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Midlands Midwest**
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**Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachais
Faculty of Science and Health**

Report of Peer Review Panel

Programmatic Review

of the

**Faculty of Science and Health
Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences**

External Validation Visit, 21st March 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the Programmatic Review Panel for the Faculty of Science and Health, and the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel conducted on 21st March 2023. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations. A Programmatic Review Panel external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal.

2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.2 Higher Education Provider

Provider	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
Faculty	Science and Health
Department	Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences
Date of Visit	21 st March 2023

2.3 External Re-Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

Name	Affiliation
Dr Michele Glacken	VP Students, Teaching & Learning & Registrar, ATU
Dr Robin Farrell	Director of Veterinary Nursing, UCD
Dr Stephen Whelan	Programme Director, SETU, Wexford
Dr Joe Patton	Head of Dairy Knowledge Transfer Department, Teagasc
Sinead McMickan	Health and Safety Authority
Dr Ian O'Connor	HoD, Natural Resources and the Environment ATU, Galway

Secretary to Panel: Sarah O'Toole, TUS.

2.4 TUS Staff

Name	Role
Dr Don Faller	Dean of Faculty of Science and Health
Dr Cormac O'Shea	Head of Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences
<u>Department Staff:</u>	
<p>Aisling Flynn, Lisa Geraghty, Maeve O'Reilly, Nuala Commins, Bernie Fallon, Andrew Healy, Edwin McCullagh, Nicholas Mullins, Ann O'Malley, Sean Reidy, Erin English, John Flannery, Dawn Howard, Annmarie O'Brien, Antoinette Sweeney, Tara Vollerhausen, Belinda Grady, Denise Lord, Meadhbh O'Dowd, Gina Burke, Gillian Coughlan, Olivia Cregg, Michael Mullen, Carol O'Donnell, Brian Murphy, Ava Brooks, Cathy Brougham, Caitriona Collins, Sinead Devery, Mary Booth, Siobhan Kavanagh, Paulina Flannery, Sean Gerrity, Antoine Fort, Natasha McCormack, Donal Eardly, Sile O'Flaherty, Anne Mulvihill, Anne Friel, Clem Higginbotham, Noreen Morris, Jim Roche, Andy Fogarty, Emma Murphy, Iain Murray, Brendan Kelly, Emer Connolly, Doireann O'Callaghan, Miriam O'Connor, Geraldine Ward, Patricia Gunning, Noel Tierney.</p>	

2.5 Employers/Industry & Alumni Representatives

Representative	Affiliation
Brian McEvoy	Senior Director Global Technology
Aisling Kealey	Zoetis, Tullamore
Alan Gallagher	Village Vets Dublin
Maeve Walsh	Bushypark Vets, Galway
Kevin Temple	Alexion Pharma
Orlaith Plunkett	PhD candidate in Microbiology Trinity
Ariana Fusciardi	Biovet Graduate
Felicia Crazer	Biovet Graduate
Siobhan Kileen	CPD Co-ordinator, Duggans Veterinary

Rebecca Gilligan	ABP Ireland & Poland
Hannah Doherty	Village Vets, Clonsilla
Rebecca Morris	Fitzpatrick Referrals Ltd

2.6 Current Student Representatives

Cian Tiernan	Andrea Lynn
Ciara Foley	Abbie Fitzgerald
Yvonne Greavy	Aoibhe Reilly
Emma O'Hagan	Katelyn Cullen
Dee Carney	Kerri Fogarty
Jamie Breslin	Alison Flynn
Ciara Tierney	Shauna Cunning
Niamh Feighery	Grace Lawlor
Aoife Mulry	

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 Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences* subject to the conditions recommendations as specified in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

List of programmes:

Group 1 Programmes:

BSc in Veterinary Nursing (3-year programme)

Higher Certificate in Animal Science Level 6 Exit Award

BSc (Hons) in Applied Biosciences (1-year add on programme)

BSc in Environmental Health & Safety Management (2-year part-time programme)

Group 2 Programmes:

BSc (Hons) in Bioveterinary Science (4-year level 8 programme)

BSc in Bioveterinary Science level 7 Exit Award

Higher Certificate in Biological Sciences

BSc (Hons) in Microbiology (4-year level 8 programme)

BSc in Microbiology Level 7 Exit Award

Higher Certificate in Microbiology Level 6 Exit Award

3.3 Conditions

No conditions apply.

