

## Report of Validation Panel

**Date of Meeting:** March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Named Award:** Master of Arts  
**Programme Title:** E-learning Design & Development  
**Award Type:** Master's Degree  
**Award Class:** Major Award  
**NFQ Level:** Level 9  
**Intakes Commencing:** February 2014  
**ECTS/ACCS Credits:** 60

### PANEL MEMBERS

Name / Function / Institution
Dr Brendan Ryder, Assistant Registrar, Dundalk Institute of Technology (Chair)
Mr Pete Luffrum, Head of Training and Development, Eircom Group Technologies
Ms Muireann O'Keefe, Learning Development Manager, Royal College of Surgeons
Dr Eugene O'Loughlin, Lecturer, Department of Computing, National College of Ireland
Ms Eva Juhl, Institutional Review Facilitator, Cork Institute of Technology

### IN ATTENDANCE

Name / Function / Institution
Ms Maud Coffey, Administrator, Department of Media Communications, CIT

### PROPOSING TEAM MEMBERS

Name / Function / Department
Ms Orla Flynn, Head of CIT Crawford College of Art & Design
Ms Rose McGrath, Head of Department of Media Communications
Dr Gearoid O'Suilleabhain, Programme Co-ordinator, DEIS / Department of Media Communications
Mr Joey Campbell, Lecturer, Department of Media Communications
Mr Brian Doyle, Lecturer, Department of Media Communications
Dr Paul Green, Senior Lecturer, Department of Media Communications

### BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The proposed Master of Arts in E-learning Design & Development was jointly developed by the DEIS Department and the Department of Media Communications as a progression route for graduates of the CIT BA (Honours) in Multimedia and other multimedia / digital media degrees to a specialised Masters-level qualification in the area of E-learning. An initial 30-credit Level 8 Special Purpose Award in Digital Media Design & Development, validated in June 2012, provides a bridging route for entrants with Level 8 qualifications in other fields. This SPA programme is scheduled to

run from September to December each year to enable a February intake into the Masters. Two external experts who participated in the SPA Validation Panel were subsequently requested to conduct the faculty-led initial review of the programme structure and module content of the proposed Masters. The recommendations of these experts were addressed by the development team prior to submission of the programme proposal for validation. The MA in E-Learning Design & Development will be hosted by the Department of Media Communications.

## FINDINGS OF THE PANEL

*NOTE: In this report, the term “**Requirement**” is used to indicate an action or amendment which in the view of the Panel **must** be undertaken prior to commencement of the Programme. The term “**Recommendation**” indicates an item to which the Institute/Academic Council/Course Board should give serious consideration for implementation at an early stage and which should be the subject of ongoing monitoring.*

The Panel would like to **commend** the programme development team for the quality of their submission and particularly for the collaborative nature of the programme design and development, which was evident on the day of the validation panel itself.

The Panel has considered the documentation provided and has discussed the programme with the proposers. Based on this, the Panel has arrived at a number of Findings, Requirements and Recommendations as follows.

### 1. Programme-Level Findings

#### 1.1 NEED FOR THE PROGRAMME

**Validation Criterion: Is there a convincing need for the programme with a viable level of applications?**

Overall Finding: Yes

#### 1.2 AWARD

**Validation Criterion: Are the level and type of the proposed award appropriate?**

Overall Finding: Yes

##### 1.2.1

The programme designation as a Master of Arts (as opposed to a Master of Science) was discussed. The proposers outlined that the programme followed a broader user-centred approach focussing on the design, presentation and usability of content and the felt/lived experience, rather than having a predominantly technological focus. In addition, at undergraduate level the Honours Bachelor of Arts with its distinct focus on design and creativity was an established brand, and a postgraduate qualification in Arts would be a more natural follow-on. The Panel accepted this.

#### 1.3 LEARNING EXPERIENCE

**Validation Criterion: Is the learning experience of an appropriate level, standard and quality overall?**

Overall Finding: Yes, subject to certain Requirements and/or Recommendations

The proposed Programme Outcomes as presented to the Panel are attached as [Appendix 1](#). Findings, requirements and recommendations concerning individual modules (if any) are recorded in Section 3 below.

