



**Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Luimnigh
Limerick Institute of Technology**

**Dámh an n-Nolaíochtaí Feidhmeacha agus na Teicneolaíochta
Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology**

Report of Peer Review Panel

Programmatic Review

of the

Department of Applied Social Sciences

External Validation Visit, 7th May, 2021

for the

BA (Hons) in Applied Social Sciences Community and Addiction Studies

and Embedded Awards:

**Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies) and
Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies)**

1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the Programmatic Review Panel, Department of Applied Social Sciences external validation visit for the proposed Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies) and Embedded Awards: Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies) and Higher Certificate in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies) and the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel conducted on 7th May, 2021. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with Section 3 of the LIT document '*Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes (ACRP): Academic Year 2019/2020*'. (The ACRP document is available on the LIT website.) A Programmatic Review external revalidation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Higher Education Provider

Institute:	Limerick Institute of Technology
Faculties:	Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology
Departments:	Department of Applied Social Sciences
Date of Visit:	7 th May, 2021

2.1. Programmes Evaluated

2.1.1 Programme Title:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies)
Award Title:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
NFQ Level:	Level 8
ECTS Credits:	240
Format:	BA (Hons)
Delivery Mode:	Full Time/ACCS/Part-time
Duration:	Four Years
Proposed starting date:	September 2021
Contact:	Dr. Carole Glynn
2.1.2 Programme Title:	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Sciences (Community and Addiction Studies)
Award Title:	Bachelor of Arts
NFQ Level:	Level 7
ECTS Credits:	180
Format:	BA
Delivery Mode:	Full Time/ACCS/Part-time
Duration:	Three Years
Proposed starting date:	September 2021
Contact:	Dr. Carole Glynn

2.1.3 Programme Title:	Higher Certificate in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies)
Award Title:	Higher Certificate in Arts
NFQ Level:	Level 6
ECTS Credits:	120
Format:	Higher Certificate
Delivery Mode:	Full Time/ACCS/Part-time
Duration:	Two Years
Proposed starting date:	September 2021
Contact:	Dr. Carole Glynn

2.2. External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

Name:	Affiliation:
Mr. Damien Courtney, Mr. Daniel Butler,	Fellow Emeritus CIT (Chairperson) Limerick Councillor and Limerick City Drug Education Prevention Specialist
Ms. Aine O'Brien, Ms. Helen Fitzgerald, Ms. Christine Chasaide,	Community Substance Misuse Team Limerick Paul Partnership Outreach Coordinator Limerick, Adult Continuing Education, UCC
Dr. Féilim Ó hAdhmaill, Ms. Ann Bourke, Mr. Michael O'Loughlin Mr. Gerry Murphy,	Lecturer, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC Student Representative Student Representative Bushypark Addiction Treatment Centre (apologies received)

2.3. Institute Staff

President	Prof. Vincent Cunnane
Dean of Faculty	Dr. Maura Clancy
Head of Department	Dr. Carole Glynn

Programme Leader

Mr. Neal Whelan

Programme Development Team

Dr. Matthew Cannon
Mr. David McPhillips
Dr. Shane O' Sullivan
Dr. Michele O' Flanagan

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.1. Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies) and embedded awards; *Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies)* and *Higher Certificate in Applied Social Sciences (Community & Addiction Studies)* subject to the condition and recommendations as specified in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively.

3.2. Condition

- 3.2.1. Include Programme level documentation for the embedded Level 7 and Level 6 awards including Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs), mapping of PLOs to relevant award standards and Programme Schedules in the final programme document.


3.3. Recommendations

- 3.3.1. Add an interview requirement as a mandatory component of the admissions criteria for all entrants. The panel views this as important given the focus and orientation of the revised programme.
- 3.3.2. Consider the title of the programme in the context of the balance of the programme content between community and addiction studies- consider community development in particular. Consider this in the context of Recommendation 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 on programme learning outcomes and employability respectively.
- 3.3.3. Review the Programme Learning Outcomes to ensure there is further clarity with respect to the Knowledge, Skills and Competencies that participants will gain in the context of the overall aim, orientation and cohesion of the programme and the prospective employment of graduates. Broaden the context of addiction studies to emphasise a wider context in addition to substance abuse.
- 3.3.4. Develop an Employability Statement that clearly articulates a vision of what the graduate competencies and job roles will be.
- 3.3.5. Ensure that programme promotional material make explicit that graduates will not be qualified to play a role as Counsellors.
- 3.3.6. Develop appropriate strategies to strengthen and support how students self-identify in relation to the programme. This should include the graduate attributes and associated employment roles and career development pathways in the context of the professional qualification associated with the programme title.
- 3.3.7. A poor student retention has been referenced for the existing Community Development programme. It is important that a full evaluation of the factors behind the associated student attrition is performed so that any issues that might continue to affect retention in the new programme are addressed. This analysis should be included in the final programme document.
- 3.3.8. Review the language used in the module descriptors to emphasise the Community Development aspects as there is currently a strong social care dimension/focus coming through (e.g. clients and service users inter alia).
- 3.3.9. Review the full programme document to consider the appropriateness of language used which references terminology such as industry requirements and adjust to a language more suited to the sector and the community/support orientation of the programme.
- 3.3.10. With the strong emphasis on CA it is important to ensure that there is no over assessment. Develop a schedule of assessments that provides an indicative range in terms of workload and associated word counts.

- 3.3.11. Develop further partnerships and formalise where possible the relationship with potential placement employers, particularly with smaller organisations.
- 3.3.12. Explore further and develop a pathway where graduates of the programme may gain professional accreditation.
- 3.3.13. Add further learning content on the area of *Poverty* given its impact in the wider context of the programme.
- 3.3.14. Add further learning content to the programme in the area EU Policy in addition to National policy.
- 3.3.15. Correct the inconsistency in Programme and Module titles between the syllabus documentation in Module Manager and the module references in Part A of the Programme document (Pages 53 and Pages 74 – 80).
- 3.3.16. Review and revise the reading lists associated with all modules to include the most up to date relevant references.
- 3.3.17. Review the wording throughout the modules to indicate that addiction is but one of the influences in Community Development.
- 3.3.18. Review the learning outcomes and indicative content of the Module *Contemporary Issues in Addiction* to broaden the learning from just an emphasis on substance abuse to better reflect the current module title.
- 3.3.19. Revisit the title of the Module *Community Management* and replace with a title that is more reflective of the learning outcomes and indicative content.

3.4. Commendations and Observations

- 3.4.1. The panel notes the exceptional circumstances in which the programmatic review has been conducted and congratulates the Department in this respect.
- 3.4.2. The panel commends the programme team on the critical self-study and self-evaluation undertaken noting it as very comprehensive and thorough. The panel commends the breath of the resulting revised programme in the first two years and particularly the foundation that 1st Year offers.
- 3.4.3. The panel commends the emphasis on the development of soft skills that support the wider graduate attributes.
- 3.4.4. The panel commends the expertise and extensive experience of the Programme Team.
- 3.4.5. The panel commends the programme team for its evident and ongoing engagement with the sector which enriches the learning environment and experience of students.
- 3.4.6. The panel compliments the programme team on the Placement Guidelines and the Problem Based Learning approach in the research project.
- 3.4.7. The panel compliments the team on the excellent programme documentation provided.
- 3.4.8. The panel commends the programme team for their positive engagement with the panel during the course of the revalidation visit.



Signature of Chairperson

Date: 8th July 2021