3.4 Recommendations

General

1. Review programme learning outcomes for exit awards to ensure that they are distinct from their parent award.
2. The quantum of assessments needs to be kept under continuous review. It is acknowledged that modifications have been made but the impact on the modest reduction needs to be monitored.
3. Inconsistencies in compiling assessment calendars needs to be actioned with only one means for marking timelines used. e.g., weeks.
4. Review documentation to ensure there is no ambiguity in relation to the manner in which failed elements will be treated. A consistent approach across programmes while aligns to the university examination regulations should be taken.
5. Programme teams need to consider the range of teaching and learning strategies they are deploying collectively, to ensure they mirror the University/Department Teaching and Learning philosophy/framework.
6. A department industry forum should be established which is representative of private industry, public sector, and regulatory bodies to enhance industry engagement in programme design/ assessment and networking opportunities.

7. Department to consider the long-term management and resourcing of placements given the proposal to include work placements in the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Bioveterinary Science.
8. Capitalise on research and mobility opportunities that the RUN EU university alliance offers.
9. Consider broadening scope of research projects beyond generation of new knowledge to also encapsulating application of current issues such as regulatory compliance. Engagement with industry would provide ideas for such secondary research.
10. Ensure students understand the relevancy of the mandatory science modules in year 1 to their programme to the overall programme outcomes.

BSc in Veterinary Nursing (3-year programme)

Higher Certificate in Animal Science Level 6 Exit Award

1. Consider the mechanisms deployed to ensure the reliability and validity of the practical examinations.
2. Consider additional/refresher skills training in relation to anaesthetics, placement of feeding tubes and the emergency management of non-responsive animals.
3. Consider how wellbeing/selfcare and sustainability can be further embedded and made more transparent in the programme.
4. Consider the development of higher order skill based CPD opportunities for graduates to afford greater career progression and opportunities.
5. Review documentation to address any inconsistencies in award titles.
6. Consider the scheduling of both year 1 and 2 practice placements during the summer to provide students with an opportunity to undertake paid employment as is the norm for college students.
7. Ensure that students understand the rationale for each of the mandated placements.

8. Consider if the equine placement hours could be reduced whilst still meeting the required learning outcomes.

BSc (Hons) in Applied Biosciences (1-year add on programme)

1. Remain cognisant of tension between offering an award year which provides a broad knowledge base versus the norm that affords students the opportunity to specialise. The panel recognise that the current broad nature suits the current student body.

BSc in Environmental Health & Safety Management (2-year part-time programme)

1. Programme boards to consider an agreed mechanism for keeping programme content aligned to current legislation/ etc and students versed on how to keep their knowledge and practice current as graduates.
2. Review modules to ensure all are NFQ level 7.
3. Deploy public service and regulatory employers to inform programme content so graduates possess the knowledge & skill sets that meet employers needs.

BSc (Hons) in Microbiology (4-year level 8 programme)

BSc in Microbiology Level 7 Exit Award

Higher Certificate in Microbiology Level 6 Exit Award

1. Review and update the documentation to ensure where failed elements are included, that they are recorded and applied consistently throughout the programme documentation and assessment matrices.
2. Reflect on the learning outcomes across the modules to ensure their specificity and alignment to NFQ level 8
3. Review approaches and assessment strategies to ensure they align with Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.
4. Identify opportunities for developing an MSc in Applied Microbiology to provide a progression pathway for students.

5. Consider a strategy for marketing the programme to an international student cohort.
6. Engage industry partners to a greater extent to assist in providing project topics, feedback on practical assessments and providing contemporary career guidance.

BSc (Hons) in Bioveterinary Science (4-year level 8 programme)

BSc in Bioveterinary Science level 7 Exit Award

Higher Certificate in Biological Sciences

1. Review the content of the award to ensure it reflects the title. It is the view of the panel that additional animal focused modules would address this current perceived misalliance in title and content.
2. Ensure that the assessments advanced mirror the award standards in terms of knowledge, skills, and competency acquisition.
3. Consider the achievability of the current student workload.
4. Ensure that programme content is cognisant of the updated thinking in relation to animal welfare and its move towards “A life worth living”.

3.5 Commendations and Observations

1. The panel would like to commend the programme teams on the diversity of the programmes on offer and the uniqueness of some.
2. The panel would like to acknowledge the mobility opportunities that the BSc Veterinary nursing programme team has availed of through the European University alliance.
3. The panel would like to commend the panel for being proactive in programme redesign as a consequence of stakeholder feedback- e.g. Introduction of work placements into Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Bio veterinary Science.
4. The panel would like to commend the introduction of the BSc (Hons) in Applied Biosciences to provide their BSc Veterinary nursing graduates with an opportunity

to attain additional scientific skills to broaden their future employment opportunities.

5. The panel would like to commend students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, who ably represented the department and commended the applicability and relevance of the learning content to practice, the array of student supports available to them and good staff: student interactions.

Michèle Glacken

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 24/04/2023

