

## VALIDATION REPORT

1.	<b>Title of Programme(s):</b> <b>(incl. Award Type and Specify Embedded Exit Awards)</b>	Master of Science in Human Resource Management & Employee Relations Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Human Resource Management & Employee Relations Postgraduate Certificate in Human Resource Management
2.	<b>NFQ Level(s)/ No. ECTS:</b>	MSc Level 9, 90 ECTS Postgraduate Diploma Level 9, 60 ECTS Postgraduate Certificate Level 9, 30 ECTS
3.	<b>Duration:</b>	1 Year
4.	<b>ISCED Code:</b>	0413 - Management and administration
5.	<b>School / Centre:</b>	School of Business, Galway
6.	<b>Department:</b>	Business & Accounting
7.	<b>Type of Review:</b>	New Programme
8.	<b>Date of Review:</b>	06/03/2023
9.	<b>Delivery Mode:</b>	Full-time, part-time
10.	<b>Panel Members:</b>	Dr Thomas O'Toole, Dean of the School of Business, SETU Prof Tony Dundon, Professor of HRM & Employment Relations, Kemmy Business School, UL Dr Emma Hughes, Associate Professor in HRM, University of Leeds John Geraghty, MSc(HRM) FCIPD, Director Organisation Development & Learning Development Carmel Brennan, Assistant Registrar, ATU (Secretary)
11.	<b>Proposing Staff:</b>	Dr Seamus Lennon Ms Deirdre Lusby Dr Eva McMorrow Dr Michael Moran Mr Colm Kelleher Mr John Byrne Ms Clodagh Geraghty Dr Amaya Vega

12.	<b>Programme Rationale:</b>	<p>The proposed MSc in HRM &amp; ER has been carefully designed with the input of national and regional employers and is coherent with and supports Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025. Particularly, the programme design incorporates strategic objectives as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education and training providers will place a stronger focus on providing skills development opportunities that are relevant to the needs of learners, society, and the economy</li> <li>2. Employers will participate actively in the development of skills and make effective use of skills in their organisations to improve productivity and competitiveness</li> <li>3. The quality of teaching and learning at all stages of education and training will be continually enhanced and evaluated</li> <li>4. People across Ireland will engage more in lifelong learning</li> <li>5. There will be a specific focus on active inclusion to support participation in education and training and the labour market</li> <li>6. The programme will support and increase the supply of skills to the labour market</li> </ol> <p>The programme development team designed the proposed programme with a very strong focus on providing skills that are relevant and needed by contemporary HR and ER professionals.</p>
13.	<b>Proposed Student Intake:</b>	30
14.	<b>Stakeholder Engagement:</b>	<p>The methodology used by the programme development team combined research of national and international comparable programmes, survey of current ATU learners, input from employers, and an extensive review of national and international reports. The methodology covered all aspects of the proposed programme, the title, rationale for the programme, the minimum intended learning outcomes, transferable and transversal skills, and the demand for the programme. The initial research for our proposed programme consisted of 2 main stages outlined below:</p> <p>Besides the desk research of the national skills strategy, National Employer Survey of Employers (2019) and analysis of over 30 HR and ER job vacancies at various job search engines, there was a formal engagement by programme development team with various industry stakeholders including detailed feedback from ten regional employers</p>

