Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest - Athlone Campus

Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachais
Faculty of Business and Hospitality

Department of Accounting and Business Computing

Report of the External Review Panel

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Accounting Technology

Level 8

Friday the 15th of March 2024

Conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams

Contents

1. Introduction

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the External Review Panel for the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Accounting Technology (Accounting Technologist Apprenticeship) which will be taught within the Faculty of Business and Hospitality. The report includes the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel conducted on Friday the 15th of March 2024. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations. An External Review Panel makes an independent impartial judgement on the programme and associated critical self-study.

2. General Information

2.1   Higher Education Provider

University: TUS Midlands Midwest - Athlone Campus

Faculty: Faculty of Business and Hospitality

Department: Accounting and Business Computing

Date of Panel: Thursday the 15th of March 2024 – Virtual External Panel conducted via MS Teams

2.2   Programmes Evaluated

Award title	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Accounting
Exit Award	N/A
NFQ Level	8
ECTS Credits	120
Award Class	Honours Degree Add on
Award Type	Bachelor of Science (Honours)
Duration	3 semesters in each of the two years

2.3   External Panel Members

Mr. John Vickery **(Chairperson to Panel)**
Former Registrar
Institute of Technology, Tallaght
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Anne Brady,
Business Advisor with Capstone
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Evelyn Smyth
Senior Manager Audit & Business Advisory
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Richie Hoare
Senior Lecturer in Accounting
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Atlantic Technological University (ATU)
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Dr Michael Barrett
Head of School of Business & Social Sciences,
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Dr Pat Donohue (**Secretary to Panel**)
Former Assistant Registrar
TUS Midwest
drpatdonohue@gmail.com

Mary Meaney **(Note taker to Panel)**
Registrar's Office
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2.4   University Staff & Others

Professor Vincent Cunnane, President, TUS

Dr Terry Twomey, VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar

Dr Michael Tobin, Interim Dean of Faculty of Business and Hospitality

Bernard Tao Cui, Head of Department of Accounting and Business Computing

Barry O'Loughlin, Programme Lead TUS

The Programme Team:

Paul Prendergast

Dermot O'Leary

Brendan McLarney

Alex Courtney

Kathleen O'Shea

Accounting Technician Ireland (ATI) Representatives:

Gillian Doherty, Chief Operating Officer

Patrick Maunsell, Director of Education

Gabriela Airini, Associated Director of Education

Marguerite Brennan, Accounting Technologist Project Manager

Martina Greenan, Head of Quality Assurance

Representing the Open University and the Northern Ireland Colleges:

Libby Shackels, Director - Curriculum (Southern Regional College)

3. FINDINGS, CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the following programme subject to the recommendations as specified in Section 3.3.

> Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Accounting Technology (Add on)

3.2   Conditions

No Conditions Apply.

3.3   Recommendations

1) Ensure there is consistency in RPLs across the jurisdictions for apprentice admission. The panel recommends monitoring the entry requirements going forward.

2) Finalise draft workplace mentor handbook. Rectify inconsistencies between the mentor handbook and the programme documentation. Consider removing entry salary level from handbook. Clarify that the proposed tutorial hours are outside the normal scheduled hours.

3) Use apprentice instead of learner/student throughout the documentation.

4) Finalise initial exemptions as soon as possible from the appropriate professional bodies.

5) Clarify whether FRS 101 &102 or the international standards will be the primary standard(s) covered in the programme.

6) Clarify whether the EU or international sustainability route will be taken.

7) Expand on the workplace mentoring processes undertaken in the programme documentation.

8) Clarify issues regarding registration fees, exam fees, membership fees and study leave.

9) Ensure that personal resource requirements are outlined in the documentation and information provision to potential apprentices (e.g. laptop).

10) Monitor the need for apprentice rotation to ensure programme learning outcomes are met.

11) Expand on the description/content of the Financial Reporting module (LO 6 Demonstrate effective communication and time management skills)

12) Clarify how repeat assessment will be managed (remove the reference to medical grounds as there can be other reasons besides medical).

13) Change learning outcome one (Demonstrate) in Sustainability for Accounting and Finance and Professional Practice and Industry Project modules.

14) Change 50% pass level to 40% in the Professional Practice and Industry Project 1 module. Replace the word *placement* with the word *module* when describing repeat work. Check the overall document for occurrences of this.

15) Document the group assessment marking strategy in the Information Security, Governance and Digital Transformation module.

16) Consider including a reference to the Revenue website in the Taxation module.

17) Review learning outcomes 1 and 2 in the Data Analytics & Visualisation module.

18) Include a learning outcome to cover *managing strategic change* and *leading and managing projects* in the Strategic Management module.

19) Review learning outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in the Professional Practice and Industry Project 2 module.

20) Consider including a project showcase event.

21) Articulate how the soft skills and verbal communication will be addressed.

22) Articulate the roles and responsibilities of each programme board (including the national board) involved and the communication mechanisms between them.

3.4   Commendations and Observations

1) The panel congratulates TUS on being awarded a QS* 5-star university rating.

2) The panel welcomes the introduction of such an innovative apprenticeship programme and acknowledge that it is the first all island apprenticeship programme collaboration.

3) The panel were impressed by the team representation, including TUS senior management, faculty & staff, representatives of ATI including the COO, the Open University and Northern Island colleges.

4) The panel welcomed the involvement of senior management in the proceedings and were impressed by the increase in apprenticeship enrolments.

5) The panel commends the quality of the programme submission and documentation and noted its comprehensive and detailed nature.

6) The panel commends the positive and collegiate engagement of the programme team during the validation visit.
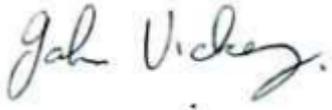
John Vickery.

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 29/03/2024