

NEW TAUGHT PROGRAMME

EVALUATION PANEL REPORT

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Provider:** Institute of Technology Carlow
- 1.2 Provider Locations:** Carlow Main Campus, Wexford Campus, Wicklow Campus, Extended Campus Centres
- 1.3 Date of Visit:** Tuesday 31 January 2017
- 1.4 Overview:**
1. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate a number of proposed awards which have been developed for the Early Years' sector.
 2. The programmes respond to the increasing demand for graduates with a Level 9 qualification who have leadership skills together with knowledge, practice capabilities, values, innovation and research abilities in the area of Early Education.
 3. The programmes build on IT Carlow's provision in this domain at Level 7 and Level 8, namely:
 - Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Higher Diploma in Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care
 4. The Panel note the intention to deliver at the Institute's campuses at Carlow, Wexford and Wicklow. They further note the possibility of delivery at other sites, including internationally, subject to differential validation.

1.6 Principal Programme:

Evaluation

Type of Award	Level	Proposed Programme Title Evaluated	Total Credits	Proposed Embedded Exit Award Evaluated	Exit Credits
Major	9	Master of Arts in Early Years Education and Leadership	90	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Early Years Education and Leadership	60
Number of Annual Intakes:			1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:			Fulltime: 1 academic year; Part-time: 2 academic years		
Target Learner Groups:			Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes. Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:			September 2017		
Expected Number of Learners per Intake:			20		
Approved Countries for Provision:			Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to the decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award	Exit Credits
Major	9	Master of Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care	90	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care	60

1.7 Associated Programmes:

1.7.1

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Major	9	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Early Years Education and Leadership	60	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 academic year; Part-time: 2 academic years		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes. Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Number of Learners per Intake:		20		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Titles	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Major	9	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care	60	None

1.7.2

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Contemporary Issues in Early Years Curriculum: Theory and Practice	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Minor	9	Certificate in Contemporary Issues in Early Years Policy, Theory and Practice	10	None

1.7.3

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Leading Quality in Early Education	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Minor	9	Certificate in Leading Quality in Early Education	10	None

1.7.4

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Leadership, Governance and Strategy	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Minor	9	Certificate in Leadership, Governance and Strategy	10	None

1.7.5

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Transformative Children's Rights Education	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Minor	9	Certificate in Transformative Children's Rights Education	10	None

1.7.6

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Early Years Policy, Strategy and Funding	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates from IT Carlow and other Higher Education Institutes Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

DECISION This programme was not approved by the Evaluation Panel.

1.7.7

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Educational Psychology	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Minor	9	Certificate in Educational Psychology	10	None

1.7.8

Type of Award	Level	Programme Titles Evaluated	Total Credits	Embedded Exit Award Evaluated
Minor	9	Certificate in Early Years Entrepreneurship and Innovation	10	None
Number of Annual Intakes:		1 full-time intake; 1 part-time intake		
Duration:		Fulltime: 1 calendar year; Part-time: 1 calendar year		
Target Learner Groups:		Level 8 Early Childhood Graduates Other applicants from a related cognate area with a proven competence in the Early Years' sector (to include overseas).		
Enrolment Date:		September 2017		
Approved Countries for Provision:		Ireland		

Approval The following programme is approved subject to decisions set out in Section 3 below.

Type of Award	Level	Approved Programme Title	Total Credits	Approved Embedded Exit Award
Minor	9	Certificate in Early Years Entrepreneurship and Innovation	10	None

1.8 Evaluation Panel Membership:

Name	Role	Affiliation
Mr Ian McKenna	Chairperson	Director, St Nicholas Montessori College, Dublin Ireland
Mr Pat McGarty	Academic Representative	Senior Lecturer, Institute of Technology Tralee
Dr Jools Page	Academic Representative	Early Childhood Care and Education Specialist & Former Director of Masters in Early Childhood Education (UK & Malta) at The University of Sheffield, UK
Ms Kathleen Tuite	Industry Representative	Early Years Specialist, Early Childhood Ireland
Ms Liz Kerrins	Industry Representative	Early Years Manager, Children's Rights Alliance
Mr David Denieffe	Secretary to Panel	Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, Institute of Technology Carlow
Ms Dolores McCann	Admin Support	PA to Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, Institute of Technology Carlow

