



**TUS**

**Technological University of the Shannon:  
Midlands Midwest**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:  
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

**[www.tus.ie](http://www.tus.ie)**

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**Dámh an n-Nolaíochtaí Feidhmeacha agus na Teicneolaíochta  
Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology**

**Roinn na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta Feidhmeach  
Department of Applied Social Sciences**

**Report of Review Panel,  
10<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Review of the**

**Master of Arts in Social Work  
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Social Sciences**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the external validation visit for the proposed Master of Arts in Social Work and embedded Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Social Sciences and the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 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 GENERAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Higher Education Provider

Provider	Technological University of the Shannon
Faculty	Applied Sciences and Technology
Department	Applied Social Sciences
Date of Visit	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2024

### 2.2 Programmes Evaluated

Programme Title	Master of Arts in Social Work
Award Title	Master of Arts
NFQ Level	9
ECTS Credits	120
Delivery Mode	Full-time/Part-time
Duration	24 Months/36 Months
Proposed Starting Date	September 2024

Programme Title	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Social Sciences
Award Title	Postgraduate Diploma
NFQ Level	9
ECTS Credits	90
Award Class	Level 9
Delivery Mode	Full-time/Part-time
Duration	12 months/24 Months
Proposed Starting Date	September 2024

### 2.3 External Programmatic Review Panel of Expert Assessors

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Mr. Damien Courtney	Chair – Formerly CIT
Dr. Martin Power	University of Limerick
Dr. Kirstie Thomas	Simmons University
Mr. Derek Walsh	TUSLA
Ms. Siobhan Wall	Brothers of Chairty
Ms. Aoife Collery	Student Representative
Dr. Brendan Murphy	Secretary to the Panel

### 2.4 TUS Staff

President	Prof. Vincent Cunnane
Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar	Dr. Terry Twomey
Dean of Faculty	Dr. Maura Clancy
Head of Department	Dr. Melinda Gushwa

#### Programme Team

Dr. Shane O’Sullivan	Ms. Jennifer O’Grady	(Programme Corodinators)
Emma Aherne,	Dr. Michelle O’Flanagan,	
Dr. Lorcan Byrne	Ms. Maureen Tierney	
Ms. Patrica O’Connor		

### **3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL**

#### **3.1 Main Findings**

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the proposed:

- Master of Arts in Social Work (Full-time),
- Master of Arts in Social Work (Part-time)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Social Sciences,

subject to the Recommendation as specified in Section 3.3.

The panel note an excellent programme presentation as reflected in the commendations.

#### **3.2 Conditions**

No conditions apply.

#### **3.3 Recommendations**

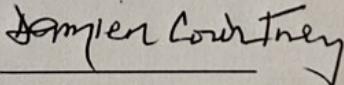
- 1) Consider aligning the independent learning hours to be specified as either per Module or per Week to provide consistency in the Approved Programme Schedule.

#### **3.4 Commendations and Observations**

The Panel commend:

- 1) the evident strategic focus and compelling rationale of the programme, fulfilling regional needs and aligned with TUS strategy;
- 2) the creation of an important progression pathway for prospective students including for undergraduate students and employees of the sector, particularly noting the Full-time, Part-time options and the embedded Postgraduate Diploma;
- 3) the excellent programme documentation which is detailed, comprehensive and developed to a very high standard;
- 4) the evident care and attention to detail in the development of the programme including:
  - a) the focus on pedagogies of care including the emphasis on wellbeing, resilience and social justice as integral themes and the creation of a community of learners approach;
  - b) innovative pedagogy integrated throughout the programme, particularly noting the benefits of simulation learning;

- c) clear alignment with the TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy including the emphasis on the development of soft skills that support the wider graduate attributes
- 5) the significant engagement and consultation with external stakeholders such as the HSE, TUSLA, and Placement Providers including the voluntary sector;
- 6) the consultation and engagement with CORU, the foresight of the programme team in aligning with CORU requirements and the associated mapping exercises as part of programme development;
- 7) the consideration given to the wider context of students and the reduction of potential barriers to participation as part of programme design;
- 8) the extensive expertise and experience of the programme team, both academic and in practice;
- 9) the positive engagement, enthusiasm, dedication, and team spirit exhibited by the programme team during the validation visit.

  
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Signature of Chairperson  
Date: 29/2024