TUS

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne: Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

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Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachas
Faculty of Business and Hospitality

Department of Accounting and Business Computing

External Validation Panel, 13/05/2024

for the
Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Enterprise and Community Development

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings and findings of the external validation visit for the proposed:

Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Enterprise and Community Development

held on the 13th of May 2024. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations for the development of taught programmes. An external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal.

2.0   GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1   Higher Education Provider

Provider	TUS: Midlands Midwest
Faculty	Business and Hospitality
Department	Accounting and Business Computing
Date of Visit	13th of May 2024

2.2   Programme Evaluated

Programme Title	Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Enterprise and Community Development
Award Title	Higher Certificate
NFQ Level	6
ECTS Credits	120
Award Class	Level 6
Delivery Mode	Taught
Duration	Two years part-time online
Proposed Starting Date	September 2024

2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

Name	Affiliation
John Vickery - Chairperson	Former Registrar, IT Tallaght
Dr Brónagh Heverin	Head of Department of Law, Public Service and Education, ATU
Patricia Kelly	Social Enterprise and Development Officer, Galway Rural Development CLG
Sam Marchetti	Founder, ConsortiaCo and Head of Impact at The SDG Hub
Dr Pat O'Connor	Head of School of Social Sciences, Law and Education, TU Dublin

Secretary to Panel: Dr Pat Donohue, Former Assistant Registrar, TUS Midwest
Support to Secretary/Panel: Ms. Claire Frawley, TUS

2.4 TU Staff

Name	Affiliation
Dr Terry Twomey	VP Academic Affairs and Registrar
Dr Michael Tobin	Interim Dean, Faculty of Business and Hospitality
Bernard Tao Cui	Head of Department of Accounting & Business Computing
Eddie Higgins	Equal Ireland
Nuala Keher	Equal Ireland
Programme Leader: Imelda Fallon	
Programme Team: Eilis Biggs, Prof. Marc Cashin, Michael Donnelly, Joanna Dukkipati, Jason Palframan, Damien Quinn.	

3.0   FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.1   Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the following proposed programme subject to the condition and recommendations as outlined in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this report:

Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Enterprise and Community Development

3.2   Conditions

Re-word the learning outcomes using Blooms Taxonomy. Use appropriate active verbs for a Level 6 programme.

3.3   Recommendations

1) Consider the wording of the title of the programme.
2) Be more explicit in the description of the overarching Teaching and Learning Strategy. Adapt to the cohort of learners.
3) Include references to UDL in the documentation. Embed across the programme.
4) Review requirements for entry onto the programme. Take account of those with a Leaving Certificate or equivalent qualification.
5) Specify the English language requirements for applicants whose first language is not English (CEFR – B2+).
6) Include expected student numbers in documentation.
7) Expand on the formative student feedback element of the Teaching and Learning strategy for individual modules.
8) Consider ways of applying social enterprise concepts through module content and assessment.
9) Include mechanisms for supporting students with disabilities in the documentation.
10) Update the reading lists across the programme.
11) Outline the role of Equal Ireland in the documentation. Detail the supports that Equal Ireland are providing to applicants currently and into the future.
12) Review the assessment schedule to ensure a more balanced student workload. Review the assessment processes to ensure timely formative assessment (assessment for learning) and summative assessment (assessment of learning).

13) Clarify the breakdown of the learning and effort module hours across the programme in the documentation in line with ECTS norms. Identify the modules that have the extra online hour, half hour and feedback hour.

14) Include a list of the potential roles of programme graduates in the documentation. (Social Entrepreneurship, Community, Corporate and Public Sector).

15) Review the number of learning outcomes and their (multiple) assessment per module.

16) Include ethical considerations (page 9) in the documentation.

17) Consider referencing governance throughout the modules.

Stage 1 Modules

Critical Skills for Learning

- Include an extra learning outcome to cover the module content.
- Amend LO2 (Develop an awareness is vague)

Community Development

- LO1 (Develop a foundation of knowledge is vague)
- LO2 (Demonstrate an awareness is vague)

Entrepreneurial Skills & Business Modelling

- Update reading list in this module.
- Include Social Enterprise Toolkit
- Review the Financial Management and Control element as it may prove difficult for first years. While it is a good idea to have students lead class discussions it may prove difficult for younger semester 1 students. Training would need to be provided.
- Review wording of LO 2 as it is not clear how it will be assessed.

Computer Applications

- Update the full reading list in this module.
- Consider including the application of AI in the module.
- LO1 (Delete 'Exercise a practical ability'. Use the word 'Manage' as the active verb.
- LO2 (Start with "Complete tasks to a high standard using MS Word, etc.)
- LO3 Delete "Employ the".

Management

- Consider including the 2023 baseline study for social enterprises in the 'other resources' section.
- Update the full reading list in this module.

Marketing

- Include buysocial.ie in the references.
- Include communicating the social mission of the business in the module content.
- LO1 Delete 'Understand', possibly use 'Describe/discuss/explain'.
- LO2 Change active verb to 'Use'. Use traditional and digital marketing communications tools to reach and communicate with consumers.

Fundamentals of Research

- LO1 Change active verb to 'Use'.
- Amend the indicative syllabus to include ethics.
- Update the reference list.

Social Impact Strategies and Skills

- This module is very ambitious. Consider splitting the module into two modules with associated learning outcomes.
- The learning outcomes need to reflect that this is a Level 6 programme/module.
- Amend documentation to show that there is no failed element in the module.
- Amend week 24 for practical evaluation.

Stage 2 Modules

Marketing Management in a Digital Age

- Consider reducing the size of this module to 5 credits.
- Include buysocial.ie in the reference list.
- Good to see that UDL is included.
- LO4 (Remove "Demonstrate". Re-word using "Create")
- Clarify whether the workshops and mentoring sessions are outside the hours indicated.

Human Resource Management

- Consider reducing the size of this module to 5 credits.
- Update reading list.
- LO2 "Resource". Re-write using appropriate active verb.

Applied Sociology

- Consider the use of the word "Applied" in the title of this module.

Operations Management

- Consider the relevance of this module to the programme as presented.
- Ensure that QMS is included in the module.
- LO1 & LO3 Remove "Demonstrate an understanding".

- Update reading list.
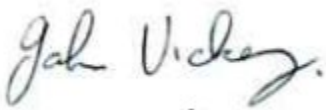
Social Enterprise and Innovation

- Include 'Social Enterprise Policy Bank' in other resources.
- LO3 'Generate'. Re-word.
- Update reading list.

Integrated Learning Project

- LO3 "Demonstrate a deep understanding". (Discuss/describe)
- LO6 "Evaluate". Use an appropriate Level 6 active verb.
- Assessment is at the end of the semester. Consider re-structuring to have some assessments earlier.
- Update reading list.

3.4   Commendations and Observations

1) The panel commend both TUS and Equal Ireland on the collaboration and the development of the programme.
2) The panel commends the programme team on the positive engagement with communities through the programme.
3) The panel appreciated the detailed discussions and clarifications provided by the programme team.
4) The panel would like to commend the team for their active and enthusiastic engagement with the panel.

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 21/05/2024