1.5 Programme Development Team Attendance Register:

Institute of Technology Carlow

Dr Patricia Mulcahy, President

Mr Joseph Collins, Head of Faculty for Lifelong Learning

Ms Maebh Maher, Head of Faculty of Business and Humanities

Ms Mary Beare Aust, Academic, Department of Humanities

Dr Carmel Smith, Academic, Department of Humanities

Dr Eileen Doyle-Walsh, Academic, Department of Humanities

Ms Vicki Anderson, Academic, Department of Humanities

Ms Tracy Whyte, Academic, Department of Humanities

Ms Sheila Long, Academic, Department of Humanities

External

Ms Gretta Murphy, Coordinator, Kilkenny County Childcare Committee

Ms Áine Gahan, Coordinator, Carlow County Childcare Committee

2. EVALUATION AGAINST THE VALIDATION CRITERIA

2.1 Examination of the Programmes:

The Panel note the alignment of the validation to the criteria set out in the *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training 2016* (including sub criteria set out in the QQI template for *Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training*).

The Panel met with the academic staff involved in the design of the programmes.

To examine the programmes against the criteria for the Institute's *Policy and Procedures for the Design, Development, Validation and Withdrawal of all Programmes at Award Levels 6-10 in the NFQ 2016*.

The Panel heard how the submission had been developed and welcomed the input of the County Childcare Committees to the Panel's discussions. It is agreed that it is in-line with the Institute of Technology Carlow's *Policy and Procedures for the Design, Development, Validation and Withdrawal of all Programmes at Award Levels 6-10 in the NFQ 2016*.

To examine the programmes against the requirements of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*.

The Panel is satisfied that the programmes meet the requirements of the Qualifications and *Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*.

To examine the programmes so that they fit with the Institute's *Strategic Plan*.

The Panel is satisfied that the programmes are consistent with the Institute's *Strategic Plan 2014-2018*.

To examine the programme against the *QQI Awards Standards*.

The Panel ask the Programme Team to review the programmes to ensure that the language used throughout the submission is consistent to a Level 9 Standard.

The programmes embed a 'professional identity' which is appropriate to Early Years Education and Care.

The Panel ask that 'leadership' is clear and transparent in both the overall programme learning outcomes but also in the module outcomes and content.

The Panel commend how the learning outcomes are appropriate to the learner as an individual, but they ask for them to be reviewed so that there is a clear focus on the continued development and formation of the Early Years' sector as a whole; the panel also ask that an element of criticality is clearly embedded and articulated in the programme and module learning outcomes.

To examine the proposed programme titles and ensure that they are fit for purpose

The Panel ask the Programme Team to revise the proposed titles to include 'care' and to bring the 'leadership' dimension to the forefront.

To examine the rationale and requirements for the programmes

The Panel is satisfied with the research undertaken, including consultation with prospective students, government bodies, agencies, industry professionals and overseas partners.

The Panel agree that there is a strong need within the Early Years Education sector for these new awards.

The Panel is happy that there will be considerable interest and application for entry into these new programmes.

The Panel is satisfied that these new awards will provide career progression opportunities for graduates.

To examine the access, transfer and progression arrangements

The Panel note that the proposed access, transfer and progression routes for prospective learners are appropriate but request that entry requirements include a proven competence in the Early Years Education and Care sector.

The Panel ask that there will be specific procedures in place for recognition of prior learning for entry onto these programmes, having regard to the mature nature of the potential cohort onto these programmes.

English Language requirements should be clear and transparent, noting the substantial written component to the Masters programme.

The Panel ask the Programme Team consider developing modules within the programme which are specifically tailored to meet international applicant requirements.

To examine curriculum content so that it is well structured and fit for purpose

The Panel agree that the 'depth of learning', appropriate to a level 9 award, should be clearly set out.

