GMIT
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EO
GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Report of External Peer Review Group for the Programmatic Review of:

Named Award:	Bachelor of Engineering
Programme Title(s):	BEng (Hons)Civil Engineering L8 (4 years) BEng Civil Engineering, L7 (3 years) L8 (+1 & + 2) HC in Civil Engineering, L6
Exit Award(s):	BEng Civil Engineering L7 Higher Certificate in Civil Engineering
Award Type:	Higher Certificate Ordinary Degree Honours Degree
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	Level 6 Level 7 Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	120 180 240
Minor Award(s):	None
Location	Galway

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Maria Kyne	Chairperson	Limerick Institute of Technology
Cait Noone	Secretary	Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology
Dr Alan Hore	IOT Member	Dublin Institute of Technology
Dr Declan Phillips	University Member	University of Limerick
Gerard Carr	Professional Practitioner	Gerard Carr Associates
Richard Browne	Institute Graduate	L & M Keating Ltd

Programme Board Team

Gerard MacMichael	Wayne Gibbons	Shane Newell
Mary Rogers	Martina Mulvey	Sean Moloney
Fiona Watson		Catriona O'Regan
Barry Gantly	Brendan Power	Rachel Gargan
Breda Joyce	Niamh Ward	John Hanahoe
Malcolm Hosty	Jim O'Connor	

Patrick Ryan		

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on the approval of the programmes Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering.

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 Self Evaluation Report (SER) for more detailed information.

3 General Findings of the External Peer Review Group

- The External Peer Review Group (EPRG) has come to the conclusion that they approve the programme for a further five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner, subject to 2 conditions and a number of recommendations.

- The SER report was very well presented and the information was clear to all of the External Peer Review Group. They congratulate the programme team on the huge amount of work involved.

- The EPRG commended that the engagement with staff was very positive. There was great work both collaboratively and collectively.

- The EPRG expressed that the engagement by the programmatic board with stakeholders and students was very positive and encouraging

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Civil Engineering
Place an x in the correct box.

Accredited for the next five academic years or until the next programmatic review, whichever occurs sooner	
Accredited subject to conditions and recommendations	X
Re-designed and re-submitted to the same External Peer Review Group 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 External Peer Review Group (EPRG). In this report, the term Condition is used to indicate an action or amendment which in the view of the EPRG 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:
- Evidence of reflection by the programme board to include, where relevant evidence of collaboration and engagement with other programmes from a similar discipline area within GMIT
- Demand
- Award
- Entry requirements
- Access, transfer and progression
- Retention
- Standards and Outcomes
- Programme structure
- Learning and Teaching Strategies
- Assessment Strategy
- Resource requirements
- Research Activity
- Quality Assurance
- Internationalisation
- Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internship etc)

4.1 Reflection, including internal and external engagement

Consideration for the panel:	Is there evidence of reflection in the SER of how the programme performed since the last programmatic review.
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.2 Demand

Consideration for the panel:	Is there a need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.3 Award

Consideration for the panel:	Is the level and type of the award appropriate?

Overall Finding:	Yes

4.4 Entry Requirements

Consideration for the panel:	Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate? Is there a relationship with this programme and further education?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the HEA and as contained in the Institute's Quality assurance Framework (QAF) COP No.4?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.6 Retention

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Are both elements of the First Year Experience {(i) Learning to Learn (now Learning and Skills Innovation) and (ii) PASS} embedded in this programme? Evidence of other retention initiatives?
Overall Finding:	Attrition is quite high and needs to be monitored

Recommendations:

- The EPRG encourage that there should be systems in place to monitor the retention initiatives set out and to improve their effectiveness.

- The EPRG believe that by contextualising the Civil Engineering 1st year experience, it may help increase retention rates. An example of this could include graduates coming in to have a talk with the students about their experiences and also could include more site visits during the year.

4.7 Standards and Outcomes

Consideration for the panel:	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)? For Minor Award (if applicable)? For Special Purpose Award (if applicable)?
Overall Finding:	Yes

The awards standards requirements for programmes on the NFQ Framework can be found at http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol01.htm

4.8 Programme Structure

Consideration for the panel:	Is the programme structure logical and well designed and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes in terms of employment skills and career opportunities be met by this programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes to include 2 recommendations

Condition:
• None

Recommendation:

• During Semester 6 the extra teaching hours freed up by the inclusion of the Work Placement could be used to support the work placement including student visits by the lecturers.
• Contact hours will be an average of 24 hours over the duration of the programme.

4.9 Learning and Teaching Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the proposed programme that support Student Centred Learning (SCL)? Evidence of consideration of flexible delivery methods including eLearning?
Overall Finding:	Yes to include 1 recommendation

Recommendation:

• The intended learning outcomes for each module need to be clearly defined in both the SER report and for students in the Approved Programme Schedules.

4.10 Assessment Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the proposed programme (as outlined in the QQI/HETAC Assessment and Guidelines, 2009)?
Overall Finding:	Yes to include 2 recommendations

Assessment strategies are required in line with HETAC's Assessment and Standards and should be considered by the programme EPRG. 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 learning and teaching strategy;
- Demonstrate how grading criteria will be developed to relate to the Institutional grading system.

