

INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BLANCHARDSTOWN

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES

PROGRAMME VALIDATION 2018

BN778 Certificate in Leadership in Intercultural Communities

Special Purpose Award

Response to Validation Panel Report

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

This programme aims to develop leadership capacity in communities with an intercultural profile which experience social disadvantage.

In recent decades, there has been increasing diversity in some communities in Ireland. This new reality has become an acknowledged and welcome part of life for many. However, in some communities where there is social disadvantage and perceived competition for resources such as housing (NiChonail and Buczkowska, 2016, p. 41) as well as access to employment (Lowry, 2006, p. 52) tensions between host community, new communities, minority ethnic communities and migrant communities living in the one area can arise. A recent report by the Immigrant Council of Ireland to guide local authorities on developing local migrant integration strategies (O'Brien, Bhatti, Murphy and Buczkowska, 2018) cited these tensions.

'...the difficulty with the indigenous population believing migrants represent competition for resources in the areas of education, health, housing and employment' (p. 11).

Integration Policy Context

Ireland established the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in 2007. Recently the office has published the Migrant Integration Strategy (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017) which sets out actions for the period 2017 to 2020. One of these actions is entitled 'Integration in the Community' (p. 30) and names local authorities (county councils) as having responsibility for action 52 'updating integration strategies' and action 53 'establishing a Migrant Integration Forum' in each local authority. Intercultural awareness training also features in the work of the Office as well as anti-racism measures and actions aimed at combating discrimination. This Migrant Integration Strategy policy initiative is reflected in the recent establishment of an Expert Advisory Group to inform Fingal County Council's Integration and Social Cohesion strategy.

Increasing Cultural Diversity

Increasing cultural diversity due to migration is a global phenomenon. Ireland, historically a country of emigration, experienced striking levels of inward migration between 1996 and 2008 (CSO 2011). While emigration increased in the aftermath of the recession (2008 onwards), before starting to decrease again since 2013, immigration has nonetheless continued to increase, albeit from a much lower level initially (CSO 2017a). The scale and pace of Ireland's transformation to a country of inward migration was remarkable, as is the resultant extent of the cultural and ethnic diversity present. The proportion of the population who were non-Irish nationals was 11.6% in 2016 (CSO 2017b), compared to 6% in 2002. The breadth of diversity is such that people of 200 different nationalities, other than Irish, are now resident in the country (CSO 2017b).

Fingal recorded the second highest number of non-Irish nationals among its residents in the 2016 census (46,909). Non-Irish nationals comprise 16% of the population in Fingal, with the largest cohort coming from Poland, Romania, UK and Africa (CSO 2017b). The local dynamic demographics and the national policy context form the background against which this programme was conceptualised.

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

Panel composition

Academic expert

Dr Camilla Fitzsimons
Department of Adult and Community Education
Maynooth University

Industry expert

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Date of Panel Review

Friday 28 September 2018

Consultation

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Dr. Bríd NíChonail, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Ms. Jacqui Gage, Partners Training for Transformation
Ms. Nuala Kane, Empower (former name Blanchardstown Area Partnership)

Findings of the panel

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

Core, values, mission and strategy

The panel found that the programme is highly relevant to the dual vision of ITB to meet the skills needs of the economy and, to increase the level of participation in higher education and training in Dublin North-West. The panel noted the practical, hand-on approach the course facilitating the development of key skills in group-work and facilitation, community development and social analysis.

Strategic planning

The panel noted the significance of this programme given the withdrawal of community development infrastructure in recent years. The programme has been developed in partnership with community stakeholders, the local development company Empower and responds to needs identified by the local authority Fingal County Council and to national agendas on Community Development, Integration and Social Cohesion

Evidence of consultation

The panel identified a particular strength of the programme being its collaboration between the 1) ITB School of Humanities Community and Youth Development Programme, 2) Empower, 3) Partners Training for Transformation and 4) Safer Blanchardstown. Each group brings complementary expertise with Empower and Safer Blanchardstown strategically positioned to both recruit, and support, students throughout the programme. The significant lead in period indicates a commitment to working on the ground and to delivering a programme that is relevant to the needs as identified by those at the coalface.

Learner employment potential

The programme is not aimed at employment, rather it is to develop integration, collaboration and leadership within communities and beyond. The development of this programme is particularly timely and relevant to addressing needs in the Dublin North-West area, as evidenced by Fingal County Council's Integration and Social Cohesion initiative. The decision to develop and deliver the programme both for the community and within the community is a key strength. The development of the programme is considered to be timely at a national level given recent policy commitments to integrated ways of working.

Protection of learners

Section 43 of the Act² 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 expressed confidence in the robust nature of ITB's quality assurance policies to ensure appropriate standards of practice amongst educators, competency in the assessment of learning, and appropriate supports for students in terms of access and progression.

Programme title and award title

The panel was satisfied that the title of the proposed programme is clear, accurate and fit for the purposes of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. The programme is consistent with QQI award titles.

² Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

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Teaching and learning

The panel commended the positioning of the programme within an adult education philosophy of learner centredness, active participation, and in support of emergent knowledge through dialogue. The structure of the programme promotes a creative, supportive, democratic learning environment where students are encouraged to draw from their lived experience as a source of analysis reflecting relevant theoretical inputs, exposure to appropriate scholarly writing and an introduction to research relevant to Leadership in Intercultural Communities.

Learner assessment

The panel found that the programme offers a good variety of assessment methods and welcomed the approach of emphasis on continuous assessment.

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 of Certificate in Leadership for Intercultural Communities.

Access, transfer and progression

Although there is no guaranteed progression into other ITB programmes at levels 7, there will be options available to learners who express a desire to progress and where they display the relevant capacities.

Decision of the panel

The panel recommended the validation of the proposed programme namely:

Programme title	Certificate in Leadership for Intercultural Communities
Programme code	BN778
Award title	Special Purpose Award
NFQ level	6 (20 ECTS credits)

Conditions of validation

There are no conditions attached to the validation of this programme.