The Panel ask the Team to review each module with respect to:

1. Ensuring that 'leadership' is clear and transparent.
2. Strengthening the indicative content in certain modules, such as Leading Quality in Early Years Education and Care.
3. Greater use of peer review journals.
4. Annually review reading lists and textbooks.
5. Compulsory reading for each module to include 3 key journal articles. Consider linking module assessment criteria to the reading of these key journal articles. This will inform the learner's ability to critically analyse and evaluate.

Contemporary Issues in Early Years Curriculum: Theory and Practice (change of module title):

1. Rename title of module to: Contemporary Issues in Early Years Policy, Theory and Practice
2. Policy and practice go hand-in-hand. Include Early Years national and

- international policy, policy formation, lobbying and power-broking in module content.
- 3. Align the learning outcomes to the indicative content.
- 4. Correct duplication of learning outcomes.
- 5. Review the current expression of learning environment to include all Early Years settings as well as the practitioner, the carer, *i.e.*, it is not just a space.
- 6. Embed 'Aistear' into module content.
- 7. Review wording used for the description of the learner. The child has their own strengths, interests, abilities, needs and experience. Within local, national and international contexts, ensure that this module reflects the depth of criticality required to ensure students are able to evaluate their own views of what value-laden terms can mean, *e.g.*, competent *versus* vulnerable.

Leading Quality in Early Education:

- 1. Strengthen module learning outcome 3 in the curriculum content to demonstrate a mastery of....
- 2. The module Leadership, Strategy and Governance to be a co-requisite.

Leadership, Strategy and Governance

- 1. Include more on strategy for Early Years Education.
- 2. The module *Leading Quality in Early Education* to be a co-requisite.
- 3. References:
 - Include 'The Wheel'
 - Include more articles, paper resources and online peer review
 - Include more Early Education specific reference material.
- 4. For the assessment, ensure that there is a balance of student abilities and knowledge within groups.
- 5. Ensure that the 'leadership' is reflective of all Early Years Education and Care settings rather than exclusively in a business context, as suggested by some resource material.

Transformative Children's Rights Education

- 1. Ensure content is appropriate to Early Years' - birth to age 6.
- 2. Learning Outcome Number 1: change wording to read ... *local, national and international law*.
- 3. Learning Outcome Number 4: should be a broad statement; finish at *their education and care*. Remove from *.and critique...onwards*.

4. Learning Outcome Number 5: Make clear and transparent what *professional development* applies to – is it the student or colleagues within their setting?

Early Years Policy, Strategy and Funding

1. Remove module.
2. Policy content to move to Contemporary Issues module.
3. Strategy content to move to Leadership, Strategy and Governance module.
4. Funding and applications should be delivered at Level 7 or Level 8. It is not appropriate for a Level 9 programme.

Educational Psychology

1. Reduce number of learning outcomes down to 5.
2. Make clear and transparent how this module links into 'Aistear'.
3. Learning outcomes should reflect the increasing need for the Early Years practitioner to engage in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary interactions.

Early Years Entrepreneurship and Innovation

1. Review references so they are specific to Early Years Education and Care.
2. Strengthen content on human resources.
3. Content to cover plans for existing business and not just green-field.
4. Include more on critical evaluation and internationalisation.

Research Methods and Dissertation

1. Reduce number of learning outcomes to 5.
2. Consider combining learning outcome 4 and 5.
3. 'Action research' to be included as an option for learners.
4. Strengthen the idea that good leaders are good researchers; they are continuously researching.

To examine the ethical perspectives of the programmes

The Panel is happy that the programmes have procedures in place to ensure that any teaching, learning or research activity shall be conducted in a manner that is morally and professionally ethical. The Panel note the Ethics Application process and the Ethics Committee's role in research approval. Also, the Panel is satisfied that ethical issues are sufficiently covered in the syllabi of the programme.

To examine the assessment strategies and to ensure that they are sound

The Panel agreed that the proposed assessment strategies are satisfactory. However the Panel encourage the team to consider, and utilise, cross-module assessment where possible.

