

# Validation Report



**BN111**

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sports  
Management and Coaching**

**with the following embedded programmes**

**BN020**

**Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management and Coaching**

**BN019**

**Higher Certificate in Arts in Sports Coaching and Administration**

**BN305**

**Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management and Coaching (add on)**

**BN412**

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sports Management and Coaching (add on)**

## Introduction

The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown was established in 1999. The mission of the Institute is to serve its students and the community by meeting the skills needs in the economy and increasing the level of participation in third-level education and training, particularly in Dublin North-West and its environs.

The Institute in 2006 was awarded delegated authority enabling the development, validation, implementation and continuous improvement of its existing taught higher education and training programmes up to and including level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

The purpose of this document is to report on the findings of the peer review panel established to validate this proposed programme against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated in the Institute policy document 2MP01<sup>1</sup>.

This submission by the School of Business and Humanities evolved through:

- examining the competence, expertise and experience of it's staff in addition to the strategy of the department/school/Institute and government educational policy
- identifying through research the need for and the preferred structure and characteristics of the proposed programme

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<sup>1</sup> 2MP01 Design, validation and accreditation of new academic programmes

## Programme overview

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sports Management and Coaching is a 4 year programme. In the design and development of this programme, close attention was paid to industry opinion obtained through in-depth research and interviews in addition to staff experience and expertise in this area.

Industry research highlighted deficiencies in the areas of coaching, conditioning, fundamental and functional movement and speed. In response to this the programme was designed to incorporate three broad sports focussed streams namely:

- Physiology
- Strength and conditioning
- Coaching

The modules designed for these streams are progressive in nature and ensure that on completion of the programme graduates will have the ability to physically condition and coach athletes and players to an elite performance level.

It also became apparent through industry research that graduates wishing to work in any sport/leisure organisation were expected to have an understanding of:

- Management
- Finance
- Marketing

Research indicated that graduates with a broad skills base in management, finance and marketing complemented with information technology awareness would have the capability to succeed in this sector.

This programme seeks to embody in students an in-depth understanding of the theories, concepts and methods as applied in the areas pertaining to sports management and coaching in addition to sufficient conceptual business knowledge and skill to effectively work in any sport and leisure facility.

## Programme detail

**Programme title** Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sports Management and Coaching

**Award title** Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

**NFQ<sup>I</sup> level** 8

**ECTS<sup>II</sup> credits** 240

**Programme code** BN111

**Banner code** BN\_BSMCO\_8

### Embedded awards

Banner code	ITB code	Programme title	Award title	ECTS credits	Format
BN_BSMCO_7	BN020	Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management and Coaching	Bachelor of Arts	Level 7 180 credits	Ab initio
BN_BSMCO_C	BN019	Higher Certificate in Arts in Sports Coaching and Business Administration	Higher Certificate in Arts	Level 6 120 credits	Ab initio
BN_BSMCO_D	BN305	Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management and Coaching	Bachelor of Arts	Level 7 60 credits	Add on
BN_BSMCO_B	BN412	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sports Management and Coaching	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	Level 8 60 credits	Add on

<sup>I</sup> National Framework of Qualifications

<sup>II</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

## Panel members

<b>Chairperson</b>	Dr. Joseph Ryan Athlone IT
<b>Panel member 1</b>	Dr. Thomas O'Toole Waterford IT
<b>Panel member 2</b>	Dr. Alan Ringland Tralee IT
<b>Panel member 3</b>	Mr. Gary Ryan Athletics Association of Ireland
<b>Panel member 4</b>	Dr. John Gaffney Sligo IT
<b>In attendance</b>	Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan IT Blanchardstown  Mr. Michael Keane IT Blanchardstown
<b>Date of Panel Meeting</b>	Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> April 2008

## Institute staff present

### **Session I Meeting with Director, Head of School & Head of Department**

Dr. Mary Meaney Director

Mr. Michael Tobin Head of School of Business and Humanities

Mr. Pat O'Connor Head of Department of Business

### **Session II Head of School, Head of Department & Programme Leader(s)**

Mr. Michael Tobin Head of School of Business and Humanities

Mr. Pat O'Connor Head of Department of Business

Mr. Val Andrews Department of Business

Mr. Gary Bernie Department of Business

Mr. Brian Watters Department of Business

### **Session III Meeting with programme design staff**

Mr. Michael Tobin

Mr. Pat O'Connor

Mr. Val Andrews

Mr. Gary Bernie

Mr. Brian Watters

Mr. Terence Sheridan

Ms. Tara Rooney

Mr. Ronan Keaskin

Ms. Mary O'Reilly

Mr. Aiden Carthy

#### Also in attendance

Mr. Daniel Tobin, Sports Development Officer, Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU)

## Panel findings

### Section I

In evaluating the appropriateness, quality and proposed operation of this programme the following criteria has been considered and is hereby reported upon:

#### **Strategic planning**

The panel was satisfied that the programme is in keeping with the Institute's mission, that it does not constitute redundant provision and that it makes efficient use of resources.

