

Report of the Review Panel to the Teaching Council following a review of the proposed Initial Teacher Education programme at **Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology**

**Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Art, Design and Graphics**

**August 2021**

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## **1. Background**

### **1.1 The Teaching Council's Review and Accreditation Function**

The Teaching Council is the statutory body charged with setting the standards for entry to the teaching profession and ensuring that these standards are upheld.

In accordance with Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, the Council shall:

- (a) review and accredit the programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State,
- (b) review the standards of education and training appropriate to a person entering a programme of teacher education and training, and
- (c) review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching,

and shall advise the Minister and, as it considers appropriate, the institutions concerned.

The Teaching Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is distinct from the academic accreditation which programmes also undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma, whereas professional accreditation for any profession is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into that profession.

The review and accreditation of programmes of ITE by the Teaching Council provides an opportunity for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to demonstrate that they offer quality programmes of teacher education. It is expected that the graduates of such programmes will achieve programme aims and learning outcomes which are aligned with the values, professional dispositions, and the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence that are central to the practice of teaching.

### **1.2 Review and Accreditation Strategy**

In order to guide its review of programmes, the Teaching Council has published *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the Review and Accreditation of Programmes* (hereinafter referred to as the Council's review strategy). That document sets out the process by which programmes are reviewed.

### **1.3 National Policy Framework**

In carrying out reviews, the Council is mindful of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* which sets out its vision for teacher education at all stages of the continuum – ITE, Induction, and Continuing Professional Development. Published in 2011, the policy highlights the evolving and dynamic context for teaching and the increasingly complex role of teachers in Ireland today. The policy states that "...the time is now right for a thorough and fresh look at teacher education to ensure that tomorrow's teachers are competent to

meet the challenges that they face and are life-long learners, continually adapting over the course of their careers to enable them to support their students' learning." It further states that innovation, integration and improvement should underpin all stages of the continuum.

In parallel with the development by the Council of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*, the Minister for Education and Skills initiated a national consultation process on the theme of improving literacy and numeracy. This culminated in 2011 with the publication of *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* as the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy standards among children and young people in the education system. The strategy emphasised teachers' professional development and proposed that the duration of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes should be extended and that programme content should be reconceptualised.

#### **1.4 Accreditation Criteria**

The Teaching Council, having established an Advisory Group on Initial Teacher Education, developed criteria to be observed and guidelines to be followed by providers in reconceptualising programmes of initial teacher education at primary and post-primary levels. They were approved by the Council and published in June 2011 as *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (hereinafter referred to as the Council's criteria). These relate to a range of areas, including programme design, areas of study, the duration of programmes, the numbers and qualifications of staff, facilities and resources. As such, they form the bridge between the Council's policy and the development and implementation of reconceptualised programmes. Significantly, the criteria:

- prescribe those areas of study which will be mandatory in programmes, including numeracy and literacy, behaviour management, parents in education, ICT and inclusive education
- set out for the first time the expected learning outcomes for graduates of all ITE programmes
- propose raising the minimum requirements for persons entering programmes of ITE at primary level and a literacy and numeracy admissions test for mature entrants
- require a 15:1 student-staff ratio
- call for the development of new and innovative school placement models, involving active collaboration between HEIs and schools, and an enhanced role for the teaching profession in the provision of structured support for student teachers
- require that student teachers should spend at least 25% of the programme on school placement, and that such placements should be in a minimum of two schools
- require increased emphasis on research, portfolio work and other strategic priorities.

While recognising the inter-related nature of all aspects of programmes of teacher education, the criteria and guidelines are categorised under Inputs, Processes and Outcomes. All three dimensions have an important bearing on the quality of teacher education. The required Inputs and Outcomes are clearly elaborated in the document, while the Processes are less prescriptive to allow HEIs the freedom to develop the processes which best suit their individual situations.

Providers of existing programmes have been asked to reconceptualise their programmes in line with the revised criteria and to submit them for accreditation.

### **1.5 Particular requirements for post-primary programmes**

In November 2020, the Council published the revised Curricular Subject Requirements (*Post-primary*). In the context of a range of factors including ongoing developments in the continuum of teacher education, teacher supply issues and Junior Cycle reform, the Council initiated a review of its Curricular Subject Requirements at Post-primary level in 2018. This included an extensive consultation process with all key stakeholders between June 2018 and April 2019. The requirements are now in effect for ITE programme accreditation purposes and will come into effect from January 2023 for applicants applying for registration with the Council. They will guide providers of post-primary concurrent programmes in determining the subject content coverage which is appropriate. They will also guide providers of post-primary consecutive programmes in determining suitability of entrants and which curricular subject's entrants can ultimately be registered to teach.

