

Report of Validation Panel for a Special Purpose, Minor or Supplemental Award

Date of Meeting: 31-03-2014

Named Award:	Postgraduate Certificate
Programme Title:	Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice
Award Type:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ Level:	9
Intakes Commencing:	01-05-2014
ECTS/ACCS Credits:	30

PANEL MEMBERS

Name / Function / External Institution or CIT Academic Unit
Dr Hugh McGlynn, Head of School of Science and Informatics (Chair)
Mr Harvey Makin, Department of Applied Physics and Instrumentation
Dr Stephen Cassidy, Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement, CIT.
Dr John Wall, Head of School of Lifelong Learning and Education, WIT
Dr Brian Bowe, Head of Learning Development, College of Engineering & Built Environment, DIT
Brian Lee, Engineering Manager, Apple Operations Europe

PROPOSING TEAM MEMBERS

Name / Function / Academic Unit
Mr Matt Cotterell, Head of School Mechanical, Electrical and Process Engineering
Dr Michael J O'Mahony, Department of Process, Energy and Transport Engineering
Dr Ann Toebes, Department of Process, Energy and Transport Engineering
Dr Irene Sheridan, Extended Campus
Daithi Fallon, FES Representative, Extended Campus

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

A Higher Education Authority (HEA) Working Group was established in September 2012 with the aim of developing an accredited STEM internship programme. The aim of this programme is to provide graduates with a structured and accredited pathway out of education and into productive work. An objective of the Programme is to expand the quality and quantity of entry-level positions within Ireland's multinational corporations and broader industrial base, thereby providing the State with a future pool of talent to meet current skills needs and to attract additional new investment. The intention is for the Programme to provide higher education institutions with an expanded supply-base for graduate-placements within Ireland, and to enhance the attractiveness of STEM as a career choice.

The Working Group comprised of representatives from:

- Higher Education Authority
- American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM)
- Department of Education & Skills
- Department of Social Protection
- Higher Education Institutions
 - Dublin Institute of Technology
 - Cork Institute of Technology
 - NUI Maynooth
 - Trinity College Dublin
 - University College Dublin
 - University of Limerick
- American Multinational Corporations

Over one year, this Group developed a proposal to launch a national internship programme which would be implemented through a partnership between industry and higher education institutions. It was agreed that the resulting award would be a Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and the broad structure of the programme would be common across all partnerships consisting of two 10 ECTS credit generic personal development and organisational context modules and a single 10 ECTS credit practice specialisation module. Each HEI would validate the programme through its quality assurance procedures.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice, developed in close collaboration between enterprise and education, is a work-based learning programme which is specifically designed to enhance the graduate's employability through a structured, credit-earning internship opportunity.

This is a Pilot programme which will be reviewed after the first delivery by all parties. The review will be conducted by the HEA with input from the Graduates, the HEIs and industry partners.

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 validation and commencement of the Programme. The term "Recommendation" indicates an item which the Course Board (or other relevant Institute unit) should implement at the earliest stage possible, and appropriate implementation of which should be the subject of ongoing monitoring.*

On consideration of the documentation provided and discussion of the programme with the proposers, the Panel has arrived at the following Findings, Requirements and Recommendations:

1. Validation Criteria

1.1 Is there a convincing need for the programme with a viable level of applications?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding: HEA-American Chamber pilot aimed at level 8 graduates to meet skills shortage

1.2 Are the level and type of the proposed award appropriate?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s):

- a) As this is a national initiative with other HEIs awarding a Postgraduate Certificate for this programme, the panel believes that this is the appropriate title and award for this programme.

- b) The Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice has been developed in close collaboration between enterprise and education, is a work-based learning programme which is specifically designed to enhance the graduate's employability through a structured, credit-earning internship opportunity.

1.3 Is the learning experience of an appropriate level, standard and quality?

Overall Finding: Yes

The three 10 credit, level 9 expert modules proposed are at appropriate level and are aligned to existing graduate development activities. They have been developed taking cognisance of employer views and expectations. The course will run over a 9 month period and the student will document work-based learning through an e-portfolio.

Finding(s): Learning experience at appropriate standard and quality.

Requirement(s): Appropriate training in the use of e-portfolio and the learning management system to be incorporated into the induction briefing for students and work-based tutors.

1.4 Is the programme structure logical and well designed (including procedures for access, transfer and progression)?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): The panel proposes that the practice specialisation module – Lean Six Sigma Management - be denote as an elective on the programme. If further practice specialisation modules related to other discipline areas are developed in the future, these could be added as electives. Additionally, the proposers have indicated that the modules could be offered within Work-based Learning Masters and Doctorates in the future.

Requirements:

- a) Product Specialisation Module to be offered as an elective.
- b) The programme to include a three-way partnership agreement between Student-CIT-Employer which clearly defines roles, responsibilities and puts in place a mechanism to deal with contingencies whereby a student loses his/her position etc.

1.5 Are the programme management structures adequate?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): Course Boards will be convened for this programme and an academic course coordinator appointed

1.6 Are the resource requirements reasonable?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): The three modules proposed are new modules and will require additional support. This will be met though the monies provided by employers to fund students, additional support through Presidents office and fact that the Practice Specialisation (Lean Sigma) module can be run through CAMMS whose Lean Sigma team has extensive experience of successfully delivering Lean Sigma programmes to industry based students.

1.7 Will the impact of the programme on the Institute be positive?

Overall Finding: Yes.

Finding(s): The programme will attract learners through the Job Bridge initiative and provide employment opportunities for participants. This will add to the portfolio of offerings within the Institute and have a positive impact with students and industry stakeholders.

2. Other Findings

Module Level Findings

Overall the panel find that the module descriptors to be well-written. Learning outcome 6 on the Organisational Context module should be re-written. The number and nature of the assessments for the Lean Six Sigma Management should be reviewed.

Requirement: Module descriptors should be reviewed and approved through the Institute's module moderation process.

Programme Evaluation Finding

Recommendation: As this first delivery of this programme will be on a pilot basis, the panel recommends, in conjunction with other providers, that the programme proposers develop an evaluation strategy as soon as possible for reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme as currently designed and delivered in meeting the overall aims and objectives of the internship programme.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the Panel is happy to commend the proposers on an excellent proposal and on the extensive engagement with enterprise partners.

Based on the above findings, the Panel recommends to Academic Council:

That the Programme 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.