

# Validation Report



## BN735

### Certificate in Community Studies

*(30 ECTS credits leading to a level 6 Special Purpose Award)*

# Introduction

The mission of the Institute is to serve its students and the community by meeting the skills needs in the economy and increasing the level of participation in third-level education and training, particularly in Dublin North-West and its environs. The Institute will do this:

- by achieving consistently high standards of relevance and quality in teaching, research, development and consultancy, and
- by offering a welcoming and supportive environment to students from all educational and social backgrounds, and to adults wishing to increase their level of technical skills.

The Institute has developed an active adult continuing education programme to provide education and training that is relevant and responsive to economic and social needs both locally and nationally and is committed to both lifelong learning and second-chance education.

The Institute in 2006 was awarded delegated authority enabling the development, validation, implementation and continuous improvement of its existing taught higher education and training programmes up to and including level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

It is Institute policy to validate all academic programmes offered by the Institute, and in so doing, indicate award and programme title, academic level by relating them to the National Framework of Qualifications and volume of learning by allocating ECTS<sup>1</sup> credits to the programme.

The purpose of this document is to report on the findings of the peer review panel established to validate this proposed programme against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated in the Institute policy document 2MP01<sup>11</sup>.

This submission by the School of Business and Humanities evolved through:

- examining the competence, expertise and experience of it's staff in addition to the strategy of the department/school/Institute and Government educational policy
- embracing a policy of inclusion and participation in third level education while also facilitating the Women in Networking (WIN) Project, a north south initiative designed to empower, mainly women, who work in both communities in the area of community development and leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

<sup>11</sup> 2MP01 Design, validation and accreditation of new academic programmes

## Programme overview

This is a one year part-time programme leading to a special purpose award in community development.

The Women in Networking project is the outcome of a successful 'Women in Focus' project in 2006. It consists of the Ardmonagh Family and Community Group in West Belfast, Ballybeen Women's centre in East Belfast and the Networking Dublin 15 group, Mulhuddart, Co. Dublin. The mission of the project is to 'provide an opportunity for women from diverse backgrounds to identify common issues, share experiences, train together and contribute to the design of policies and plans to bring about positive change in their areas.'

The project is being funded by the Community Bridges Programme International Fund for Ireland, from June 2008 to June 2011.

In the North, participants will pursue the Certificate in Community Development, delivered by the Belfast Metropolitan College, representing 60 CATS points from the University of Ulster, year 1 BSC in Community Development, level 4 (equivalent to Irish Level 6).

The certificate consists of modules in:

- Community Development Theory and Practice
- Community Education Theory and Practice
- Leadership in Community Development

In the South, it is envisaged that participants will undertake this special purpose award, 'The Certificate in Community Development'.

This programme is designed to equip students with the skills and techniques which they require to succeed at third-level and also offer a range of modules which will introduce them to community development theory and debate.

## Programme detail

<b>Programme title</b>	Certificate in Community Development Level 6 30 ECTS Credits
<b>Award title</b>	Certificate in Community Development Level 6 30 ECTS Credits
<b>Award type</b>	Special Purpose
<b>NFQ<sup>1</sup> level</b>	6
<b>ECTS credits</b>	30
<b>Programme code</b>	BN735
<b>Banner code</b>	BN_HCCOD_Q

## Panel members

<b>Chairperson</b>	Dr. Oliver Murphy Institute of Technology Tralee
<b>Panel member 1</b>	Mr. Owen Ross Athlone Institute of Technology
<b>Panel member 2</b>	Dr. Teresa Nyland Health Service Executive
<b>Panel member 3</b>	Mr. John McHugh Carlow College
<b>Panel member 4</b>	Dr. Patricia Kennedy University College Dublin
<b>In attendance</b>	Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan IT Blanchardstown  Mr. Michael Keane IT Blanchardstown
<b>Date of Panel Meeting</b>	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2009

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<sup>1</sup> National Framework of Qualifications

## **Institute staff present**

Mr. Michael Tobin, Head of School of Business and Humanities

Ms. Georgina Lawlor

Mr. Gael LeRoux

Ms. Lavinia McLean

## **Panel findings**

### **Section I**

In evaluating the appropriateness, quality and proposed operation of this programme the following criteria has been considered and is hereby reported upon:

#### **Strategic planning**

The panel was satisfied that the programme is in keeping with the Institute's mission, that it does not constitute redundant provision and that it makes efficient use of resources.

#### **Protection of learners**

Section 43 of the Act<sup>1</sup> does not apply.

#### **Quality assurance**

The panel were informed of how the submission had been developed and approved internally whilst complying with the Institute's quality assurance policies and procedures. The panel concurred that said policies and procedures had been applied to the development of the proposed programme.

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<sup>1</sup> Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

## **Programme titles and award titles**

Following discussion, the panel was satisfied that the title of the proposed programme, is clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders and consistent with HETAC<sup>1</sup> award titles.

## **Ethics**

The panel was satisfied that the Institute has internal policies and procedures in place to ensure that all teaching, learning or research activity across the spectrum of NFQ levels is conducted / delivered in a manner that is both morally and professionally ethical.

## **Section II**

In evaluating this programme the following specific aspects have been considered and are hereby reported upon:

### **Unity**

The panel found that the programme design is consistent with HETAC's policy on Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects, that it has an underlying unifying theme with modules bonded by linkages being either implicit or explicit. It was also clear to the panel how the standards of knowledge, skill and competence evolve throughout the programme as a whole.

### **Teaching and learning**

The panel discussed with staff of the Institute the various modes of interaction practised with learners. Evidence of a clear dialogue was confirmed, enabling learners to develop and have available to them the support of academic staff.

The panel was satisfied that the necessary staff can be drawn from the existing staff members of the School of Business and Humanities.

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<sup>1</sup> Higher Education and Training Awards Council

## **Rationale**

The development of this programme is in unison with the core values and mission of ITB, to embrace a policy of inclusion and participation in third level education while also facilitating the Women in Networking (WIN) Project, a north south initiative designed to empower, mainly women, who work in both communities in the area of community development and leadership.

## **Minimum entry requirements**

The minimum entry requirements for standard applicants are a pass in five subjects (ordinary level) in the Leaving Certificate to include mathematics and English or Irish, or an equivalent qualification. Mature students may be admitted without meeting these minimum entry requirements.

## **Learner assessment**

Through discussion with the design team, and from the submission document itself it was explained to the panel the multiple modules of assessment, both formal and informal that will be employed. The scale of learner assessment was also deemed appropriate for the proposed programme.

## **Standards of knowledge, skill and competence**

The panel felt having reviewed the syllabi and assessment methods that learners would be capable of attaining the standards of knowledge, skill or competence as presented.

## Decision of the panel

The panel recommended the validation of the proposed programme namely:

<b>Programme title</b>	Certificate in Community Development Level 6 30 ECTS Credits
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<b>Award type</b>	Special Purpose
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<b>Programme code</b>	BN735
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## Panel observations

The panel were suitably impressed with the structure, content and originality of this programme and commended the importance of this initiative for practitioners as part of their personal and professional development.

## Panel signatures

### Chairperson

Dr. Oliver Murphy \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Secretary

Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>I</sup> National Framework of Qualifications