

## EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

<b>1.</b>	<b>Title of Programme:</b>	BSc (Honours) in Agriculture & Environmental Management, L8 BSc (Ordinary) in Agriculture & Environmental Management, L7 HC in Agriculture, L6				
<b>2.</b>	<b>School / Centre:</b>	School of Science, specifically the Department of Life and Physical Sciences in association with Mountbellew Agricultural College (MAC)				
<b>3.</b>	<b>Duration:</b>	Level 8: 4 years Level 7: 3 years Level 6: 2 years				
<b>4.</b>	<b>NFQ Level:</b>	Level 8, Level 7, Level 6.				
<b>5.</b>	<b>Type of Review:</b>	<b>New Programmes:</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	√	<b>No:</b>	
		<b>Differential Validation:</b>	<b>Yes:</b>		<b>No:</b>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Date of Review:</b>	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2015				
<b>7.</b>	<b>Delivery Mode:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	√	<b>Part-time</b>	√	<b>Blended</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Panel Members:</b>	Dr Frank McMahon (chair) Dr Marie Mahon, NUIG Dr Maura Farrell, NUIG Peter Melinn, AIT Dr Eoin Finneran, Agriculture Consultant Dr Edna Curley, NUIG Michael Hannon, Registrar, GMIT				
<b>10</b>	<b>Programme Rationale:</b>	<p>There are four prime reasons why these programmes should be offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increasing demand for agricultural education and training in expanding agricultural, applied environmental, agribusiness and agri-service areas.</li> <li>• The continued and increasing demand for existing programmes offered and the value of these programmes to the BMW Region and beyond.</li> <li>• The requirement to develop programmes that address the training needs of new technologies in the industry and to develop programmes that enable graduates to innovate and be competitive in the industry.</li> <li>• The necessity to adapt/adjust existing modules in programmes or to add additional modules in order to satisfy criteria for identified job opportunities and careers for graduates of programmes and to develop a level 8 ab-initio degree.</li> </ul>				
<b>11.</b>	<b>Potential Demand for Entry:</b>	A maximum of 60 students will be taken onto this programme.				

12.	<b>Stakeholder Engagement:</b>	<p>As part of the new programme development process the programme board consulted with industry/employers and graduates of the programme. A number of representatives of industry were invited to partake in a focus group for both BB Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness and BSc Agriculture and Environment Management programme suites. The representatives that were able to attend the consultation forum were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oliver Burke – Teagasc (Business Unit Manager – Roscommon and Longford)</li> <li>• Michael Owens – Drystock Farmer</li> <li>• Joe Naughton – Aurivo Co-operative</li> <li>• Stephen Lee – Dairy Farmer</li> <li>• Cathal McCormack – Alltech (Animal Feed, Nutrition &amp; Health</li> </ul>
13.	<b>Graduate Demand:</b>	<p>There is a demand locally and nationally and internationally for graduates of agriculture-based degrees who have the necessary skills to work in agriculture-based industries. This programme is designed to address these needs. Demand for agricultural programmes is soaring in Ireland at present, with the number of learners stating first preferences for agriculture and horticulture programmes rising from 606 in 2007 to 1409 in 2013.</p> <p>Due to a myriad of environmental challenges agriculture in the future will be more diverse, knowledge intensive and more green. Hence this programme places a strong emphasis on sustainable agriculture and sustainable development. There is an increasing demand for graduates with skills in applied ecology, and this revised programme places a major emphasis on this area.</p> <p>Current Government policy, as outlined in the Harvest 2010 document, indicates a growth in employment in all major areas of Agriculture and the Agri Food sector over the next decade.</p>
14.	<b>Entry Requirements:</b>	<p>Students will have to meet the entry requirements as indicated in GMIT's Academic Code of Practice No 4 (Access, Transfer and Progression).</p>
15.	<b>Programme Management:</b>	<p>The programme will be offered as a full-time programme. Students who wish to take the programme on a part-time basis will be facilitated to do so.</p>
16.	<b>Module syllabi:</b>	<p>Deemed appropriate but refer to section 19 below for any specific findings and recommendations.</p>
17.	<b>Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment (LTA):</b>	<p>Student centred learning is achieved by various means, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laboratory sessions with an approximate 16:1 student: staff ratio. Such sessions allow for interaction between the lecturer and the student on a one to one basis and thus greatly facilitate communication between students and staff.</li> <li>• The year 4 project allows the student to analyse various work tasks and problems, design and execute a specific project, and to present this work as</li> </ul>

		<p>a thesis. The project thus allows the students to excel in a particular area, and to communicate their results to others. This is the epitome of student-centred learning, where students are facilitated to work on their own, to manage a major project, and to present their findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The industrial placement in year 2 allows the student to apply the knowledge and skills in an industrial setting. The students are given the skills required to be successful in the workplace, and to plan and execute the various work tasks presented to them.</li> <li>• Many of the assignments completed as part of the continuous assessment of a module feature outcomes such as individual or group presentations.</li> <li>• Use of in-class activities to encourage active learning.</li> <li>• Pedagogic approaches which encourage students to facilitate their own learning.</li> <li>• A range of different teaching methodologies are used throughout the programme and this helps students with different learning styles.</li> </ul>
18.	<b>Access, Transfer, Progression (ATP):</b>	As per GMITs Code of Practice No 4 on Access, Transfer and Progression
19.	<b>Findings and Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>Recommendations of the panel in relation to award sought:</b></p> <p>The panel are pleased to recommend for approval the three programmes as presented with the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HC in Science in Agriculture is the new proposed title.</li> <li>• Ensure there is a distinction between L7 and L8 Learning Outcomes</li> <li>• Ensure reading material is up-to-date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Danger of over –reliance on core-Teagasc manuals</li> <li>○ More emphasis on peer-reviewed journals and international literature where relevant.</li> <li>○ Engagement with more recent rural literature to facilitate a wider perspective</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Panel supports the transition to grading placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Should develop a rubric for assessing this module</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider mapping Biology LC subject requirements for Teaching Council (TC) recognition</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to offering a supplementary award to graduates to obtain the Glas Advisor recognition.</li> <li>• Consider the ratio of CA to terminal exams, currently CA is 30%, recommend going to 40%.</li> <li>• Build on the relationship between GMIT and NUIG to encourage postgraduate progression</li> </ul> <p><b>Special conditions attaching to approval (if any):</b></p> <p>None</p>

21.	<b>Synergies with existing programmes:</b>	Synergies with existing programmes: First year is common with the BB (H) in Rural Enterprise & Agri-business, with BB in Rural Enterprise & Agri-business and with a HC in Business in Agriculture.	
22.	<b>FAO: Academic Council:</b>		
		<b>Approved:</b>	
		<b>Approved subject to recommended changes:</b>	<b>√</b>
		<b>Not approved at this time:</b>	

Signed:

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**Dr Frank McMahon**  
**(Chair)**

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**Mr Michael Hannon**  
**(Registrar)**