Report of Validation Panel

Date of Meeting: 30/April/2018

Named Award: Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

Programme Title: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Business with Aviation Studies

Award Type: Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

Award Class: Major Award

NFQ Level: 8

Intakes Commencing: September 2018

ECTS/ACCS Credits: 240

PANEL MEMBERS

Name / Function / Institution
Dr. Patricia Moriarty, Head of School of Business and Humanities, Dundalk Institute of Technology
Mr Owen Ross, Head of Department of Business and Management, Athlone Institute of Technology
Capt Niall Cummins, Safety Regulation Division, Irish Aviation Authority
Dr Susan Steele, Chief Executive Officer, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
Dr Stephen Cassidy, Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement, CIT

PROPOSING TEAM MEMBERS

Name / Function / Department
Dr Pio Fenton, Head of Department of Marketing and International Business
Dr Rose Leahy, Programme Coordinator, Department of Marketing and International Business
Dr Gearoid O'Suilleabhain, Head of Department of Technology Enhanced Learning
Ms Deirdre Goggin, Work Based Learning and RPL Facilitator,Externded Campus
Captain Kyle Johnson, Atlantic Flight Training Academy
Mr Gerard O'Donovan, Head of Faculty of Business and Humanities
Mr Brian McGrath, Head of School of Business

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The Department of Marketing and International Business seeks to validate a specially designed international business degree programme for airline pilots that reflects their training background, trajectories and career ambitions. The degree programme has been developed to incorporate the key tenets of internationalisation with respect to business with emphasis on cultures, operations, logistics and strategy. The programme will be delivered online and allow for progression through the programme in a timely manner reflecting the demands of careers within the aviation industry.

Entry criteria for the programme will recognise the training of qualified airline pilots and through Recognition of Prior learning will acknowledge their significant effort and learning at Level 6, 7 and 8 of the NFQ. The qualification will provide, through a conversion lens, key insight into issues confronting International Business. Candidates interested in

the proposed programme are motivated by the need to have business qualifications as essential elements of their career progression opportunities.

Thus programme was developed in response from a request from the Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA). AFTA are a significant player internationally with respect to pilot training and are considered national leaders within Ireland. Within their Cork base they attract an impressive cohort of students who serve the market in Europe and the Middle East in particular. In approaching CIT, they do so wishing to draw upon regional supports for education. Their team has an established track record of partnership with HEIs in Ireland on this matter also with a BSc in Airline Operations offered in conjunction with Waterford Institute of Technology. They are specific in their request on this occasion that the programme offered be a business programme. Furthermore, they are looking to partner on this programme on foot of their own evaluation of the market place. Through our engagement with AFTA we have held impactful meetings with Ryanair and other airlines who are united in their support for this programme.

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 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

Based on research undertaken by the Department, there is a large cohort of qualified pilots you would be interested in this programme. AFTA estimates that it has up to 2000 graduates from its school of which approximately 75% do not have a third level qualification. There is now a requirement for pilots wishing to progress to Captain rank, transfer to airline or airport operations management roles or to fly with a number of Middle Eastern Airlines to hold a third level qualification. That this programme is to be delivered online makes this programme feasible to undertake for this cohort of students.

1.2 AWARD

Validation Criterion: Are the level and type of the proposed award appropriate?
Overall Finding: Yes

Given the background of the students and the need to give the students a broad ovberview of international business, the panel were in agreement that the proposed Bachelor of Arts (Honours) was the most appropriate award type.

1.3 LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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

The panel were satisified that the graduates on successful completion of the programme would meet the generic award standards of a NFQ Level 8 programme.

