



TUS

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

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

www.tus.ie

**Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachas
Faculty of Business and Hospitality**

Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure

Report of the Programmatic Review External Panel

Programme

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Physical Education Studies

Tuesday 12th March 2024

Conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings of the Programmatic Review Panel for the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, and the findings and conclusions of the External Validation Panel conducted on the 12th of March 2024. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations. A Programmatic Review external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on the programmatic review and associated critical self-study and proposed programme changes.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Higher Education Provider

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Provider | Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest |
| Faculty | Faculty of Business and Hospitality |
| Department | Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure |
| Date of Visit | 12 th March 2024 |

2.2 Programme Evaluated

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Programme Title | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Physical Education Studies |
| Award Title | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Physical Education Studies |
| Code | AL_BPHYS_H08 |
| NFQ Level | Level 8 |
| ECTS Credits | 240 |
| Award Class | Honours Degree Abinitio |
| Delivery Mode | Full Time |
| Duration | 4 years |
| Proposed Starting Date | September 2025 |
| Contact | Dr Emma Reardon |

2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

| Name | Affiliation |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Professor Marie Parker-Jenkins | Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Limerick (Chairperson) |
| Dr Micheál Newell | College of Medicine Nursing & Health Sciences, University of Galway |
| Dr Catherine Gorman | Senior Lecturer, TU Dublin |
| Dr Michael Hall | Senior Lecturer and Head of Department, Health and Leisure Studies, MTU Tralee Campus |
| Liam Cunningham | General Manager, Athlone Regional Sports Centre |

Secretary to Panel: Dr Pat Donohue, Former Assistant Registrar, TUS Midwest

2.4 TU Staff

| Name | Affiliation |
|---|---|
| Dr Terry Twomey | VP Academic Affairs & Registrar, TUS |
| Dr Michael Tobin | Interim Dean of Faculty of Business and Hospitality |
| Dr Emma Reardon | Head of Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure |
| Seán Connell | Senior Lecturer, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure |
| Programme Team: Seán Connell, Niamh Foley, Dr Sinead Purtill, Joe Meegan, Joe Tierney, John Harding, John Killeen, Nicola Ryan, Nora Shine | |

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.1 Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the proposed programme and associated embedded awards:

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Physical Education Studies

3.2. Conditions

1. Align the business modules and physical education modules to show that they meet the regulation requirements of the Teaching Council, particularly in line with the number of credits and subject-specific requirements.
2. Revisit the title to reflect the contents of the programme.

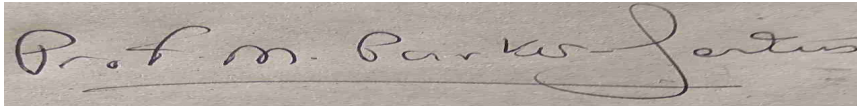
3.3 Recommendations

1. Consider including the word 'Applied' or similar in the title name to capture what the programme aims to achieve.
2. Clearly outline a description of graduate attributes and the overall programme learning outcomes (MIPLO).
3. Increase and embed indicative content on professional ethics and child welfare across the programme.
4. Explicitly state what career pathways are the focus of the proposed programme.
5. Show diagrammatically a module roadmap for potential students.
6. Reconsider the sequencing of modules for example, HR Management precedes the Introduction to Management module.
7. Consider reviewing the title 'Advocating Health & Wellbeing'; the panel suggests 'Promoting Health & Wellbeing' as an alternative.
8. Review the financial resources required and the availability and alignment of certifications embedded in the programme - coaching, aquatics, first aid, food safety, lifeguard, safeguarding etc.

9. Consider including more behavioural change within the programme modules.
10. Demonstrate a more explicit link to the constructs of sustainability, mapping the programme using such tools as STARS.
11. Provide a clear pathway from initial coach badges to advance qualifications, such as coach developer.
12. Consider projecting student numbers to support inclusion of applicants from SER.
13. Include more indicative content on the development of social skills, including dealing with people, emotional intelligence, teamwork, GDPR and professional practice.
14. Review work placement hours.
15. Review the learning outcomes around entrepreneurship.
16. Revise and update all the modules to ensure that reading material and referencing are recent and relevant.
17. Reference the depth and breadth of external competitive market research undertaken for this programme proposal.
18. Consider the potential for elective choice.