		<p>(multinational and SMEs from manufacturing, retail, public, non-profit, trade unions, finance sectors etc.). While the desk research revealed the skills that graduates of the proposed MSc programmes should possess, the detailed feedback from those employers revealed much more detailed information about the need for MSc in HRM &amp; ER graduates to have the ability to demonstrate a combination of functional and leadership competencies, complemented by set of technical &amp; digital skills and an awareness of other crucial business functions. Current students were also surveyed to establish their interest in completing this programme.</p>
15.	<p><b>Graduate Demand/Employment:</b></p>	<p>The programme development team tracked the number of jobs in the areas of HRM and ER from May to September in 2022 to assess the employment opportunities for graduates. The data shows a very healthy and consistent recurring demand.</p> <p>Some examples of possible vacancies advertised are listed below and show that the graduates will have a diverse opportunity for their future careers. The vacancies ranged from entry to senior roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Manager</li> <li>• HR Administrator/Officer</li> <li>• Learning &amp; Organisational Manager</li> <li>• L&amp;D Specialist</li> <li>• Hospitality Recruiter</li> <li>• Group Engagement &amp; Wellbeing Manager</li> <li>• Payroll Administrator</li> <li>• Head of Human Resources</li> <li>• Talent Acquisition Specialist</li> <li>• Recruitment Co-ordinator</li> <li>• Senior Talent Manager</li> <li>• Senior HR Business Partner</li> <li>• Head of People &amp; Culture</li> <li>• HR Benefits Specialist</li> </ul>
16.	<p><b>Entry Requirements, Access, Transfer &amp; Progression:</b></p>	<p><u>Entry Requirements:</u> (Note recommendation and response re Entry Requirements) All applicants for these programmes must show evidence of academic achievement equivalent to level 8 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a minimum grade classification of H2.2 in a level 8 Bachelor (Hons) Business/Commerce degree OR</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a minimum grade classification of H2.1 in a level 8 Bachelor (Hons) degree from a non-Business discipline</li> </ul> <p>Applicants who do not meet the specific academic requirements may still apply through the University's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route.</p> <p>The programmes will be taught and examined through English and a minimum standard of English is required to participate. The English Language Requirements will be as determined by ATU and as published in the University's Access, Transfer and Progression code. Currently, any applicant who does not have English as a native language must show evidence of a minimum score of C1 (7.0 IELTS) or equivalent in English proficiency.</p> <p><u>Progression:</u>  The learners who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate in HRM (L9 - 30 ECTS) in part-time mode can progress to either Part-time Postgraduate Diploma in HRM &amp; ER (L9 - 60 ECTS) or into the Part time MSc in HRM &amp; ER (90 ECTS).  The learner who successfully complete the Postgraduate Diploma in HRM &amp; ER (60 ECTS) can progress to MSc in HRM &amp; ER (90 ECTS).</p>
17.	<b>Programme Structure:</b>	<p>The proposed programme will see learners undertake 90 ECTS over 1 year (2 semesters) for full time learners and 90 ECTS over 2 years (4 semesters) for part-time and research learners. Each semester is eighteen weeks long. Full-time learners will complete 30 ECTS credits per semester and parttime learners will complete 15 ECTS credits per semester. The remaining 30 ECTS will be completed through dissertation which will take approx. 4 months to complete for full-time learners and 12 months to complete for part-time learners. Each module is either 5 ECTS credits or 10 ECTS credits as per ATU Code of Practice.</p>
18.	<b>Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment Strategies:</b>	<p><u>Teaching &amp; Learning Strategy:</u>  The teaching and learning approaches will include a variety of traditional and digital methods including, inter alia, face-to-face lectures, online lectures, practical workshops, case studies, group discussions, group exercises, online forums, guest lectures, and independent research. The programme development team also expect learners to engage with and learn from fellow learners through group discussions and</p>

		<p>group activities. A key strength of the proposed programme is small class numbers, both in terms of learner numbers and faculty, which allows for a more interactive learner-lecturer relationship.</p> <p>Constructivist teaching methods will be used, where possible, to emphasise the practical application of the curriculum. This will allow learners to become more actively involved in their own and each other's learning. The use of problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, the flipped approach, cooperative learning activities, etc. will assist learners to develop more holistically. Staff will host guest speakers that will bring an alternative insight ensuring that the curriculum, while academically grounded, is also current and relevant to employers. Integrating academic theory with practical industry scenarios will promote learning, professionalism, and employability.</p> <p>Transferable skills and competencies will be developed. For example, group projects will enable the development of team working skills and presentations will facilitate the development of communication skills and promote confidence and leadership.</p> <p><u>Assessment Strategy:</u> Most modules offered in the MSc in HRM &amp; ER feature elements of formative and summative assessment. These will include a whole range of assessment instruments to measure learner performance and gain an insight into their knowledge, skills and competences and will draw from a range of assessment modes.</p>
19.	Resource Implications:	<p>To deliver the programme successfully, the following resources are needed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in the area of Blended delivery (i.e. design and delivery of blended modules, advanced Moodle knowledge and skills). This should be lab based face-to-face training</li> <li>• Training for the lecturer in HR Analytics &amp; Information Systems on a visualisation software (e.g. Core HR)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Teaching Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library resources</li> <li>• IT suite for HR Analytics &amp; Information Systems module delivery</li> <li>• IT resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HR specialised software (e.g. Core HR)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ol>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional staff teaching hours for preparation</li> <li>• Dissertation supervision hours for staff</li> <li>• Professional licence for Tablo (approx. €2000) - HR Analytics &amp; Information Systems</li> </ul> <p>3. Additionally resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trips &amp; Company Visits</li> <li>• Guest speakers</li> </ul> <p>4. Student Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed special student rate in nearby hotel for 1 night a week (Wednesday) during the 24 delivery weeks.</li> </ul>
20.	<b>Synergies with Existing Programmes:</b>	N/A
21.	<b>Findings and Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>Commendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The panel commended the evident collaboration and teamwork involved in the development of the programme which was reflected in the quality of documentation presented. It was obvious to the panel that considerable thought and effort was involved in the programme design.</li> <li>2. The research into market demand and the extent of external engagement with stakeholders was also commended by the panel.</li> </ol> <p><b>Conditions:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The panel strongly recommends that the Programme Development Team review the programme assessment strategy ensuring that number and size of assessments are consistent with the weighting of modules, that there is an appropriate mix of assessments across the programme, and most importantly that students are not over assessed. Consider whether there is scope to combine some modules so that students undertake fewer modules e.g., Employment &amp; Industrial Relations Law and Negotiation &amp; Mediation. Fewer modules and larger assessments would assist in student management of workload.</li> <li>2. Consider a minor revision to the Programme Learning Outcomes so that the focus is not solely on the Human Resource (HR) and Employee Relations (ER) practitioner</li> </ol>