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 Recommendations

The structure of the proposed programme is highly innovative to reflect the professional development needs of its target cohort of students. Features of the programme structure which were described in the self-study report and discussed at length during the panel meeting were:

1.4.1 Advanced Entry: The proposed programme is designed to give advanced entry into Stage 3 of the progamme to learners who have completed the AFTA Pilot Training Programme (or equivalent) and hold an Frozen ATPL (Airline

Transport Pilot License). In 2006, Waterford Institute of Technology mapped the pilot training syllabus as being equaivalent to 95 ECTS of higher education at range of levels on the National Framework of Qualifications as part of their Bachelor of Science in Airline Operations. The Department of Marketing and International Business have reviewed the updated syllabus which contains significant additional learning and is proposing that the combined learning is equivalent to 120 ECTS. The Department are proposing that potential applicants be required to develop a pre-entry portfolio which documents their formal pilot qualifications, describes additional learning gained whilst operating as a pilot post-qualification and includes an academic essay on a business topic relating to the aviation business to assess their suitability for the programme.

Finding: The panel **supports** the Department's proposal to grant advanced entry into Stage 3 for learners holding the Frozen ATPL (Airline Transport Pilot License) qualification.

Recommendation: The panel **recommends** that the Department and the Institute consider providing a range of supports to potential learners to aid them in the development of their pre-entry portfolio, in particular, the academic skills needed to complete the academic essay.

1.4.2 Online Delivery: Given the nature of the learner cohort, the department is proposing to deliver this programme entirely online. The Department presented well-reasoned arguments describing their careful pedagogical design of modules in respect to delivery and assessment modalities for online delivery.

Finding: The panel **supports** the Department's proposal to deliver this programme online.

Recommendation: The panel **recommends** that the Department takes every measure including, for example, online proctoring, presentations, stage submission of assignments to satisfy itself that the work presented is the work of the learner.

1.4.3 Module Sequencing: The programme has been designed, in general, with a series on standalone modules allowing learners to takes modules at a pace that meets their needs. The Department are proposing that all learners would be required to initially take the following two modules: *Global Management & Leadership* and *Sales & Marketing* and that learners would have successfully completed all or nearly all modules before commencing the capstone *Business Project* module.

Findings: The panel **supports** the Department's proposal to allow learners undertake the modules in a flexible sequence subject to the provisos listed above.

1.4.4 10 Credit Modules: The proposed programme consists of 10ECTS modules exclusively. A derogation for a series of 10 credit modules is sought based on emerging ideas about merging different pedagogical approaches, resources and technologies to create online modules which move from traditional high contact with low directed student learning to a low contact high directed student learning revolving, in turn, around additional tracked content on the one hand and a peer-based online community of learners on the other. Such an approach allows for the instructional design of modules that leverage the online environment to maximise the effectiveness of contact time while also supporting learners to take more ownership of and take greater responsibility for their own learning and development processes.

Finding: The panel **supports** the derogation request for this programme to be formed from 10 credit modules exclusively.

1.4.5 Award Classification: The programme has been developed with 120 ECTS of advanced level modules covering a broad range of areas associated with International Business. The Department is proposing that the programme's award be classified on the basis of these modules presented across the final two years of the programme. This will allow for flexibility of delivery and also ensures that the totality of student learning as part of the programme is reflected in their award.

Finding: The panel **supports** the derogation request for this programme that the classification of this award be based on the final 120 ECTS of the award.

1.4.6 Free Choice: Given the breadth of learning in International Business required of the learner to meet the programme outcomes of the programme, the Department is seeking a derogation from the inclusion of free choice electives in the programme. The learner will have an elective choice between two cognate electives in the latter stage of the programme.

Finding: Due to the unique structure of the programme, the panel supports the derogation request to not include a free choice elective in the programme.

1.4.7 Induction of Learners

Recommendation: The panel consider that the correct induction of learners onto the programme will be a key determinant in their success. The Deparment is proposing to re-purpose and deliver a range of online supports in areas such as academic skills, CIT policies and procedures and key technologies to be used. The panel recommend that the programme team consider supplementing these online supports with a 1 or 2 day induction workshop where learners undertake a formal induction programme, meet fellow participants on the programme and interact with key staff delivering the programme.

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 Faculty and School 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

The panel would like to **commend** the programme team on developing this programme which aligns with the business needs of the region and beyond.

2. Module-Level Findings

The following lecturers from the School of Business attended the panel session where modules were discussed in detail.