##### 1.3.1

**Requirement:** A programme assessment schedule needs to be included for the programme.

##### 1.3.2

**Recommendation:** Programme Outcome 3 (Skill – Range) should be elaborated.

### 1.3.3

**Recommendation:** Following one or more iterations of the programme, the proposers should consider developing an alternative format for the research thesis (i.e. the modules *E-learning Thesis* and *E-learning Project*). This can be introduced in the context of the normal continual improvement processes within the Institute. In the Panel's opinion, the research report would be an alternative model which might merit investigation.

### 1.3.4

**Recommendation:** To foster cross-fertilization between modules, the programme development team should explore opportunities for joint assessment within the programme.

### 1.3.5

**Recommendation:** The programme team should strengthen the exposure of learners to pedagogical / learning theory in the Masters programme itself (rather than rely too much on the underpinning undergraduate CIT Multimedia programme or Special Purpose Award). In this context, the team should either explicitly include learning theories within current module learning outcomes, or should consider including a module specifically dedicated to learning theory.

## 1.4 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

**Validation Criterion: Is the programme structure logical and well designed (including procedures for access, transfer and progression)?**

Overall Finding: Yes, subject to certain Requirements and/or Recommendations

The Panel notes that the programme structure had already been the subject of external peer evaluation by Dr Patrick Felicia, WIT and Mr John Kelly, Webfios. The proposed Semester Schedules are included in [Appendix 2](#).

### 1.4.1

The proposed entry requirements are "a Level 8 degree in a cognate field (multimedia, digital media or related field) or equivalent as per CIT's approved policy for Recognition of Prior Learning". It is furthermore proposed that Level 8 graduates with qualifications in other fields will be required to undertake an initial 30 credit *Certificate in Digital Media Design & Development* (Special Purpose Award).

### 1.4.2

**Requirement:** The Panel considers that the programme entry requirements need to be clarified further, and more detail provided to applicants on who would be required to take the Special Purpose Award in Digital Media Design & Development. In particular, the programme developers should define specifically and in detail what they consider to be a cognate area for purposes of direct entry into the Masters programme.

### 1.4.3

**Recommendation:** Learning to learn and critical reflection should be more strongly embedded in the programme structure, particularly in the module *New Media Workplace* (see also the respective Module Recommendations under 2.3 below).

## 1.5 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

**Validation Criterion: Are the programme management structures adequate?**

Overall Finding: Yes

## 1.6 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

**Validation Criterion: Are the resource requirements reasonable?**

Overall Finding: Yes

The Panel was assured by the Head of CCAD on behalf of the President and CCAD that appropriate resources in terms of staffing and facilities will be put in place when the programme is validated.

## 1.7 IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTE

**Validation Criterion: Will the impact of the programme on the Institute be positive?**

Overall Finding: Yes

## 2. Module-Level Findings

The Panel notes that (2) modules on the proposed programme are pre-approved modules which may be delivered across several CIT programmes.

The Panel was informed that the new draft modules have already been considered by the CIT module moderator and external reviewers Dr Patrick Felicia, WIT and Mr John Kelly, Webfios.

In exercising its brief to consider the overall standard and appropriateness of modules, the Panel wishes to add the following findings, requirements and recommendations.

### 2.1 ALL MODULES

**Requirement:** Any revisions to Module Descriptors or Semester Schedules made to address the recommendations and requirements in this require sign-off from the CIT Module Moderator and the Registrar's Office prior to approval by the CIT Academic Council.

### 2.2 ALL DRAFT MODULES

**Recommendation:** The resources lists for all draft modules should be checked and completed/amended as appropriate (e.g. publication dates, typos).

### 2.3 MODULE *New Media Workplace* (Draft, Expert level, 5 cr.)

**Requirement:** The reading list provided needs to be reviewed and brought fully up to date.

**Recommendation:** Critical reflection should be embedded in the module. An e-Portfolio could be used as a tool to facilitate this, thus enabling the students taking the module to provide evidence of continuous work.

