

Programmatic Review of the Faculty of Business & Humanities 2016

Phase 2: Programme Review

PROGRAMME PANEL REPORT

SCHOOL: School of Humanities
DEPARTMENT: Department of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies
DATE: April 12 - 13th 2016

PROGRAMMES SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

Major Awards

BA in Early Years Education
BA (Hons) in Early Years Education
BA (Hons) in Montessori Education

Non-Major Awards

None

PROGRAMME REVIEW PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Kathryn O’Riordan, Cork City Childcare Company (Chair)
Professor Francis Douglas, UCC
Dr. Mary Moloney, Mary Immaculate College
Dr Mary Daly, Independent Early Years Advisor
Dr. Tom O’Mahony, Dept. of Electrical & Electronic Eng., CIT.

PROGRAMME REPRESENTATION

Programme Staff

Dr. Cian O’ Neill, Head, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies
Dr. Vanessa Murphy, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies
Dr. Judith Butler, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies
Dr. Frances Clerkin, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies
Evelyn Egan Rainy, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies

Marian Quinn, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies

Ona McGrath, Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies

Learner Representatives

Joely- Kim Maynard, Early Years Education, Year 4, Student Representative

Orla Beamish, Early Years Education, Year 3, Student Representative

Sarah Coughlan, Early Years Education, Year 2, Student Representative

Alison Draper, Early Years Education, Year 1, Student Representative

Ann Donnellan, Montessori Education, Year 3, Student Representative

Ciara O'Callaghan, Montessori Education, Year 3, Student Representative

Denise Byrne, Montessori Education, Year 4, Student Representative

Isabelle Veale, Montessori Education, Year 4, Student Representative

Graduates

Wendy Oke, Early Years Education, currently completing an MA in ECEC

Janette Crowley, Montessori Education, employer in ECEC

Constantina O'Sullivan, Montessori Education, Children's book author

External Stakeholders

Joanie Barron, Wallaroo Playschool, Project Co-ordinator

Sarah O Leary, Cheeky Cherubs , Co-Owner

Elaine Bermingham, Model Farm Road, Manager

A. PROGRAMME SUMMARY AND MAJOR CHANGES PROPOSED

1. BA IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

1.1. Programme Summary

The Ba in Early Years Education is a NFQ Level 7 programme. The aim of the programme is to support graduates to develop the requisite dispositions, attitudes, knowledge, skills and competences to work with and on behalf of children. Graduates are trained to educate and meet the specific needs of children aged birth-6 years and to manage ECEC facilities. The current intake for this programme is approximately 60 students per year. On successful completion of this programme, students who achieve an average of 50% or greater in Year 3 are eligible to progress to the BA (Hons) Early Years Education programme of study (Level 8). Currently, there is no provision for undertaking the BA in Early Years Education programmes on a part time basis.

1.2. Major Changes Now Proposed

The key changes proposed can be summarised as follows:

- The profession of Early Childhood Education and Care has changed dramatically and as a consequence the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes of graduates need to reflect this change. Many of the proposed changes are in response to this change in the profession.
- The programme now entails 40 credits for placement (two 20 credit placements) instead of 25 credits. To support this, Personal & Professional Development modules have been revised and better integrated with placement modules. A consequence was the need to reduce content in areas such as health, law and the arts. Furthermore, a lot of modules have been re-arranged to support and make space for the 20 credit placement modules.
- Strengthening the emphasis on the participatory rights of young children in early childhood education and care settings via new modules such as Children's Rights, Curriculum & Assessment, Creative & Critical Thinking, and Outdoor Learning.
- Personal & Professional Development is included in all four years of the programme with a strong emphasis on critical reflection, constructing a professional identity, emotional intelligence, leadership and advocacy as well as skills for working with children such as listening, conflict resolution, etc.

