

BACKGROUND – E-LEARNING

E-learning as a field of study, as an approach to teaching and learning and as an industry has evolved considerably over the last decade and a half.

Governments and policy makers have consistently underlined its importance and provide substantial funding initiatives to support its development and mainstreaming. Related policies and requirements with regard to lifelong learning, the knowledge-based economy, work-based learning and globalisation, combine with the benefits of e-learning as a delivery and support tool to make e-learning one of the most rapidly growing sectors in the worldwide education and training and digital media industries.

In addition, E-learning has now become a key practice and service at all levels of education and training. In this context there arises a concomitant need – separate to direct employment in the e-learning industry – for individuals to support existing e-learning systems while also guiding future developments in this fast changing area. Recent years, for instance, have seen a wider use of job titles such as “Learning Technologist”, “E-learning Officer” and “E-learning Instructional Designer” to capture the roles and responsibilities of those charged with providing guidance, encouragement and support for the effective use of technology to facilitate learning.

PROGRAMME AIM AND ORIENTATION

The programme seeks to produce developers of cutting edge, educationally effective e-learning solutions.

Graduates will go on to work as designers and developers either directly as part of the burgeoning e-learning sector or in support of in-house e-learning and learning technology departments which are becoming mainstream in a number of other areas and industries.

The programme is a Master of Arts and, as such, reflects a special orientation towards, variously, creativity, culture and design, rather than technology per se.

A FULLY ONLINE PROGRAMME

The programme is delivered entirely online using many of the same e-learning tools and technologies which also form the course curriculum. This means the programme may appeal to those who, for whatever reasons, cannot commit to attending regular face-to-face lectures and labs or who simply find the flexibility and convenience of studying at a distance attractive.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The course is delivered full-time over just 2 semesters. The first semester, which runs from February to May consists of five taught modules, as indicated below:

Semester One: February - May

Module Title	Credits
Module Design	5
Education Research & Proposal	10
New Media Workplace	5
Narrative & Games for Learning	5
E-Learning Authoring	5

Semester two runs from June until September and incorporates the development and piloting of an innovative e-learning solution, and the completion of a traditional academic thesis.

Semester Two: June - September

Module Title	Credits
E-learning Thesis	20
E-learning Project	10

The student's e-learning project is to be developed in tune with both contemporary learning theory and contemporary e-learning practice. As part of the thesis element of the programme students are, in addition, required to pilot or field test their project outcome with real learners. Data analysis, findings and conclusions resulted from same are, finally, to be presented in context of a formal academic thesis incorporating, as appropriate, a literature review and technical/use case background.

Further detail with regard to recommended resources, average weekly workload, and assessment tasks is available at <http://www.cit.ie/course/CRHELDE9>