



Oscoil
Itechnolaogtha
an Ailantailg

Atlantic
Technological
University

New Programme (Major Award) External Validation Report

Section A

Report of the External Review Panel

Programme Reference Number:	44.
Faculty/School(s):	St Angelas
Department(s):	Department of Home Economics

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed

Title:	MSc in Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion
Type of Award:	Structured Masters
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	9
ECTS:	90
ISCED:	0910
Duration:	2 years
Proposed Student Intake:	20
Proposed Start Date:	2024
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Postgraduate Certificate in Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion
Type of Award:	Postgraduate Certificate
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	9
ECTS:	30
ISCED:	0910
Duration:	1 year
Proposed Student Intake:	20
Proposed Start Date:	2024
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Date of Review:	3 rd May 2024
-----------------	--------------------------

Review Panel

Panellist Role	Title	Name	Organisation	Job Title
Chair	Dr	Edel Healy	Dundalk Institute of Technology	Head of School of Health & Science
External Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Fiona Lavelle	Kings College London	Lecturer in Nutritional Sciences
External Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Emer Cullen	NHS North East England	Registrar in Public Health Medicine
Industry/ Community Representative	Dr	Charmaine McGowan	Safefood	Scientific Officer
Student Representative	Ms	Ruth Keogh	ATU	Student
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 Design Team

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

Dr Amanda McCloat	Dr Helen Maguire
Dr Elaine Mooney	Caroline Hopper
Arlene Molloy	

Introduction

The Master of Science in Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion is an interdisciplinary, structured research masters programme which is aimed at Home Economists who have an interest in advancing their knowledge across the three allied programme areas at postgraduate level. The merging of disciplinary knowledge is essential, as the phenomena and challenges of everyday living are not typically one dimensional.

This M.Sc. programme provides the only discipline specific progression route, nationally and internationally, for Home Economics Teachers/Home Economics Graduates seeking to advance to postgraduate level in the discipline whilst also developing contemporary knowledge on the impact of nutrition and food consumption practices on human and planetary health and the potential to positively improve health outcomes and overall quality of life of individuals, families and communities.

On successful completion of this programme, students will:

- Critically appraise and critique contributions to the current body of knowledge in Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion and utilise life-long learning skills to demonstrate commitment to developing professional knowledge and practice.
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the interrelationship between Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion as pertains to human and planetary health.
- Be skilled in proposing, researching, and developing solutions as applicable to individual, family and community level health and wellbeing and communicating these to a variety of stakeholders, at a professional and appropriate level, utilising a range of effective approaches.
- Competently apply a range of approaches to plan and undertake advanced research in the integrated areas of Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion, demonstrating expert skill to present and defend scientific research findings to discipline specialists and non-specialists, utilising a variety of forms.
- Demonstrate effective time management and organisation skills and competence to acquire, organise, analyse, integrate, and critically review information from a wide range of sources relating to home economics, nutrition, and health promotion and to construct and defend reasoned conclusions.

See Appendix for Entry Requirements, Programme Learning Outcomes and Approved Programme Schedule.

Rationale for Programme(s)

The Master of Science in Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion, Level 9 [NFQ] structured masters programme is designed to meet the personal and professional needs of Home Economics graduates, alongside allied discipline professionals and graduates.

Delivered fully on-line, this one-year full-time/two-year part-time, structured research masters programme will facilitate participants to understand and critically evaluate contemporary policy and

practice across the three integrated programme areas, enabling graduates to apply the most recent knowledge, theory, and evidence-based research to their future professional practice.

The M.Sc. programme coalesces the latest theoretical content and evidence-based research from across the three component programme areas of Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion. Throughout the programme, the three component areas are inherently linked under the overarching field of Home Economics. In essence, Home Economics content/body of knowledge is drawn from multiple disciplines and professional Home Economists synthesise this diverse knowledge through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiry (IFHE, 2008). Hence, the transdisciplinary nature of Home Economics provides a basis for investigating deeply complex themes/problems related to everyday living in a range of environments. The two aspects of Nutrition and Health Promotion are integral to Home Economics as well as existing as disciplinary areas. Nutrition is a significant element of Food Studies, one of the three core areas of the discipline Home Economics in Ireland, and the disciplines of Home Economics and Health Promotion maintain closely aligned philosophies with both adopting a holistic approach and in working in a steadfast and sustainable manner to advocate for the advancement of individual, family, and community health outcomes throughout the life course. The transdisciplinary approach to the integration of three areas involved in this M.Sc. programme provides for a key strength of the programme, equipping students with new knowledge and new approaches to research across these fields.