The following details by semester the proposed amendments:

Year One:

- The module Child Pedagogy has been removed
- The module Exercise & Play is redeveloped as Physical Activity & Movement
- A new module, Creative and Critical Thinking has been introduced to facilitate an awareness of the child as a confident and competent co-constructer of their understanding of themselves and their world.
- Developmental Psychology moved from Sem 2 of Year 1 to Sem 1 of Year 1.
- Sociology has been developed as Sociological Perspectives and moves from Sem 2 of Year 1 to Sem 1 of Year 1

- A new module Play and Learning is introduced into Semester 2
- Child Health and Development is retitled as Child Health & Well-Being.
- The module, Inclusion: Equality & Diversity has been moved from Year 3 (Sem 6) to Semester 2.
- Introduction to Creative Arts has become Process-Led Creative Arts and moved from Sem 1, Year 1 to Sem 2, Year 1.
- Placement has been removed and incorporated into the extended placement in Year 2.
- Theatre Production has been removed as a module.
- An Ghaeilge has moved to Year 4 of the programme so that the students Irish skills will be fresher when going into professional practice.
- Free Choice has been removed from Semester 2

Year Two

- A new module, Inclusion: Additional Needs is introduced into Sem 1
- The module Early Education Legislation is redeveloped as Civil Aspects of Child Law
- Creative Arts 2 is re-designated Learning Through the Arts
- Adapted Physical Activity moves from being an elective in Sem 4 to a mandatory module in Sem 3.
- Prof & Per Dev (Second Stage) is redeveloped as PPD: Intermediate

- A 20 credit placement module is introduced into Sem 2 of Year 2
- A 10 credit Understanding ECEC Settings module is introduced into Sem 2 of Year 2
- Child Pedagogy (Second Stage) has been removed from Sem 3
- Childhood Behavioural Disorder has been removed from Sem 4
- Free Choice has been removed from Semester 3

Year Three

- Educational Psychology is renamed Educational Psychology in ECEC
- A new module, ICT & Learning is introduced into Sem 5
- A new module, Curriculum & Assessment is introduced into Sem 5
- A new module, Outdoor Learning in ECEC is introduced into Sem 5
- A new module, Literacy and Numeracy in ECEC is introduced into Sem 5
- Business, Law and HR has been redeveloped and is now to be called Management and Business Law. It is moved from Year 4 (Sem 7) to Year 3 (Sem 5). Previously it was a required module and it is now an elective.
- The module, ECCE Groupwork has been removed
- The module Child Pedagogy (third stage) has been removed
- The module Comparative Social Policy has been removed
- The elective module RITE has been removed
- The module Create Arts 3 has been redeveloped as Arts in an Emergent Curriculum
- A new module, Inclusion: Supporting EAL has been introduced
- The module Early Years Educational Research Design is now called Research Skills in ECEC. It has moved from Year 4 (Sem 7) to Year 3 (Sem 6)
- Professional Dev (Third Stage) has been redeveloped as PPD: Advanced. It is moved from Sem 5 to Sem 6.
- A new module, Children's Rights in ECE has been introduced as an elective
- The module Out of School Care has been moved from Year 4 (Sem 8) to Sem 6. It was a required module and is now an elective
- The module Research Skills (Introduction) has been removed
- The elective module, Early Education and the Law has been removed

2. BA (HONS) IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

2.1. Programme Summary

The BA (Hons) in Early Years Education is a NFQ Level 8 degree programme which currently runs in full time mode only. The majority of students who complete the BA in Early Years Education continue to the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education. Year 4 develops the BA in Early Years graduate through a focus on research, reflective practice and leadership.

2.2. Major Changes Now Proposed

Years 1 to 3 are common with the BA in Early Years Education. See section 1.2 for a summary of those changes. The major change to the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education has been in the introduction of 20 credit placement module in Sem 7 and an accompanying 10 credit Research to Practice in ECEC module. This has meant significant restructuring, redevelopment, movement of modules and reduced content.

The following details by semester the proposed amendments:

Year four:

- A 20 credit placement module, Placement: Reflective Practice has been introduced
- A new 10 credit Research to Practice in ECEC module has been developed
- The module Therapeutic Applications is removed
- The module Multicultural Education is removed
- The elective module Kodaly-Inspired Education is removed
- The elective module, Early childhood Intervention is removed
- The module Research Dissertation is retitled Research Dissertation in ECEC
- A new module, PPD: Leadership in Practice is introduced in Sem 8
- The module, Social Policy which was in Year 2 (Sem 4) is renamed Early Childhood Social Policy and now appears in Year 4 (Sem 8).
- The module, Health and Nutrition which was in Year 2 (Sem 4) is renamed Child Health and Nutrition and now appears in Year 4 (Sem 8)
- The module Administration and Finance is redeveloped as Enterprise for ECEC. It has been changed from a mandatory module to an elective module.
- The elective module on Ghaeilge has been moved from Year 1 (Sem 2) to Year 4 (Sem 8)

3. BA (HONS) IN MONTESSORI EDUCATION

3.1. Programme Summary

The BA (Hons) in Montessori Education is a NFQ Level 8 degree programme which currently runs in full time mode only. The programme aims to produce highly skilled Montessori educators with the requisite knowledge, skills, dispositions, attitudes and competence to work effectively to meet the requirements of children. This is a relatively new degree that was developed as a joint venture between Cork College of Commerce (CCOC) and CIT. CIT offers the final two years of the programme. To enter the programme students need to have completed a QQI Level 6 award (to enter into Y3) or have achieved a BA (Level 7) to enter Y4.