### **1.6 Programme overview**

This report relates to the review of the following programme provided by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology– **Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Art, Design and Graphics** - hereinafter referred to as the programme. This is a 240 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credit programme offered over four years, which prepares student teachers to teach Art and Design and Communications Graphics (DCG).

## **2. The Review Process**

The review of the **Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Art, Design and Graphics** took place between December 2020 and June 2021, in accordance with the Council's review strategy. The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the panel') was appointed by the Teaching Council's Director, with Prof. Anne O'Gara as Chairperson and Dr Niall Seery and Ms Valerie Lewis as Panel members. The panel was supported in its deliberations by external subject experts and by the Director and staff of the Teaching Council. The panel conducted its review through virtual meetings and on-line discussion, due to the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Documentation relating to the application was submitted to the Teaching Council by GMIT on 29 June 2020. The panel met initially on 3 February 2021 to give preliminary consideration to the GMIT submission. Issues for further clarification were identified by the panel and were communicated to GMIT on 24 February 2021. The panel met on 17 May 2021 to consider GMIT's response to these clarifications and following same a letter requesting further clarifications was sent on 21 May 2021. The Panel met to consider GMIT's response to these clarifications on 29 June 2021. This Report was drafted after that meeting.

### **3. *Publication of this Report***

The Teaching Council routinely makes information available to the public in relation to its functions and activities and, in line with that practice, this report will be available on the Council's website, [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

### **4. *Documentation***

The documentation submitted in June 2020 by GMIT was in accordance with the template provided by the Teaching Council in the Pro Forma and Guidelines which accompany the Council's review strategy. Key areas of focus were:

#### **4.1 *Inputs***

- Conceptual Framework
- The Programme
- Programme Aims
- Programme Design
- Areas of Study
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies
- School Placement
- The Duration and Nature of the Programme
- Student Intake
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Student Support and Guidance Systems
- Communication and Decision-Making Structures
- Financial Resources

#### **4.2 *Processes***

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Approaches
- Engagement of Student Teachers with the Programme
- Engagement of Student Teachers with Staff and with other Student Teachers
- Progression within the Programme
- Personal and Social Development
- Development of Professional Attitudes, Values and Dispositions
- Lifelong Learning
- Reflective Processes

#### **4.3 *Outcomes***

- Knowledge-Breadth/Knowledge-Kind
- Know-How & Skill-Range/Know-How & Skill-Selectivity
- Competence-Context/Competence-Role
- Competence-Learning to Learn
- Competence-Insight

## 5. Overall Findings

Having regard to the documentation that was initially submitted, together with the supplementary documentation that was provided, the panel adjudges that the programme satisfies the criteria set down by the Teaching Council in its *Criteria and Guidelines* and in its Curricular Subject Requirements in respect of the curricular subjects Art and Design and Communications Graphics (DCG). Accordingly, it recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation.

The commendations in Section 6 below relate to areas of particular strength which the panel has identified.

With regard to the recommendations in Section 7, the panel submits that the Teaching Council should require the college to set out, within twelve months of receiving the final review report, its detailed proposals for implementing the recommendations. It further recommends that the Teaching Council should prioritise those areas to be accorded particular attention when the programme falls due for re-accreditation.

In the case of the national issues raised in Section 8 of this report, the panel recommends that the Council engage in dialogue on those issues at national level.

The panel proposes that accreditation of the programmes would have a lifespan of five years.



## **6. Commendations**

Having regard to:

1. the Pro Forma documentation which was submitted
2. the supplementary material which was submitted
3. advice received from the curricular subject specialists who supported the review process

the panel has noted a number of particular strengths of the programme, as follows:

### **6.1 Engagement with the review process**

The Panel acknowledge the constructive and proactive manner in which the programme design team at GMIT engaged with the review process.

### **6.2 Inputs**

#### **6.2.1 Programme Aims**

The Panel commend GMIT for its innovative endeavour in proposing a cross-disciplinary full-time Level 8 undergraduate concurrent Initial Teacher Education programme, designed for applicants who wish to pursue a professional teacher qualification in the two post-primary Leaving Certificate (LC) subjects, Art and DCG.

#### **6.2.2 Student Support and Guidance Systems**

The Panel consider that the student-centred focus at the institute, in particular the Nurturing Excellence in Student Teachers (NEST) initiative is to be commended.

### **6.3 Processes**

#### **6.3.1 Engagement of Student Teachers with Staff and with other Student Teachers**

The commitment of GMIT to showcasing student work at their annual Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom Conference is to be commended.

#### **6.3.2 Reflective Processes**

The progressive development of the student portfolio across the disciplines of Art and DCG, over the four year programme, will enhance the professional identity of the student teacher. The Panel commend this approach.