#### **Evidence of consultation**

Through discussion with Institute staff, the panel found that a comprehensive research effort was undertaken to validate the need for, and the preferred structure and characteristics of the proposed programme.

The primary research activity was pluralistic in nature involving:

- Qualitative feedback arising from individual interviews with existing students, graduates, industry contacts of academic staff and a focus group with industry.
- Quantitative information was obtained through an industry survey.

An extensive secondary research activity explored Irish Government and European Union publications, trade journals, print media articles, web resources and the output of a recent internal programmatic review. Resources relied upon include:

Irish Sports Council  
Irish Institute of Sport  
Australian Institute of Sport

National Coaching Training Centre  
Department of Art, Sport and Tourism  
National Sports Governing Bodies

## **Learner employment potential**

It is envisaged that graduates would operate in positions that require operational skills from a sporting and business perspective in both established organisations and embryonic entrepreneurial enterprises. A typical selection of commercial positions envisaged for these graduates would include managerial positions within commercial and public leisure and sporting enterprises, local authorities, government departments, organisations and agencies in addition to positions involving the sales and marketing of sporting goods, brands and services.

## **Protection of learners**

Section 43 of the Act<sup>1</sup> does not apply.

## **Quality assurance**

The panel were informed of how the submission had been developed and approved internally whilst complying with the Institute's quality assurance policies and procedures. The panel concurred that said policies and procedures had been applied to the development of the proposed programme.

## **Programme titles and award titles**

Following discussion, the panel was satisfied that the titles of the proposed programme, and its embedded sub-awards are clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders and consistent with HETAC award titles.

## **Ethics**

The panel was satisfied that the Institute has internal policies and procedures in place to ensure that all teaching, learning or research activity across the spectrum of NFQ levels is conducted / delivered in a manner that is both morally and professionally ethical. However, the panel stressed the importance of students having Garda clearance, medical certification and a valid First Aid Certificate for the duration of the programme and an attendance certificate for the "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport".

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<sup>1</sup> Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

## **Section II**

In evaluating this programme the following specific aspects have been considered and are hereby reported upon:

### **Unity**

The panel found that the programme design is consistent with HETAC's policy on Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects, that it has an underlying unifying theme with modules bonded by linkages being either implicit or explicit. It was also clear to the panel how the standards of knowledge, skill and competence evolve throughout the programme as a whole. However, the panel felt that the terminology of the learning outcomes needed to be re-visited within the submission document and linked back to the indicative assessment schedule.

### **Teaching and learning**

The panel discussed with staff of the Institute the various modes of interaction practised with learners. Evidence of a clear dialogue was confirmed, enabling learners to develop and have available to them the support of academic staff.

Course management arrangements were discussed and deemed adequate, these included:

- survey of students by lecturer
- summary of survey of students by lecturer
- survey of students by department
- course boards

The panel was satisfied with the proposed resource plan for the necessary staffing levels and were suitably impressed with the qualifications, experience, competence and commended the obvious enthusiasm of the staff concerned.

## Relevance

Dublin 15 has become synonymous with a number of high profile sporting organisations and structures including Abbotstown (Football Association of Ireland) and the National Aquatic Centre (Swim Ireland). Coupling this with the exponential growth in the emergence of gyms, golf courses, clubs for soccer, rugby, athletics and GAA within the area, it is fast becoming a hub of sporting activity. It is the profile of this local environment, the Institute's strategic plan and the many and varied sporting talents, qualifications and skills of a number of Institute staff that led to the genesis of this new programme.

## Supporting publications

The findings of "Tracing the Development Process and Needs of Irish Coaches"<sup>i</sup> outlined the current deficiencies in coach education and skills development while recognising the shortfall in expert personnel in the fields of coaching children, physiology, psychology and fundamental movement. This was further supported by recommendations found in "Building Pathways in Irish Sport"<sup>ii</sup> which highlighted the need for coaches with expertise in fundamentals and the coaching of children.

## Demand

Educational Institutes who have developed related courses in health and leisure have experienced a robustness in student applications especially in the light of a continuing decline in more traditional academic areas namely, computing, engineering and languages. This is further supported by the number of first preference choices for this programme, currently over 400, lodged with the Central Applications Office (CAO) for the academic term 2008/09.