**Recommendation:** The proposers should consider including

- the Horizon Reports (<http://www.nmc.org/horizon-project>),
- MOOC's (Massive Open Online Courses), and
- psychometric testing.

**Recommendation:** As the resources and content of this module in the Panel's opinion is prone to date quickly, the programme team should continue to keep the module under review, and to update it as required as part of the normal continual improvement processes within CIT.

### 2.4 MODULE *E-learning Authoring* (Draft, Expert level, 5 cr.)

**Recommendation:** The programme team should consider adding author assessment to the module content.

### 2.5 MODULE *Module Design* (EDUC9013, Expert Level, 5 cr.)

**Recommendation:** At the next point of review of this approved module, the Panel suggests that the Module Coordinator should be requested to consider possibilities for broadening out the learning outcomes and content of this module to make it more suitable for learning situations beyond the immediate CIT context.

## 3. Other Findings

**Recommendation:** The Panel recommends that Cork Institute of Technology should consider requiring a programme assessment strategy to be included in the programme documentation for each proposed programme, in line with best practice as stated in HETAC's *Assessment and Standards* (2009).

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the Panel recommends to the Academic Council of Cork Institute of Technology that the **Master of Arts in E-learning Design & Development** should be validated for five academic years, or until the next programmatic review, whichever is soonest, subject to implementation of the Requirements above, and with due regard to the Recommendations made.

Implementation of Requirements
1.3.1 – Complete
1.4.2 – Complete
2.1 – Complete. Module Moderator sign-off: 1 May 2013. Registrar’s Office sign-off: 3 May 2013.
2.3 – Complete

The full implementation report received from the Programme Coordinator, Dr Gearoid O’Suilleabhain, is attached to this report (Appendix 3).

**APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Programme Outcomes**

## Programme Outcomes

On successful completion of this programme the learner will be able to :

<b>PO1</b>	<b>Knowledge - Breadth</b>	A systematic understanding and knowledge of the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a range of e-learning and technology-enhanced learning solutions within the e-learning industry and other sectors and workplaces, including, in particular, the broader education and training sector.
<b>PO2</b>	<b>Knowledge - Kind</b>	Critical awareness of contemporary and emerging issues with regard to e-learning and technology-enhanced learning research, development and practice.
<b>PO3</b>	<b>Skill - Range</b>	An advanced level of skills in the fields of e-learning design and development, educational research and pedagogy
<b>PO4</b>	<b>Skill - Selectivity</b>	An ability to select and implement, in a professional manner, industry-standard and emerging e-learning technologies and methodologies to address the needs of clients and learners.
<b>PO5</b>	<b>Competence - Context</b>	An ability to operate in a professional and self-initiating manner in a range of teams and contexts within the e-learning industry and other sectors and workplaces, including, in particular, the broader education and training sector.
<b>PO6</b>	<b>Competence - Role</b>	An ability to contribute significantly to and, as appropriate, take lead role in the design, development, implementation and research of pedagogically effective e-learning and technology-enhanced learning solutions.
<b>PO7</b>	<b>Competence - Learning to Learn</b>	An ability to reflect critically on one’s own practice and development and to direct their own continuing professional development requirements.
<b>PO8</b>	<b>Competence - Insight</b>	Critical reflection on pedagogical as well as the broader socio-cultural, psycho-cultural impacts and contexts of e-learning technologies and digital media in general.

## Appendix 2 – Semester Schedules

### Semester Schedules

#### Semester 1

Mandatory								
Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Hours Contact Hours	PT Hours Contact Hours	Course Work	Final Exam
EDUC9013	Module Design (Approved)	STEPHEN CASSIDY	Expert	5.0	1.00	1.00	100.0%	0%
EDUC9016	Education Research & Proposal (Approved)	STEPHEN CASSIDY	Expert	10.0	2.00	2.00	100.0%	0%
No Code Yet	New Media Workplace (Draft)	ROSE MC GRATH	Expert	5.0	2.00	1.50	100.0%	0%
No Code Yet	Narrative & Games for Learning (Draft)	ROSE MC GRATH	Expert	5.0	3.00	1.50	100.0%	0%
No Code Yet	E-Learning Authoring (Draft)	ROSE MC GRATH	Expert	5.0	4.00	3.00	100.0%	0%

