



TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

www.tus.ie

**Dámh an Ghnó agus Daonnachtaí
Faculty of Business and Humanities**

**An Roinn Spórt agus Luath-Óige
Department of Sport and Early Childhood**

Report of External Validation Panel

External Validation Panel, 25/04/2024

for the

**Master of Science in Applied Sports Performance
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sports Performance
Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Sports Performance**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings and findings of the external validation visit for the proposed:

Master of Science in Applied Sports Performance
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sports Performance
Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Sports Performance

held on 25th April 2024. The external validation visit was undertaken in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations for the development of taught programmes. An external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Higher Education Provider

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Provider | TUS: Midlands Midwest |
| Faculty | Business and Humanities |
| Department | Sport and Early Childhood |
| Date of Visit | 25 th April 2024 |

2.2 Programme Evaluated

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Programme Title | Master of Science in Applied Sports Performance |
| Award Title | Master of Science |
| NFQ Level | 9 |
| ECTS Credits | 90 |
| Award Class | Level 9 |
| Delivery Mode | Full-time |
| Duration | 1 year |
| Proposed Starting Date | September 2024 |
| Contact | Dr. Keith Hennessey |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Programme Title | Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sports Performance |
| Award Title | Postgraduate Diploma |
| NFQ Level | 9 |
| ECTS Credits | 60 |
| Award Class | Level 9 |
| Delivery Mode | Full-time |
| Duration | 1 year |
| Proposed Starting Date | September 2024 |
| Contact | Dr. Keith Hennessey |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Programme Title | Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Sports Performance |
| Award Title | Postgraduate Certificate |
| NFQ Level | 9 |
| ECTS Credits | 30 |
| Award Class | Level 9 |
| Delivery Mode | Full-time |
| Duration | 0.5 year |
| Proposed Starting Date | September 2024 |
| Contact | Dr. Keith Hennessey |

2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

| Name | Affiliation |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mr. Damien Courtney - Chairperson | Fellow Emeritus CIT |
| Mr. James Scott | FAI |
| Mr. Angelo Walsh | Tipperary GAA |
| Dr. Denise Martin | ATU |
| Dr. Michael McCorry | DKIT |
| Ms. Siobhan Cronin | Student Representative |

Secretary to Panel: Dr. Michael Francis Ryan, TUS.
Support to Secretary/Panel: Ms. Claire Frawley, TUS

2.4 TU Staff

| Name | Affiliation |
|---|--|
| Mr. Donnacha McNamara | Dean of Limerick School of Art and Design |
| Dr. James Griffin | Head of Department of Marketing and Digital Communications |
| Programme Coordinators: Dr. Keith Hennessey Programme Team: Craig Coffey, Marion Geary, Aaron Grant, Kelvin Harold, Donnacha Mulcahy, Damien Young | |

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.1 Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the proposed

Master of Science in Applied Sports Performance

Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sports Performance

Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Sports Performance

3.2 Condition

- 1) The Programme team must reduce the number of modules and introduce at least one cross modular assessment by integrating existing single modular assessments.

3.3 Recommendations

Programme Structure and Content

- 1) Ensure the modules listed on the part-time Certificate Programme are the same as those listed for the full-time Certificate Programme.
- 2) Consider increasing the credit weightings currently assigned to the placement component to ten credits, without increasing the current 100 hours in placement practice. Additional learning hours could be spent on learning, reflection and professional development initiatives.
- 3) Consider opportunities for integration of some existing modules to address significant workload in a one-year period (currently 5 modules in one semester); e.g. consider integrating 'Athlete Welfare' and 'Contemporary Issues' modules. If this amalgamated module was to run in the second semester, it would provide an opportunity for cross-modular assessment -aligned to the placement.
- 4) Review the proposed provision of modular credits on Research Methods; is it excessive - given that prospective students will have typically completed a research methods component at undergraduate level?
- 5) Consider integrating key elements of the Research Methods module into the Applied Research Methods Module; thereby creating a 5-credit space for an additional module or additional credit allocation to the placement component.
- 6) Consider an additional focus on 'Injury Management' and making it more explicit in the programme to address key issues including injury prevention, the rehabilitation process and return from injury protocols (to specifically support

- the listed learning outcomes on 'injury prevention principles' and 'periodisation').
- 7) Integrate further opportunities in the programme for working in multi-disciplinary teams.
 - 8) Consider integrating more content on Youth Athletic Development.
 - 9) Develop further content in relation to Artificial Intelligence and an indicative policy on how it can be integrated as a positive tool in Sports Performance practice.
 - 10) Ensure all reading lists are consistent and complete to include the names of publishers.
 - 11) Ensure that human-centred 'data management' and 'data handling' are more explicitly prominent across the programme content and skill domains.

