

Validation Report



Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in **Digital Marketing**

BN119

Department of Business

School of Business & Humanities

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown

May 2016

Introduction

In 2006 the Institute 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.

Programme overview

Digital marketing is marketing for the modern, connected consumer. New and emerging digital technologies have changed the face of marketing as businesses and brands now recognise the value of having an active online presence to reach new customers alongside their offline marketing activities. Marketing is the discipline of understanding how and why consumers buy products and services and using those insights to satisfy consumer wants and needs. Digital marketing combines traditional marketing with the latest digital tools and media to help businesses reach, connect and promote their products to a wider audience using strategies that inform, captivate and engage.

This programme will equip learners with the necessary skills and abilities to operate effectively within the marketing industry either in a client-based or agency environment. With this aim in mind, learners will be immersed in the following threshold concepts and skills:

- The Marketing mix
- Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning
- Consumer Behaviour
- Environmental Analysis
- Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling
- Supply Demand & Elasticity
- Return on Investment
- Corporate Citizenship
- Statistical Numeracy
- Literacy
- Appreciation of Web Systems, platforms and networks

The programme will produce graduates who are independent and innovative thinkers with the requisite digital marketing skills underpinned by a sound

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

understanding of fundamental marketing theory and insight to succeed in rapidly changing marketing environments/industry.

Panel composition

Chair Dr. Andrew Power
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and
Technology

Academic experts Dr. Declan Fleming
NUI Galway

Mr Donnacha McNamara
Limerick Institute of Technology

Dr Sarah Diffley
Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Industry experts Ms Annette Ni Dhathlaoi
Marketing Consultant

Mr Joe Wilde
Marketing Consultant

In attendance Mr. Richard Gallery
Registrar
IT Blanchardstown

Mr. Michael Keane
Quality Assurance Officer
IT Blanchardstown

Date of Panel Meeting Thursday 27th April 2016

Consultation

Management consulted during the panel meeting:

Dr. Pat O'Connor Head of School of Business & Humanities

Ms. Fiona Malone Head of Department of Business

Academic staff consulted during the panel meeting:

Ms. Bairbre Brennan Ms. Isobel O'Reilly

Dr. Colm McGuinness Ms. Olivia Edge

Mr. Paul Stacey Mr. Brian Watters

Ms. Anne-Marie Nolan Ms. Jennifer Cowman

Mr. Thomas Mulvey Ms. Sandra Thompson

Mr. Paul Dervan Mr. Martin Fitzgerald

Ms. Niamh Braiden

Findings of the panel

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/consultation effort was undertaken with stakeholders to validate the need for, and the preferred structure and characteristics of the proposed programme.

Learner employment potential

The panel was of the opinion that graduates would be of immediate value to industry and can look forward to an exciting range of career opportunities.

Protection of learners

Section 43 of the Act¹ does not apply.

Quality assurance

The panel was 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 programmes.

Programme title and award title

Following discussion, the panel was satisfied that the title of the proposed programme is clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders and consistent with QQI award titles. However, in relation to the title of the proposed embedded Higher Certificate award the panel recommended that the word 'communications' be removed, see panel recommendations.

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 and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

Unity

The panel found that the programme design is consistent with QQI 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 each of the individual programmes as a whole.

Teaching and learning

The panel discussed with staff of the Institute the various modes of interaction practised with learners. Course management arrangements were discussed and deemed adequate. Evidence of a clear dialogue was confirmed, enabling learners to develop and have available to them the support of academic staff. The panel noted the emphasis on experiential problem based learning and welcomed same to encourage creativity, empowerment and learner engagement. The panel also welcomed the applied focus of the programme and the proposed use of e-Portfolios to facilitate learner supervision and the archiving of course work thereby providing future employers with demonstrable evidence of work product.

Learner assessment

Through discussion with the design team, it was explained in detail to the panel the multiple modes of assessment, both formal and informal that will be employed throughout the programmes. The panel was informed of how the Institute's policy on continuous assessment is based on the objective of developing/enhancing the learners' application of knowledge, aptitude for critical analysis and problem solving within specific timeframes. In relation to the grading of the placement the panel requested that further clarity be provided in relation to same. The panel commended the use of integrative cross modular assessment events and noted their contribution in developing practice based, industry ready graduates. However the panel noted an inconsistency in the number of indicative assessment events especially within the financial modules and recommended that these be reviewed, see panel recommendations.

Standards of knowledge, skill and competence

Having reviewed the syllabi and assessment methods as proposed the panel was of the opinion that learners would be capable of attaining the standards of knowledge, skill or competence relevant for the award.

Access, transfer and progression

The panel confirmed that the programme incorporates the established procedures for access, transfer and progression.

Placement

The panel was very supportive of the inclusion of placement, the definitive component of the programme providing learners with the opportunity to reflect on their studies and apply theory to practice while facilitating the skills required for professional practice. Given the importance of same the panel was of the opinion that the credit allocation for the placement be reviewed, see panel recommendations.

Decision of the panel

The panel recommended the validation of the proposed programme and associated embedded awards namely:

Programme title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Marketing
Programme code	BN119
Award title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
NFQ level	8 (240 ECTS credits)

Embedded awards

Bachelor of Arts in Digital Marketing

(BN040 – NFQ level 7 - 180 ECTS credits – ab-initio)

Higher Certificate in Arts in Digital Marketing

(BN041 – NFQ level 6 - 120 ECTS credits – ab-initio)

Bachelor of Arts in Digital Marketing

(BN309 – NFQ level 7 - 60 ECTS credits – add on to BN041)

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Marketing

(BN424 – NFQ level 8 - 60 ECTS credits – add on to BN040)

Conditions of validation

This validation is subject to the following conditions:

1. Suite of marketing modules

Revise the suite of marketing modules to ensure differentiation and a cohesive progression of marketing knowledge throughout the programme.

2. Digital technologies

Include an additional module on digital technologies in the final year of the programme.

3. Online selling and sales management

Change the status of the 'Online Selling & Sales Management' module DMKT H3018 from elective to mandatory.

Panel recommendations

In the light of continuous improvement the panel offered the following recommendations:

➤ Placement

Revise the credit weighting from 20 ECTS credits to 30 ECTS credits.

➤ Title of the embedded Higher Certificate award

Remove the word 'communications' as proposed from the programme title such that the title reflects 'Higher Certificate in Arts in Digital Marketing'.

➤ Learning outcomes

Revise the module learning outcomes to providing a consistency in relation to volume with terminology appropriate for a NFQ level 8 programme, and clearly articulate the assessment events and linkages to the attainment of the learning outcomes and reassessment opportunities as appropriate.

➤ Assessment

Clearly articulate all integrative cross modular assessment events within each of the impacted module syllabi.

Integrate the use of workshops and guest industry speakers into the fabric of assessment.

Clarify reference to 'Facebook and GMO challenges' to be incorporated into the assessment of modules.

➤ Resources

Review the resources as listed within the module syllabi to ensure they are the most recent, relevant and appropriate for each of the modules.

➤ Applied focus

Make the applied focus of this programme more explicit within the module descriptors and syllabi.

➤ Make other technical and minor amendments as discussed at the panel meeting.

Panel signatures

Chair

Dr. Andrew Power _____ Date _____

Secretary

Mr. Richard Gallery _____ Date _____