#### Semester 2

Mandatory								
Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Hours Contact Hours	PT Hours Contact Hours	Course Work	Final Exam
No Code Yet	E-learning Thesis (Draft)	ROSE MC GRATH	Expert	20.0	0.25	0.25	100.0%	0%
No Code Yet	E-learning Project (Draft)	ROSE MC GRATH	Expert	10.0	0.25	0.25	100.0%	0%

### Appendix 3 – Implementation Report

REQUIREMENT/RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1.3.1. <b>Requirement:</b> A programme assessment schedule needs to be included for the programme.	A full week by week list of all assessment task details has been provided as well as a chart showing all assessment points.
1.3.2 <b>Recommendation:</b> Programme Outcome 3 (Skill – Range) should be elaborated.	<p>Programme Outcome 3 has now been elaborated and reads as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">An advanced level of skills in designing, developing, researching and evaluating e-learning solutions incorporating a range of pre-production, production and post-production multimedia skills.</p>
1.3.3 <b>Recommendation:</b> Following one or more iterations of the programme, the proposers should consider developing an alternative format for the research thesis (i.e. the modules <i>E-learning Thesis</i> and <i>E-learning Project</i> ). This can be introduced in the context of the normal continual improvement processes within the Institute. In the Panel’s opinion, the research report would be an alternative model which might merit investigation.	The proposers will consider an alternative format for the research thesis in the context of the programme’s continual improvement processes and have already changed the coursework breakdown to incorporate a report of initial feasibility study (week 4) and a “ ‘mid-way’ milestone class presentation” presentation (week 6).
1.3.4 <b>Recommendation:</b> To foster cross-fertilization between modules, the programme development team should explore opportunities for joint assessment within the programme.	In deference to the CIT framework and attendant requirements with regard to ensuring the maximum reusability of modules, no joint assessments have been created. The way however in which a number of semester 1 assessment outcomes directly support semester 2 work will be made explicit to students. This planned linkage is most conspicuous with regard to Education Research & Proposal (semester 1) and E-learning Thesis (semester 2) and E-Learning Authoring (semester 1) and E-learning Project (semester 2) but also relates to linkages between New Media Workplace(semester 1) and E-learning Thesis (semester 2) and between Narrative & Games for Learning (semester 1) and E-learning Project (semester 2).
1.3.5 <b>Recommendation:</b> The programme team should strengthen the exposure of learners to pedagogical / learning theory in the Masters programme itself (rather than rely too much on the underpinning undergraduate CIT Multimedia programme or Special Purpose Award). In this context, the team should either explicitly include learning theories within current module learning outcomes, or should consider including a module specifically dedicated to learning theory.	<p>A number of changes have been made to the programme modules to strengthen and extend pedagogical and learning theory aspects. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to the wording of the learning outcomes and indicative content for the Education Research &amp; Proposal module confirming the educational research and pedagogical linkages.</li> <li>• Changes to the wording of the learning outcomes and indicative content for the E-learning Authoring module underlining the nature of the process as one informed by Pedagogical and Instructional Design Principles.</li> <li>• Changes to the E-learning project module so it now incorporates a new learning outcome (“Apply a range of learning and design frameworks to the process of e-learning design and development”).</li> <li>• The inclusion of various pedagogical and psychological frameworks and models of learning in the indicative content for The Module Design module.</li> <li>• The inclusion of pedagogical perspectives on narrative and story in the Narrative &amp; Games for Learning module.</li> </ul>



