



TUS

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

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

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Faculty of Applied Science and Technology

Department of Applied Social Sciences

Report of External Validation Panel

External Validation Panel, 10/11/2025

for the

Bachelor of Art (Honours) in Youth Work and Community Development (F/T, P/T)

Bachelor of Art in Youth Work and Community Development (F/T, P/T)

Higher Certificate in Art in Youth Work and Community Development (F/T, P/T)

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION	3
2.1 Higher Education Provider	3
2.2 Programme Evaluated	3
2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors	4
3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL	6
3.1 Main Findings	6
3.2 Conditions	6
3.3 Recommendations.....	6
4.0 APPENDIX	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

Bachelor of Art (Honours) in Youth Work and Community Development (F/T, P/T)

Bachelor of Art in Youth Work and Community Development (F/T, P/T)

Higher Certificate in Art in Youth Work and Community Development (F/T, P/T)

held on 10th November 2025. 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	Applied Science and Technology
Department	Applied Social Sciences
Date of Visit	10 th November 2025

2.2 Programme Evaluated

Award Title	Bachelor of Art (Honours)
Programme Title	Bachelor of Art (Honours) in Youth Work and Community Development
NFQ Level	8
ECTS Credits	240
Award Class	Level 8
Delivery Mode	Full-time/ Part-time
Duration	4 years
Proposed Starting Date	September 2026
Contact	Dr Sasha Noonan

Award Title	Bachelor of Art (Honours)
Programme Title	Bachelor of Art (Honours) in Youth Work and Community Development
NFQ Level	7
ECTS Credits	180
Award Class	Level 7
Delivery Mode	Full-time/ Part-time
Duration	3 years
Proposed Starting Date	September 2026
Contact	Dr Sasha Noonan

Award Title	Higher Certificate in Art
Programme Title	Higher Certificate in Art in Youth Work and Community Development
NFQ Level	6
ECTS Credits	120
Award Class	Level 6
Delivery Mode	Full-time/ Part-time
Duration	2 years
Proposed Starting Date	September 2026
Contact	Dr Sasha Noonan

2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

Name	Affiliation
Prof. Marie Parker-Jenkins - Chairperson	Prof Emeritus UL

Dr Hilary Tierney	Maynooth University
Ms. Mairead Cluskey	ATU
Mr. Ross Brosnan	Limerick Youth Service
Mr. Brendan O'Loughlin	Former CEO Offaly LDC
Mr. Jac Gorey	Student Representative

Secretary to Panel: Dr. Sarah O'Toole, TUS.
Support to Secretary: Ms. Claire Frawley, TUS

2.4 TU Staff

Name	Affiliation
Dr. Maria Kyne	VP Student Affairs and Registrar
Dr. Maura Clancy	Dean of Applied Science and Technology
Dr. Carole Glynn	Head of Department of Applied Social Sciences
Programme Coordinator: Dr. Sasha Noonan Programme Team: Lorcan Byrne, Matthew Cannon, Tracey Conroy, Catherine Corcoran, Bridget Kirwan, Thomas O'Hara, Shane O'Sullivan.	

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.1 Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the proposed **Bachelor of Art (Honours) in Youth Work and Community Development f/t p/t**
Bachelor of Art in Youth Work and Community Development f/t p/t
Higher Certificate in Art in Youth Work and Community Development f/t/ p/t subject to the conditions in Section 3.2 and recommendations as specified in Section 3.3.

3.2 Conditions

- 1) Develop a document on the delivery of the programme for part time students which outlines the structure, delivery mode, consistency of learning outcomes, considerations for block placement, and RPL arrangements.

3.3 Recommendations

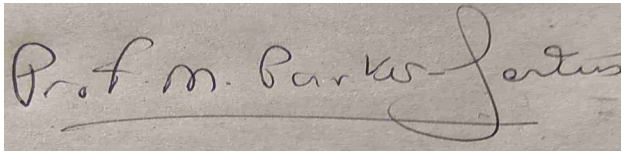
- 1) Consider how best to incorporate the topic of 'working with volunteers', and the management relationship between volunteers and staff in the module *Managing in Organisations* and relevant modules in the programme.
- 2) Ensure that the topic of conflict management, working with challenging behaviours and facilitation could be noted and recognised in relevant modules.
- 3) Consider opportunities to address contemporary issues e.g. extremism, gender equity, polarisation, migration, and how to prepare students to work in these contexts.
- 4) Review the programme documentation throughout for typos and inaccuracies. e.g. Update the programme documentation to reflect that the Level 6 takes two years instead of one year.
- 5) Review the inconsistency in the number of module learning outcomes assigned to the different modules across the programme.
- 6) Review the timing of the assessments and the assessment schedule to ensure students can manage their workload throughout the semesters.
- 7) Consider using the Viva as a broader assessment tool such as an exit interview to support students transitioning into work practice.
- 8) Consider the value of class-based assessment during class time, especially when teaching time is limited.

- 9) Consider amending the documentation reference to work placement to include evenings and weekends.
- 10) Explicitly outline in the documentation the placement criteria for students and ensure this is consistent within the student handbook and the approved course schedule e.g. link prerequisite modules to placement.
- 11) Enhance visibility of 'Fitness to Practice' policy in the relevant areas of the document, in relation to preparation for placement and placement modules.
- 12) Consider the reference to terminology such as 'social care', 'clients' and 'industry'.
- 13) Review and check the spelling of 'youth work' throughout the documentation.
- 14) Identify where possible, opportunities and experience for seeking funding and grant applications.
- 15) Ensure that learning outcomes related to public administration (PLO) are incorporated in modules before they complete the social policy module.
- 16) Review the documentation under the 'Governance and Leadership' module as sections of the text are missing.
- 17) Update the documentation to ensure accuracy throughout, e.g. academic writing has 50% attendance, but 80% attendance as a programme requirement.
- 18) Consider how staff will be supported when managing the additional workload for arranging placement and continuously building and linking with stakeholders in the sector.
- 19) Consider programme management seeking recognition of workload supervision, consistent with the arrangement with social care, e.g. 2 students (per hour) for 30 credit module, and with recognition of the two professional bodies overseeing the programme.
- 20) Review the reading lists to ensure the most recent and relevant literature is referenced throughout the programme, to include recent articles and other reports, national and international.

3.3 Commendations and Observations

- 1) The panel commends the team for the development of this innovative and creative programme to address the need in the sector and the region for such a programme.
- 2) The panel commend the practical nature of the programme and the holistic and creative approach to the programme.
- 3) The panel were impressed by the commitment of the team in the development of the programme.

- 4) The panel thank the programme team for the documentation including the rationale for the programme changes and their willingness to embrace feedback during the panel discussion.
- 5) The panel appreciated the detailed and rigorous discussions and the helpful clarifications provided by Management and the Programme Team.
- 6) The panel commends the programme team for the extensive engagement with stakeholders and the time commitment from the programme team in the development of the programme.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored, textured paper. The signature reads "Prof. M. Parker-Jentles" in a cursive script. A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 10/11/2025