Programme Learning Outcomes, Graduate Profile & Assessment

- 12) Ensure that a clear list of core programme learning outcomes is included in the documentation to clearly outline the graduate profile. The programme would benefit from re-visiting the Programme Learning Outcomes and clarifying who the graduate is going to be (Develop table 20, p.72 to clarify core Learning Outcomes).
- 13) Review all programme learning outcomes to ensure that they reflect level 9 objectives of application, critical analysis, insight and evaluation.
- 14) Include programme level outcomes on professionalism to include ethical domains, artificial intelligence, data management, GDPR.
- 15) Consider how potential entry level challenges for participants (who may not come from a Sports Performance background) might be identified and subsequently addressed; possibly through additional online and face to face mechanisms (e.g. Conditioning for Human Performance); consider an online bridging module before candidates commence this module?
- 16) Clarify the intended graduate profile, employability statement and employability pathways to ensure clear branding; what exactly is the title and skill set of the graduate?
- 17) Highlight in the documentation the rationale from industry, for a multi-disciplinary generalist graduate profile.
- 18) Consider how the graduates will affiliate to the newly established Irish Sports and Exercise Science Association (ISESA).

- 19) Review the current schedule of assessment (currently all CA) and consider opportunities for rationalisation and integration using cross-modular assessments.
- 20) Clarify in the assessment proposal if students are completing a 6,000-word essay (literature review?) and a research proposal in the same semester. If so - reconsider if this assignment could be placed earlier in the research process.
- 21) Outline clearly in the documentation the provision for thesis supervision over semester three (Summer period).

22) **Module Specific Recommendations**

Conditioning For Human Performance

Consider integration of a 'cross-over assessment' with 'Sport Technology & Performance Analysis' and possibly the 'Research' module.

Skill Acquisiton - ensure the language used in the module descriptor reflects more application and analysis. Ensure that laboratory work is more clearly visible in the descriptor.

Sport and Exercise Nutrition

Consider providing a clearer outline of the case study and its objectives.

Athlete Welfare

Very interesting and important module - but is it possible to assess such a broad range of topics? (Students will need a clear outline on assessment to ensure the case-study covers the core module learning outcomes). Consider integrating some input on social media. Could the module focus be re-orientated to include performance management and become a capstone module for the programme?

Stage Two Modules

Sport Technology and Performance Analysis

A very positive and necessary module.

Include further learning outcomes on professionalism and data management to reflect a ten-credit module. There is a need to consider: resource provision and access to necessary technologies, including live streaming and access to relevant licences for students (e.g. 'teamoppy' sports apps).

Consider this module as an embedded certificate, given the relevance of managing data and metrics to current and future industry.

Consider integration of drone technology and also how to ensure effective sports analysis feedback and filtering of relevant information to coaches and players.

Coaching Psychology

A really important module - particularly the interpersonal domain and the focus on the communicative soft skills in practical contexts.

Placement

- Ensure that relevant placement opportunities are provided and that criteria for these is established.
- Provide more information on how placement opportunities will be identified and subsequently organised, supervised and assessed (% grading mechanism).
- If a student is already working full-time in a relevant sports performance environment, could they be accredited using Recognition of Prior Learning? If so, outline this RPL process/TUS policy.
- Outline the nature of documentation provided for the placement supervisor and assessment criteria.
- Outline the induction process for placement and associated provision of guidance for placement supervisors.
- Given the effort and work required, this module deserves a greater credit allocation.
- The process of reflection, dealing with conflict and professional behaviours need to be more explicit in the learning outcomes for the module.

Contemporary Issues in Sport

Reconsider the language of modular learning outcomes (replacing the verb 'explain' with appropriate level 9 taxonomy (e.g. 'critically evaluate')).

Research Methods

Applied Research Methods

Thesis

- Reconsider the current allocation of credits for the research modules component (possibly integrating both research modules into one 5 credit module).
- Consider how best in a short timescale between ethical approval and dissertation (Feb - June), how to support students in gathering data particularly testing (using quantitative data).
- Consider bringing forward the research proposal so that some data gathering might have happened earlier in the programme cycle.
- Review module LO No 6 and replace with 'contributing to the body of knowledge.'
- Provide indicative timelines for submission of key thesis components.

Provision of Programme Team CVs

23). Ensure that CVs are provided for all programme team members.

24). Technical Writing Issues

- page 17 (1.3) the title should read 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion'
- page 20 (1.5) delete second reference to Tennis Ireland
- page 37(1.10) TUS Requirements for Progression - clarify the progression requirement, Is it a 2.2. grade or 40% cited in 5.a
- page 60 (2.7.2) Consultation with learners was appendix 1 not appendix 2
- p.79 (4.5) clarify the number of participants in the survey; it's different in the narrative to that indicated in the graph
- Section on 'Quantity of The Learning: It should read 'Total Per Week' rather than Total Per Semester.

3.4 Commendations and Observations

- 1) The panel commend the team for the comprehensive documentation and interesting, indicative syllabus.
- 2) The panel commend the different modes of programme delivery and embedded awards for the programme.

- 3) The panel commend the proposed links with industry in the programme and the multi-disciplinary nature of the programme.
- 4) The panel commend the 'applied industry expertise' evident at a high level amongst the programme team.
- 5) The panel appreciated the detailed discussions and clarifications provided by the programme team.
- 6) The panel would like to commend the team for their active and enthusiastic engagement with the panel.

Danier Courtney
Signature of Chairperson

Date: 8/15/2024