

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

Date of Meeting: 17-4-

2018

Named Award: Certificate
Programme Title: Certificate in Enterprise Development
Award Type: Special Purpose Award
NFQ Level: 6
Intakes Commencing: Sept 2018
ECTS/ACCS Credits: 20

PANEL MEMBERS

Name / Function / External Institution OR CIT Academic Unit
Dr Gearóid Ó Súilleabháin, Head of Dept of Technology Enhanced Learning, Cork Institute of Technology (Chair)
Dr Margaret Linehan, Head of School of Humanities, Cork Institute of Technology
Breda O'Dwyer, Manager, CEED - Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, IT Tralee
Hugh Griffin, The Sales Institute of Ireland

PROPOSING TEAM MEMBERS

Name / Function / Academic Unit
Dr Breda Kenny, Head of Department, Department of Management & Enterprise
Dr Helen Mc Guirk, Head, Hinks Centre of Entrepreneurship & Excellence
Mr Brian Mc Grath, Head of School, School of Business

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

This special purpose award relates to a two year project funded under the EU's ESP programme for employability, inclusion and learning (PEIL) targeted specifically at Gender Equality and focusing on women's entrepreneurship. The project consortium is made up of two Local Development Companies (South and East Cork Area Development CLG and Ballyhoura Development Partnership) and the Cork Institute of Technology including the Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence, the Rubicon Centre and, now, The Department of Management and Enterprise.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2014 Report for Ireland, reported that Irish men are 2.1 times more likely than Irish women to be early stage entrepreneurs and 2.4 times more likely than Irish women to be new business owners. The EU average ratio of male to female Early Stage Entrepreneurs (1.8:1) suggests also that there is still a pool of women entrepreneurs to be supported.

In this context, the project sets out to bridge the gap between men and women's participation in self-employment / entrepreneurship by developing a female-orientated support programme which will enable more females, especially those coming from a position of challenge or disadvantage, to become entrepreneurs. By combining personal development and business modules, the programme team aim to develop participant levels of motivation, business skills and give them a greater confidence to take part in mainstream entrepreneurship activities on completion. Learners are to be supported by mentors and a training team who are all experienced entrepreneurs who have been working closely with start-ups for many years. Personal and professional confidence building is core to the programme with the programme building confidence through the development of knowledge, skills and networks.

The proposed programme comprises of the following four 5 ECTS modules

- Business Personal Development
- Business Feasibility Study
- Micro Business Planning
- Finance for New Business

These modules were reviewed by the panel as part of the validation process.

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(s): The programme aims to bridge the gap between men and women's participation in self-employment / entrepreneurship by developing a female-orientated support programme which will enable more females, especially those coming from a position of challenge or disadvantage, to become entrepreneurs. The need for same is demonstrated through, inter alia, statistics the programme team have identified with regard to the EU and Irish ratios of male to female Early Stage Entrepreneurs (1.8:1) suggesting there is still a pool of potential women entrepreneurs to be supported. The initial group of students will actually be funded under the EU ESF project from which the programme emerges.

Recommendation: The panel suggest the title of the programme (i.e. Certificate in *Personal Development and Enterprise*) be reconsidered as it seems to emphasise Personal Development above both Enterprise and, significantly, over Entrepreneurship (which does not appear in the title). An alternative title might be found to better represent the content, purpose and overall aim of the programme and better assist in its future promotion (see below).

Recommendation: While the current cohort of students are funded via an ESF project, the panel recommends the department look at ways to make the programme sustainable beyond the lifetime of funding. This may involve adding additional modules or developing alternative versions of the programme for different cohorts and different cohort needs.

Recommendation: In the above context but also by way of raising awareness of the initiative in general the panel recommend the department look beyond dissemination and promotional channels provided by the programme's community development partners.

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

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): The panel found the proposed programme to be at the appropriate level for the identified student group with the appropriate number of credits for its scope and overall aim. Module descriptors and programme outputs in turn articulate well with standard NFQ indicators for level 6.

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

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

Finding(s): The panel commend the relevance, standard and quality of the programme. A well-integrated balance of theory and practice combine with flexible delivery and support to create a coherent, workplace-relevant and effective learning experience.

Recommendation: See module-specific recommendations below.

Module: Personal Development

Recommendation: The panel recommended the proposers consider addressing in this module, and elsewhere perhaps, the needs of students with respect to both academic and business writing.

Recommendation: Under *Indicative Content* the item “Networking online and offline” appears under the subheading of “*Presentation Skills*”. It is recommended this important aspect of the module and its indicative content be retained but under a more appropriate heading or subheading.

Recommendation: Workload figures given in the descriptor are the same for both part-time and full-time. The later would typically involve a greater number of contact hours.

Recommendation: The panel recommend the module author/s look to include journal articles and, as appropriate, online sources under *Module Resources*

Module: Business Feasibility Study

Recommendation: The panel recommend the module author/s look to include journals and journal articles under *Module Resources*.

Recommendation: Workload figures given in the descriptor are the same for both part-time and full-time. The later would typically involve a greater number of contact hours.

Module: Finance for New Business

Recommendation: The panel recommend that the Credit unions be explicitly referenced in the module descriptor.

Recommendation: Workload figures given in the descriptor are the same for both part-time and full-time. The later would typically involve a greater number of contact hours.

Recommendation: The panel recommend the module author/s look to include journals and journal articles under *Module Resources*

Module: Micro Business Planning

Commendation: The panel welcome the appearance of a module on this often-overlooked area.

Recommendation: The host department and/or module author(s) might look to see if, in context of the above commendation, this module could be offered or shared in other contexts of delivery across the institute.

