

Validation Report



BN112

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Digital
Media**

with the following embedded programmes

BN021

Bachelor of Arts in Creative Digital Media

BN413

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Digital Media (add on)

Introduction

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 2MP01¹.

This submission by the School of Informatics and Engineering in conjunction with the Centre for Interdepartmental Studies 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

¹ 2MP01 Design, validation and accreditation of new academic programmes

Programme overview

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Digital Media is a 4 year programme. The aim of this programme is to equip students with the skills and knowledge enabling them to embark upon a rewarding career in digital media.

Within the programme structure the student will acquire a sophisticated understanding of the range of concepts that underpin both the practical technologies and skills and the theoretical aspects of digital media systems and design.

Four broad thematic areas will be explored throughout this programme namely:

- Professional development
- Design and context
- Digital media for the web
- Technology skills

Within the professional development theme the student will study modules specifically concerning professional practice and their personal development, lifecycle development, project management and working in the digital media industry.

The design and context theme will be delivered through a suite of modules covering the basic principles of design, including graphic design and form, layout, typeface and other elements of desktop publishing, human computer interaction and universal design.

The digital media for the web theme will include a range of modules covering client-side development, website design and usability and dynamic server-side web development.

The final theme will cover a wide range of technical skills required for the creation of digital media artefacts including such topics as multimedia authoring, systems development, animation, digital audio and video.

Research has shown that successful practice in this area requires a combination of technological know how, creative design skills and a critical understanding of the industry context. This programme aims to provide this combination of skills and knowledge and in doing so put its graduates in an ideal position to operate at the very heart of organisations engaged in innovative digital media projects.

Programme detail

Programme title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Digital Media
Award title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
NFQ^I level	8
ECTS^{II} credits	240
Programme code	BN112
Banner code	BN_DDMED_8

Embedded awards

Banner code	ITB code	Programme title	Award title	ECTS credits	Format
BN_DDMED_7	BN021	Bachelor of Arts in Creative Digital Media	Bachelor of Arts	Level 7 180 credits	Ab initio
BN_DDMED_B	BN413	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Digital Media	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	Level 8 60 credits	Add on

^I National Framework of Qualifications

^{II} European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

Panel members

Chairperson	Mr. Terry Twomey Limerick Institute of Technology
Panel member 1	Dr. Richard Studdert University College Cork
Panel member 2	Mr. Derek O'Reilly Dundalk Institute of Technology
Panel member 3	Prof. Gary Granville National College of Art & Design
Panel member 4	Mr. John Barrett IBM
In attendance	Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan IT Blanchardstown Mr. Michael Keane IT Blanchardstown
Date of Panel Meeting	Wednesday 16 th April 2008

Institute staff present

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

Dr. Mary Meaney	Director
Mr. Larry McNutt	Head of School of Informatics & Engineering
Dr. Brian Nolan	Head of Department of Informatics
Mr. Damian Cox	Head of Centre for Interdepartmental Studies

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

Mr. Larry McNutt	Head of School of Informatics & Engineering
Dr. Brian Nolan	Head of Department of Informatics
Mr. Damian Cox	Head of Centre for Interdepartmental Studies
Mr. Stephen Sheridan	Department of Informatics

Session III Meeting with programme design staff

Mr. Larry McNutt	Dr. Brian Nolan
Mr. Damian Cox	Mr. Stephen Sheridan
Dr. Matt Smith	Mr. Hugh McCabe
Ms. Margaret Kinsella	Mr. Dan McSweeney
Mr. Markus Hoffman	

Also in attendance Mr. Michael Murphy of Cork Institute of Technology

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.

Rationale

Ireland is home to a fast-growing and innovative digital media sector that encompasses a broad range of activities including content creation, systems development and service provision. The impact of digital technology has transformed traditional information technology, media and entertainment industries resulting in new ways of working, new products and services and new business opportunities.

Government research publications based on industry consultation have stressed the importance of digital media as a key area for future economic development. Skill shortages have been identified in the areas of "creativity, high-end content specific skills and digital content related business skills"^I. A more recent report by the "Expert Group on Future Skills Needs"^{II} on behalf of Forfás examined the international digital media industry and analysed the implications for Ireland in terms of future skills requirements. This report strongly confirmed that the demand is for employees that have a balance of technical and non technical skills. It is this multi-disciplinary aspect of the digital media industry that this

^I A Strategy for the Digital Content Industry – Forfás 2002

^{II} Future Skills Requirements of the International Digital Media Industry: Implications for Ireland", Forfás 2006

programme seeks to address by providing its students with a combination of technical, creative and business skills.

Learner employment potential

It is envisaged that graduates will have the knowledge and skills to take up employment in a broad number of areas within the digital media industry, including web design and administration, interactive media production, 2 and 3D animation, digital video production, digital audio production, project management and instructional media design. This programme aims to develop graduates that can operate at the very heart of organisations engaged in innovative digital media projects.

Protection of learners

Section 43 of the Act¹ 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 title of the proposed programme, and its embedded sub-awards in the context of Digital Media is clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders and consistent with HETAC award titles. However the panel proposed that the title be amended to include the word "creative", to emphasise the creative as distinct from the technical orientation of the programme.

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.

¹ 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.

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.

The panel heard how lectures, individual and group workshop exercises, tutorials and project work pertinent to each module will be delivered in a structured manner. Each module introducing the students to the fundamental concepts of the subject area with instruction then advancing to an appropriate level to cover in-depth knowledge, fostering the development of individual aptitudes and where relevant developing team working skills in the respective areas. The panel also heard how educational visits to business and other concerns where digital media are employed and developed will form an integral part of the programme.

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.

Minimum entry requirements

Entry requirements as discussed at the panel meeting for admission to the programme were deemed appropriate.

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. These included a combination of in-class tests, formal examinations, assignments, reports, projects, presentations and seminars. The scale of learner assessment was deemed appropriate for the proposed programme.

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:

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Panel Conditions

1. Re-title the programme to include the word “creative” as follows:

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Digital Media

^I National Framework of Qualifications

^{II} European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

Panel recommendations

The following specific recommendations were made:

- 1) Consider a more holistic cross module approach to student assessment and link this to the development of the students work portfolio.
- 2) Review semester 5 contact hours and bring in line with the contact hours of the other semesters.
- 3) Consider the sequence of the modules on Web Development and Web Design.
- 4) Consider the title of the module “Multimedia Systems Development”.
- 5) Stipulate an alternative assessment process that may be used for those students unable to undertake/gain work placement.
- 6) Review the indicative content of the module “3D Modelling and Animation” – the panel felt that this was over ambitious for one semester.
- 7) Clearly stipulate the minimum entry requirements.
- 8) Stipulate repeat arrangements for all modules, particularly those assessed by 100% continuous assessment and make same visible to students.
- 9) Review the content of the module “Digital Video and Audio 1” with a view to shifting the focus more on digital tv content delivery methods.
- 10) Review the module syllabi to ensure that no pre-requisites exist between sequential odd and even semesters.
- 11) Make other minor amendments as discussed at panel meeting.

Panel observations

The panel commended the design team on what they found to be an innovative, coherent and well structured submission document. They 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 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

Mr. Terry Twomey _____ Date _____

Secretary

Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan _____ Date _____