Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Chorcaí
Cork Institute of Technology

PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW OF THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS & HUMANITIES 2015-2016

Phase 2: Programme Review

PROGRAMME PANEL REPORT

SCHOOL: School of Business
DEPARTMENT: Accounting & Information Systems (Agriculture & Horticulture)
DATE: 12TH & 13TH APRIL 2016

PROGRAMMES SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

Major Awards

[Please give the full title for every programme under review, and indicate embedded/exit awards. Where a title change is recommended, please add the proposed title in brackets if known.]

Program	Award	Specialisation	ECTS Credits
CR_BAGRI_6	Higher Certificate in Science	Agriculture	120
CR_BAGRI_7	Bachelor of Science	Agriculture	180
CR_BAGRI_8	Bachelor of Science (Honours)	Agriculture	240
CR_BHORT_7	Bachelor of Science	Horticulture	180
CR_BHORT_8	Bachelor of Science (Honours)	Horticulture	240

Non-Major Awards

None

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

[Please denote the Panel Chair. Also indicate any persons in attendance, e.g. note-takers.]

Michael Hagan, Lecturer in Horticulture, IT Blanchardstown (Panel Chair)
Matt Cotterell, Head of School of Mechanical Electrical & Process Engineering
Dr Kate Semple, Senior Lecturer, CAFRE
Johnny O'Brien, Master Farmer, IFA

PROGRAMME REPRESENTATION

Programme Staff

Marie Dorgan, Lecturer, Department Accounting and Information Systems

Julie Cavanagh, Lecturer, Department Accounting and Information Systems

George Murphy, Lecturer, Department Accounting and Information Systems

Colette M Murphy, Lecturer, Department Marketing & International Business

Maurice Murphy, Lecturer, Department Management & Enterprise

Majella Moloney, College Principal, Clonakilty Agricultural College-Teagasc

Karen O'Connell, Lecturer, Clonakilty Agricultural College-Teagasc

Clive Atkinson, Lecturer Department of Process, Energy and Transport Engineering

Joseph Croke, Lecturer Department of Biological Sciences

Eddie Fitzgerald, Lecturer Department of Biological Sciences

Learner Representatives

Louise Crowley, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Full Time Stage 1, Student Representative

Eoin O'Sullivan, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Full Time Stage 1, Student Representative

Rachel Keohane, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Full Time Stage 3, Student Representative

Miriam Adair, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Full Time Stage 4, Student Representative

Owen O'Driscoll, Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, Full Time Stage 1, Student Representative

Ann Daly, Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, Full Time Stage 3, Student Representative

Tommy Hayes, Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, Full Time Stage 4, Student Representative

Graduates

John O'Sullivan, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture (Studying Masters Research Accounting)

David O'Leary, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture

Caroline O'Sullivan, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture

Cara Tremayne, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture

Jennifer Beasley, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture

David Gerard Murphy, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture

Jonathan O'Callaghan, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture

External Stakeholders

Trevor Martin, Waterfall Farms

Francis Kearney, Irish Cattle Breeders Federation

Michael O'Driscoll, Bandon Co-Op

A. PROGRAMME SUMMARY AND MAJOR CHANGES PROPOSED

1. [BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURE]

1.1. **Programme Summary**

The BSc in Agriculture is a three-year ab-initio full-time degree programme with an embedded Higher Certificate exit award.

The programme develops farming, business and management skills to enable graduates to follow careers as successful commercial farmers or in the agribusiness sector. It will provide graduates with the skills they will need to be able to participate actively in policy decisions whether they are local, regional or international – which will influence their profession and its role in a modern economy.

1.2. **Major Changes Now Proposed**

The proposed modifications are detailed in Section 8 of the Programme Submission and the major changes are as follows:

- Soil Science replaces Crop Science in Stage One/Semester One
- A customised Maths module is introduced in Stage One/Semester Two
- Laboratory component has been incorporated into the Marketing module
- A new Agri-Chemistry is introduced in Stage Two/Semester One
- Two generic Law modules are replaced by one customised Law module
- International Business Environment module is introduced in Stage Three/Semester One
- Spreadsheet content is incorporated into the Financial Management for Agri module in Stage Three/Semester Two

2. [BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN AGRICULTURE]

2.1. **Programme Summary**

The BSc(Hons) in Agriculture is a one-year add-on full-time degree for candidates who have achieved a minimum 50% average in the BSc in Agriculture.

