Validation Report

Master of Arts

in

Management

for the Nonprofit Sector

(BN527)

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 2MP01[I].

Programme overview

This programme is aimed at those already working in organisations in the non-profit[II] sector (NPOs). The programme will enable participants to develop advanced core competencies in Management in the NPO sector, to build on learning and management skills already gained and to further develop the analytical skills and academic knowledge of learners. This programme is structured to develop competitive managerial leaders and decision-makers who can help their NPO meet the challenges facing them. Challenges include rising demand for their services, increased competition for funds and government outsourcing of specific activities. These challenges will require NPOs to refocus and up-skill their management capability so that they can deliver the services required, while maintaining public trust. Delivered over 2 years this programme aims to place IT Blanchardstown, in conjunction with its delivery partner ITT Dublin, at the forefront of management education for the non-profit sector

---

[I] 2MP01 Design, validation and accreditation of new academic programmes
[II] The term nonprofit is used here to cover all charitable, community, voluntary and social enterprises.

Panel composition

Chair   Dr. Patricia Moriarty
                                       Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar
                                       Dundalk Institute of Technology

Academic experts   Ms. Marian Duggan
                                       Limerick Institute of Technology

                                       Dr. Danielle McConville
                                       Queen's University Belfast

                                       Mr. Don Crowley
                                       Cork Institute of Technology

Industry expert   Mr. Denis Cronin
                                       Daughters of Charity

In attendance   Mr. Richard Gallery
                                       Registrar
                                       IT Blanchardstown

                                       Mr. Michael Keane
                                       Quality Assurance Officer
                                       IT Blanchardstown

Date of Panel Meeting   Tuesday 24th May 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

Mr. Cormac Doran   Head of Department of Humanities

Academic staff consulted during the panel meeting:

Dr. Francis McGeough   Mr. Garreth Smith

Ms. Sheila Coyle   Mr. Donal Rogan (ITT)

Ms. Caroline Tansey (ITT)   Dr. Blath McGeough (ITT)

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. The panel commended the programme design team on this initiative to address the needs of a niche area and the programme design team's collaboration with ITT Dublin.

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, 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 employers within the non-profit sector.

Protection of learners

Section 43 of the Act[I] 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.

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. The panel however was of the opinion that ethical consideration needed to be made more explicit throughout the programme and module descriptors, see panel recommendations.
.

[I] 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 however requested that a more detailed teaching, learning and assessment strategy be articulated, see panel recommendations.

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. The panel encouraged the use of integrative cross modular assessment events to reduce the volume of assessment and recommended that further opportunities for group work in relation to assessment be explored, 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 proposed award. However, the panel requested a schedule of delivery be provided in order to more clearly articulate student contact, engagement and learner workload, see conditions of validation.

Access, transfer and progression

The panel confirmed that the programme incorporates the established procedures for access, transfer and progression. However, the panel requested that the entry requirements be revised to reference the requirement of an appropriate work environment enabling learners to successfully engage with the applied focus of this programme, see conditions of validation.

Decision of the panel

The panel recommended the validation of the proposed programme and associated exit award namely:

Programme title	**Master of Arts in Management for the Nonprofit Sector**
Programme code	BN527
Award title	Master of Arts
NFQ level	9 (90 ECTS credits)
Exit award	**Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Management for the Nonprofit Sector** (*BN539 – NFQ level 9 - 60 ECTS credits*)

Conditions of validation

This validation is subject to the following conditions:

1.   Entry requirements

Clearly articulate the entry requirements referencing the requirement of an appropriate work environment enabling learners to successfully engage with the applied focus of the programme.

2. Schedule of delivery

   Articulate the schedule of delivery providing further clarity on student contact, engagement and learner workload.

3. Schedule revision – semester 2

   Revise the credit allocation for the module MMNS H6016 'Social Marketing' to 5 ECTS credits.

   Extract the governance component of the module MMNS H6014 creating a standalone module on 'Governance' with a credit weighting of 5 ECTS credits. Retitle MMNS H6014 as 'Financial & Performance Management' with a credit weighting of 10 ECTS credits.

4. Teaching, learning & assessment strategy

   Clearly articulate the teaching and learning strategy for this programme.

   Define the programme and module assessment strategies clearly articulating all module assessment events and the linkage of same to the attainment of the learning outcomes.

Panel recommendations

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

➢ Staff development

   Arrange for all staff involved in the delivery of the programme to be provided with training on online delivery, related systems and best practice.

➢ Induction

Incorporate an induction programme, two day residential if possible, containing activities to include academic writing, online technologies, data requirements and confidentiality etc.

➢ Programme delivery

Formalise the delivery and sharing of resources between ITB and ITT.

➢ Assessment

Utilise integrative cross modular assessment events to reduce the volume of assessment across the taught modules.

Explore further within module assessment the opportunity for group work.

Provide live case studies for those participants unable to access required data in their workplace.

➢ Ethics

Clearly articulate ethical considerations and make more explicit with the programme and module descriptors.

➢ Learning outcomes

Revise the volume, terminology and linkage to assessment events as discussed at the panel meeting.

➢ Resources

Update the module resources as discussed at the panel meeting.

➢ Dissertation

Revise the descriptor to address issues as discussed at the panel meeting including research topic, supervision etc.

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

Panel signatures

Chair

Dr. Patricia Moriarty   _____   Date _____

Secretary

Mr. Richard Gallery   _____   Date _____