

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

Programme	Code	Level	ECTS	Duration	Award Type	Embedded Awards
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Design	GA_DDESG_H08	8	240	4	Major	Bachelor of Arts in Design
Bachelor of Arts in Design	GA_DDESG_B07	7	180	3	Major	None
Certificate in Textiles and Costume for Visual and Cultural Industries	GA_DTVCG_S07	7	10	1	SPA	None

Date of Panel:

February 8th, 2022

External Peer Review Group:

Panel	
Chairperson	Dr. Joe McGarry Educational Consultant
IoT/University Representative	Ms. Valerie Renehan Head of Media Communications, MTU, Cork
IoT/University Representative	Prof Martyn Evans Pro Vice Chancellor for Arts and Humanities, Manchester Metropolitan University
Industry Representative	Ms. Lorna Ross Chief Innovative Officer, VHI (Health and Wellbeing)
Graduate Representative	Ms. Rossana Cooke Human Factors Engineer/Graduate
Secretary	Ms. Carmel Brennan Assistant Registrar, GMIT

1 Introduction to Programmatic Review

Programmatic review involves a periodic, formal, systematic, comprehensive and reflective review and evaluation of each programme and award offered by the Institute for purposes of programme development, quality enhancement and revalidation. It is an important means of ensuring and assuring, *inter alia*:

- that required academic standards are being attained;
- that programmes and awards remain relevant and viable;
- that student needs, including academic and labour-market needs, are addressed;
- that the quality of programmes and awards is enhanced and improved;
- public confidence in the quality of GMIT's programmes and awards.

GMIT last conducted Programmatic Review in 2014 and was due to undertake it again in 2019/20. The process was delayed until this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of a programmatic review is to review the development of the programme over the previous five to seven years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality. The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes' responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria and relevant awards standards. In particular, a programmatic review seeks to confirm that the promise evidenced at the original validation (or since the last programmatic review) in terms of academic quality, relevance and viability has been realised, and that the programme is adapting appropriately to evolving circumstances.

The specific objectives of a programmatic review are, *inter alia*, to:

- analyse and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, including details of student numbers, retention rates and success rates;
- review the development of the programme in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments;
- evaluate the response of the programme to regional and societal requirements and to educational developments.
- evaluate the feedback mechanisms for students and the processes for acting on this feedback;
- review the feedback from students relating to the student experience of the programme
- evaluate stakeholder engagement including links and collaboration with industry, business and the wider community.
- review feedback from employers and graduates.
- evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme;
- review any research activities in the field of learning in the disciplinary areas and their impact on teaching and learning;
- consider likely future developments in the disciplinary areas;
- make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules, and to discontinuing programmes or parts of programmes.

Academic Council identified three themes to be specifically addressed during the 2021/22 Programmatic Review namely:

- Assessment – ensure the assessment strategy and methodology are appropriate and aligned with learning outcomes and that students are not over-assessed.
- Employability – ensure that students develop career skills necessary to prepare them for employment. Embed professional practice (e.g. work placement, work-based projects in the programme, ensuring that there is an appropriate plan for their management)
- Sustainability – review modules and learning outcomes to ensure that the sustainability agenda is addressed, debated and applied within student learning and assessment, as appropriate.

2 Methodology

The programmatic review process involves a self-evaluation by each programme board followed by an external peer review. The Programme board engaged in a process of the collection and review of data related to the programme and feedback from stakeholders including students, graduates and industry. The overall programme and each individual module have been reviewed and recommendation(s) for updates made as required.

The External Peer Review Group (EPRG) received a copy of the Self Evaluation Review documentation and the programme documentation including any proposed changes. The EPRG then met the Programme Board (Appendix A) to discuss the programme and the documentation provided, as well as meeting a representative sample of students (Appendix B). The schedule for the review visit is contained in Appendix C.