## **7. Recommendations**

Having regard to:

1. the Pro Forma documentation which was submitted
2. the supplementary material which was submitted
3. advice received from the curricular subject specialists who supported the review process

the panel has noted a number of areas of the programme which it believes should be developed. They are as follows:

### **7.1 Inputs**

#### **7.1.1 Conceptual Framework**

To enhance the developing teacher identity of the students in preparation for the classroom, the Panel recommends ongoing review of the approach to design across the two disciplines Art and DCG.

### **7.2 Outcomes**

#### **7.2.1 Knowledge-Breadth/Knowledge-Kind**

Given the innovative commitment of the institute to coupling Art and DCG in this programme, the Panel recommends an approach whereby the modality of the capstone project in year 4 could encompass the breadth of understanding and learning of design across the two disciplines to include aesthetic and functional perspectives.

## 8. *National Issues*

Having regard to:

1. the Pro Forma documentation which was submitted
2. the supplementary material which was submitted
3. advice received from the curricular subject specialists who supported the review process

the panel has noted the following issues which it believes merit further attention by the Teaching Council and/or other national stakeholders.

In the national context of the introduction of *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education* the Panel consider that the developing teacher identity of the students on this innovative programme remains a matter for ongoing review.

## ***Appendix 1 - Review Panel Membership***

### ***Independent Review Panel Chair***

#### **Professor Anne O’Gara**

Professor O’ Gara is Adjunct Professor, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. Formerly President of Marino Institute of Education from 2006-2018, Anne had a long and distinguished career in education as an Inspector of Schools with the Department of Education and Skills, Assistant National Coordinator of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and as a primary teacher serving schools in designated areas of disadvantage for twenty years. She was a member of the Teaching Council on two occasions from 2007-2012 and 2016-2018. Anne is currently Deputy Chair of the Board of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), a Board member of The Ark and the Irish Universities Association’s representative on the Qualifications Advisory Board for the Early Learning and Care Sector.

### ***Panel Member***

**Valerie Lewis** is an Educational Policy and Development Officer at Education and Training Boards Ireland. She has over twenty years of experience in the Irish Education arena at post-primary and tertiary level, working across a range of sectors. She has previously worked in the Public Information and Communication and, Development Education sections of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, supporting the design and enhancement of their formal education programmes and Strategic Education Partnerships. Valerie has also written and designed a range of citizenship education and training materials, distributed both in Ireland and at European level.

### ***Panel Member***

**Dr. Niall Seery** is currently Deputy President of Athlone Institute of Technology. He served as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar before taking the role as Director of the Technological University Project at AIT. He has a PhD in Engineering Education and has a background in Engineering and Technology Teacher Education, where he spent 15 years as an academic with a specialist interest in pedagogical practice. He received the Regional Teaching Excellence Award for Higher Education Teaching in 2013. Niall has served as Director of studies at undergraduate and masters level, while also developing an emerging research agenda. In 2010, he founded and continues to direct the Technology Education Research Group, where he is still active in research development and mentorship. He has supervised a number of PhD students to completion and actively contributes to a number of journal editorial boards in the area of Design and Technology education. He also served as a visiting Associate Professor of Technology Education at the Royal Institute of Technology, KTH in Stockholm. Niall has experience in hosting international education conferences and participation in international research projects.

**Appendix 2 - Teaching Council Registration: Curricular Subject Requirements(Post-primary) Effective for registration on or after 1 January 2023**

## Art (Including Crafts)

*In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of Art (including crafts) an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:*

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Art (Including Crafts) studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
  - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Art (Including Crafts).
  - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Art (Including Crafts) comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).
2. The study of Art (Including Crafts) during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Art (Including Crafts) syllabus/specification to the highest level in post-primary education (see [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)).
3. To meet this requirement the degree must include the study of all of the following:
- a) Drawing, 2D and 3D Visual Studies in Art/Craft/Design
  - b) Media
  - c) Art/Design History and Critical Studies/Visual Cultural Studies

# Design and Communication Graphics (DCG)

*In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:*

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
  - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Design and Communication Graphics (DCG).
  - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).
2. The study of Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) syllabus/specification to the highest level in post- primary education (see [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)).

To meet this requirement the degree must include the study of all of the following:

- a) The Application of Plane and Descriptive Geometry<sup>10</sup>
- b) Applied Graphics<sup>11</sup>
- c) Design Communication<sup>12</sup>
- d) Computer-Aided Design<sup>4</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This may include the use of projective systems

<sup>11</sup>.This may include Dynamic Mechanisms, Structural Forms, Geological Geometry, or Surface Geometry.

<sup>12</sup>.This may include Graphic Illustration and Information and Communications Technology. <sup>4</sup>This may include Assembly Drawing

<sup>4</sup>.this must have a significant focus on the study of construction methods and practices applicable to residential units