Recommendation: Workload figures given in the descriptor are the same for both part-time and full-time. The later would typically involve a greater number of contact hours.

Recommendation: The panel recommend the module author/s look to include journals and journal articles under *Module Resources* as well as a possible Irish textbook.

Recommendation: It is recommended those delivering the module consider doing a “pre-workshop” or similar with any mentors that are involved in supporting the students.

Recommendation: The panel recommend the module author/s consider again the formulation of Learning Outcomes 2 and particularly Learning Outcome 3 for this module as they may imply learning achievement beyond level 6.

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

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): The department are clear on the kinds of students they are trying to recruit. Entry requirements are indicated as typically being standard entry with Leaving Certificate or equivalent: with the full approval of the panel, the department also indicates that suitable work and life experience will also be considered through CIT’s Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. Computer skills are also, rightly, indicated. All applicants are finally required to attend a mandatory screening interview. Progression options include CIT’s Higher Certificate in Business.

Commendation: In addition to the above, the panel would like to note and commend the availability of progression routes via the likes of CIT’s Exxel programme for more advanced female entrepreneurs.

Commendation: The panel note and commend the programme’s use of Technology Enhanced Learning platforms and tools for flexible delivery and student support which incorporates both on-campus and off-campus/online learning elements.

Commendation: The panel welcome the fact that, in the current iteration of the programme, mentoring and networking aspects are not based exclusively around female business people and entrepreneurs. The panel, on the other hand, further encourage and commend the inclusion of and emphasis placed on the availability of female role models.

1.5 Are the programme management structures adequate?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): The panel were reassured by the support for the programme at department, school and faculty level. Details of delivery arrangements, the management structures, online supports, and QA processes in place for this and other programmes in the department were considered to be of a more than adequate level and standard.

1.6 Are the resource requirements reasonable?

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): Resources approval has been received for this programme. The initial delivery of the programme is, in any case, funded via the EU/ESF project from which the programme emerges.

Requirement(s):

Recommendation(s):

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

Overall Finding: Yes

Finding(s): This special purpose award addresses an established need to support women entrepreneurs through a bespoke accredited programme. Through the programme, CIT will help participants in the region address key barriers to their success as entrepreneurs such as access to finance, information, skills and motivational support as well as limitations such as lack of role models and support networks. As such the programme will operate as a positive force for change in terms both of encouraging greater gender equality and regional development. The close linkage with Local Development Companies, South and East Cork Area Development CLG and Ballyhoura Development Partnership is an additional positive which represents a further strengthening of the institute's involvement in community development in the region. The programme and the underlying project have also given rise to close and valuable collaboration internally between the Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence, the Rubicon Centre, the Department of Management and Enterprise and the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning.

CONCLUSION

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, due regard to the Recommendations made above.

Implementation of Requirements and Recommendations
Requiring Registrar's Office Sign-Off:
<p>1.1 a) Recommendation: <i>Complete. Comments from panel taken on board and proposed title change is: Certificate in Enterprise Development</i></p>
<p>1.1 b) Recommendation: <i>Progression pathways from the programme will be extended to include additional options alongside the Higher Certificate in Business. Options include progression to enterprise development programme such as the female programme Exxcel and the New Frontiers programme. Additional modules that can be developed include social enterprise, community engagement, tourism business development, food business, well being and leisure, business growth and internationalisation and family business management.</i></p>
<p>1.1 c) Recommendation: <i>To ensure sustainability beyond the current funding model, a wider promotion and dissemination campaign will be undertaken to recruit both male and female participants. This will include engagement with regional, national and international stakeholders. At a national level, Local enterprise offices, department of social protection, community groups and alumni of the current and related programmes. At international level, engagement with enterprise Ireland, social entrepreneurs Ireland, relevant government departments and national networks such as Incubation Centre Manager networks. At the international level, we will explore potential around the EU funded programmes such as Erasmus Plus and build on existing network and track record in these programmes.</i></p>
<p>1.3 Module Recommendations:</p> <p>Module: Personal Development <i>Reference to academic and business writing skills referred to in the module descriptor and in the module content. Networking online and offline now a separate content topic under indicative content for this module. Workload allocation hours now clarified for full time and part time delivery. Full time delivery now has an additional 1.5 hours contact time for lecturer supervised learning. Additional resources on business networking added. Additional online sources added.</i></p> <p>Module: Business Feasibility Study <i>List of relevant journals now included. Workload allocation hours now clarified for full time and part time delivery. Full time delivery now has an additional 1.5 hours contact time for lecturer supervised learning</i></p> <p>Module: Finance for New Business <i>Credit unions now specifically mentioned under the sources of funding in the content section of the module. It was not included in the module description section as no other specific funding source was mentioned here. Workload allocation hours now clarified for full time and part time delivery. Full time delivery now has an additional 1.5 hours contact time for lecturer supervised learning. List of relevant journals included in resources</i></p> <p>Module: Micro Business Planning <i>The school of business is currently reviewing this module for possible delivery to students as part of the alternative to placement modules for business studies students in year 3. Workload allocation hours now clarified for full time and part time delivery. Full time delivery now has an additional 1.5 hours contact time for lecturer supervised learning for all modules except micro business planning where mentors will provide contact time for both full and part time participants. Resources updated as requested. An induction session will be held with the full delivery team and mentors for this programme with specific focus on this module. A post workshop is also planned to evaluate the first iteration of the programme Learning outcomes reviewed for this module and references made to producing plans as opposed to strategies to reflect the level of learning expected here.</i></p>