



TUS

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre, An tIarthar Láir
Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest

Faculty of Applied Sciences and Health

Department of Applied Social Sciences

Report of Validation Panel

26^h May 2026

for the

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Addiction Recovery

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the online external validation panel meeting for the proposed:

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Addiction Recovery (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Arts in Applied Addiction Recovery (Level 7)
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Addiction Recovery (Level 6)

and the findings and conclusions of the Panel held on 26th of May 2026.

The validation was undertaken in accordance with TUS Policy and Procedures for Programme Validation and Modification. A validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Higher Education Provider

Institute: Technological University of the Shannon
Faculty: Applied Sciences and Health
Department: Applied social Sciences
Date of Meeting: 26th of May 2026

2.2 Programmes Evaluated

Programme	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Addiction Recovery
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts
NFQ Level	Level 8
ECTS Credits	240
Delivery Mode	Full time
Proposed Start Date	2026
Duration	4 Years

Programme	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Addiction Recovery
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts
NFQ Level	Level 7
ECTS Credits	180
Delivery Mode	Full time
Proposed Start Date	2026
Duration	3 Years

Programme	Higher Certificate in Applied Addiction Recovery
Award Title	Higher Certificate
NFQ Level	Level 6
ECTS Credits	120
Delivery Mode	Full time
Proposed Start Date	2026
Duration	2 Years

2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Pat Maunsell (Chair)	Further Education and Skills Coach and Mentor.
Professor William O'Connor	University of Limerick
Tiernan O'Neill	Corpus Christi Primary School
Dr. Jim O'Shea	MindAware Consultancy Ltd.
Caitriona Kennelly	PCI College
Peter McMahon	HSE
Joanne Molloy	Student Representative
Dr Brendan Murphy	TUS Secretary to Panel

2.4 University Staff

Dr. Maura Clancy

Dean of Faculty of applied Sciences
and Technology.

Programme Team:

Neal Whelan

David McPhillips

Lindsey Liston

Gemma O Neill

2.5 Documentation

1. Programme Self-Assessment Report
2. Programme Document AMM Level 8 (Honours) Programme
3. Programme Document AMM Level 7 Degree Programme
4. Programme Document AMM Level 6 Higher Certificate

2.6 Validation Meeting Agenda/Summary

The validation panel met on MS Teams at 10.00am and followed the agreed Agenda for the day. This included:

- Private Meeting of Assessors
- Meeting with Management
- Meeting with the Programme Team 1
Break
- Meeting with the Programme Team 2
- Private Meeting of the Panel
- Final Meeting with Management

2.7 Rationale for a Dedicated Applied Addiction Recovery Programme

a) Addressing a Critical Skills Gap

Ireland faces a growing need for professionals trained in recovery-oriented practice, peer support, community reintegration, and trauma-informed care. Traditional addiction studies programmes often focus on clinical or theoretical perspectives, leaving a gap in applied, practice-based education that integrates lived experience, community

engagement, and recovery capital. The Applied Addiction Recovery programme fills this gap by:

- Equipping learners with practical skills for frontline and community-based roles;
- Integrating lived experience as a legitimate source of expertise;
- Preparing graduates to work in multidisciplinary recovery environments.

b) Supporting Social Inclusion and Economic Participation

Education is a proven pathway out of homelessness, unemployment, and marginalisation. The evidence of the SETU Tiglin collaboration shows that structured learning helps individuals rebuild confidence, reconnect with family, and re-enter the workforce. A dedicated programme amplifies these benefits by offering:

- Recognised qualifications;
- Clear progression routes;
- Opportunities for employment in the recovery and social care sectors.

c) Aligning with National Policy and Higher Education Priorities

In addressing the recommendations for improvement, the revised programme aligns with:

- HEA access and inclusion goals;
- Government commitments to widening participation;
- National Drugs Strategy priorities around rehabilitation, community integration, and recovery capital.

Together this advances the strong policy momentum at national and local level as well as offering institutional support in accordance with TUS Strategy through an education-led recovery initiative.

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.1 Main Findings

The Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the proposed:

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Addiction Recovery (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Arts in Applied Addiction Recovery (Level 7)
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Addiction Recovery (Level 6)

3.1 Commendations and Observations

The panel commend:

- 1) the Faculty and Department for identifying a niche in the market and developing a programme with significant impact and relevance to communities and that has an emphasis on broadening access;
- 2) the comprehensive consultation process with relevant stakeholders, noting the breadth and depth of the associated consultation;
- 3) the emphasis on personal development and practitioner development progressively developed through the programme including the placement strategy;
- 4) the inclusion of an AI strategy in the programme as outlined in the self-assessment report;
- 5) the panel appreciated the enthusiasm of the programme team, and the constructive discussions and the helpful clarifications provided by Management and the Programme Team.

3.2 Conditions

No conditions apply.

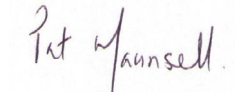
3.3 Recommendations

- 1) Differentiate the programme learning outcomes (PLO's) for the embedded Level 7 and Level 6 awards from the Level 8 award.
- 2) Review the mapping of Module Learning Outcomes (MLO's) to Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO's), for all programmes, to ensure all modules map to PLO's. As part of this review, consider if 5 PLO's is sufficient.
- 3) Revise MLO's that begin with the term 'Understand' to use measurable active verbs.

- 4) Review individual module assessment strategies and revise as appropriate/relevant to:
 - a) provide further detail of the assessment strategy/breakdown of assessment within module descriptors that only reference 100% Continuous Assessment within the module definition form;
 - b) ensure adherence with *TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes* (Section 4.8) with respect to the use of Failed Elements (it is noted that a number of modules indicate more than one Failed Element);
 - c) consider the schedule of assessment deliverables within individual modules (to avoid over concentration of deliverables towards the end of each semester).
- 5) Review and revise the total number of Mandatory ECTS Credits for Stage 4 to align with 60 ECTS.
- 6) Explore how individuals with lived experience can be supported to access and complete the programme. Consider specific allocation of places for lived-experience students (including dedicated financial support/bursary, supervision & personal support).
- 7) Consider more extensive integration of the emerging new national drugs strategy and consider how it may impact on the programme. Consider how the programme may be underpinned by Sláintecare principles.
- 8) Incorporate further formal learning to support the development of academic writing skills, particularly at the early stages of the programme.
- 9) Consider further how the TUS can further support students emotionally, given the particular focus and context of the programme. Consider developing a mentoring dimension.
- 10) Consider further theory & content on psycho-social assessment & psychosocial interventions.
- 11) Address the optimal use of AI as an empowering tool in supporting individuals who are vulnerable and support dealing with addiction and recovery through the learning content of the programme (both within Modules and in Placement).
- 12) Consider how learning content may be added to address barriers when accessing integrated care, for example, links between bi-polar disorder and addiction.
- 13) Align the listing of the modules between the Programme Self-Assessment Report and the Academic Module Manager document.

14) Review the transcript (short) title of the Stage 4 Module *Therapeutic Facilitation Skills* to give further context (currently titled *Therapeutic*).

Signature of Chairperson:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Mansell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Date: 27th May 2026