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Midlands Midwest**

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**Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachais
Faculty of Business & Hospitality**

Report of Peer Review Panel

Programmatic Review

of the

**Faculty of Business & Hospitality
Department of Accounting and Business Computing**

External Validation Visit, 12th December 2022

Final Report

Contents

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the Programmatic Review Panel for the Department of Accounting and Business Computing and the findings and conclusions of the Programmatic Review Panel conducted on 12th December 2022. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations. A Programmatic Review Panel makes an independent impartial judgement on the programmatic review and associated critical self study and proposed programme changes.

2.1   GENERAL INFORMATION

2.2   Higher Education Provider

Provider	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
Faculty	Faculty of Business & Hospitality
Department	Department of Accounting and Business Computing
Date of Visit	12th Dec 2022

2.3   External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

Name	Affiliation
Mr. Stephen McManus	Former Registrar DKIT (Chairperson)
Mr. Ger Long	SETU
Ms. Noreen Henry	ATU
Mr. Ian Barrett	Accountant, MD, Care About You
Dr. Fergus Gaughran	Ulster Bank

2.4   TUS Staff

Name	Role
Prof. Vincent Cunnane	President
Dr. Terry Twomey	VP Academic Affairs & Registrar
Ms. Michelle McKeon Bennett	Dean of Faculty
Dr. Trevor Prendergast	Head of Department
Programme Leaders and Department Teaching Staff	

2.5   Employers/Industry & Alumni Representatives

Representative	Affiliation
Sinéad Mulvihill,	Senior Director Finance, EMEA, Teleflex
Peter Sullivan	BCA Accountants, Tullamore
Pauline O Connor	BI Team Lead, IT Department, Global BI and Analytics with Teleflex
John Hanley,	Manager in the SME Section, Russell Brennan Keane Accountants
Ciaran Brady,	KBG Accountants
Dermot Ainsworth	General Manager of the NPD Group in Athlone

2.6   Current Student Representatives

Student	Programme
Cian Sheridan	BA & MA in Accounting
Anand Joseph	BA & MA in Accounting
Amy Daly	BA & MA in Accounting
Kyle Higgins	BA & MA in Accounting
Oliver Jennings	MSc in Data Analytics
Terry Quinn	MSc in Data Analytics
Ken Devitt	MSc in Data Analytics

3.1 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.2 Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends reapproval of the following programmes in the *Department of Accounting and Business Computing* subject to the recommendations as specified in Sections 3.3.

Accounting Suite of Programmes

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting with Finance and Placement (4 Year, Ab initio)

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting with Finance (3 Year, Ab initio)

Bachelor of Arts in Accounting with Finance Level 7 (Embedded)

Master of Arts in Accounting

Post Graduate Diploma in Arts in Accounting

Data Analytics Suite of Programmes

Master of Science in Data Analytics (Full-time)

Master of Science in Data Analytics (Part-time)

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics (Full-time)

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics (Part-time)

Higher Diploma in Data Analytics (Part-time)

3.3 Conditions

No Conditions Apply.

3.4 Recommendations

General

1. As part of routine practice, conduct further Benchmarking of the Department's performance with relevant published HEA data and National surveys, including the National Survey of Student Engagement.

2. Utilise fully the RUN-EU (University Network) to exchange and build best practice in teaching, learning, assessment and in research.

3. Provide further context in the programme Self Evaluation Reports on the formal processes utilised for engaging with students and gaining feedback, including how that feedback is actioned for continuous improvement.

4. Consider further Programme opportunities that maximise both the Accounting and Data Analytics strengths and resources available in the Department.

5. Explore how further life long learning opportunities can be created for employees in cognate areas that support upskilling, career development and talent retention.

6. Continue to develop further the formal and informal industry liaison fora including those supported by social events.

Accounting Suite of Programmes

1. Review the Programme Learning Outcomes across the programme suite to ensure they adequately reflect the updated programmes and revised emphasis on areas such as development of Professionalism, Digitals Skills and Sustainability *inter alia*.

2. Add appropriate Programme Learning Outcomes to the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting with Finance and Placement* to ensure that they reflect the additional 60 ECTS Credits of work placement and the additional skills and competencies that that experience brings..

3. Explore if further learning content on *Analytics* could be introduced into the Accounting programmes to complement the core competencies.

4. Consider developing placement opportunities with other larger employers in addition to those in Accountancy Firms (e.g. accountancy departments of Pharmaceutical companies).

5. Develop a coherent Marketing and Recruitment strategy to promote uptake of the Accountancy programmes. In particular, include how the 4 year Programme with Placement can be promoted (referencing the counting of Placement towards the professional training requirement by Professional Bodies).

<u>Data Analytics Suite of Programmes</u>

1. Review the similarity in Programme Learning Outcomes between the Masters and Postgraduate Diploma in Data Analytics and ensure there is sufficient differentiation that indicates the differing levels of the programmes.

2. Enhance the depth of specification of the learning outcomes, indicative content and assessment strategies on the Masters Programme.

3. Conduct a review of the award statistics in the Data Analytics Suite of Programmes and benchmark to national trends. The panel notes that students on the Masters programme should be appropriately challenged in a manner that might be reflected in award outcomes.

4. Add a programme learning outcome to reflect the explicit learning on Ethics that has been incorporated throughout the revised programme suite.

5. Review the balance of Practical and Theoretical learning between the *Masters/Postgraduate Diploma* and the *Higher Diploma* Programmes (the panel noted the Higher Diploma has more a greater theoretical focus while the Masters/Graduate Diploma has more emphasis on practical).

6. Consider adding learning content on *Data Visualisation* to the *Higher Diploma* Programme.

7. Review the Module Learning Outcomes across the *Higher Diploma* Programme to use measurable active verbs consistently.

8. Consider the broader aims/depth the Masters programme and the entry cohorts the programme is targeting *vis a via* cognate versus non cognate. Ensure that the marketing and promotional material reflects these.

9. Develop, at departmental level, a coherent marketing strategy to support the programme suite and counter the trend of decreasing uptake.

10. Consider whether some material, such as coding and introductory data visualisation could be moved into a bridging programme for those without these skills.

3.5   Commendations and Observations

1. The panel commends the comprehensive programme documentation produced to a very high standards and presented in an accessible manner.

2. The panel commends the self-evaluation undertaken including the strong student, industry and external engagement.

3. The panel commends the considered changes introduced to the programmes during the course of the programmatic review including the emphasis on the development of Professional and Digital Skills and Sustainability.

4. The panel commends the department in developing and growing research capacity and in leveraging the skillsets across TUS and the RUN-EU Network to support this development.

5. The panel commends the internationalisation strategy and the utilisation of the RUN EU Network to increase mobility opportunities for students and staff.

6. The panel commends the enhanced used of digital technology in teaching and learning.

7. The panel commends the ongoing work in leading the development of the Level 8 (2 Year Add-on) in the Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship programme.

8. The panel commends the programme teams for the active participation and strong engagement with the panel during the revalidation event.

9. The panel appreciated the attendance of the President during the Validation event.

Stephen McManus.

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 16/12/2022