3 Background to Programme(s) Being Reviewed

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Design

Bachelor of Arts in Design

The BA (Hons) in Design programme is aligned with the broad aims and specific objectives of GMIT. The BA (Honours) in Design and BA in Design programmes at the Centre for Creative Arts & Media (CCAM) were initiated in September 2016. The Level 7 & Level 8 students are taught as one group and are undifferentiated for Stage 1-3. Stage 1 is a broad foundation in the Elements and Principles of Design with an emphasis on enquiry, experiential learning, and skills acquisition. Stages 2, 3 and 4 are focused Specialised Pathways with distinct modules as well as sharing several common modules across each programme Stage. 2017 marked the creation of the School of Design and Creative Arts. The first Industry Placements happened in 2019 (Stage 3/Semester 6). That year also saw the first BA in Design graduation ceremony and 2020 saw the first cohort of BA (Honours) in Design graduate. During the time under review there has been significant changes to the environment in which the programme operates. This relates to both internal factors such as improved infrastructure, staff development and technological support and external factors such as the impact of the Covid-19 coronavirus epidemic, the shifting of Climate Change to the centerground and the emergence of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals as well as GMIT's embracing of the Athena SWAN ethos. All this, and more, informs the changes proposed under Programmatic Review, as the programme strives to remain relevant and to equip students with the essential problem-solving skills necessary to tackle the diverse challenges that the immediate and the longer-term future will deliver. The programme involves the choice of a specific elective pathway after a common first year. The pathways are Product Design, Animation & Game Design, Graphic Design & Illustration, Interior Design, Textiles for Fashion Design. The panel endorsed the strategy and provided some useful recommendations for the programme. The team is working on building on the success of the programme and creating higher visibility of the programme pathways by having them validated as separate programmes which the student would choose after completing the common first year. The exception to this is Animation & Game Design which has been redesigned as a 3-year level 8 degree aligned with the Film & Documentary programme, and a new programme in Creative Media & Storytelling, in a 'Media' programme family.

Certificate in Textiles and Costume for Visual and Cultural Industries

This award is a collaboration between Textiles (Art and Design) and Production Design (Film and Documentary). This special purpose award aligns the skills of textile design with the entrepreneurship of film and visual culture. Learners will research a costume design concept and complete visual interpretations informed by the critical analysis and creative design development and resolutions. The learners will demonstrate an awareness of the Costume Designer's role within the production process initial design research to final presentation. The module will support the learner to evaluate and synthesise the appropriate technical processes for fabric construction and manipulation. The learner will employ problem solving strategies based on an understanding of

contemporary and historical design. This programme has not been delivered to date, but it is expected to be offered imminently given recent announcements in relation to the film industry in the region.

4 General Findings of the External Peer Review Group

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the Programme Board, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

Accredited until the next programmatic review	
Accredited until the next programmatic review subject to conditions and/or recommendations ¹	x
Re-design and re-submit to the same External Peer Review Group after additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

5 Programme-Level Findings Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Design and embedded programmes

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer, and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards ²)? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes

¹ **Note:**

Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined in the report and a response document describing the actions 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 next delivery 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.

² GMIT has adopted QQI’s award standards which are available [HERE](#).

Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning, and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g. content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff:student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g. Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

The Programme Board explained the rationale for named awards namely, to provide visibility of discipline for graduates seeking employment and membership of professional bodies. This is an issue that had arisen in student feedback. There was a view by some panel members that the chosen titles were traditional and not as inspiring as the content of the programme. Whilst more radical titles may be understood within the industry, it was felt that they would not be understood by potential applicants. The dilemma for the Programme Board was choosing titles which would attract students, reflect the programme, and communicate what graduates will be able to do.

The need and operation of the pathways embedded in the programmes were discussed. From a costing viewpoint, a holistic approach to programme design was taken, and all but one stream is well populated. First years will continue to be taught together, and some modules will be offered in more than one stream as appropriate to ensure the programme viability. It is proposed that students will choose their specialism earlier so that they can become embedded in their discipline at an earlier point in the programme. Students will be mentored on their stream choice, and some flexibility to change streams will remain as first year modules are yearlong and contain transferable skills.

There is no portfolio as part of the entry requirement for the programme, as the Programme Board don't want to put obstacles in the way of students that might not have had an opportunity to study art for the Leaving Certificate. Retention rates suggest that this approach is working. Modules in year 1 are structured so that there is a steady relationship between lecturers and students to allow for mentoring.

The programme aims to build writing skills incrementally to journal publication standard. In student led seminars participants learn to defend, work with cross disciplinary teams, reflecting what they will experience when they enter the workplace. Proposed changes aim to reduce assessment and to make assessment more authentic. Assessments, where possible, let students follow their own interests. The introduction of a yearlong placement is based on student, staff and industry feedback. A flexible approach involving placements, work-based projects or Erasmus is proposed, combined with online modules. Experience during the pandemic and the ongoing e-WIL project give confidence that this approach will succeed.

The panel met with several students who expressed interest in collaboration between specialisms and increased opportunity for design and development ideally following a project fully through to conclusion. There was mixed opinion on the proposal of choosing the specialism earlier with one view that not all students will know what they want to do that early. It was agreed that enhanced tasters for each specialism should be provided. Placement was generally viewed positively as an opportunity to apply learning. The relevance of all modules on the programme was not fully understood.

In addition to the normal Programmatic Review changes the Programme Board wished to introduce new named pathways leading to distinct awards, which was considered as a Differential Validation. The primary changes proposed for the programme are yearlong delivery, earlier pathway choice, yearlong work placement with supporting online modules and the migration of animation and game design to an autonomous programme. These changes as outlined in Appendix D were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the conditions and recommendations below.

