

New Programme Validation External Review Panel Report

Programme Reference Number:	S020
Faculty/School(s):	Science
Department(s):	Health & Nutritional Sciences
Type of Review:	Panel

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed:

Title:	Award Type:	NFQ Level:	ECTS:	Duration:	Delivery Mode:	Proposed Student Intake:	Proposed Start Date:
Certificate in Epidemiology Applications for Health and Sustainability	SPA	9	6	1 stage	Blended	10/20/30	May 2025

Date of Review:	09 th May 2025
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Review Panel

SPA Awards - Validation Panel		
Panellist Role	Name	Role and Organisation
Chair	Dr Thomas Smyth	Head of Faculty, Science, ATU Sligo Campus
Academic Discipline Expert	Dr Neville McClenaghan	Head of Department, Life Sciences, ATU Sligo Campus
Industry/Community Representative	Dr Anne O'Farrell	Senior Researcher/ Epidemiologist with HSE
Student Representative	Mallikharjuna Rao Sakhamuri	Student Representative, ATU
VPAAR Nominee / Secretary	Dr Aodhmar Cadogan	Assistant Registrar, ATU.

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

The panel met the staff listed below during the review process.

Name	Role
Dr Owen Kenny	Head of Department of Health and Nutritional Sciences
Dr Richel Burns	Lecturer, Department of Health and Nutritional Sciences
Dr Riona Walsh	Lecturer, Department of Health and Nutritional Sciences
Prof Frances Lucy	ATU Lead for EU GREEN University Alliance,

Introduction

Blended Intensive Programme: The Level 9 Certificate in Epidemiology Applications for Health and Sustainability is an online, blended programme developed from an accredited Level 9 module which was delivered previously by the programme lead as part of the Level 9 Certificate in Public Health. This module was adapted to a more bespoke focus on health and sustainability to fit with the EU Green Blended Intensive Programme (BiP) call and was successful in that call. Therefore, the programme is being delivered as part of the 2025 EU Green programmes available for all nine EU Green institutions.

The programme also provides an opportunity for PhD students to upskill in epidemiology applications, which is the science of public health as part of their requirement for taught credits.

In this module students will learn about the different health surveillance systems which exist in Europe at national and international level, and how such systems may need to adapt to new threats. Students will gain an understanding of the various study designs employed in epidemiological research as well as the statistical analysis techniques used to analyse population health data. The module will also cover the use of systematic literature review for evidence synthesis in epidemiology, and the importance of critical literature appraisal in this area. Furthermore, a range of topics critical to applied epidemiology in the setting of modern, sustainable health systems will be covered, including ethical issues, health inequity, the One Health approach, and concepts in Global Health.

Rationale for Programme(s)

This programme is based on a previously accredited module within the Department of Health and Nutritional Sciences. The module has been adapted for the delivery of a Level 9 SPA which is open for registration to all EU Green Institutions as part of the Blended Intensive Programme (BiP) offerings for 2025.

The theme of the programme aligns with the core values of EU Green: understanding and effectively managing public health concerns and providing sustainable practices for improving health outcomes and the wider ecosystem.

This programme will be delivered online and will also have an in-house workshop element as part of the BiP format. Guest lecturers from our EU Green partner institutes will be involved in the delivery of topics. The delivery of this programme is solely funded by EU Green. There is no cost of resources or commitment by the Faculty of Science for the delivery of this special purpose award.

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.
2. The rationale for the programme is well informed and justified.
3. The design of the programme is suitably structured and fit for purpose.
4. The design of the programme ensures that students can successfully achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes.
5. The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is well planned and appropriate for the discipline area and type of award.
6. Assessment techniques are fair, valid, reliable, consistent and a credible measure of the academic standard attained by students.
7. The planned resources, including staff, physical, online, library and student supports, sufficiently support the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the 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.

9. There is demand for potential graduates from the programme.
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.
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.

Findings

Overall Finding

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

Reason for Overall Finding

The programme is timely and the development team are commended for participating in the EU Green project.

Commendations

The team were congratulated for developing a unique, innovative and well-designed special-purpose award.


Validated subject to condition(s) and/or recommendation(s)

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

- Clarify the entry requirements to include a Degree at ordinary or honours level.
- Include in the Teaching and Learning Strategy a note that “Detailed briefs will be provided for each component including a statement about the reflective element requirements”.
- Section 7.3 remove the statement “such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Public Health”.
- Clarify in the section 13 Appendix, that the BIP will run for three years, rotated between the participant EU universities.

Report Approval

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

Signed: 	
Name: Dr Thomas Smyth Validation Panel Chair	Date: 09/05/25