the business and IT speciality, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge in the areas of web development, database management and object orientated programming, underpinned by knowledge of systems analysis and design.

Through project work and presentations, students will be able to demonstrate their ability to gather, assemble and display data in structured business environments. This will be reinforced by use of cross module assessments. The integrative assessment will require students to work in both group and individual contexts, applying the theoretical knowledge gained in lectures and laboratories to practical business scenarios under supervision. For example, the Skills for Success in Higher Education module will use group work for research and presentations in Exploring Modern Enterprises module. In semester 3, students in Object Orientated Programming develop programming projects to solve business problems, e.g., writing a python programme to calculate the NPV on a stream of income. Students are exposed to working in groups throughout the four semesters, with the Skills for Success in Higher Education module playing a key role. Additionally, Skills for Problem Solving module provides them with the ability to contribute effectively and participate in business teams, to work effectively both independently and in teams, to manage deadlines. Throughout directed learning and continuous assessments, student will be able to evaluate own learning ability and styles.

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[1] 2MP01 Design, Validation and Accreditation of New Academic Programmes

[2] A recommendation is a proposed action, which in the opinion of the validation panel, must be given serious consideration.

Validation Panel Composition

Chair: Dr Yvonne Kavanagh, Assistant Registrar,
                             Institute of Technology Carlow

Member(s): *Academic*   Owen Ross
                             Head of Department of Business and Management, Athlone Institute of Technology

                             Eoghan Sadlier
                             Head of Department of Business, Limerick Institute of Technology,

Member(s): *Business/Industry*
                             Brian Campion,
                             Head of Operations, DNA IT

In attendance: Dr Larry McNutt, Registrar, IT Blanchardstown (Panel Secretary)

                             Dr Philip Owende, Academic Quality Manager, IT Blanchardstown

Date of Panel Meeting: June 15, 2018.

Consultation

Management Team consulted for the panel meeting:

Assumpta Harvey   Head of School of Business

Dr Fiona Malone   Head of Department of Business

Academic staff contributing to programme development and consulted during the panel meeting:

Brian Watters   Senior Lecturer in Business

Eoin O'Kennedy   Lecturer in Informatics/Business

Ann Marie McKeon   Lecturer in Business

Stephen White   Lecturer in Informatics/Business

Validation Panel Findings

In evaluating the appropriateness, quality and proposed operation of this programme the following criteria were considered and are hereby reported upon:

Strategic planning

The panel was satisfied that the programme and the design are in keeping with the Institute's mission, do not constitute redundant provision, and consider efficient deployment of associated resources.

Evidence of consultation

The programme development process sought for and considered inputs from: academic staff involved in the delivery of department of informatics programmes; learner representatives; potential employers, business and practitioners, and; technical staff representatives. Through the structured discussions with the management, and the programme design and delivery teams during the validation panel visit, the panel established evidence that comprehensive research/consultation efforts were undertaken with both internal and external stakeholders to validate the rationale and components of the proposed programme.

Graduate employment potential

The panel was of the opinion that there are a wide range of career opportunities for graduates, and based on core knowledge and competence outcomes of the proposed programme, such graduates would be of immediate value to industry.

Protection of enrolled learners

Part 6 Section 65(1) of the Act[3] does not apply.

Provisions for quality assurance

The panel was informed of how the programme submission had been proposed, developed and approved internally, in compliance with the Institute's quality assurance policies and procedures. The panel noted that the Institute's policies and procedures for programme development, monitoring and continuous improvement complied with the current national guidelines. The Institute has procedures for the periodic revalidation (normally every five years) of the programmes it validates, and the validation and revalidation reports are published.

Programme title and award title

The panel considered and made recommendations (see panel recommendations later) regarding the title of the proposed programme. The specific recommendation will accurately inform prospective learners and other stakeholders. The award title is consistent with QQI award titles.