<p>1.4.2 <b>Requirement:</b> The Panel considers that the programme entry requirements need to be clarified further, and more detail provided to applicants on who would be required to take the Special Purpose Award in Digital Media Design &amp; Development. In particular, the programme developers should define specifically and in detail what they consider to be a cognate area for purposes of direct entry into the Masters programme.</p>	<p>Further Clarification has been offered as follows:</p> <p>Direct entrants to this 60 credit award would require a level 8 qualification in the field of multimedia -- or cognate fields such as creative digital media, digital media design, interactive media, and multimedia applications -- or to evidence an equivalent learning as per CIT's policy for Recognition of Prior Learning.</p> <p>Level 8 graduates with qualifications in other fields can apply but may be required to undertake an initial 30 credit <i>Certificate in Digital Media Design and Development</i>. The stated aim and outcomes of this Special Purpose Award serve to indicate expectations for direct entry to the masters programme in terms of the applicant's requisite prior knowledge, skills and competence in the design, development and implementation of digital media technologies and solutions.</p>
<p>1.4.3 <b>Recommendation:</b> Learning to learn and critical reflection should be more strongly embedded in the programme structure, particularly in the module <i>New Media Workplace</i> (see also the respective Module Recommendations under 2.3 below).</p>	<p>The second learning outcome is now formulated as follows: Provide insights inside the processes of media creation, production and delivery by <i>critical reflection</i> on engagement with established industry players and sources.</p> <p>The first assessment has also now been changed as follows: <i>A reflective online learning journal</i> in the form of an e-portfolio, based around engagement with established industry players and sources.</p>
<p>2.1 ALL MODULES <b>Requirement:</b> Any revisions to Module Descriptors or Semester Schedules made to address the recommendations and requirements in this require sign-off from the CIT Module Moderator and the Registrar's Office prior to approval by the CIT Academic Council.</p>	<p>Revisions have all been signed off by the Registrar's Office.</p>
<p>2.2 ALL DRAFT MODULES <b>Recommendation:</b> The resources lists for all draft modules should be checked and completed/amended as appropriate (e.g. publication dates, typos).</p>	<p>The resources list for all draft and approved modules have been amended as appropriate.</p>
<p>2.3 MODULE <i>New Media Workplace</i> <b>Requirement:</b> The reading list provided needs to be reviewed and brought fully up to date; <b>Recommendation:</b> Critical reflection should be embedded in the module. An e-Portfolio could be used as a tool to facilitate this, thus enabling the students taking the module to provide evidence of continuous work ; <b>Recommendation:</b> The proposers should consider including: the Horizon Reports (<a href="http://www.nmc.org/horizon-project">http://www.nmc.org/horizon-project</a>), MOOC's (Massive Open Online Courses), and psychometric testing; <b>Recommendation:</b> As the resources and content of this module in the Panel's opinion is prone to date quickly, the programme team should continue to keep the</p>	<p>The reading list has been revised and brought up-to-date.</p> <p>The second learning outcome is now formulated as follows: Provide insights inside the processes of media creation, production and delivery by <i>critical reflection</i> on engagement with established industry players and sources.</p> <p>The first assessment has also now been changed as follows: <i>A reflective online learning journal</i> in the form of an e-portfolio, based around engagement with established industry players and sources.</p> <p>The NMC Horizon Reports now appear in the Resources section. MOOCs are listed, along with MMORPGs, as an example of the trend towards "massive" online spaces in the</p>

<p>module under review, and to update it as required as part of the normal continual improvement processes within CIT.</p>	<p>indicative content section and Psychometric testing has been added under Careers and Personal Development (also in the indicative content section).</p> <p>The programme team will continue to keep the module under review, and to update it as required as part of the normal continual improvement processes.</p>
<p>2.4 MODULE <i>E-learning Authoring</i>  <b>Recommendation:</b> The programme team should consider adding author assessment to the module content.</p>	<p>“Testing and assessment tools” already appears in the module’s indicative content but a number of learning outcomes have been changed to incorporate the design and development both of “e-learning content” and “e-learning activities”.</p>
<p>2.5 MODULE <i>Module Design</i>  <b>Recommendation:</b> At the next point of review of this approved module, the Panel suggests that the Module Coordinator should be requested to consider possibilities for broadening out the learning outcomes and content of this module to make it more suitable for learning situations beyond the immediate CIT context.</p>	<p>Already a number of changes have been made to the module’s learning outcomes and assessments to change the emphasis from the process of developing module descriptors to developing “pedagogically effective units of learning”.</p>