New Programme Validation Report
Report of the External Review Panel

Programme Reference Number:	53
Faculty/School(s):	Business
Department(s):	Business and Accounting
Type of Review:	New Programme Validation

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed:

Title:	Award Type:	NFQ Level:	ECTS:	Duration:	Delivery Mode:	Proposed Student Intake:	Proposed Start Date:
Master of Business in Professional Practice and Development	Masters (Taught)	9	90	2 years	Blended	11	January 2025
Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice and Development	Postgraduate Diploma	9	60	2 years	Blended	11	January 2025

Date of Review:	04 November 2024

Review Panel

Panellist Role	Title	Name	Organisation	Job Title
Chair	Ms	Mairéad Boland	SETU	Assistant Registrar
External Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Briga Hynes	Kemmy Business School	Associate Professor
External Academic Discipline Expert	Prof	Laura Bradley-McCauley	Ulster University Business School	Professor of Inclusive Entrepreneurship, Programme Director Help to Grow
Industry/ Community Representative	Mr	Paul Clabby	Roscommon County Council	Community and Enterprise
Student Representative	Mr	Ali Usama	ATU	PhD Researcher
Academic Secretary	Dr	Simon Stephens	ATU	AR Academic Recognition and Research QA

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 Design Team

Seamus Lennon	Deirdre Lusby
Kevin McDonagh	Caitline Ni Ghabhain
Marie English	John Kennedy
John Scahill	Ivan McPhillips
Patrick Tobin	Fearghal McHugh
Conal Mac Seain	Eva McMorrow
Kevin Quinn	

Introduction & Rationale for Programme(s)

The aim of the Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Professional Practice in Management and Development (60 credits) programme is to support Údarás na Gaeltachta's Graduate Development Programme (GDP) by delivering the programme's theoretical content to develop managerial and leadership skills, within a regional context, while learners engage in the practice of management in Údarás na Gaeltachta and their client companies through the Graduate Development Programme.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Professional Practice in Management and Development programme (60 credits) and Údarás na Gaeltachta's Graduate Development Programme run in parallel and integrate with each other. The academic programme development team have chosen to develop a Master in Business in Professional Practice in Management and Development (90 credits) with the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice in Management and Development programme (60 credits) as an embedded award. This will enable students to apply to progress to the Master's programme, if they wish, on successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional

Practice in Management and Development programme (60 credits). This will not be funded by Údarás na Gaeltachta. The Graduate Development Programme only encompasses the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice in Management and Development (60 credits). The Masters, and the embedded Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice in Management and Development, Aim to empower students to become proficient managers and change agents and to:

1. Equip students with advanced knowledge and skills in management practice and development studies.
2. Foster critical thinking and analytical capabilities, enabling students to address complex challenges faced by organisations and communities locally and globally.
3. Cultivate practical competencies essential for effective management, such as strategic planning, project management, financial management and digital skills.
4. Equip students with the skills to manage organisations ethically and sustainably.

Validation Criteria

ATU's Developing and Validating New Taught Programmes Policy specifies that new programmes must comply with the following criteria for validation:

1. The programme aims and learning outcomes are clear and aligned with the proposed award title. *Yes, but additional review and editing is needed. In particular, the panel note the need for updating of the titles of both programmes to clarify their focus. In addition, the programme development team should consider augmenting the rationale and the programme aim of both programmes to clarify the attributes that may be expected of any learner who has successfully completed the programmes and, for both programmes, ensure congruency and connectedness between the programme title, aim and learning outcomes. Finally, the panel notes the need to update several programme and module learning outcomes to ensure that these are well aligned with the level of the award – in particular, they should emphasise clearly that graduates of the programme will be in a position to demonstrate leadership as well as a systematic understanding, critical analysis and, ultimately, mastery of the programme content.*

2. The rationale for the programme is well informed and justified. *Yes. The panel notes with approval and commends the strong collaboration between Údarás na Gaeltachta and ATU in developing a programme that reflects and embeds the Irish language and which will be of relevance not only to participants in the graduate development programme of Údarás na Gaeltachta, but which will also speak to individuals working in Gaeltacht regions.*

3. The design of the programme is suitably structured and fit for purpose. *To some extent. The panel note the somewhat unusual design of the programmes, which comprise a large number of small-volume modules (i.e. twelve five-ECTS credit modules). The panel's initial concerns about this structure were allayed by discussions with the programme development team, who provided details of how faculty members will collaborate on the delivery of content across modules as well as the assessment. The panel very much welcome this approach, but note that the programme development team should outline more clearly the rationale for the 'bundling' of modules for delivery and assessment within the programme documentation and advise the programme development team to formalise the proposed collaboration and linkages across modules through the production of a 'roadmap' or grid that sets out in detail which modules will be bundled and how this will be done. This document will be of benefit to all faculty members involved in the programme's delivery, to Údarás na Gaeltachta, and to learners enrolled on the programmes.*

4. The design of the programme ensures that students can successfully achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes. *Yes, subject to minor revisions. As outlined above, the panel notes the need for greater formalisation of the proposed 'bundling' of modules' delivery and assessment.*

Furthermore, they recommend the updating of several programme and module learning outcomes to ensure that they reflect the level of the award(s).

