



TUS

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

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

www.tus.ie

Dámh an Ghnó agus na nDaonnachtaí
Faculty of Business and Humanities

Report of Peer Review Panel

Programmatic Review of the

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care
Level 8

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care
(Exit Award Level 7)

Higher Certificate in Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care
(Exit Award Level 6)

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care
Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery)

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care Flexible
Learning (Blended Delivery)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the External Panel visit to TUS for the Programmatic Review of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care Level 8, Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care (Exit Award Level 7), Higher Certificate in Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care (Exit Award Level 6), Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care, Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery) Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care, and the findings and conclusions of the External Panel.

The Programmatic Review visit was undertaken in accordance with Section 3 of the LIT document 'Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes (ACRP): Academic Year 2021/2022'. The ACRP is published on the TUS website. An external Panel makes an impartial judgement on the Critical Self Study and programme changes proposed within the Programmatic Review.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Higher Education Provider

Institute: TUS: Midlands Midwest

Faculty/School: Faculty of Business and Humanities.

Department: Department of Sport and Early Childhood Studies

Date of Visit: 12th May 2022

2.2 Programmes Evaluated

Department of Sport and Early Childhood Studies

2.3 External Programmatic Review Panel of Expert Assessors

Mr Damien Courtney – Fellow Emeritus CIT (Chairperson)

Ms Sandra Corbett – Starting Small Standing Tall Creche

Ms Mary Skillington – Atlantic Technological University

Dr Eileen Doyle-Walsh – SETU Carlow Campus

Ms Shauna Fisher – Student Representative

2.4 Institute Staff

Dr Terry Twomey, Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar

Mr Donnacha McNamara, Dean of Faculty of Business and Humanities

Ms Elaine Barry, Head of Department of Sport and Early Childhood Studies

Department of Applied Social Science Programme Leader:

Ms Ashling Sheehan-Boyle

2.5 Selected Stakeholders:

2.5.1 Employers/Industry & Alumni Representatives:

Meabh O’Kelly – The Beehive, Rathkeale Community Creche

Caroline O’Dowd – Caroline O’Dowd Montessori Creche

Mary-Ellen O’Sullivan – Seedlings Nature School

Claire Fitzgerald – Little Explorers Cappamore

2.5.2 Current Students:

Celine Walsh

Laurene McCarthy

Elfi Chan

Jack Copely

Marian Daly

Janelle Whyte

2.6 Documentation

2.6.1 Faculty Document

2.6.2 Department Document

2.6.3 Programme Documents:

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care Level 8,

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care (Exit Award Level 7),

Higher Certificate in Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care(Exit Award Level 6),

Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care,

Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery) Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW PANEL

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends the on-going approval and re-validation for a further five years of the submitted programmes and associated amendments in the Department of Applied Social Science:

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care Level 8,
- Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care (Exit Award Level 7),
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care(Exit Award Level 6),
- Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education & Care,
- Flexible Learning (Blended Delivery) Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education & Care,

subject to the following conditions and recommendations.

3.1 CONDITIONS

- 3.1.1 Provide a designated flat classroom space for ECEC For the coming academic year in Moylish Campus

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- 3.2.1 Address the necessity for a designated outdoor ECEC space on Moylish Campus.
- 3.2.2 Collaborate with TUS Midlands Athlone for: development of elective modules for flexible learning; post graduate research and progression opportunities.
- 3.2.3 Ensure that there is investment in equipment and resources for the programmes. There should be a continuous rolling investment in core learning resources.
- 3.2.4 Improve the visibility of digital literacy in the programme - particularly digital storytelling, stop-start animation and the possibility of using e-portfolios. Some of these could be integrated into the STEAM module -Stage 3.
- 3.2.5 Consider how themes of: Child, Family and Community & interdisciplinary collaboration can be integrated before the proposed year 4 module, possibly making these themes more visible in Sociology & Psychology Stream in advance of placement or alternatively; moving the module to semester 5.
- 3.2.6 Produce a formal communication mechanism between academic staff and the placement mentor and placement agencies.
- 3.2.7 Provide a formal programme for all placement providers (induction, documentation, supervision processes, ongoing review and feedback processes).

- 3.2.8 Provide clarity to the students in the documentation with regard to special regulations (repeat and progression opportunities for placement).
- 3.2.9 Ensure that relevant placement induction and supporting documentation is provided for academic supervisors to maximise the quality and consistency of the student experience.
- 3.2.10 Support the proposal to grade/mark placement with the provision of relevant rubrics to accurately assess students and their portfolios.
- 3.2.11 Find an appropriate balance between formal placement assessment and leaving space for students to engage with the practice dynamic.
- 3.2.12 Evaluate and enhance the provision of live streamed versus pre-recorded lectures for flexible learning students.
- 3.2.13 Support ongoing CPD (accredited and unaccredited) and research opportunities for staff; including partnership opportunities in networks such as RUN-EU.
- 3.2.14 Enhance opportunities to embed research skills for students across the programme and strengthen research progression pathways for post graduate study opportunities.
- 3.2.15 Introduce programme specific mechanisms to ensure academic integrity, given the increased focus on Continuous Assessment and consolidate Quality Assurance processes for breaches of academic integrity.
- 3.2.16 Introduce an additional final exam (to replace some Continuous Assessment) between semester 2 and semester 5.
- 3.2.17 Provide a clear assessment schedule overview for students and re-consider the current bottleneck of assessments in week 12.
- 3.2.18 Reduce the number of overall assessments and consider more shared assessments across modules, so that each stage of the programme has at least one shared assessment task.
- 3.2.19 Consider the feasibility of amalgamating some 5 credit modules into 10 credit modules to address the possibility of fragmentation and over-assessment.
- 3.2.20 Ensure the assessment load for flexible learning/part-time students is realistic and manageable.
- 3.2.21 Ensure consistency in the provision, layout and detailing of reading lists for the modules.

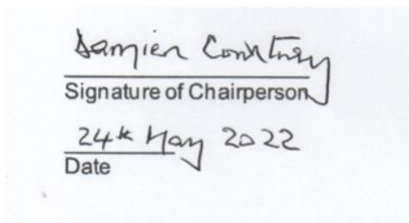
3.3 COMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

- 3.3.1 The Panel commends the programme team for the quality of the documentation provided and their diligent work in the preparation of same.
- 3.3.2 The Panel commends the recency of the research involved in its preparation and the integration of recent policy initiatives in the sector.
- 3.3.3 The Panel commends the potential of the programme to prepare graduates for current industry needs and future trends.

- 3.3.4 The Panel commends the variety of assessment methods being proposed.
- 3.3.5 The Panel commends the focus on: Practice, Outdoor Play, Wellbeing & Sustainable Development.
- 3.3.6 The Panel commends the commitment to active learning pedagogies.
- 3.3.7 The Panel commends the blend of lectures, tutorials and workshops proposed.
- 3.3.8 The panel commends the engagement with the community and how it enhances the programme.
- 3.3.9 The panel commends the programme team for their positive engagement during the course of the re-validation visit.
- 3.3.10 The panel commends the admirable collegiality and commitment for a small team.

Observation:

- 1. Only one of the placement personnel present had experience of a TUS student in work placement. It would have been helpful to have heard from more of the current placement hosts for the programme



Damien Conboy
Signature of Chairperson

24th May 2022
Date