

Validation Report



BN749

Certificate in Plant Studies

**Minor award of the
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture**

Level 6 20 ECTS credits

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 (NFQ).

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^I 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^{II}.

This submission by the School of Informatics and Engineering 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
- feedback from prospective students at open evenings and other marketing events

Programme overview

^I European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

^{II} 2MP01 Design, validation and accreditation of new academic programmes

This is a part-time programme leading to a NFQ level 6 minor award of the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture (BN113). The aim of this programme is to provide training and upskilling opportunities for participants already in the workplace providing added value to participants' existing qualifications and experience while also providing a sound academic foundation for further study on level 6, 7 and 8 horticulture programmes. This programme will impart a substantial knowledge of the plants encountered in Ireland today, both native and exotic, their efficient propagation and protection, and their use in landscapes and general horticultural amenities.

Programme detail

Programme title	Certificate in Plant Studies
Award title	Certificate in Plant Studies. Minor award of the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture - Level 6 20 ECTS credits
Award type	Minor Award
NFQ level	6
ECTS credits	20
Programme code	BN749
Banner code	BN_SHTSC_XPS

Panel members

Chairperson	Mr. Tony Quinlan Registrar (retired) Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
Panel member	Mr. Con Traas University of Limerick
In attendance	Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan Institute of Technology Blanchardstown Mr. Michael Keane Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Date of Panel Meeting	Wednesday 2 nd June 2010

Institute staff present

Head of Department and Programme Leader

Mr. Damian Cox	Head of Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies
Ms. Rachel Freeman	Department of Engineering

Panel findings

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 Act¹ 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.

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 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.

¹ Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

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. Course management arrangements were discussed and deemed adequate.

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.

Learner assessment

Through discussion with the design team, and from the submission document itself it was explained to the panel the multiple modes of assessment, both formal and informal that will be employed. The scale of learner assessment was 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:

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Panel signatures

Chairperson

Mr. Tony Quinlan _____ Date _____

Secretary

Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan _____ Date _____