

Report of Validation Panel

Date of Meeting: 18 December 2018

Award Type:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Programme Title:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Musical Theatre
Award Class:	Major
NFQ Level:	8
Intakes Commencing:	September 2019
ECTS/ACCS Credits:	240
Embedded Award:	No (<i>future development of embedded Level 7 exit award possible</i>)

PANEL MEMBERS

Name / Function / Institution
Chairperson: Ms Brigitte Moody, Senior Lecturer / Course Director, Graduate Diploma and MA in Dance, Dep't of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, University of Limerick
Ms Breda Cashe, Independent Theatre Producer, Breda Cashe Productions, Dublin
Mr David Wray, Musical Director / Programme Leader, BA in Musical Theatre, American College Dublin
Mr Killian Donnelly, Performer (Westend/Broadway; currently Jean Valjean, Les Misérables, Cameron Mackintosh 25th Anniv. Production, UK & Ireland Tour 2018)
Dr Brendan O'Connell, Head of Department of Biological Sciences, CIT (for the Office of the Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs)

IN ATTENDANCE

Name / Function / Institution
Ms Eva Juhl, Institutional Review Facilitator, Office of the Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs, CIT (<i>9 am – 10:15 am only</i>)

PROPOSING TEAM MEMBERS

Name / Function / Department
Ms Aiveen Kearney, Head of CIT Cork School of Music (CSM)
Mr John O'Connor, Head of Department of Pop, Jazz, Trad, Voice & Theatre Studies, CSM
Ms Deirdre Long, Lecturer
Mr David Hayes, Lecturer
Ms Aisling Byrne-Gaughan, Lecturer
Ms Hilda Leader-Galvin, Lecturer
Ms Mary Hegarty, Lecturer

Ms Aine Whelan, Lecturer
Ms Irene O'Mara, Lecturer

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The programme proposed is a 4-year, ab-initio, full-time Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Musical Theatre ('BAMT'). This programme will be hosted by the CIT Cork School of Music and coordinated by Mr John O'Connor, Head of Department of Pop, Jazz, Trad, Voice & Theatre Studies.

The proposed BA (Honours) in Musical Theatre is designed to complete a matched suite of performing arts degrees at the CIT Cork School of Music. The resulting spectrum of programmes is to facilitate appropriate focused choices and career tracks for incoming students while allowing a certain degree of transferability for those developing cross-disciplinary inclinations further along the journey.

Nationally, at the point of validation the proposed programme would be the only specialist Musical Theatre degree at Honours degree (NFQ Level 8) level in the country.

The programme team deems that a cohort of 24 full-time students per stage can be sustained, with an approximately equal male/female split. The programme will be delivered in full-time mode only.

In addition to the standard CIT entry requirements of two H5s and four O5/H7s with English or Irish in the Leaving Certificate, each candidate will undertake an audition in singing, acting, and dance for which they will be awarded a total points score out of 600. A similar mechanism already operates in CSM's other restricted access programmes. Through the auditions, the proposers intend to specifically target applicants who have already received training in a private theatre school for several years and have appreciable levels of skill in acting, singing, and dance, perhaps with a particular affinity for one of these areas. In addition to natural talent and a personal profile that fits industry norms, applicants will be expected to have engaging communication skills and a serious commitment to hard work and personal development.

The programme submission lists five large musical theatre stage schools in the Cork area which the proposers expect to be the immediate feeders for the BAMT, though a level of national interest is also expected based on the demographic in existing CSM programmes.

This dedicated Musical Theatre degree is based around the 'triple-threat' skills of singing, dancing, and acting and is intended as a career-focused pathway into the industry. As part of the curricular delivery, it is intended that between 10% and 25% of the contact hours will be delivered by visiting lecturers in intensive day-long sessions, making use of CIT's Rory Gallagher Theatre when no other on-campus accommodation is available. The mandatory core of the degree course is built on intensive atelier and one-to-one coaching in the three principal skills, acting, dance and singing; specialist chorus work, combined with contextual history lectures and music theory; and ensemble, growing from small group work to the culminating production each year. The key to the BAMT structure is the use of 'short, fat' modules to deliver four of the six modules in one semester each year, leaving a 5/6 week production period at the end of the term to facilitate a quasi-professional production.

As the four stages of the BAMT (Hons) come completely onstream, the programme submission flagged the need to identify supplementary premises for rehearsals and lectures. A survey of the main CSM timetable by indicated that it should be possible to deliver Stage 1 completely in the main building, facilitating the relationship of the first years with their peers on the other courses. All shared electives throughout the years will also remain in the main building. In Stages 2 – 4 the programme team will endeavor to conduct all of the one-to-one training in Union Quay, moving out to supplementary accommodation for groupwork and

rehearsals. The Everyman Theatre has been provisionally booked for May 2020 to accommodate the first planned public show of the programme.

While the prime intended career pathway post-graduation is into the musical theatre industry as a performing specialist, the programme also aims to equip and qualify graduates to progress to postgraduate study in any suitable institution, on any appropriate course, with the proviso that Musical Theatre and Drama is not part of the Irish mainstream secondary curriculum, so is not currently recognized as a base subject for a Masters in Education.

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, as a **condition of validation**.*

*The term “**Recommendation**” indicates an item to which the Institute, academic unit or programme board should give serious consideration. Normally it is expected that recommendations will be implemented as soon as possible. Progress will be monitored and will be discussed in programmatic review.*

Requirements and recommendations may be accompanied by a short summary of the findings giving rise to them. Panels may also record other findings (including on commendable features of the proposed programme) which they deem important for the quality assurance record.

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

Findings: The proposers have clearly outlined an ongoing and growing demand for trained, qualified performers, creative and executive staff and specialist technicians in the Musical Theatre sector. Currently there is no level-8 programme in Ireland, with students travelling to the UK to study this discipline area.

1.2 AWARD

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

Overall Finding: Yes

1.3 LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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

Overall Finding: Yes

1.4 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

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

Overall Finding: Yes

Requirements:

1.4.1. Requirement: An elective regulation must be developed for semester-8 of the programme schedule

Recommendations:

1.4.2 Recommendation: The development and inclusion of additional dance electives to add to the complement of modules in that particular pillar of the programme.

1.4.3 Recommendation: "Acting through song" forms a more explicit part of the programme delivery

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 on behalf of the President and Head of Faculty/College/School that appropriate resources in terms of staffing and facilities will be put in place when the programme is validated.

Recommendations:

1.6.1 Recommendation: The panel are satisfied that the physical resources exist for the delivery of stage 1, however the panel recommends that the space and equipment resources for the delivery of subsequent stages are scoped and reported to the relevant management structure in a timely manner.

1.6.2 Recommendation: The panel proposes the recruitment of an additional AV technician to support the delivery of the programme

1.7 IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTE

Validation Criterion: Will the impact of the programme on the Institute be positive?

Overall Finding: Yes

2. Module-Level Findings

The Panel notes that 19 modules on the proposed programme are pre-approved modules which may be delivered across several CIT programmes.

The Panel was informed that the new draft modules have been the subject of internal and external scrutiny by the CIT module moderator and external reviewers

2.1 ALL MODULES

Requirement: Any revisions to Module Descriptors or Semester Schedules made to address the recommendations and requirements in this validation panel report require sign-off from the CIT Module Moderator and the Registrar's Office prior to approval by the CIT Academic Council.

3. Conclusion

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

- The Programme meets required standards for an award in its 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, subject to implementation of the Requirements above, and with due regard to the Recommendations made.