3.4 Commendations and Observations

1. The panel commends the leadership of the Faculty and Department and the collegiate engagement was quite evident.
2. The panel noted the enthusiasm and commitment of the programme teams and strong engagement with the panel during the validation event and noted that it was very impressive, particularly the development of the various matrices.
3. The panel commends the comprehensive programme documentation which was well structured and presented in an accessible manner.
4. The panel commends the University's engagement with the local community in the delivery of their practical modules.

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored, textured paper. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Prof. M. Parkash Jaiswal".

Signature of Chairperson

Date: 03/04/2024

4.0 APPENDIX

09.00 am PRIVATE MEETING OF THE PANEL OF ASSESSORS

The panel of assessors met via Microsoft Teams. The Chairperson, Professor Marie Parker-Jenkins, welcomed the members of the panel and outlined the broad context of programmatic review in accordance with approved Quality Assurance procedures of the Technological University (TU). Programmes are approved on a five-year cycle and the programmatic review offers an opportunity for self-study and enhancement of the programme suite. The panel can impose conditions for revalidation and/or make recommendations for improvement. Conditions are obligatory, while recommendations are provided in an advisory capacity to offer suggestions for improvement.

The Chairperson asked the panel to introduce themselves and to give their initial impressions with respect to the programmes and the documentation.

The panel agreed that further clarification was required in relation to:

1. Programme Title
2. Business Curriculum Mapping
3. Market Research Undertaken
4. Anticipated Student Numbers
5. Sustainability
6. Career Pathways
7. Independent Certifications
8. Professional Ethics
9. Reference List

The Chairperson thanked the panel for their contributions and the panel adopted the proposed agenda for the day.

9.30 am MEETING WITH TUS MANAGEMENT

Dr Terry Twomey, Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar, Dr Michael Tobin, Interim Dean of Faculty of Business and Hospitality, Dr Emma Reardon, Head of Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure and Mr Seán Connell, Senior Lecturer, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure joined the meeting.

The panel members introduced themselves and detailed their areas of expertise and members of the management team outlined their respective roles. The Chairperson thanked the Institute for the opportunity to review the proposed programmes.

Dr Terry Twomey outlined to the panel that Physical Education was a natural development and strengthening of the TUS portfolio in the sports arena. He confirmed that TUS is committed to the development of this area in both the Midlands and the Midwest.

Dr Michael Tobin delivered a presentation to the panel providing a background to the Faculty, its staff and student numbers. He outlined that the faculty strategy is focussed on increasing CAO numbers, postgraduate numbers and research activity. He highlighted that a key strength of the department was its level of engagement with schools and industry and the delivery of relevant, timely and appropriate skills to all learners. He noted that there were many career progression pathways from this degree but that it was not a physical education degree leading to the guarantee of a PME in physical education. Dr Tobin concluded his presentation by outlining to the panel how the programme aligns with TUS values and its strategic plan.

Dr Emma Reardon, Head of Department highlighted the four pillars of the programme - Physical Activity, Lifestyle & Wellness, Business and the Research Capstone Project. She noted that upon reflection on what is happening in industry and emerging Government policy, the department had recognised a need to develop a programme that incorporated more physical activity and sports related content but that also addressed our changing relationship with healthy eating and nutrition. She noted that physical education is now

offered at both Junior and Leaving Certificate; TUS can offer students a continuation of education in this area for everyone and not just sports people and elite athletes.

Dr Reardon informed the panel that upon careful mapping against QQI standards the programme team had classified it as a Bachelor of Arts rather than a Bachelor of Science. It was noted that there was already a sufficient offering across the TUS Midlands and Midwest campus in the area of science and this programme was unique in its multidisciplinary approach to the delivery of physical education with a business and lifestyle strand.

She concluded the presentation by highlighting the range of industry-specific accreditations embedded within the programme, including food safety Level 2. She outlined that the Department had mapped the PE offering with the teaching council requirements but there was no protected pathway.

The Management Team addressed the questions put forward by the panel as outlined below:

Research

The Department initially looked at the sports offering at TUS before looking at TU nationwide and the education landscape in the UK. A real core value of the team was to create a well-constructed programme with new modules. They were influenced by public policies coming out from the OECD and HSE and channelled that in their multi-disciplinary approach.