## Minimum entry requirements

Entry requirements for admission to the honours degree were deemed appropriate. It was noted by the panel, however, that entry requirements for the level 6 and level 7 embedded programmes as stated in the submission document require clarification.

The panel noted that the marketing of the programme needed to highlight the amount of physical activity involved in participating in the curriculum.

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<sup>i</sup> National Coaching Training Centre 2007 - [www.nctc.ul.ie/publications.htm](http://www.nctc.ul.ie/publications.htm)

<sup>ii</sup> National Coaching Training Centre 2007 - [www.nctc.ul.ie/publications.htm](http://www.nctc.ul.ie/publications.htm)

## **Learner assessment**

Through discussion with the design team, and from the submission document itself, it was explained in detail to the panel the multiple modes of assessment, both formal and informal that will be employed. While the scale of learner assessment was deemed appropriate for the proposed programme, please note in this regard the panel's recommendation number 3.

## **Standards of knowledge, skill and competence**

The panel felt having reviewed the syllabi and assessment methods that learners would be capable of attaining the standards of knowledge, skill or competence relevant for this award.

## **Access, transfer and progression**

The programme incorporates the established procedures for access, transfer and progression while accommodating a variety of access and entry requirements from applicants with expertise related disciplines.

## Decision of the panel

The panel recommended the validation of the proposed programme including its embedded awards namely:

<b>Programme title</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sports Management and Coaching
<b>Award title</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
<b>NFQ<sup>I</sup> level</b>	8
<b>ECTS<sup>II</sup> credits</b>	240
<b>Programme code</b>	BN111
<b>Banner code</b>	BN_BSMCO_8

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<sup>I</sup> National Framework of Qualifications

<sup>II</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

## Panel conditions

None

## Panel recommendations

The following specific recommendations were made:

- 1) Consider introducing an element of choice (electives) to Year 3 and Year 4 of the programme thus producing two separate streams of specialisation, one potentially with a specific sports focus with the other having a specific business focus. One of the streams could include work placement.
- 2) Consider the sequence of the modules on skills acquisition. Consider the inclusion of a high level overview of the Skills Acquisition module (semester 8 on the approved course schedule) in the first module in semester 1 namely “Coaching Theory and Practice”.
- 3) Define a matrix of the assessment schedule and use same to consider if students will be over assessed, with the intention of shifting the emphasis more towards independent learning. Consider cross-modular assessment as a means of reducing the amount of assessment.
- 4) Consider the titles of modules and the following specific changes:

The module “Power Strength Speed Literature Review” (SMCO H4011) to “Sports Management and Coaching”.

The module “Applied Exercise Physiology 1” (SMCO H3023) to “Performance Analysis”, and consequently The module “Applied Exercise Physiology 2” (SMCO H4012) to “Applied Exercise Physiology”

The module Coaching and Special Populations (SMCO H3011) to Coaching Special Populations

- 5) Consider merging the modules “Life Coaching” (SMCO H4013 semester 7) and “Professional Skills” (SMCO H3015 – semester 5) to allow the insertion of a new module titled “Elite Coaching” in semester 7.

- 6) Stipulate that Garda clearance must be attained by all students by Year 2 of the programme, and ensure students do not operate without supervision in the presence of minors in year 1.
- 7) Stipulate that a valid First Aid Certificate be mandatory for all students for the duration of the programme (required within 3 months of start of programme), and amend approved course schedule accordingly.
- 8) Include within the module “Regulatory Environment” (SMCO H2015) a mandatory attendance certificate for the “Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport”.
- 9) Clearly stipulate on all marketing material for the program the level of physical activity involved and the necessity of medical health certification prior to commencement.
- 10) Establish clear and transparent protocol for the reservation of places on the programme.
- 11) Consider offering credit allocation for high performance athletes. This could be built in as part of the CA component of a module.
- 12) Clarify the minimum entry requirements as stated in the submission document for the level 6 and 7 programmes and amend as appropriate.
- 13) Review learning outcome terminology and amend accordingly to reflect the level of module, appropriate number of learning outcomes and ability to relate learning outcome to assessment (measurable).
- 14) Review the module syllabi to ensure that no pre-requisites exist between sequential odd and even semesters.
- 15) Make other minor amendments as discussed at panel meeting.

## Panel observations

The panel concurred on the wide range of skills a graduate of this programme seeking employment would require and felt that these were well reflected in the programme. The use of a “subject journal” to assess the module “Sports Club Operations Management” was highly commended. The panel also commended the willingness of Institute staff present to engage in open and frank dialog through which their obvious enthusiasm for the new programme became evident.

## Panel signatures

### Chairperson

Dr. Joseph Ryan \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Secretary

Dr. Diarmuid O’Callaghan \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_