The BSc(Hons) in Agriculture degree offers student the opportunity to continue their studies preparing them for more advanced entry to business with a higher skill portfolio. The degree focuses on two key areas relevant to the Munster area namely Dairy production and Food Processing, while building on the programme currently undertaken by students at CIT and equally offering progression opportunities for graduates from comparable level 7 Agriculture degree programmes.

2.2. **Major Changes Now Proposed**

The proposed modifications are detailed in Section 8 of the Programme Submission and the major changes are as follows:

- A new Advanced Soil Science is introduced in Stage Four/Semester Two

3. [Bachelor of Science in Horticulture]

3.1. **Programme Summary**

The BSc in Horticulture is a three-year ab-initio full-time degree programme.

The course is unique in its mix of knowledge and skill in three distinct disciplines – business; science; and art. The programme supports the two distinct areas within horticulture:

Amenity: This includes landscape design along with constructing and maintaining parks, public areas, sports grounds, recreation facilities and roadsides. Interior landscaping is a specialism within amenity horticulture which is concerned with the design, installation, and maintenance of plantings in shopping centres, office buildings, hotels, residences, etc.

Commercial: This involves growing crops such as fruit/vegetables, nursery stock, bedding plants for sale.

3.2 Major Changes Now Proposed

The proposed modifications are detailed in Section 8 of the Programme Submission and the major changes are as follows:

- Soil Science replaces Plant Propagation in Stage One/Semester One
- A customised Maths module is introduced in Stage One/Semester Two
- Laboratory component has been incorporated into the Marketing module
- A new Agri-Chemistry is introduced in Stage Two/Semester One
- Two generic Law modules are replaced by one customised Law module
- Selling and Sales module is introduced in Stage Three/Semester One
- Spreadsheet content is incorporated into the Financial Management for Agri module in Stage Three/Semester Two

4. [Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture]

4.1. **Programme Summary**

The BSc (Hons) in Horticulture is a one-year add-on full-time degree for candidates who have achieved a minimum 50% average in the BSc in Horticulture.

The BSc (Hons) in Horticulture degree offers student the opportunity to continue their studies preparing them for more advanced entry to business with a higher skill portfolio. Particular focus is being paid to Agri food in terms of fruit, vegetables and flowers for which the Munster region has an identified competitive advantage, while building on the programme currently undertaken by students at CIT and equally offering progression opportunities for graduates from comparable level 7 Horticulture degree programmes.

4.2. **Major Changes Now Proposed**

The proposed modifications are detailed in Section 8 of the Programme Submission and the major changes are as follows:

- A new Advanced Soil Science replaces the Nutrition and Health module in Stage Four/Semester Two

B. PANEL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Overall Recommendation to Academic Council on Revalidation

[Please remove OR retain & adapt any text in square brackets as required.]

Upon confirmation of [the fulfilment of any Panel conditions and] the successful completion of the internal programme and module moderation process, the Panel **recommends to Academic Council that the programmes listed above be revalidated** for a further five years or until the next Programmatic Review, whichever is sooner, with effect from [Insert Date].

No conditions are attached to this recommendation other than Registrar's Office approval of the programme and module specifications.

2. General

2.1 **Commendations**

The Panel complements the programme staff on the comprehensive documentation submitted. Interactions with staff, students, graduates and employers were very open and informative. The Panel was very impressed by the students and graduates interviewed in the course of the Review and it was clear that staff are highly committed to providing the best learning experience for their students. Graduates had a strong sense of identity with their respective programmes and their enthusiasm/experiences should be harnessed particularly in the future promotion of the programmes.

3. Graduate Profile and Award

3.1 **Commendation**

The Panel commended the Programme team on the introduction of Soil Science and Advanced Soil modules into the programmes as this will open up opportunities for level 8 graduates as Teagasc Farm Advisors and potentially as Agriculture Science teachers through the Teaching Council.

3.2 **Recommendations**

The Programme Team is advised to take any further necessary steps to develop the opportunities outlined above.

Whilst graduates felt they had received a good broad-based education (and this was echoed by employers) they were unsure when it came to graduation as to what job opportunities were open to them. It is recommended that there would be engagement with the CIT Careers Office in this regard in terms of enhancing awareness of the opportunities and career paths open to them.