Commendation(s):

1. The Professionalism and thoroughness of staff in reviewing the programme and documenting the findings.
2. The evident student-centred approach of staff and their open engagement with the panel.
3. The exercise of consolidating and rearticulating the evolution of the programme and the articulation of this in the visualisations provided in the documentation.
4. Embedding sustainability throughout the programme rather than including it as a single module.

Condition(s):

1. Ensure that Programme Learning Outcomes are specific to each of the named awards and are simplified as appropriate. Specify those that are generic across each award and those that are pathway specific.

Recommendation(s):

1. Consider the new award titles and whether they do justice to the programme content.
2. Articulate the specialisms within the programme beyond the award titles to ensure clarity for prospective students and employers.
3. Ensure that the BA in Design in Textile and Fashion Design title is specified correctly in all places within the documentation.
4. Consider the timing of requiring students to make their pathway choice at the end of 13 weeks, and the implications of this for students. Ensure that there is a strong justification for the timing based on examining other programmes and consulting with current and potential students.
5. Formalise the measures that will be undertaken to support students in choosing their specialism, whatever the timing of that is. Ensure that students get an in-depth introduction to each specialism to scaffold their decision. This should include mentoring first year students as make their decision.
6. Explore opportunities for student to engage in inter- and intra-disciplinary collaboration and projects within the School and Institution, modelling the situation in industry.
7. Articulate the plans for management of the placement. This should include tri-partite agreements ensuring all are clear about their expectations and responsibilities. Ensure that there are contingencies built in for students on unsuccessful placements.
8. Consider a wide range of assessment approaches for the Professional Practice module ensuring they are appropriate to assess the intended learning from placement. Consider the best means to capture student learning on placement in a way that will be useful to them when job seeking.
9. Consider supporting students in developing portfolios which can be used by them in gaining employment on graduation.
10. Ensure that there is adequate communication among members of the Programme Board to ensure that there is a reasonable schedule of assessment for students.
11. Ensure that the project schedule gives equal attention to the implementation and presentation phase as to the research phase. Project phases and timelines should be evident to students.

For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
NB: If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

6 Visual and Cultural Industries

This programme has not been delivered to date. However, funding has recently been announced for an academy in Spiddal, and part of the training will be costume and design. There were no suggested changes to the programme. The panel approved the programme until the next Programmatic Review subject to the recommendation below.

Commendation(s):

None

Condition(s):

None

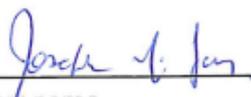
Recommendation(s):

1. Align the entry requirements with GMIT's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy.

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Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
NB: If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:



 Insert name
 Chairperson

Date:

24/06/2022

Appendix A Programme Board Members

The panel met with the following staff:

Dr. Patrick Tobin	Ms. Sara Nash	Ms. Marion McEnroy
Ms. Celine Curtin	Mr. Gary Dempsey	Mr. Jim Vaughan
Mr. Kieran Egan	Ms. Vivienne Martin	Ms. Louise Manifold
Mr. Thomas Sweeney	Ms. Lynne O Loughlin	Mr. Tony Magner
Mr. Kenneth Nevin	Mr. Aiden Linehan	Ms. Tina Byrne
Ms. Emma Hogan		

Appendix B Student Representatives

The panel met with the following student representatives:

Student Name	Programme	Stage
Keira Buckley	BA (Hons) In Design (Fashion and textiles)	4
Ronan Magee	BA (Hons) In Design (Industrial Design)	4
Patrick Gaffney	BA (Hons) In Design (Graphic Design)	4
Connor Ostheimer	BA (Hons) In Design (Industrial Design)	4
Isabella Florio	BA (Hons) In Design (Fashion and textiles)	4

Appendix C Schedule of Meetings

Agenda	
Date:	8th February 2022
2pm	Private Panel Meeting
2.30pm	Design and Textiles Programme Boards
4.10pm	Break
4.25pm	Student Representatives
4.45pm	Private Deliberations
5.15pm	Feedback

Appendix D Proposed Changes to BA (Hons) in Design and embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	Demonstrate an ability to integrate education for sustainability and contemporary practices of sustainable design in the creation, specification, and manufacture of design outputs.	In recognition of the strategic role that sustainability has acquired in international design practice and

		education in alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
Overall Contact Hours	To be calculated.	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	All modules are changing to a year-long delivery (See list below). Pathway specific learning will be integrated into the Spring term of the first stage.	To enable more flexible delivery and to alleviate assessment overload. This decision was made to allow the students to acquire sufficient discipline credits prior to entering work-integrated learning (Professional Practice & Projects).
Addition of New Module(s)	See Module Changes below.	
New APS Regulations	Special Regulations amended to reflect the new pathway names, with respect to electives.	
Minimum Entry Requirements	No change.	
Changed transfer or progression routes		
Teaching & Learning Strategy		
Assessment Strategy		