3.2. Major Changes Now Proposed

Based on feedback from focus groups with students and an industrial advisory panel significant changes have been made to Semester 7 of Year 4. Modules have been moved into this year and new modules created.

The following details by semester the proposed amendments:

Year Three:

- The module Linking Education to PE has been renamed PE: Moving and Learning and moved from Year 4 (Sem 7) to Year 3 (Sem 5)
- The elective modules have been removed from Sem 5 and there is now no free choice in Sem 5.

Year Four

- The module APA for the Young Child which was an elective module in Year 3 (Sem 5) of the programme now appears as a mandatory module in Sem 7 of Year 4.
- A new module, Creative and Critical Thinking is proposed for Sem 5 of Year 4

- A new module, Outdoor Learning in ECEC is being proposed as an elective module for Sem 5 of Year 4
- A management module Management and Business Law (an existing module but not used on this programme previously) is being introduced as an elective into Sem 5 of Year 4.
- The module Educational Research Skills is being renamed Montessori Research Skills
- The module Pedagogy in Practice is being renamed Teaching Process
- The module Linking Education to PE has been renamed and moved to Sem 5
- The module Literacy and Inclusion practices has been removed
- The elective module Single vs CoEd Schooling has been removed
- The elective module Kodaly-Inspired Education has been removed
- The elective module, Administration and Finance has been replaced with the Elective module An Ghaeilge in Sem 8
- The module Educ. Research Dissertation has been renamed Montessori Dissertation

B. PANEL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. OVERALL RECOMMENDATION TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL ON REVALIDATION

Contingent upon the fulfilment of any Panel conditions and upon confirmation of 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 1 September 2016.

The panel believes that modules in the final year of a Level 8 programme should be at advanced level and that the learning outcomes and assessment schema of these modules should reflect the higher order cognitive and/or affective level of the module. In particular, the panel believes it is not good practice to move modules from early to later years in programmes. Such a move, where deemed necessary, requires that new modules reflecting the new higher order level of the module be written. Therefore, as condition of revalidation, the following Panel requirements must be met for both the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education and the BA (Hons) in Montessori Education:

- 1.1. **Requirement:** The Panel requires that modules moved from earlier years need to be substantially changed to develop the L8 graduate. This necessitates that they become new modules.
- 1.2. **Requirement:** The Panel requires that unless modules are being shared with another programme, or are outside of the main discipline area, and with the exception of the module An Ghaeilge, all other modules in Y4 should be at the "Advanced" level.
- 1.3. **Requirement:** The Panel requires a much higher percentage of the module LO's appear at the upper ends of an appropriate taxonomy of learning outcomes (cognitive, affective, etc).

2. GENERAL

- 2.1. **Commendation:** The Panel **commends** teaching staff delivering these programmes who are highly qualified, capable and motivated. They are passionate about their subjects and very professional. It is evident that they undertook the programmatic review very seriously and have engaged with this process extensively and proposed significant changes to the existing programme. The engagement, by staff within the department, with the panel was excellent. The BA (Hons) in Early Years Education program is highly rated by students, graduates and employers. Two of the three employers would have rated CIT students/graduates from this programme as more capable than those from any other programme. The students that the panel met were excellent. They were well prepared, equally passionate, informed, articulate and reflective.

3. ENTRANT AND GRADUATE PROFILE, AWARD AND PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 Entry to the BA (Hons) in Montessori Education occurs at Y3 from a variety of feeder QQI L6/L7 courses. At present, Y1 and Y2 are not delivered in CIT. The obvious implication is

that CIT is dependent on other providers to deliver these years. Generally, these courses tend to focus on the 3 – 6 year old age group and years 3 and 4 which are provided by CIT focus on the 6 – 12 year old age group. There is some inconsistency in this structure in the fact that the more important course is taught at the lowest level and the most important course from the point of child development (0-3 age group) is not taught at all. It would be the panel's view that a more integrated, coherent programme would result if CIT was to take responsibility for designing and delivering the entire programme.

