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 Science
Programme Title(s):	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management Bachelor of Science in Construction Management Higher Certificate in Construction Management
Exit Award(s):	Higher Certificate in Construction Management, L6 (2 years) Ordinary Degree in Construction Management, L7 (3 years)
Award Type:	Higher Certificate, Ordinary Degree, Honours Degree
Award Class:	Higher Certificate, Ordinary Degree, Honours Degree
NFQ Level:	Level 6, Level 7 and Level 8
ECTS / ACCS Credits:	120, 180, 240
Location	Galway
Minor Award(s):	N/A

Panel Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Maria Kyne	Chairperson	LIT
Aedin O'hEocha	Secretary	GMIT
Dr Alan Hore	IOT Member	DIT
Dr Declan Phillips	University Member	UL
Paul Stewart	Professional Practitioner	Stewart Construction
Brian Holmes	Institute Graduate	BAM

Programme Board Team

Martina Mulvey	Tomas Murphy
Elisha McNamara	Martin Taggart
Lisa Dooley	John Hanahoe
Patrick Ryan	Dr Mark Kelly
Mary Rogers	Wayne Gibbons
Gerard Mac Michael	Malcolm Hosty
Evan Duggan	Siobhan Cawley

1 Introduction

The following report to Academic Council is a validation panel report from an expert panel of assessors on the Bachelor of Science (Hons) Construction Management

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) felt that there was excellent engagement with the programme design team during the review session and that a full and frank discussion had taken place on the challenges facing the programme team in delivering a quality programme.

The Self Evaluation Report (SER) was a well informed and forward looking appraisal of the programme's current performance and planned actions for the enhancement of the programme going forward.

The EPRG found that there had been good engagement with external stakeholders and that this was reflected in the SER.

Concern was expressed by the EPRG with regard to attrition from the programme and it is recommended that the attrition rate is continually monitored and that strategies for the improvement of the 1st year attrition rate are continually reviewed.

Concerns were raised with regard to the reduction in minimum CAO points required for entry to the programme over the last number of years and, as a consequence, the academic ability of incoming students, particularly in relation to maths. It was noted that the lower points entry requirements has had an impact on retention rates, particularly given that the programme may not have been the first choice of some students.

The programme team were commended on their good work in the area of research. Accessing adequate research funding is seen as a challenge.

Concern was expressed by some members of the EPRG with regard to the heavy load placed on students as a result of the number of weekly contact hours, particularly for first and second year students. [1]
There is a requirement for a programme document for the level 6 award to be developed and for the level 6 programme learning outcomes to be mapped to the QQI Award standards.

In discussion with students, feedback on the programme was largely positive with students commenting particularly favourably on the accessibility of lecturing staff, small class sizes, programme content, ICT content, particularly the BIM modules, and the year 3 placement.

---

[1] Some members of the EPRG asked that the report reflect that there was disagreement on this issue and that not all panel members shared this concern.

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

The Bachelor of Science (Hons) Construction Management, the Bachelor of Science in Construction Management, and the Higher Certificate in Construction Management (pending receipt of the report, and mapping of the programme learning outcomes to the QQI award standard) are:

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/or 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

Commendation(s):

The EPRG commended the programme team on the following:

- The quality of the Self Evaluation Report
- Industry endorsement of the programme
- The extent of the engagement with external stakeholders

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

Condition(s):
- A separate programme document for the level 6 award must be developed and programme learning outcomes mapped to relevant QQI award standards.

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

Recommendation(s):

- The current economic climate and the consequent decline in demand for construction related programmes, both nationally and locally, has led to a reduction in the minimum CAO points required for entry to the programme. This has impacted on the academic ability of class groups, particularly with regard to mathematics. The EPRG recommends that the programme team continue to monitor attrition rates and to implement retention strategies to support students, particularly in the first year of the programme.

4.5 Access, Transfer and Progression

Consideration for the	Does the proposed programme incorporate the procedures for

panel:	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:	Yes

Commendation(s):
The EPRG commends the programme team on:
- The implementation of a tutor system.
- The accessibility of academic staff
- The change in the teaching strategy in relation to surveying which has seen an increase in student attendance to approximately 100%

Recommendation(s):
- It is recommended that the attrition rate is continually monitored.
- The EPRG supports and encourages the continued development and evaluation of strategies to improve student retention.
- The EPRG recommends the development of maths supports for students.
- Lecturers should encourage students to engage with the feedback journal

Note: It is noted that the intake of up to 20% mature students has had a generally positive impact on the class group.

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

Commendation(s):

* None

Condition(s):
* A separate programme document for the level 6 award must be developed and programme learning outcomes mapped to relevant QQI award standards.

Recommendation(s):
* None.

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

Commendation(s):
* None

Condition(s):
* **None**

Recommendation(s):
* The word "understand" in the learning outcomes is seen as too vague and difficult to assess. It is suggested that the word "understand" is replaced with something that can more easily be assessed, e.g. "demonstrate and /or apply".
* Book lists should be updated as appropriate.
* Year 2 elective modules should be reviewed for appropriateness to the programme and with regard to the overlapping of content.
* Contract law and planning should be addressed within the programme.
* Temporary works design and related legislation should be addressed within the programme.
* 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

Recommendation(s):

* More emphasises at an earlier stage on report writing / scheduling in terms of learning

Note: Use of e-learning is evident

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

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.