5. The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is well planned and appropriate for the discipline area and type of award. *Yes, but the volume of assessment should be reconsidered and revised as necessary to ensure that it is reasonable for learners who are working alongside their studies. It is likely that the proposed approach of 'bundling' assessment across modules will be of assistance in ensuring that the assessment load is feasible for learners.*

6. Assessment techniques are fair, valid, reliable, consistent and a credible measure of the academic standard attained by students. *Yes, but the volume of assessment should be reconsidered and revised as necessary to ensure that it is reasonable for learners who are working alongside their studies..*

7. The planned resources, including staff, physical, online, library and student supports, sufficiently support the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme. *Yes. Please add detail on bi-lingual supports provided to learners on the programme, including supports for undertaking the research element of the master's programme for those learners who elect to progress to that programme.*

8. The programme facilitates lifelong learning for a diverse student population by setting out appropriate entry requirements and opportunities for access, transfer, and progression. *Yes, and address a specific industry and regional need. The panel note with approval the collaborative approach to the programmes' development (i.e. between Údarás na Gaeltachta and ATU) which should ensure that the programme content and structure are appropriate and suited to participants on Údarás na Gaeltachta's graduate development programme. The panel welcome Údarás na Gaeltachta's the support and accommodations that Údarás na Gaeltachta has pledged to provide for students enrolled on the postgraduate diploma programme to support them in undertaking their studies; however, the panel also recommends that these supports and accommodations be formalised and that the partners ensure that they are implemented consistently for all learners.*

9. There is demand for potential graduates from the programme. *Yes, please add detail on future iterations of the programmes – the panel notes that the programme leading to a postgraduate diploma has been developed on the basis of a tender and specification provided by Údarás na Gaeltachta; students who (optionally) successfully complete an additional 30 ECTS credits will be eligible for a master's award. Following the first iteration of the programme, Údarás na Gaeltachta and ATU will review the programme design and implementation and may make changes to elements of the programme on the basis of this review. This is welcomed by the panel,*

who also advise ATU to explore the demand for similar bespoke programmes from other local and/or regional development authorities and consider whether elements of this programme might be incorporated within such programmes.

10. The learning environment and mode of delivery are consistent with the needs of the intended students of the programme and accessible and appropriate support services for students have been provided for. *Yes. However, the panel has recommended that further detail is needed on the bilingual supports that will be provided to students enrolled on both programmes.*

11. Students will be well informed on the requirements of the programme, guided to relevant resources and supported in their studies in a caring environment. *Yes. The panel note with approval the inductions that will be provided by both <u>Údarás na Gaeltachta and ATU.</u>*

Findings

Overall Finding

Validated without changes	
Validated subject to condition(s) and/or recommendation(s)	**YES**
Rejected	

Reason for Overall Finding

A strong presentation by the programme team who have extensive knowledge of the industry and experience of the TLA requirements of these modules. The programme team have a strong record of working collaboratively with Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

1. The programme team are to be commended for integrating the Irish language into these L9 programmes, which will make them more relevant both to those participating in the Údarás na Gaeltachta graduate development programme and, more generally, to individuals working in Gaeltacht regions.

2. The programme team are to be commended for providing a future-facing programme that promotes regional development and that will support the formation of graduates who understand and will be in a position to implement regional development policy.

3. The inclusion of a specific Rural Policy module is welcomed by the validation panel.

4. The panel commends the continued development of ATU's collaboration with Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Conditions

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council that subject to satisfying any condition(s) detailed below, the panel is satisfied that the proposed programme(s) meets the validation criteria as set out in Atlantic Technological University's Developing and Validating New Programmes Policy.
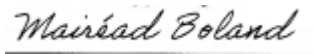
N/A

Recommendations

The panel advises Academic Council that the Programme Development Team and/or the Department should take cognisance of any recommendations outlined below.

1. Review the programme learning outcomes and module learning outcomes to make sure that all the descriptors are written at Level 9 and to eliminate any repetition across the module learning outcomes.

2. Provide clarity on the delivery mode i.e. all delivery/students online or all delivery/students on-campus.

3. Formalise details of the time commitment/accommodations provided by the industry partner to students on this programme and ensure that these are applied consistently.

4. Review the programme title to specify what aspect of "Development" is intended. Consider removing "and" before Development. Ensure coherence and connectivity between the programme title, the programme aim and all learning outcomes (programme and module) by updating as necessary.

5. Provide a roadmap of linkages between modules' delivery and assessment, ensuring that this makes clear how the modules connect to form a Level 9 graduate development programme.

6. Consider the inclusion of "resource management" related topics within modules or as a stand-alone module i.e. HR and people.

7. Consider the inclusion of "Leadership" related topics within modules or as a stand-alone module.

8. Review the volume of assessment connected with the completion of 12 modules. Provide additional detail on the scope for cross-module assessment (bundles of modules).

9. Provide details on the provision of bi-lingual student support services.

10. Provide details on the provision of bi-lingual supervision for the 30 ECTS research project.

11. Acknowledge in the programme rationale that in the future there may be other employers who may wish to engage with ATU to develop similar programmes.

Report Approval

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

Mairéad Boland

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Validation Panel Chair

November 4th 2024