



**Institute of Technology Sligo
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA SLIGEACH**

PROGRAMME VALIDATION REPORT

DATE OF EVALUATION 25th May 2016

PROGRAMME EVALUATED Bachelor of Business in Tourism with Event Management L8 Ab-initio

Unique Programme reference Number PRN: SG_BTOUR_H08

Panel of Assessors

Chair: Gerard O'Donovan, *Head of Faculty of Business and Humanities, CIT*

Panel members: Ray Keaney, *Head of Department of Management, ITT Dublin*

Michael Gill, *Head of Department Business, Humanities & Technology, GMIT – Mayo Campus*

Sean Mulhern, *Mulhern Leonard, Chartered accountants, Sligo*

Feidhlim Seoige, *The Union of Students in Ireland*

Rory O'Connor, *Sligo Live*

Brian King, *Group Operations Manager, Kingfisher Group, Kingfisher Club*

Declaration regarding any conflicts of interest:

The members of the Panel signed a form confirming that they did not have any conflict of interest.

Meeting with School Management and Programme Development Team

Attendees:

Ann Higgins (HOD)	Alan Kelly
Cillian O'Murchu	Susan Leonard
John Creed	Caroline Casey
Gary Reynolds	Angela Bartlett
Beatrice Flavin	John Gaynor
Aiden Bell	Helen Grady
Mairead McCann	Clodagh Crowe
Karen McManus	

The Chair welcomed School Management and the Programme Development team and introduced the panel.

Programme design, modifications and title

The rationale for a move to a L8 is that it offers a specialised L8 award in Tourism and Event Management and there is an identifiable gap in the market. This will be the first programme in this field. Nationally there is an increasing demand for L8 programmes and it attracts a different student cohort. The introduction of this programme will facilitate a move towards research for students. This new L8 will give greater visibility on the CAO as the add-on is not there.

The L7 is continued as the Department does not want to close the door to students with lower CAO points who can enter and complete a 3 year L7 and be successful at a L8 Add-on. The L7 Programme has strong links to post Leaving Certificate courses.

Learning Outcomes

The panel asked to see that learning outcomes on the new L8 and the existing Add-on are consistent. This would require more detail in documents. Staff confirmed that Programme learning outcomes had been amended to reflect the specialised nature of new programme and to map Tourism and Event Management. The Dissertation was moved to L8 which is in alignment with other programmes.

Delivery methodologies and Assessment Strategies

There are 1 elective and 2 mandatory modules in Semester 7. Students from L7 Business will not be allowed into Year 4 BA in Tourism Event Management as they need to cover tourism event related subjects at L7.

The panel commented that the assessment strategy seemed very traditional, there is a tendency towards large emphasis on final exams, they felt the nature of modules were suitable to greater weighting on continuous assessment. Staff responded that the Eco (Green) Tourism stream runs through 4 years and is taught through case studies. 1st year assessment tends to be final exam but there is a shift towards continuous assessment as the programme progresses. The panel suggested that the programme could benefit from more standalone modules.

There are no new modules in Semester 7 or Semester 8, but the Dissertation moved from L7 to L8. Students exiting at L7 take a module to give them appropriate research skills. The panel asked where the issue of a Project as a dissertation presented a challenge, there is a lot of applied project work done throughout the programme, should the dissertation be academic or

could a project be feasible. A Business plan would be unacceptable but some academic research could be feasible for a project (relevant to business).

Group work is managed using software to monitor individual contribution. Individual marks are awarded to group members.

Feedback to and from students

Student feedback on the Dissertation is very positive. It can be difficult to process but also be very worthwhile. Students derive a lot of benefits from the Dissertation and some consider it the best part of the programme. Staff will use programme to show enterprise and business startup pathways to students.

Employment of graduates

The graduate profile covers a wide variety of professions.

Links with employers

The links with industry and employers are underdeveloped and the Department needs to foster links. They should use work placement network and research output to forge stronger links.

Research

History of research is historically strong in the tourism area and there are currently four PhD students in this area. The Department could look to develop themes such as sustainable planning. Staff acknowledged that the challenge of workload undermines research but they are considering looking to CRISP and to link research to entrepreneurship and business development

Summary of Findings

The panel thought that the programme was undersold. They commented on the large amount of good work being produced and encouraged staff to take advantage of it. The programme has innovative and dynamic modules and assessment schedule and the panel believed it will be successful. The panel recommended to Academic Council that it approve the Programme.

Panel Conditions

1. None

Panel Recommendations

1. The panel recommends the Department seek to develop and forge stronger links with industry and employers.

Signed on behalf of programme validation Panel



Mr Gerard O'Donovan
Chairperson
Date: 25th May 2016

Mr John Daffy
Recording Secretary
Date: 25th May 2016