4. Programme Operation and Performance

4.1 Panel Observations

The Agriculture students and Horticulture students tend to come from different backgrounds. Whilst the Agriculture programme has a strong CAO uptake the Horticulture programme attracts a greater number of mature applicants. As the programme is delivered on two campuses the issues of travel and accommodation were explored with students and graduates. Travel to and from Clonakilty was less of an issue for Agriculture than for Horticulture students. There is less pressure on lecture rooms in Clonakilty College and students had better access to IT facilities there than in CIT. Nationally Agriculture as a discipline has a much higher prominence than horticulture and there is considerable scope to increase the production of fruit and vegetables in the country. The South West Region has a unique micro-climate which enables the growing of plants not normally possible at these latitudes; the Region also contains excellent visitor centres that attract tourists interested in gardens and landscaping. A focus on these regional strengths and the potential for future growth are key factors in the promotion of the Horticulture programmes in CIT.

4.2 Panel Recommendations

- The Panel recognises the challenge in attracting sufficient student numbers into the Horticulture programme stream. Any barriers (such as travel) that prevent students taking up places on the programme or in continuing with participation in the programme need to be examined and appropriate actions initiated.
- The visibility of Agriculture and Horticulture as disciplines in their own right is not prominent on the CIT website and this deficit needs to be addressed.
- In the case of Horticulture the Panel strongly recommends the establishment of a Stakeholder Focus Group to consider the marketing and promotion of this programme stream.
- The development of practical teaching resources for Horticulture students (subject to budgetary constraints) should be a priority. This could be undertaken on the CIT Bishopstown campus through enhanced landscaping ("Eden" at CIT as one student put it) and the production of plant and food products on the campus. Good synergies exist with the Herbal Science and Nutrition/Health programmes in Bishopstown and there is considerable scope for shared facilities. The new Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units in Bishopstown are a valuable heating source and the cultivation of vegetable/fruit produce for the kitchens and Culinary Arts programmes on the campus would be a welcome development.

5. Proposed Programme Specification (incl. Delivery and Assessment)

5.1 Recommendation

- Students/Graduates in both programme streams suggested the possibility of dividing Work Placement into smaller blocks or in developing other placement opportunities as they feel they miss out on certain aspects due to seasonal effects. The Programme Teams are requested to consider the merits/de-merits of such an approach.
- Students/Graduates felt there was an emphasis in the business modules on large scale enterprises and that there was scope to include of knowledge for small business operations e.g. VAT/PRSI.
- Is there scope for students lacking practical farming skills to elect to spend more time on specific Clonakilty units to improve their suitability for work placement? Ideally there could be a

requirement of a minimum period of work experience in farming prior to commencing the Agriculture programme but it was recognised that this would be subject to external constraints.

6. MODULES

This section presents the findings and recommendations from an indicative review of modules carried out by the members of the Peer Review Panel. The Panel notes that a comprehensive survey of module specifications could not be carried out in the context of this review.

Therefore, a recommendation of the Panel to revalidate the programme(s) under review is contingent on the successful prior completion of the subsequent internal programme and module moderation process carried out by, or on behalf of, the CIT Registrar's Office.

6.1 Recommendations

- Employers were of the opinion that the basic mathematical skills and applied IT competencies of graduates need improvement. The Panel welcomes the proposed programme changes that address these issues but requests that the Programme Teams keep these areas under review.
- Learning resources need to up-dated in a consistent manner across all modules.
- The Panel welcomed the inclusion of training on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive -SUD (in the Land Mechanisation module with support from other modules) which will allow graduates of both Agriculture and Horticulture to register as professional users without the need for further training. It was recommended that this needs to be explicitly stated in the module Learning Outcomes and that students are advised as to the details of the registration process.
- Horticulture students expressed some disappointment at Electives not being available. The areas in which they had particular interest were Plantmanship and Botany/Plant Identification. It is recommended that the selection of electives available should be reviewed and only those with a high probability of running should be listed.

7. OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (INCL. ON PROCESS)

None

8. DEROGATIONS SOUGHT

None

C. PROGRAMME FINALISATION

*[This section is to be completed by the **CIT Registrar's Office.***

It records the implementation of any panel requirements and the completion of the internal module moderation process. Confirmation of completion by the CIT Registrar's Office is required for both before the programmes can be submitted to the CIT Academic Council for revalidation.]

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF PANEL REQUIREMENTS

2. MODULE AND PROGRAMME MODERATION

D. APPENDIX – TIMETABLE OF PHASE 2 MEETINGS