3.2 Recommendation: The panel **strongly recommends** that 1st and 2nd year of the Montessori degree is offered at CIT to ensure the quality and coherence of the programme. Current pathways onto the programme should be maintained. In developing this programme recommendations 5.6, 5.7 and 5.10 need to be reflected on.

4. PROGRAMME OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE

4.1 Commendation: The panel **commends** the work of the Department and programme teams in the support they provide to their students. The student representatives that the panel met were vocal in their praise for the teaching staff that they encountered on the programme.

4.2 Commendation: The panel **commends** the Department on the operation of their programmes in terms of student recruitment, retention and graduation rates.

5. PROPOSED PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (INCL. DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT)

5.1 Commendation: In relation to the BA and the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education, the panel **commends** the programme team on the suggested changes to the placement modules which are well considered and, in the panels view, improve both programmes. The suggested changes to the assessment process for the placement module are likewise very welcomed and to be commended. The placement modules would appear to be well linked and integrated with the personal/professional development modules that support them. This theme of the programme has been well considered and strengthened.

5.2 Commendation: The panel **commends** the programme team for the emphasis on Creativity, Arts and Music which is a particular strength of the BA and the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education and continues to feature strongly in the proposed programme.

5.3 Commendation: The panel **commends** the programme team for introducing the module Literacy and Numeracy on the BA in Early Years Education. It is welcomed and strengthens the proposed new programme in that context.

5.4 Recommendation: The panel **strongly recommend** that the programme team re-consider the most important stage of childhood – birth to three age group - within the programme. Very few of the learning outcomes seem to specifically target this age group. Students confirmed this view and acknowledged that they were poorly prepared to work with the 0-3 year-old age group. They confirmed that, within the programme, there was relatively little theory or practice related to this age group.

5.5 Recommendation: In relation to the BA and the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education, the panel **strongly recommend** that the programme team re-consider making all management

related modules elective. One of the stated aims of the programme is that graduates would be trained to “manage ECEC facilities”. In the proposed programme all management related modules are elective and this aim is not delivered. It would be the panel’s recommendation that at least one of these modules would become mandatory. While there are any number of possibilities for achieving this, the panel would suggest that the programme team consider the relative merits of the Law and Management themes within the programme.

- 5.6. **Recommendation:** In relation to the Ba (Hons) in Montessori Education, the panel would **strongly recommend** that the programme team need to reflect on the purpose of the programme and what graduates are qualified to do – is it fundamentally about the Montessori Philosophy or Teacher Training? While the programme aim suggests the former, many of the modules in Yr 4 and the students that the panel met suggest the latter. Given that there is no longer ‘Conditional Registration’ by the Teaching Council this latter role needs to be considered and the implications for students undertaking the programme for that purpose need to be explicit. Currently, there is ambiguity in relation to employment opportunities following completion of the programme.
- 5.7 **Recommendation:** The panel **strongly recommend** that the programme team re-consider the organisation of the BA (Hons) in Montessori Education. Consistent with 3.1, the panel would recommend that a more holistic approach be adopted in which child development, age groups, philosophy and teaching methods are integrated throughout the degree. In the proposed programme there is a need to revise and revisit theory and practice as it relates to younger children. This needs to be pitched at the correct level so that it is intellectually demanding. [The panel acknowledges that there are few Montessori courses that target the 0-3 age category. The panel suggest that the course provided by Waterpark Montessori, might be a useful starting point.]
- 5.8 **Recommendation:** The panel **recommends** that disadvantage and inclusion feature more prominently in the revised programme. The panel suggest that the new model of inclusion, launched in November 2015 be embedded in the revised programme. This is important given that Ireland’s children now come from many different types of background. Within this theme, the team might consider the inclusion of parents, especially those from vulnerable families and those new to Ireland with EAL.
- 5.9 **Recommendation:** The panel **recommend** that play as a mechanism for learning within the quality frameworks could be more fully defined. The emphasis on outdoor play is brilliant but are the fundamentals of play emphasised enough?
- 5.10 The panel acknowledges the thought, time and effort that the team have invested in re-organising the programme to accommodate the placement modules. The scope of this change is extensive (Section A 1 & 2). However, in places, the progression and development of thematic areas and content needs to be re-considered. The panel would **suggest** that the Model Framework for Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Educational Sector (Dept. of Justice, quality and Law Reform, 2002) might be considered as a mechanism to identify and review core themes within both programmes (0-6yr age groups). For each theme within this framework, the programme team might reflect on how learning progresses from broad, general concepts to narrow or more specific areas. Within a thematic area, modules need to build on prior ones. Within each theme, are the constituent modules predominantly theoretical, practical or do they combine an equal mix of theory and practice? The panel believe that Aistear, Siolta and the Practice Guide should be introduced in Semester 1 and weaved through modules

throughout the four years. They are key frameworks for students. It is important to ensure that modules considered essential by the Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs are encompassed.

