**Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Luimnigh**
**Limerick Institute of Technology**

**Dámh an Ghnó agus na nDaonnachtaí**
**Faculty of Business & Humanities**

**Roinn na Seirbhísí Gnó agus Airgeadais**
**Department of Business & Financial Services**

**Report of Peer Review Panel**

**Programmatic Review**

**of the**

**Department of Business & Financial Services**

**External Validation Visit, 26th May, 2021**

**for the**

**Department of Business and Financial Services**

Final Report

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the Programmatic Review Panel for the Department of Business & Financial Services and the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel conducted on 26th May 2021. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with Section 3 of the LIT document *'Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes (ACRP): Academic Year 2020/2021'.* (The ACRP document is available on the LIT website.) A Programmatic Review Panel external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal.

## 2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Higher Education Provider

| | |
|---|---|
| Institute | Limerick Institute of Technology |
| Faculties: | Faculty of Business & Humanities |
| Departments: | Department of Business & Financial Services |
| Date of Visit: | 26th May 2021 |

### 2.2 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

| Name: | Affiliation: |
|---|---|
| Dr. Austin Hanley, | Formerly Athlone IT (Chairperson) |
| Ms. Marie Moran, | IT Sligo |
| Ms. Deirdre O'Loughlin, | Dell |
| Mr. Richard Fahy, | BF Business Consulting Dac |
| Mr. Brian Kelly, | MHP Solicitors |
| Mr. John Riordan, | Keogh Ryan Tierney Chartered Accountants |
| Mr. Colm Barry Murphy, | CIT |
| Ms. Jessica Burke, | Student Representative |

### 2.3 Institute Staff

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Prof. Vincent Cunnane |
| VP Academic Affairs & Registrar | Ms. Marian Duggan |
| Dean of Faculty | Mr. Donnacha McNamara |
| Head of Department | Mr. James Collins |

## Academic Staff

Ms. Jessica Dalton

Ms. Jean Forbes Cook

Mr. William Lyons

Ms. Ciara Staunton

Ms. Helen Chadda

Mr. Richard O'Keeffe

Ms. Morna Canty

Ms. Emma Dillane

Mr. Michael Sheehan

Mr. Tim Galvin

Ms. Edith O'Leary

Mr. PJ Ryan

Ms. Anne Marie Dooley

Mr. Richard Boylan

Mr. John Quigley

Ms. Gretanne O'Beirne

Mr. Conor Foley

Ms. Nora O' Mahony

Mr. John Riordan

Ms. Margaret O'Sullivan

Mr. Brian Kelly

Ms. Jessica Bourke

Mr. Eoin Sadlier

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

**3.1    Main Findings**

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends reapproval of the following programmes in the *Department of Business and Financial Services* subject to the recommendations as specified in Sections 3.3.

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
Bachelor of Business in Accounting and Finance
Higher Certificate in Business in Accounting and Finance

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Law and Taxation
Bachelor of Business in Law and Taxation
Higher Certificate in Business in Law and Taxation

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business
Bachelor of Business in Business
Higher Certificate in Business in Business

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business with Computing
Bachelor of Business in Business with Computing
Higher Certificate in Business in Business with Computing

**3.2    Conditions**

No conditions apply.

**3.3    Recommendations**

*General*

3.3.1  Clarify in the documentation, the entry points to the programmes and/or their associated embedded awards.

3.3.2  Given the predominance of 5 Credit modules as a result of Semesterisation, the panel recommends that further cross modular assessments should be developed

to support coherency within programmes. Details of this should be included in the assessment strategies of relevant modules where appropriate.

3.3.3 Review the total number of assessments across programme stages to ensure that there is no over assessment. The panel notes that some module learning outcomes are assessed multiple times and this should be reviewed to see if rationalisation is possible.

3.3.4 Review the repeat assessment strategy in all modules where it constitutes an 100% Final Exam. The repeat assessment should ensure that all learning outcomes are assessed.

3.3.5 Develop at Institute level a best practice guideline on the number of learning outcomes, total number of assessments, and total number of times a single learning outcome can be assessed, for modules of given numbers of credits.

3.3.6 The panel notes that there is no detail on the Study Abroad component of the *Work Placement/Study Abroad* module and recommends that there should be some context or detail of the associated learning, including learning outcomes and assessment. Consider developing a separate module descriptor.