The Master of Science in Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion is the only postgraduate qualification on the Island of Ireland, and internationally, which combines the identified disciplinary areas. This programme addresses a gap in current provision nationally to provide a postgraduate pathway for teachers of Home Economics and Home Economics degree programme graduates with a specific interest in the interrelated and combined areas of home economics, nutrition, and health promotion.

The programme expands the Atlantic Technological Universities current programme portfolio by providing structured research masters Level 9 programme in Home Economics outside the arena of education, and with contemporary applicability in the specific fields of nutrition and health promotion.

This M.Sc. is designed to appeal to Home Economists /Home Economics graduates from a range of undergraduate Level 8 (NFQ) programmes who aspire to gain further competencies to advocate for the sustainable health & wellbeing of individuals, families & communities. Successful completion of the M.Sc. will equip graduates with new knowledge and competency in the interdisciplinary programme areas of Home Economics, Nutrition and Health Promotion. Graduates will also be eligible to pursue a research PhD programme.

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

Reason for Overall Finding

The panel believe the programme meets an identified need, is student-centric and meets ATU's criteria for programme validation.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

1. The Programme Development Team demonstrated positive and open engagement with the panel.
2. The proposed programme meets a clear need in the sector.
3. There is evident commitment to the development of the profession, and research in this discipline.
4. There is an evident student-centred approach to the design and delivery of the programme.
5. The panel welcomed the applied nature of the programme as demonstrated through the reflective nature of assessment.

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.

1. The programme entry requirements should reflect that students must be currently working (part- or full-time) in a relevant role, allowing them to engage fully with the reflective elements of the programme assessment.
2. Given that an aim of this programme is to increase research in the home economics discipline, the output of the applied research practicum module should be a research article in publishable format, removing the option for a conventional research thesis. As the numbers on the Programme increase having only one option will make it easier from a quality assurance perspective.
3. Include a specific learning outcome that makes reference to the 'social determinants of health and inequalities' in the 'Health Promotion for Individuals, Families and Communities' module.

Recommendations

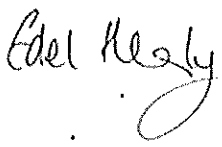
The panel advises Academic Council that the Programme Development Team and/or the Department should take cognisance of any recommendations outlined below.

1. Review the title of the programme, ensuring that it provides clarity about the totality of the programme. As currently written, it reflects the titles of the taught modules only and not the integrated entirety of the programme in particular the significant research component. The title should clearly describe what graduates will be able to do at the end of the programme.
2. Specify explicitly the graduates targeted for entry onto the programme other than home economics graduates. Indicate more explicitly in the entry requirements the cognate degrees that will be accepted for entry.
3. Clarify that there is sufficient supervisory capacity available for the number of students targeted by this programme, and particularly whether there are sufficient staff with the appropriate background to supervise across of the programme's disciplines (home economics, nutrition and health promotion).
4. Align this programme with the requirements of nutrition and health promotion professional bodies and/or frameworks to ensure quality standards. Each of the modules should be delivered by staff with relevant qualifications, ideally with relevant professional registrations or eligible for registration.
5. Given the online delivery of the programme, provide further detail of the supports available for students to maximise engagement and build community.
6. Provide an indicative student timetable so there is clarity about the student experience.
7. Include in the Applied Research Practicum Handbook a list of integrated journals which students may aim to publish in, as well as conferences and other mechanisms by which students can disseminate their research.
8. Consider the additional resources which may be required to support the potential multi-disciplinary nature of student research projects, and significant weighting attributed to the Applied Research Practicum module.

9. Articulate the progression pathway to PhD within the programme document.
10. Nutrition for Human and Planetary Health:
 - a. Review content to focus on content relevant to the module learning outcomes. Consider removal of some more introductory content that could be covered in undergraduate programmes.
 - b. Expand on the assessment strategy for this module, providing enhanced clarity for students.
 - c. Review the required reading list for this module ensuring that the number of texts listed is appropriate.
11. Applied Research Practicum:
 - a. Clarify in the programme document how student projects are identified.
 - b. It is recommended that there is a more integrated approach to research projects incorporating the three themes of the programme where possible.
 - c. Encourage students to write and submit an abstract for publication to relevant conferences.
 - d. Remove reference to 'individual/group' supervision (page 35).

Report Approval

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

<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Name Dr. Edel Healy Validation Panel Chair</p>	<p>Date 7th May 2024</p>
--	-------------------------------------