**TUS**

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

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

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**Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachais
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics**


**Report of Peer Review Panel**

**Programmatic Review**

**of the**

**Faculty of Engineering and Informatics
Department of Mechanical, Polymer & Design**

**External Validation Visit, 18th May 2023**

Final Report

Contents

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the Programmatic Review Panel for the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, and the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel conducted on 18th May 2023. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations. A Programmatic Review Panel external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal.

## 2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

## 2.2 Higher Education Provider

| Provider | Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest |
|---|---|
| Faculty | Engineering and Informatics |
| Department | Mechanical, Polymer & Design (Creative Media) |
| Date of Visit | 19th May 2023 |

## 2.3 External Re-Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

| Name | Affiliation |
|---|---|
| Danny Brennan | Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology |
| Dr Gertie Taggart | Former Head of Faculty of Engineering, ATU Letterkenny |
| Damien Byrne | Lecturer, Animation Department of Film & Media Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire |
| Nollaig Crombie | Head of Department of Design & Creative Media, ATU Letterkenny |
| Dr Iain McCurdy | Assistant Professor of Music, Maynooth University |
| Fiona Fox | Visual Design Lead at Accenture |
| Ruairi Conaty | Cinematographer and Director |
| Gareth Lyons | Screenwriter - My Aunt Sally (Animation Company) |

Secretary to Panel: Dr. Michael F. Ryan.

## 2.4    TUS Staff

| Name | Role |
|---|---|
| Dr Sean Lyons | Dean of Engineering and Informatics |
| Ms Breda Lynch | Head of Department of Mechanical, Polymer & Design |
| <u>Department Staff:</u><br>Nicole McKenna, Carmel Smith, John Benton, Paul O'Neill, Deaglan Campbell, Margo McNulty, Carmel Joyce, John Peavoy, Lea Farrell, Duncan Moore, Audrey O'Beirne-Cleary, Jody Walsh, Shane Byrne, Duncan Moore Eoin Heffernan, Caoimhe Hogan, Thomas J O Donoghue, Stephanie Smyth | |

## 2.5    Employers/Industry & Alumni Representatives

| Representative | Affiliation |
|---|---|
| Lisa Dooley | Creative Director, The Factory |
| Harry Harty | Learning and Development Specialist, Lighthouse Studios |
| Neil Masterson | Head of Events OSS Company |
| Hannah Doyle | Alumni |
| Thomas Jacob | Alumni |
| Niall O'Connor | Alumni |

## 2.6    Current Student Representatives

| | |
|---|---|
| Heather Mc Ekenny | Adam Hunter |
| Gavin Harte | Michael Eirlis |
| Thren Aldritt | Joshua Jerry |

## 3.1    FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

## 3.2    Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends reapproval of the following programmes in the Department of *Mechanical, Polymer & Design (Creative Media)* subject to the conditions recommendations as specified in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

**List of programmes presented for review:**

Graphic Design

- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic & Digital Design, Level 8

Embedded/Related Programmes

- o Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Graphic & Digital Design, Level 8 Add-on
- o Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design, Level 7
- o Higher Certificate in Arts in Graphic Design, Level 6 (Exit Award)

Animation & Illustration

- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Animation & Illustration, Level 8

Embedded/Related Programmes

- o Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Animation and Illustration Add-on, Level 8
- o Bachelor of Arts in Animation & Illustration, Level 7
- o Higher Certificate in Arts in Animation & Illustration, Level 6 (Exit Award)

Music

- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Music & Sound Engineering, Level 8

Embedded/Related Programmes

- o Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Music & Sound Engineering, Level 8, Add-on
- o Bachelor of Science in Sound Engineering, Level 7
- o Bachelor of Science in Sound Engineering, Level 7, Add on
- o Higher Certificate in Engineering in Music & Instrument Technology, Level 6

## 3.3    Conditions

No conditions apply.

### 3.4 Recommendations

<u>General:</u>

I. That the title of the Department is reconsidered (possibly renamed 'Creative Media').

II. That all programmes, review the number of module learning outcomes with a view to establishing consistency (4 for 5 ECTS to 8 for 10 ECTS).

III. That all programmes review the module resources regarding essential reading lists and standardise the number of core texts required (2-3 core texts) .

IV. Include where possible the URLs for recommended resources in each module.

V. Ensure that active verbs used in MLOs for years 3 and 4 reflect an appropriate level of critical analysis relevant to each stage.

