



Differential Validation

(Major Programme Changes – Type A)

Report of the Review Panel

Programme Reference Number:	M087
Faculty/School(s):	Design, Education, Humanities
Department(s):	Education

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

Title:	Award Type:	NFQ Level:	ECTS:	Duration	Delivery Mode:
Master of Arts in Professional Studies in Special Educational Needs	Major	9	90	3 yrs	Part time
Post Graduate Diploma in Professional Studies in Special Educational Needs	Minor	9	60	2 yrs	Part time
Post Graduate Certificate in Professional Studies in Special Educational Needs	Minor	9	30	1 yrs	Part time

Date of Review:	24 th January 2024
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Review Panel

Panellist Role	Title	Name	Organisation	Job Title
Chair	Dr	Seamus Lennon	ATU	Head of Department of Creative Education
External Industry Discipline Expert	Mr	Paul Keogh	Summerhill College Sligo	Principal
External Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Trevor O' Brien	Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, Mary Immaculate College (University of Limerick)	Programme Leader / Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Special Education (PGDISE) and Master's in Inclusive Special Education (MEISE).

Academic/Head of Department	Dr	Brónagh Heverin,	ATU Donegal	Head of Department of Law, Public Service and Education.
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) Nominee/Academic Secretary	Ms	Carmel Brennan	ATU	Assistant Registrar

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.

Dr Fiona Crowe	Bairbre Tiernan
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Summary of Proposed Modifications

- Change to Programme Title from MA in Professional Studies in Special Education Needs to MA in Professional Studies in Special Education Needs and Inclusive Education
- Change to Programme Learning Outcomes – updates to language to reflect modern thinking.
- Change to module delivery from blended to online.
- Modules updated to reflect Department of Education policy compliance.
- Introduction of two new elective modules.

See modification form for full details.

Rationale for Modifications

Most of the changes are driven by changes in the evolving educational context and new national policy. The change in delivery mode is to better provide for the needs of the target population, allowing for wider geographic reach.

See modification form for full details.

Findings

Overall Finding

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

Reason for Overall Finding

The panel commended the comprehensive documentation provided reflecting changes in inclusive and special education. The focus on the social model of disability is noteworthy. There is clearly a concerted effort to meet the needs of the target audience particularly in terms of flexible delivery and programme structure. The consideration of language as it relates to current modules of inclusive and special needs education is strong. Notwithstanding that, the panel made a number of conditions for approval primarily relating to clarifying the structure of the programmes in the documentation, and ensuring that the programme document accurately reflects the delivery of the programme.

Conditions


1. Revise the master's Approved Programme Schedule and elective rules to specify the requirement to undertake 45 ECTS of electives as part of the 90 ECTS masters. Ensure that the calculation of awards is correctly represented on the Approved Programme Schedule in each instance.
2. Include Advanced Research as an elective module on the Postgraduate Diploma programme with a special regulation to indicate that it is mandatory for students progressing to the masters programme. This should be included in the progression section of the document. If it is decided to leave the Introduction to Educational Research module It should also be clear that students who wish to take the Introduction to Educational Research module should be taking this prior to the Advanced Research module in the Postgraduate Diploma. Map out the potential routes that students can follow ensuring that these are clearly communicated to students.
3. Clearly specify in special regulations in the master programme exit award the requirements to achieve the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma awards.
4. Review the hours on the programme to ensure that they are appropriately proportionate to credit weighting of the modules. This will involve an increase in hours for each module. The breakdown between synchronous and asynchronous activities should be explicit. Ensure that hours are represented correctly for the Advanced Research module.
5. Rewrite the teaching and learning strategy to reflect the online delivery of the programme, giving particular attention to how student community will be built. Teaching and learning strategies for each module must provide comprehensive detail regarding the delivery of the module. Reference should be made to AI and integrity of assessments and how this will be managed.
6. Programme learning outcomes should reference policy in relation to theory.

Recommendations

None.

Report Approval

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

<p>Signed:</p> <p>Name Dr Seamus Lennon Differential Validation Panel Chair</p>	 <p>Date 14/02/2025</p>
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