Recommendations:

- The EPRG finds that there are details lacking in some modules regarding assessment. Some module assessments are based on 100% continued assessment and some module assessments are based on learning outcomes and continuous assessment. The assessment strategies should be more clearly defined and should avoid over assessing some modules.

- Modules which are 100% continuously assessed should have the assessment requirements set out in detail in the module descriptor forms. Consideration should be given to sending the coursework briefs to External Examiners.

4.11 Resource Requirements

Consideration for the panel:	Does the Institute possess the resources and facilities necessary to deliver the proposed programme?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.12 Research Activity

Consideration for the panel:	Evidence that Learning & Teaching is informed by research? Number of staff engaged in institutional/pedagogical research?
Overall Finding:	Yes

Commendation:

- The EPRG indicate that engagement in the Stakeholders survey (students, graduates and industry) was excellent and the feedback received from all the stakeholders and the students was valuable information to have included in the SER document.

4.13 Quality Assurance

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the Institute's quality assurance procedures (QAF) have been applied and that satisfactory procedures exist for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes?
Overall Finding:	Yes

4.14 Internationalisation

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme demonstrate how the syllabi represent an international dimension? Is there evidence of approaches to induct international students?
Overall Finding:	Yes to include 1 recommendation

Recommendation:

- The EPRG reflect that support and encouragement should be given to the programme board initiatives to continue to improve internationalisation of the curriculum.

4.15 Professional Practice (Work Experience / Internships etc)

Consideration for the panel:	Does the proposed programme incorporate professional practice as per the Institute's policy on professional practice (PP)? If not, is there evidence that PP is under consideration by the programme board?
Overall Finding:	Yes to include commendation and recommendations

Commendation:

- The EPRG welcomes the proposed extended work placement module and have recommended the following

Recommendations:

- A list of Approved Work Placement providers should be developed for students.

- A work placement handbook detailing the management and assessment of the work placement should be developed for students.

- A placement report should be completed by the students which would contain a critical review and should reflect on the work experience gained. It would be recommended that the assessment of work placement be simplified to 3 components:
  1   A Diary detailing the experience.
  2   A Reflective Report.
  3   An Interview upon completion of the work placement.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Condition:

Approved Course schedule regulations should be clearly outlined on 3 locations,

1   Module Descriptor Forms

2 Programme Documents (Academic Module Manager)
3 Approved Programme Schedules

Recommendation:

- The EPRG request that module description forms for all modules should be modified to ensure; reading lists are up to date, learning outcomes to be assessed by either examination or coursework are clearly stated and that the number of learning outcomes reflect the number of ECTS credits that the modules carry.

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

Consideration for the panel:	Have appropriate module assessment strategies been included in each Module Descriptor?
Overall Finding:	Yes to include 1 recommendation

Recommendation:

- The EPRG puts forward that reassessment opportunities apply to all modules (unless the module(s) has been presented and approved as "non-repeatable" by GMIT's academic council) and the information regarding such reassessment should be included on all module descriptor forms.

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

5.2.1 Module – Proposed new Multidisciplinary Module Semester 2 Stage 2

Commendation:

- The EPRG believe that this module makes an excellent contribution to the programme but syllabus content should be expanded to include civil engineering contracts.

Recommendation:

- The EPRG suggest that the programme board prepare a briefing documentation for students for the multidisciplinary project clearly showing the management of the work load and assessment for the project.

5.2.2 Module – Proposed extended Work Placement Module

The EPRG welcomes the proposed extended work placement module and have recommendations included see above point 4.15

5.2.3 Module – Proposed new Health & Safety Module year 1

- The EPRG suggest that Health and Safety should be incorporated or embedded into all of the other modules and not be as a separate module.

5.2.4 Module – Proposed new Research Module

Commendation:

The EPRG welcomes this module to the programme.

6.0 Student Findings

Due to the timing of the meeting, it was attended by 2 former students of GMIT who had already graduated. The graduates both had found work shortly after leaving GMIT and within a short time had been promoted to higher positions within their companies. They found that in Level 7 the structural engineering course content was very beneficial and Euro Codes they learned helped them in their current positions. They stated that the knowledge of software packages including Rivet and the BIM module they received at GMIT was excellent. They both agreed that the work placement was very advantageous as it helped them to make contacts with future employers and one of the students got summer work on site after the placement. They also commended the teaching of both hand calculations and software training during the programme. The hard work put in at GMIT during their final year helped them to learn excellent time management skills for their future careers.

Commendation:

- The EPRG found that the 2 graduates were excellent ambassadors for GMIT.
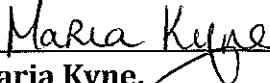
7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Commendation:

The EPRG commend the engagement that the programme board had with stakeholders and believe it was a valuable experience.

8.0 Future Plans

Consideration for the panel:	Evidence that the programme board considered and identified opportunities and signalled proposals for related new programme and award development.
Overall Finding:	Yes

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

Maria Kyne   _27/01/15_
Maria Kyne,   **Date**
Chairperson