Louise Murphy	Dr AnneMarie Ivers
AnnMarie O'Donoghue	Sharon Lehane
Dr Deirdre O'Donovan	Elaine O' Brien
Dr Claudia Wagner	Dr Ana Cruz Garcia
Niamh Lenihan	Orla Cartner
Josephine O'Halloran	Scott McGowan

The panel would like to **commend** the programme team on the quality of the documentation presented to the panel and, in particular, the level of engagement by the programme team with the panel over the duration of the panel visit.

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

Recommendation: The development of IT skills is a basic necessity of any Honours degree graduate. In this programme, the development of these skills are embedded throughout the programme rather than in a bespoke module. The programme team should review module descriptors to highlight the nature of the IT skills being developed.

A focus on facilitation of groupwork throughout assessments would be very beneficial for this cohort and relevant opportunities should be undertaken.

The management of confidentiality within the programme should be determined at the outset to ensure company anonymity.

2.2. Module: Business Law

Recommendation: The panel recommends that the module be reviewed to move the focus more onto European and aspects of Aviation Law.

2.3. Module: Business Project

Recommendation: The panel recommends that the module descriptor be updated to show the correct supervisory hours have been allocated to this module. The project word length should also reflect the 10 ECTS weighting of the module (e.g. maximum of 8-10,000 words). The programme team could usefully review other modules with written assignments or reports and give indicative word counts, which would reflect both the overall credit weighting of the module and the weighting given to the particular assignment.

2.4. Module: Operation & Project Management

Recommendation: The panel recommends that the section under Business Process Improvement be revised to reflect the methodologies and tools used in the aviation industry.

2.5. Module: Geopolitics

Recommendation: The panel recommends that the module learning outcomes be re-written in more general terms rather than specifically naming individual countries which would give flexibility to the module lecturer to customise the delvery of the module to reflect current events or the interests of the learner cohort.

3. Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the Panel has arrived at the following Conclusions:

- The Programme meets the required standards for an award in the Arts field of study at Level 8 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

- The Programme meets the criteria for validation of a new programme adopted by the Academic Council of Cork Institute of Technology.

   The Panel therefore recommends that the Programme be validated for five academic years, or until the next programmatic review, whichever is soonest, having due regard to the Recommendations made.

APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Programme Outcomes

The programme outcomes have been designed to reflect primarily the knowledge, skills and learning developed during the duration of the programme but also to acknowledge the likely starting point for the programme's participants. The outcomes therefore include a tinge that reflect the professional technical qualification of the candidates as pilots Specifically, the programme outcomes will reflect the position of this programme as a Bachelor of Arts award.

PO1	Demonstrate their knowledge of the key business areas that underpin international business activity while building upon the competencies garnered in their aviation training and related experience.
PO2	To identify, analyse, evaluate and synthesise complex problems emanating from the global business environment with a view to forming rounded perspectives on issues such as international trade, international politics & culture, law, economics & trade, business development and other knowledge intrinsic to the development of opportunities for business in an international context that reflects the challenges of global volatility and uncertainty.
PO3	Design integrated business solutions to challenging problems that reflect the challenges of an ever-changing business environment.
PO4	Identify challenges and opportunities in an international context, supporting their analysis through reasoned argument, use of empirical data and synthesis of environmental factors such as politics, culture, trade, law and market forces.
PO5	Building upon the competences developed in their aviation training and careers in a complex and demanding role apply their knowledge in a range of business types including those that trade internationally including SME and MNC organisations.
PO6	Demonstrate their ability to offer leadership, take initiative and undertake responsibility for a range of dynamic environments necessitating possibilities such as working alone, in groups and as part of hierarchical structures while conscious of the personal and organisational motivations of themselves and others.
PO7	Display autonomy to control their own personal development through inquiry, reflection and investigation
PO8	Expose their consciousness of their own value and the intrinsic strengths and weaknesses and to further infuse their identified strengths in an ethical and responsible framework for their personal and career development.

Appendix 2 – Semester Schedules

Stage 3 / Semester 1

Mandatory

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	Global Management & Leadership (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.
No Code Yet	Sales & Marketing (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.