Ethics

The panel was satisfied that the Institute has internal policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate ethical oversight in respect of teaching, learning, and research activity across all programmes in the NFQ levels covered.

Consistency

The panel found that the programme design is consistent with QQI policy on accumulation of credits and certification of subjects, that it has an underlying unifying theme with both implicit and explicit linkage of modules. The panel was contented with expectation in progressive development of the learners' standards of knowledge, skill and competence throughout the individual modules and the integrated programme outcomes.

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[3] Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

Teaching and learning

The panel discussed with the programme development team about the range of interactions used with learners in the course of programmes delivery. Course management arrangements were also discussed and deemed adequate. The panel observed clear evidence of planned interactions with and comprehensive academic and technical support arrangements for learners.

Learner assessment

Through discussion with the programme design team, the multiple modes of assessment to be employed (both formal and informal) were articulated. The Institute's policy on continuous assessment, based on objective development/enhancement of learners' application of knowledge and critical analysis and problem solving skills within specific timeframes were highlighted. The panel encouraged the consideration of cross-modular assessment events to minimise the volume of assessment across the taught modules.

Standards of knowledge, skill and competence

Having reviewed the syllabi and assessment methods as proposed, the panel was of the opinion that learners would be capable of attaining the standards of knowledge, skill or competence relevant for the award of the *Higher Certificate in Business in Business with Information Technology*.

Access, transfer and progression

The panel confirmed that the programme incorporates well-established procedures for access, transfer and progression. These are provided for per the Institute's Policy *3AD08 Admissions Policy*.

Other salient considerations

Being a validation for Level 6 Exit Award, the programme and module level discussion were combined in the same discussion session. The panel focused on understanding of linkages to the primary NFQ Level 7 and Level 8 programmes, hence; how the graduates attributes at Level 6 could be enhanced to meet designated job roles and also prepare them for progression to higher awards in ITB or elsewhere.

Decision of the Panel

The panel recommends validation of the following programme with Conditions[4]/Recommendations[5]:

Programme title: Higher Certificate in Business in Business with Information Technology

Programme code: BN048

Award Title: Higher Certificate in Business

NFQ level: 6 (120 ECTS credits)

Conditions of Validation

(1)   Entry to the programme to be specified per the parent programmes; BN010 Bachelor of Business in Information Technology, and; BN103 Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Information Technology.

(2)   The Programme to be offered as an Embedded Award of programmes BN010 and BN103.

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[4] A condition is an action, which in the opinion of the validation panel, must be undertaken prior to the commencement of the programme. Conditions are mandatory for programme approval.

[5] A recommendation is a proposed action, which in the opinion of the validation panel, must be given serious consideration.

Recommendations

The panel provided the following recommendations:

(1) Investigate opportunities for industry certification associated with the programmes areas and encourage take-up in the programme.

(2) Programme design may be used to address the attrition in Year 1 of study. Therefore, consider front-loading the 20 ECTS Credits IT modules to semesters 1 and 2, as these will be what the entrants will expecting. This is to initially instil a deep feeling for their discipline, therefore may significantly enhance retention. The normal 5 ECTS Credit module approach covering transition to third-level education is inadequate in most part.

(3) Continue to explore progression opportunities to other programmes, both within ITB and elsewhere as means of widening the opportunities where the Higher Certificate graduates can progress.

(4) Consider offering of electives in future iterations of programmes as a strategic approach to addressing programme sustainability.

Commendations

The panel commended the following aspect of the proposed programme and the validation process:

(1) Organisation of the business colloquium event geared to enhancing retention is commendable.
(2) Offer of the module BSST H1043 Skill for Success in Higher Education is commendable support for transition to Higher Education.
(3) The programme team engaged the panel in informative discussion on the proposed Exit Award.

Validation Report Sign-off

Chair

_____   _____
Dr Yvonne Kavanagh   Date

Secretary

_____   _____
Dr Larry McNutt   Date