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 completion of the subsequent internal programme and module moderation process carried out by, or on behalf of, the CIT Registrar's Office.

- 6.1 **Recommendation:** The panel **recommends** that the programme team re-consider the need for the module "Research to Practice in ECEC" on the BA (Hons) in Early Years Education programme. In light of earlier recommendations on progression of skills and knowledge and the need for more management related modules, the programme team might consider whether an applied research project that would focus upon management might be a better use of these.
- 6.2. **Recommendation:** In relation to the BA and BA (Hons) in Early Years Education, the panel **recommend** that the team consider the provision of industry specific accredited skill courses e.g. first-aid, manual handling, food safety. From a safety and legal perspective, it might be important that students complete some of this training prior to going on work placement.
- 6.3 **Recommendation:** The panel **recommend** that Montessori students need to have their role within the primary school classroom clarified when undertaking placements. Further, there is a need to explain/clarify the expectations of both the students and teachers within the school to avoid any potential confusion for students on placement.
- 6.4 The panel **suggests** that the programme team re-consider the need for the module "Understanding ECEC Settings" on the BA in Early Years Education. At present it is our view that it is not sufficiently differentiated from the 20 credit placement module to warrant 10 credits of new learning. The panel would suggest that the team consider whether there are other modules that need to be included instead of Understanding ECEC settings, whether the module should be included as part of a 30-credit placement module or that it be better differentiated from the placement module through the LOs and indicative content.
- 6.5 Students completing the BA (Hons) in Montessori Education appear to have a qualification that is not professionally recognised. The panel would **suggest** that consideration be given to seeking MACTE recognition for the Montessori programme. If successful, it would enable graduates to teach in Montessori schools in the USA and Canada. Closer links with other providers of Montessori programmes might help in this regard
- 6.6 It would be the panel's view that the current level of placement supervision would not meet the requirements of either the Teaching Council or MACTE. The panel would **suggest** that this be reviewed in the context of gaining professional recognition for the BA (Hons) in Montessori Education.

- 6.7 As noted in the commendations the panel welcome the introduction of a module on Literacy and Numeracy. There are particular aspects of maths/numeracy that need to be focused on in the early years – size, shape, measure, counting, one-to-one correspondence, comparisons, etc. In addition to this specific module, it is important that literacy and numeracy is embedded throughout other modules like play, the learning environment, etc.
- 6.8 Similarly, as noted in the commendations the focus on the arts in this programme is superb. It is important to connect and integrate these modules to different curricula and also emphasise what it does for children (supports their well-being, communicating, exploring and thinking). It is also important to extend this curriculum to support the birth to three age group.
- 6.9 The panel **suggest** that the historical context and background of ECCE in Ireland should be introduced in semester 1 and that it should be used to familiarise students with an understanding of ECCE settings.
- 6.10 The programme team should consider the use of IT platforms (e.g. Mahara) to develop reflective diaries during placement. These should be reviewed regularly and feedback, with indicative or partial grades, provided to students once a month. This would ensure greater oversight of, and support for, learning during placement.

7. OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 **Recommendation:** The panel would **strongly recommend** that the Dept. consider developing a research centre/hub for Early Years Education within CIT. There is no such centre in Ireland at present. The aim would be to develop CIT as a centre of excellence which would be internationally recognised (like Reggio Emilia in Italy or Project Zero in Harvard). Existing staff could collaborate with research fellows to support this. Such a centre could provide important support and context for research components of the Early Years programme. In turn, the undergraduate programme could provide a cohort of Masters and PhD students, which should be strongly encouraged.

8. DEROGATIONS SOUGHT

- 8.1. The Panel confirms that all large modules included in the programmes align with CIT policy on large credit modules.
- 8.2 BA in Early Years Education: Derogation from Free Choice **needs to be sought** for Sem 2 and Sem 3.
- 8.3 BA (Hons) in Montessori Education: Derogation from Free Choice **needs to be sought** for 5.

C. PROGRAMME FINALISATION

*[This section will 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