Stage 3 / Semester 2

Mandatory

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	The HRM Function (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	0.00	3.00	100.
No Code Yet	Finance Management (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	0.00	0.00	100.

Stage 3 / Semester 3

Mandatory

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	Cross Cultural Communication (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	0.00	100.
No Code Yet	Purchasing and Supply Mgmt (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.

Stage 4 / Semester 1

Mandatory

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	Strategy for the Global Enviro (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.

Elective

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	Economics and Trade (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.
No Code Yet	Geopolitics (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	0.00	0.00	100.

Stage 4 / Semester 2

Mandatory

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	Aviation Business Environment (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.
No Code Yet	Operation & Project Management (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	3.00	3.00	100.

Stage 4 / Semester 3

Mandatory

Mod Code	Module Title	Co-ordinator	Level	Credits	FT Contact Hours	PT Contact Hours	Cours Work
No Code Yet	Business Project (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	2.00	3.00	100.
No Code Yet	Business Law (Draft)	Pio Fenton	Advanced	10.0	0.00	0.00	100.

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Business with Aviation Studies
Response to Panel Recommendations

	Recommendation	Response
1.4.1	The panel **recommends** that the Department and the Institute consider providing a range of supports to potential learners to aid them in the development of their pre-entry portfolio, in particular, the academic skills needed to complete the academic essay.	We will develop a supporting document (drawing upon resources from the office of RPL) that will guide the student through the application process. We are also looking at developing a Video that can be used to assist on putting the portfolio together.
1.4.2	The panel **recommends** that the Department takes every measure including, for example, online proctoring, presentations, stage submission of assignments to satisfy itself that the work presented is the work of the learner.	The modules will be assessed and reviewed in line with Institute Policy. The online Proctoring process as outlined to Academic Council will be employed where necessary and the use of anti-plagiarism software will be ingrained in the programme's assessment mechanisms.
1.4.7	The panel consider that the correct induction of learners onto the programme will be a key determinant in their success. The Department is proposing to re-purpose and deliver a range of online supports in areas such as academic skills, CIT policies and procedures and key technologies to be used. The panel recommend that the programme team consider supplementing these online supports with a 1 or 2 day induction workshop where learners undertake a formal induction programme, meet fellow participants on the programme and interact with key staff delivering the programme.	The programme is delivered online and as such it may be difficult to organise a fully inclusive on-boarding induction that would be delivered in CIT. However, this will be considered and we can look at the matter from intake to intake. Equally, we may offer such a day in CIT (and/or Dublin) for those that might be able to attend in person with a similar induction available virtually. It should be noted that these practices are not the norm for such activities.
2.1	The development of IT skills is a basic necessity of any Honours degree graduate. In this programme, the development of these skills are embedded throughout the programme rather than in a bespoke module. The programme team should review module descriptors to highlight the nature of the IT skills being developed.	A review of modules has been carried out and some learning outcomes and indicative content has been updated to reflect the IT skills that are developed. In some cases this is reflected in the assessment mechanisms (Financial Management). Modules that have been updated explicitly include Economics & Trade, Financial Management and Sales & Marketing
2.2	**Business Law** The panel recommends that the module be reviewed to move the focus more onto European and aspects of Aviation Law.	This module has been updated to reflect the tenor of the panel discussion and recommendations. The Module will be retitled to Law for International Business.
2.3	**Business Project** The panel recommends that the module descriptor be updated to show the correct supervisory hours been allocated to this module.	This module has been updated to reflect the tenor of the panel discussion and recommendations.
2.4	**Module: Operation & Project Management** The panel recommends that the section under Business Process Improvement be revised to reflect the methodologies and tools used in the aviation industry.	This module has been updated to reflect this recommendation.
2.5	**Module: Geopolitics** The panel recommends that the module learning outcomes be re-written in more general terms rather than specifically naming individual countries which would give flexibility to the module lecturer to customise the delivery of the module to reflect current events or the interests of the learner cohort.	This module has been updated to reflect this recommendation.