VI. That contemporary media options including podcasts, documentaries, 'Ted talks' (for communal watching), and other resources be included in module resources to enhance dialogue and improve inclusion of diverse learning needs.

VII. That opportunities for formalised collaboration across programmes be documented with a view to improving synergies across programme modules (animation and music; music, visualisation and sound; illustration and photography) so that graduates are familiar with multi-disciplinary teams in industry.

VIII. That further opportunities for collaborative project work be explored (including online collaboration) and that issues of 'authenticity and ownership' regarding collaborative assessment work are addressed.

IX. That the provision of elective modules be considered in future cycles of the programmes.

X. Review the number and sequencing of modules being offered in year 4 of the programmes.

XI. Further develop strategies to ensure academic integrity in assessment (including innovative assessment design) and continue to enhance modalities for proof of learning; whereby students can describe and articulate the creative process, their learning journey and their design rationale.

XII. Continue to explore synergies in creative media across relevant TUS locations (Athlone, LSAD and Clonmel).

XIII. Where possible that designated home rooms be identified and allocated to specific programmes (particularly year 4) & that locker space be allocated to the Engineering Building.

XIV.    Audit current programme inclusion of 'up to date' software applications and ensure that students are **incrementally familiarised** with these and other digital tools, so that graduates are capable and adaptable in the use of new digital technologies.

XV.    That all programmes are adequately resourced regarding staffing, technical support and tutor-demonstrators (particularly where additional students join a cohort in year 4).

XVI.    Review and ensure consistency and correctness in the accuracy of the documentation for each programme; including the self-evaluation study.

XVII.    Delineate more clearly and correctly the graduate attributes, appropriate to each exit award level.

XVIII.    Embed sustainable practices across all programmes.


Graphic Design/Group 1 Programmes:

I.    Reconsider the programme contact hours with a view to reducing the direct contact hours and increasing the self-study hours in years 3 and 4 of the programmes.

II.    Continue to collaborate with ETBs with a view to formalising an arrangement for transfer of  level 6 students into years 2/3.

III.    Continue to encourage (where possible) students to enter industry competitions (e.g. ISTD, D&AD, RSA).


Animation & Illustration /Group 2 Programmes:

I.    That module titles clearly distinguish the area of study to help students understand the **thematic focus** of the module (particularly years 1-3) .

II.    That opportunities for collaboration and specialisation be further considered in the Graduate Project (Year 4).

III.    That appropriate arrangements for alternative work-placement (stage 3) are clearly outlined in the documentation (regarding students who do not secure their own placement), so that relevant LOs are achieved including the development of relevant soft skills and exposure to professional practice.

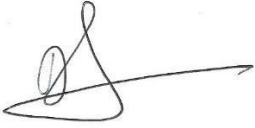IV.    Consider the integration of additional input of typography into the programme.

<u>Music/Group 3 Programmes:</u>

    I.    Consider reducing the number of assessments in some modules and consolidate the assessment of learning outcomes into fewer assessment tasks.

    II.    That additional resourcing be allocated to technical support and maintenance of equipment for the programme.

    III.    Improve support for programme participants to run relevant disciplinary - industry events on and off campus continue (post pandemic), to support teamwork, marketing and event management.

### 3.5    Commendations and Observations

The following were commended by the panel during the programmatic review process:

    I.    The extensive documentation and well-designed programmes.

    II.    The engagement by faculty members with the review process.

    III.    The engagement with industry regarding relevance of programme themes to enhance potential employability of graduates.

    IV.    The integrated role of work placement in the programmes and the integration of a placement preparation module for students.

    V.    The preparation of students for further career planning, particularly the use of portfolio development & professional practice throughout the programme cycles.

    VI.    The international engagement (China and Germany) and engagement with ETBs.

    VII.    The balance between theory and practical work in the graphic design programme.

    VIII.    The successful streaming of modules in relevant programmes particularly the Animation and Illustration Programme.

    IX.    The distinctive nature of some of the programmes particularly the BSc. Hons in Music and Sound Engineering: the range of modules offered and the esoteric projects completed by year 4 students.

    X.    The flexibility afforded to students on the various programmes to develop their own areas of interest and skill-sets.

    XI.    The positive feedback from the student and industry stakeholders, regarding their experience of the programme and its graduates.

    XII.    The commitment of faculty staff to programme improvement (and contingency planning during COVID) as evidenced by student stakeholder feedback.

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 24/06/2023