Programme Title

The panel expressed concern that the programme title did not match the ambition of the proposed programme. In response, the programme team stated that they wanted to change the narrative around the study of Physical Education and it was not just about sport but food and wellness. It was noted that consideration had been given to including

Business in the title and the team were open to feedback from the panel in respect of the title.

Chronic Illness in Adults

The programme team confirmed that it was not within the skillset of the Department to address chronic illness in adults. The focus and expertise of the Department would be in the wellness, well-being and food nutrition side of physical education. The Head of Department noted that students would be designing programmes for all ages in the Curriculum Design module in Year 4.

Child Protection

The team confirmed it would be mandatory for all students to receive Garda vetting and attend the Sport Ireland Safeguarding, Child Welfare and Protection Awareness workshop. They would also attend courses in sport and physical literacy with Coaching Ireland and first aid. The team agreed to investigate putting resources in place to facilitate students completing Safeguarding Two.

10.15am MEETING WITH THE PROGRAMME TEAM

The Head of Department introduced Team HTL to the panel - Dr Sinead Purtill, Joe Tierney, Joe Meegan and Niamh Foley specialising in Sport and Physical Activity, John Killeen specialising in Culinary Arts and Food Studies, Seán Connell, Senior Lecturer in IT, Business and Sports, Hospitality and Culinary Programmes, Nicola Ryan specialising in Well-Being and lead on the Research proposal and Consultancy project and Nora Shine specialising in Finance and Accounting.

Title

In response to panel feedback that the programme title did not match the ambition of the programme, the Head of Department outlined that the team had found from their interaction with students that a continuation of subjects taught at second level really resonated with them. They are no longer identifying with Sports Management with

International Placement because it is not Sports Science. She noted that Physical Education is now a designated subject with a broad content and as a result there has been an increased interest in courses in this area. She indicated that she was opposed to removing Physical Education from the title but was open to suggestions from the panel on introducing another element to the title. The panel suggested that consideration should be given to including the word 'Applied' to the title to capture the essence of the course.

Teaching

The Head of Department outlined that the team view the programme as a study of Physical Education, believing it provides an opportunity to change the narrative around Physical Education. She noted that the programme document outlines a variety of successful career paths that graduates can pursue. The programme will not be marketed as a teaching programme as there is no protected pathway and a student cannot be guaranteed a place on a PME, hence the deliberate omission of teaching in the document. The panel pointed towards an institute where they advise students that teaching is an option based on seventeen years' experience in this area and this resulted in an increase in applications.

Business Credits

The programme team outlined that should a student wish to pursue teaching as a career path there are sufficient credits in the programme mapped to the teaching council.

The panel queried the number of credits and the team confirmed that there were 55 credits in the business column and in the Lifestyle and Wellness section, there are an additional 10 credits for the Event Management module.

Student Numbers

The Head of Department outlined that ideally the programme would be available on the CAO in 2025, with places available for QQI applicants. The aim is to have 30 students enrolled based on data analytics research. The ambition is to have two exit awards embedded in the programme with a Level 6 exit award validated separately to connect more strongly with the ETB sector. Once a student has completed two years, they can

then transfer into year 3. It was noted that TUS was the first Technological University to be identified as a University of Sanctuary, with ten academic scholarships per academic year.

Award

In response to a query as to where the Level 8 graduate from this course would fit within the health sector, the programme team drew the panel's attention to documentation outlining the physical education capabilities that graduates will have to meet societal demands. The programme team expressed their willingness to expand the qualifications they can give to students in addition to the proposed academic award.

Sustainability

The Head of Department highlighted that sustainability is one of their key strengths and is implicit across all programmes. Over the past year the Department have installed four aeroponic towers and a wormery to promote food sustainability and reduce food waste. Students are currently growing pumpkins, beetroot, tomatoes and peppers on the TUS Athlone campus providing them with an opportunity to work with sustainably produced food rather than just learning it theoretically. The panel pointed out that the Department should map the sustainability content of the programme using for example: STARS a rating system used by Universities and Colleges.

Research Project

The research project takes an applied and practical approach. The student creates, envisages and settles on a research title and questions; students are supported by partners in industry.

