Differential Validation Report Form

Report of the Review Panel

Reference AQAE046 *Procedure for Approving and Implementing Changes to Programmes and* AQAE047 *Procedure for Approving and Implementing Changes to Modules.* Used for Major Changes to Programme(s) (Type A).

Programme Reference Number:	M076
Faculty/School(s):	Design, Education and Humanities
Department(s):	Social Sciences

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed (include embedded awards):

Title:	Award Type:	NFQ Level:	ECTS:	Duration	Delivery Mode:
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology and English	Honours Degree Ab initio	8	180	3 years	Full time

Date of Review:	29th May 2025

Review Panel

Panellist Role	Name	Role and Organisation
Chair	Dr Dermot O'Donovan	Head of Department of Creative Education ATU
External Academic/Discipline Expert Remote	Dr James Brunton	Assistant Professor Dublin City University
Academic/Head of Department	Dr Elaine McHugh	Lecturer in Psychology/Early Childhood Education and Care ATU
VPAAR Nominee/Academic Secretary	Carmel Brennan	Assistant Registrar, ATU Sligo

All external members of the panel have declared that they are independent of ATU (Atlantic Technological University), and all have declared that they have no conflict of interest.

Programme Board

The panel met the staff listed below during the review of the proposed modifications.

Meekness Sholola	Allison Gillen
Patrick Broderick	Garret Scally

Summary of Proposed Modifications

1. Updates to multiple modules in all stages are being proposed:

   The type of delivery has been amended in consideration of increasing student numbers in consultation with Heads of Department (2022, 2023, and 2024) and agreed at programme boards. Specifically, the provision of additional tutorial if over 24 students in stage 1, and 30 students in subsequent stages.

   On two modules there are changes to learning outcomes and there are various changes to assessment and learning strategies.

   Changes to articulation of attendance requirements.

   Swapping of semesters for Research Methods for Psychology 2 with Social Psychology.

2. Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) accreditation led to the need to bring in a new second named award of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology and English for those students who specialise in psychology in the final semester of the programme. This allows PSI differentiate students who are eligible for membership from those who are not.

Rationale for Modifications

1. Outlined on Modification document "BA(Hons)_E&P_Modification_of_Modules_combined pdf". Rationale relates to class size and type of teaching and assessment, ensuring students have requisite skills to effectively and ethically conduct practical work, and improving articulation of module learning outcomes.

2. The BA Honours in English and psychology underwent its PSI accreditation visit in May 2024. The accreditation visit was successful, and this is now only one of two programmes in Ireland with a second subject and PSI accreditation within a three-year degree. Outlined on Modification document "BA(Hons)_P&E_PSI programme modification pdf".

Findings

Overall Finding

Approved without changes	
Approved subject to condition(s) and/or recommendation(s)	**X**
Rejected	

Reason for Overall Finding

The panel commends the Programme Board for the manner in which they presented a large volume of changes. The documentation was clear and reader friendly. The Programme Board representatives present were evidently passionate about the programme and its students and engaged in an open and positive discussion of the proposed changes.

The name change is appropriate and will provide clarity for those seeking membership of the Psychology Society of Ireland. There was evidence of considerable thought having gone into the proposed changes, with a view to ensuring the quality of the programme and its graduates and ensuring ethical approach to the development of practical skills. Notwithstanding this, some of the proposed changes require further work as outlined in the conditions below to ensure that they are in line with ATU policy and procedures.

The Differential Validation panel does not have authority to approve additional resources for delivery of the programme. Therefore, whilst recognising the rationale for the proposed changes to type of delivery hours, will only approve this subject to appropriate resources being secured for delivery for each stage of the programme.

Amendments to module learning outcomes were reviewed and deemed appropriate. Changes to assessment other than those referred to in conditions/recommendations were approved. Adoption of a new citation style is approved as are minor amendments to specified modules in relation to module description and syllabus.

Conditions

1. The DV panel cannot approve additional resources for delivery and therefore the approval of changes to structure of delivery hours are agreed only if resources are available to deliver the programme in its entirety. The Head of Department must confirm this to the Quality Office before any change in this regard will be made on Banner.

2. Ensure there is a consistent approach in relation to attendance requirements across the programme, that there is clarity in relation to the consequences of lack of attendance, and that these are enforceable. As currently, articulated the variations in attendance requirements and how they are expressed will be confusing for students. The focus should be on attendance expectations, engagement, professionalism and the strong link to learning rather than minimal requirements. If necessary, a special regulation should be included in the programme APS to indicate the small number of specific modules where attendance and participation in class work is essential for students to acquire the necessary skills to ethically engage in practical work.

Recommendations

1. The change of semester for Research Methods for Psychology 2 and Social Psychology is approved but needs to be implemented on the draft programme APS on Academic Module Manager. The Quality Office can assist with this.
2. Devise and agree a robust process in relation to ensuring that students are registered on, and graduate from the correct award title.
3. Remove 0% assessments, articulating these formative assessments instead in the assessment strategy for the module.
4. Cross-reference the module guides and handbooks provided to students within module descriptors for modules with large assessments.
5. Review reading lists to ensure that they are up to date in all instances.
6. Arising from discussions, the Quality Office is asked to consider the following:
    -   the status of formative assessment and how it can or should be represented in module development procedures and Academic Module Manager;
    -   to whether there should be an enforceable ATU attendance policy;
    -   assuring academic integrity given the availability of generative AI.

Report Approval

This report has been agreed by the evaluation panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Signed: _[signature]_ Name: Dr Dermot O'Donovan Differential Validation Panel Chair	Date: 06/06/2025