but includes all people managers who will need HR and ER knowledge and skills as part of their role.

3. The Organisational Behaviour and Labour Process module could be considered as the core of the programme but might be better reframed as 'Competing Perspectives in People Management'. This is a foundational module which will allow all students irrespective of background to become familiar with the principles of the discipline. Consider whether this module merits the allocation of 10 ECTS.
4. Revise the number of weeks in the semester to 15 weeks so that it accurately reflects the weeks during which students are engaged with content/assessment and reflects ATU policy.
5. Ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for relevant practical skill development embedded within the programme.
6. The Dissertation Handbook requires further enhancement to include grading rubrics, referencing standards, structure and timing of dissertation meetings, and further detail of how supervision over the summer months will be managed. Consider whether a later submission date could be facilitated without financial consequences for the student. The handbook should be completed in advance of the first intake of students.
7. Consider removing degree classification discrimination in relation to entry requirements for cognate and non-cognate applicants. Consider whether instead non-cognate degree holders should have experience of people management prior to entry.
8. Consider appropriate postgraduate study space for the student cohort undertaking the programme.

Module Specific Recommendations:

**BUST09036 2023 Human Resource Analytics & Information Systems:** Consider whether there is overlap between this module and the Research Methods module which could be removed. Provide further detail on the assessments for this module.

**LAWL09014 2023 Employment & Industrial Relations Law:** Consider revising the assessment for this module to ensure it is practical and not totally reliant on an examination. Consider use of an open book rather than closed book examination.

		<p><b>MGMT09012 2023 Organisational Analysis &amp; Management:</b></p> <p><b>MGMT09011 2023 Organisational Behaviour &amp; Labour Process:</b> Review this module with a view to redressing the balance between theory and practical. This might be facilitated by broadening the scope of the module and renaming it 'Competing Perspectives in People Management' or similar which would enhance opportunities for practical content and assessment. Consider whether the core of the module is labour process or socialisation of work, and the best textbook for students to cover the topic.</p> <p><b>ECON09003 2023 Labour Economics and Policy:</b> Consider inclusion of the ethnicity pay gap as well as gender pay gap.</p> <p><b>BUST09035 2023 Negotiation &amp; Mediation:</b></p> <p><b>MGMT09013 2023 Employee Relations in an International Context:</b></p> <p><b>BUST09034 2023 Research Methods:</b> Consider whether the development of the dissertation proposal could be one of the outputs of this module.</p> <p><b>MGMT09014 2023 Talent Acquisition &amp; Retention:</b></p> <p><b>MGMT09015 2023 Managing Learning &amp; Development:</b> Review assessment in light of the type of assessment used and the overassessment of students.</p> <p><b>BUST09032 2023 Change and Sustainability:</b></p> <p><b>MGMT09016 2023 Contemporary Issues in Human Resource Management:</b> Consider whether an alternative mode of assessment might be more appropriate for this module.</p> <p><b>THES09008 2023 Dissertation - 30 ECTS:</b> Remove '30 ECTS' from module title. Ensure the supervision attached to the module is reflected in the module descriptor and the Approved Programme Schedule. Consider whether the wordcount for the dissertation is overly onerous and should be reduced.</p>	
22.	FAO: Academic Council:	Approved:	
		Approved subject to recommended changes:	X
		Not approved at this time:	
	Signed:		
		Chair	Secretary