To examine the teaching and learning strategies to ensure that they are sound

The Panel note the proposed approaches to teaching and learning.

The Panel agreed that they are appropriate to enable the learners to achieve the minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

The Panel note and commend the proposed assessment feedback mechanisms.

To examine the teacher-learner dialogue process and to ensure that learners will be well informed, guided and cared for

The Panel note that the proposed modes of communication and interaction between academic, technical and administrative staff and the learners themselves are excellent.

The Panel note that learner representatives must have the opportunity to sit on their Programme Stream Board and also on the Institute's Academic Council and Governing Body.

The Panel commend the positive services provided to the learners by Student Services, Sports & Recreation, Library, Computer Services, Restaurant, *etc.*

To ensure the programme is well managed and resourced

The Panel note the role of the Programme Board in the ongoing monitoring of programmes at IT Carlow. It asks that these programmes are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure their viability and appropriateness.

The Panel is happy that the necessary physical facilities and resources are available at the Institute of Technology Carlow to deliver all of these proposed new programmes.

The panel acknowledge the use of 'Blackboard' and 'Collaborate' in the virtual learning environment. The Panel met with the staff involved in the design of the programmes; they were impressed with their levels of qualification, competence and their enthusiasm. However to remain at the cutting edge, staff must be encouraged to participate on continuing professional development programmes and to engage in research.

3. DECISIONS *(For the attention of Institute of Technology Carlow Academic Council)*

The Panel would like to commend the Programme Development Team on their enthusiasm, the manner in which they defended the programmes and for their openness to the contributions from the Panel. Also they commend them on the development of the programmes and their engagement with childcare committees.

3.1 Determination

The evaluation panel recommend the validation of the following programmes:

Type of Award	Level	Programme Title	Total Credits	Exit Award
Major	9	Master of Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care	90	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care
Major	9	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care	60	
Minor	9	Certificate in Contemporary Issues in Early Years Policy, Theory and Practice	10	
Minor	9	Certificate in Leading Quality in Early Education	10	
Minor	9	Certificate in Leadership, Governance and Strategy	10	
Minor	9	Certificate in Transformative Children's Rights Education	10	
Minor	9	Certificate in Educational Psychology	10	
Minor	9	Certificate in Early Years Entrepreneurship and Innovation	10	

Subject to the following listed under 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 below.

3.2 Conditions

The evaluation panel require that the Programme Development Team should take note of the following conditions and that a satisfactory response to those conditions shall be received before the validation is considered by Academic Council of the Institute.

1. The award title for the major awards to change as above (and associated minor awards to change correspondingly).
2. Change module title to: Contemporary Issues in Early Years Policy, Theory and Practice and adjust the module learning outcomes and module content accordingly.

3.3 Recommendations

Recommendations are suggestions made by the Programme Evaluation Panel in the spirit of improving the proposed programme. While these are not binding, the reasons for not incorporating a recommendation have to be clearly stated by the Programme Development Team in its response to the Evaluation Report.

1. Greater use of peer review journals.
2. Cross-module assessments to be employed in order to minimise assessment burden, so that students understand the connections across modules within the major awards.
3. Entry requirements to include a proven competence in the Early Years' sector.

4. Explicitly include critical analysis and review in a number of the learning outcomes; reflective of the mastery required at Level 9.
5. Revise the programme learning outcomes to emphasise the wider contribution of the individual to the Early Education sector.
6. Revise to include strong evidence of leadership both in module content and module learning outcomes.
7. 'Action research' should be evidenced more in the Research module as an option.

3.4 Programme Schedules and Programme Abstracts

Amended Programme Schedules, to incorporate the above, and the Programme Abstract, must be submitted with the Response to this Panel Evaluation Report.

3.5 Approval

Programme Evaluation Report Approved by:

Mr Ian McKenna
Chairperson to Panel
*(Director, St Nicholas Montessori
College Ireland, Dublin)*

Mr David Denieffe
Secretary to Panel
*(Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar
Institute of Technology Carlow)*

Date: _____

Date: _____