3.3.7 Consider further how the Stage 3 module *Business Problem Solving,* as the alternative for *Workplacement,* could be augmented with real world industry-based projects. Ensure that the learning experience can account for the programme context.

3.3.8 The panel, and the industry representatives, noted that the soft skills (including communication and teamwork) are of fundamental importance to enable graduates integrate into a business environment. The panel recommends increased emphasis on the development and assessment of such soft skills in the *teaching and learning* and *assessment strategies* across modules as appropriate.

### *Programme Suites: Business with Computing* **and** *Business*

3.3.9 Review the learning outcomes across all modules to ensure that they are expressed using measurable active verbs (for example, demonstrate an understanding of).

3.3.10 Review the learning outcomes across all modules to ensure that they align with the NFQ level particularly the higher order learning expected at Level 7 and Level 8.

3.3.11 Include further detail in the syllabus document of what constitutes the breakdown of the 100 % CA specified in the Stage 1 modules *Management Principles* and *Organisational Behaviour* and the Stage 2 module *IP and Technology Law.*

3.3.12 Review the use of the term 'critically evaluate' as a learning outcome for the Stage 1 module *Marketing Principles*.

3.3.13 Review the learning outcomes of the stage 3 module *Hrm* and express using active verbs that more closely align with assessment.

3.3.14 Develop cross modular assessment opportunities to link the technical and business streams. The stage 3 module *Applied Programming* provides a good example of where this might be possible.

3.3.15 Add the repeat assessment strategy to the Stage 4 module *Digital Marketing, Analytics & User Experience*

3.3.16 Revise the learning outcomes of the Stage 4 module *Company Law* to diversify the verbs and reflect higher order learning associated with Level 8 on the NFQ.

3.3.17 Review the independent learning hours throughout the programme schedules. There are no independent learning hours specified across a range of modules and consider aligning the consistency of specification of independent learning hours (i.e. weekly or per semester)
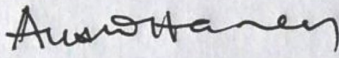
### *Programme Suite: Accounting and Finance* **and** *Law and Taxation*

3.3.18 Be mindful of the balance between mandatory and elective modules as they relate to professional body exemptions. Consider how you communicate to students what modules lead to specific exemptions.

3.3.19 Add further learning content on data analytics to the *Accounting and Finance* and *Law and Tax* programmes given its increasing importance as a transferable skillset in business.

3.3.20 Consider including learning content on propriety systems relating to ERP, for example Oracle and SAP environments, to the Stage 2 module *Sage Accounts and Payroll*.

3.3.21 Consider including a module on *Professional Skills* in the Accounting and Finance Programme, such as in the Law and Tax Programme.

3.3.22 Consider including a mock trial/practical exam or equivalent to either the Stage 1 module *Law and Legal Systems* or the Stage 2 module *Tort Law*.

3.3.23 Consider including reference to Lean Six Sigma in the Module Definition Form for the Stage 2 Module *Project Planning and Control*.

3.3.24 Add the independent learning hours to the Stage 2 modules *Law and Business*, *Company Law I and II* and to the Stage 4 modules, *International Tax Planning* and *Criminal Law 1 and 2.*

3.3.25 Consider including the practical application of *Agile Methodologies* in the programme in relevant modules where appropriate.

## 3.4 Commendations and Observations

3.4.1 The panel is impressed with the extensive work and self-evaluation undertaken and the considered changes introduced by the programme teams during the course of the programmatic review.

3.4.2 The panel compliments the programme teams on the impressive programmes with excellent structure, progression and flow of learning.

3.4.3 The panel commends the excellent programme documentation developed and presented.

3.4.4 The panel commends the inclusion of work-based learning in the form of work placement across all programmes and notes the flexibility of when placement can begin that maximises opportunities for students.

3.4.5 The panel commends the programme teams for developing the various exemptions for professional body accreditation requirements that are included in the programmes.

3.4.6 The panel commends the programme teams for the active participation and strong engagement with the panel during the revalidation event and noted that it was very impressive.

3.4.7 The panel is aware of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Higher Education sector and highly commends the Faculty and Department for progressing a programmatic review in these circumstances.

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Signature of Chairperson

Date: 08/09/2022

Final Report