Recommendation(s):
- The programme board should review its assessment schedules so that the assessment load is balanced and that CA requirements can be completed sufficiently far in advance of the final examination sessions, suggest by the end of week 10
- Introduce an assessment guide for students, if not already available
- Where modules are 100% assessed by continuous assessment, sufficient detail on the breakdown of marks should be provided to students.
- The programme board should review module learning outcomes to ensure all learning outcomes are assessed and to ensure that learning outcomes are not unnecessarily assessed more than once
- The EPRG recommends that the programme team avail of opportunities for the introduction of integrated/interdisciplinary project(s) within the programme
- The process for repeat assessments should be clear to students

Note: There are no Special Regulations

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

Commendation(s):
- The number of highly qualified and knowledgeable staff

Recommendation(s):
- The EPRG supports the programme team's desire for a dedicated resource room for its fourth year students.

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(s):
- The staff initiative with regard to the hosting of an annual International Construction Management day conference was commended, particularly as it engages companies, students and other stakeholders.

Recommendation(s):
- The EPRG recommends that the programme team continue their good work in the research area, particularly with regard to the collaborative nature of the research being conducted.
- The EPRG recommends that the programme team seek to increase their research funding.

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

Recommendation(s):
- Review the possibility of developing collaborative research projects with international partners with whom the Institute already has a relationship, e.g. Brazil
- This programme does not typically attract international students. The EPRG suggests that the programme team should seek opportunities to increase the number of international students on the programme.

4.15Professional 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

Recommendation(s):
- That the learning outcomes to be achieved from the placement are reviewed with the employer and the student in advance of the placement and that the student provides a detailed report on how the learning outcomes have been achieved upon completion of the module.
- The work placement should be tailored to suit the type of contract. The input of the employer is seen as important and it is suggested that the employer be asked to provide a detailed appraisal of the student placement.
- The Institute has a duty to its students to ensure that the workplace is safe from a health and safety perspective. A review of the process should be carried out to ensure that there is sufficient lecturer engagement with the employer and an adequate number of staff visits.
- The panel endorses the programme team view that all students on placement in Ireland and the U.K. should be visited by lecturing staff.
- Staff should share their experiences of the Work Placement module with their colleagues on other programmes.

Note:
It is also worth noting that the possibility of a 12 month work placement has been considered but the programme team feel that it would be difficult to exclude the necessary number of modules from the programme to facilitate a longer work placement.

5.0 Module-Level Findings: General

Commendation(s):
- The use of common modules between programmes is commendable. This is particularly evident in relation to the QS programme. However, the possibility of increasing the number of common modules should be investigated, e.g. with regard to BIM modules in years 1 and 2.

Recommendation(s):
- Year 2 elective modules should be reviewed for appropriateness to the programme and with regard to the overlapping of content.
- Contract law should be addressed in more depth within the programme.
- Greater emphasis on temporary works design and related legislation within the programme.
- Planning and programming should be addressed within the programme.

- Consider making Health and Safety a mandatory rather than an elective module (Note in the review of the Civil Engineering Programme it was suggested that Health & Safety be embedded in every module – this may facilitate a reduction in contact time.)

5.1 Module Assessment Strategies

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

Recommendation(s):
- See 4.10 above

5.2 Module Level-Findings: Specific Named Modules

5.2.1 Module - (Structural Design and Detailing Module)

Recommendation(s):
- The temporary works and the structural design components of the (structural design and detailing module) in year 2 should be aligned to what's needed on site / important principles /emphasis on temporary works design, and associated legislation. From a safety perspective the temporary works element is hugely important (feedback from practitioner)

5.2.2 Module (Health & Safety)

Recommendation(s):
- This should be made a mandatory rather than an elective module.

5.2.3 Module (Building Information Modelling (BIM))

Recommendation(s):
- Consider combining BIM modules in Year 1 and 2.

6.0 Student Findings

Eight students took part in the feedback session. These included students from the B.Sc. in Construction Management and two other programmes, the B.Sc. in Architectural Technology and the B.Sc. in Construction Economics and Quantity Surveying. Overall the feedback was positive with students commenting positively on:
- Small class sizes
- One to one contact with, and accessibility of, lecturing staff
- Course content
- Job opportunities
- Knowledge of software packages acquired
- BIM modules

- Placement module

The Work Placement was seen as hugely important for student learning and development. It allowed students to acquire new skills, work with a variety of professionals and make industry contacts. Students felt that the placement module greatly improved their chances of employment after graduation.

Participation on the Civic Engagement module was seen as a great opportunity to work in multidisciplinary teams. It was suggested that integrated projects across other modules would provide further learning opportunities.

Students also noted that deadlines for assessments were sometimes difficult to achieve with a significant numbers of CA assignments due at the same time. It was also suggested that some CA assessments were given too close to final examination sessions leaving students with little time to study.

It was suggested that there was a need for a dedicated resource room for year 4 students to allow students to work and carry out research collaboratively. The access to ECDL in first year was seen as helpful but some students felt that better ICT skills would greatly benefit them as would presentation and writing skills along with greater exposure to scheduling.

It was also suggested that "Structures" would be better placed in year 3 of the programme and that the surveying module, currently in year 2, should be later in the programme.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

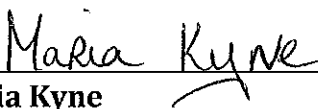No concerns were raised in relation to stakeholder engagement.

Commendation(s):
- Effective stakeholder engagement

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:	n/a

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

Maria Kyne

Maria Kyne
Chairperson

Date: 27/04/16