Module Sequencing

The Head of Department provided the panel with a background to the module sequencing. She highlighted that students really enjoy Sports Psychology as a first-year module and the panel in response recommended that consideration be given to revisiting Psychology/Behavioural Change later in the programme. It was noted that the Sports

Management programme focus is practical and applied in the first two years and theoretical in the final two year. The Physical Education Studies programme has a better balance with an even spread of theoretical and practical modules across each semester. The programme team agreed to consider the appropriateness of the sequencing of HRM before Introduction to Management.

The panel queried and the programme team agreed to review the use of the word 'advocating' in a second-year module, the term being more appropriate for a more mature learner. It was suggested that consideration be given to replacing 'advocating' with 'promoting'. In respect of the Event Management module, the Head of Department highlighted that a student would need to be of a Level 8 ability to run and host an event, hence the positioning of the module. The panel noted that the outdoor recreation module was very extensive for a 5-credit module. The panel congratulated the programme team for producing a wide variety yet focussed curriculum.

Customer Service

The panel confirmed that they are very explicit in the delivery of soft skills and transversal skills, in particular in the practical modules. Customer service forms part of the marketing module and all business modules have presentations as part of the assessment. The programme team noted that their existing graduates have a real strength in their presentation and communication skills which really enhances their employability. The programme team agreed to review the modules to reflect this in the documentation.

Practical Work

The programme team provided a comprehensive report on the practical aspect of the course. The wellbeing module was highlighted as an example, it has an assessment weighting of 70% portfolio and 30% in class examination. Students experience contemporary approaches to wellness that is trending – forest bathing, ice baths, outside saunas, walking leader programmes. Students also gain experience in care settings. The coaching programmes involve working with primary schools and special education

schools in the locality providing opportunities to engage with young children. It is hoped to expand this out to secondary schools.

Work Placement

The panel queried the seven hundred hours of work placement equating to twenty weeks and more than thirty credits. It was confirmed that TUS is currently undergoing a review of its work placement strategy. Currently the Hospitality and Sports Management programme is devised at 700 hours and this programme will remain in line with the other two programmes until the work placement review team come back to the committee and it is properly formalised. The policy is currently at VP and Deans' level.

The Chairperson thank the participation of the programme team and the panel retired to deliberate over the day's proceedings.

12.00 pm PRIVATE MEETING OF THE PANEL OF ASSESSORS

The Chairperson invited the panel members to outline the issues they felt had been highlighted during the meeting with TUS management and the programme team. The panel again reviewed the proceedings of the day and discussed the contributions of Management and the Programme team.

The panel commended the leadership of the Faculty and Department. They were impressed with the quality and depth of the self-evaluation undertaken. The panel noted that the programme documentation was comprehensive and well structured.

The panel agreed that the programme suite would be approved with two conditions and a number of recommendations. The detailed wording of the conditions and recommendations was then further discussed and developed. These are presented in Section 3.2 and 3.3 of this Report.

The Chairperson thanked panel members for their work in reviewing the large volume of documentation and for their valuable insights throughout the day.

12.30 am PANEL FEEDBACK TO FACULTY MANAGEMENT

In the concluding session, the Chairperson of the External Validation Panel, Professor Marie Parker-Jenkins briefed TUS management and the programme team on the outcome of the day. The panel was pleased to recommend approval of the proposed programmes, with two conditions and a series of recommendations, outlined in section 3.2 and 3.3 of the report.

The Chairperson outlined the recommendations and noted that they were in the spirit of enhancing the programme. The Chairperson thanked the panel members for their time and engagement in the review and complimented the staff on a comprehensive programmatic review.

Interim Dean of Faculty, Dr Michael Tobin thanked the Chairperson and panel members for a robust and excellent discussion and welcomed the findings. He expressed his thanks to the programme team and staff of the Department who had given generously of their time throughout the process.

The Chairperson, Professor Marie Parker-Jenkins conveyed thanks to her fellow panel members, TUS Management, the Programme Team and the Quality Office before bringing the validation panel to a close.

4.1 Notes

Panel Member 1

https://www.uea.ac.uk/course/undergraduate/bsc-physical-education-sport-and-health#course_modules

<https://stars.aashe.org/>