



TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

www.tus.ie

**Dámh an Ghnó agus Fáilteachais
Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning
Department of Lifelong Learning**

Report of External Validation Panel

15th June 2023

for the

**Certificate in Professional, Personal, Workplace Development & Wellbeing SPA
Certificate in Customer Service Excellence SPA
Certificate in Operational Excellence SPA
Higher Diploma in Business in Operational Management**

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION	3
2.1 Higher Education Provider.....	3
2.2 Programmes Evaluated.....	3
2.3 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors.....	5
2.4 TUS Staff.....	6
3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL	6
3.1 Main Findings.....	6
3.2 Conditions.....	6
3.3 Recommendations	6
3.3 Commendations and Observations.....	8

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines, in summary form, the proceedings and findings of the external validation visit for the proposed Department of Lifelong Learning programmes held on 15th June 2023. 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.

2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.2 Higher Education Provider

Provider	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
Faculty	Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning
Department	Lifelong Learning
Date of Visit	15 th June 2023

2.3 Programmes Evaluated

Programme Title	Certificate in Professional, Personal, Workplace Development & Wellbeing
Award Title	Certificate in Professional, Personal, Workplace Development & Wellbeing
Code	AL_BPPWW_6
NFQ Level	6
ECTS Credits	10 ECTS
Award Class	Special Purpose Award
Delivery Mode	Part-Time, Online, Blended
Duration	One semester
Proposed Starting Date	September 2023
Contact	Dr Michael Tobin

Programme Title	Certificate in Customer Service Excellence
Award Title	Certificate in Customer Service Excellence
Code	AL_BCSRV_6
NFQ Level	6
ECTS Credits	20 ECTS
Award Class	Special Purpose Award
Delivery Mode	Part-Time, Online
Duration	One semester
Proposed Starting Date	September 2023
Contact	Dr Michael Tobin

Programme Title	Certificate in Operational Excellence
Award Title	Certificate in Operational Excellence
Code	AL_BOPEX_6
NFQ Level	6
ECTS Credits	20
Award Class	Special Purpose Award
Delivery Mode	Part-Time, Online
Duration	One semester
Proposed Starting Date	September 2023
Contact	Dr Michael Tobin

Programme Title	Higher Diploma in Business in Operational Management
Award Title	Higher Diploma in Business in Operational Management
Code	AL_BOPMT_8
NFQ Level	8
ECTS Credits	60 ECTS
Award Class	Higher Diploma
Delivery Mode	Part-Time, Online
Duration	1 year
Proposed Starting Date	September 2023
Contact	Dr Michael Tobin

2.4 External Validation Panel of Expert Assessors

Name	Affiliation
John Vickery	Former Registrar, Institute of Technology Tallaght
Christine Charlton	Chief Executive Officer, Westmeath County Enterprise Board
Patrick Claffey	Director of QMP Consulting Ltd.
Neil Quinlan	Head of Department of Lifelong Learning, SETU, Waterford
Cathal Kearney	Registrar Dorset College & Education Consultant

Secretary to Panel: Dr Patrick Donohue, Former Assistant Registrar, TUS Midwest

2.5 TUS Staff

Name	Role
Prof. Vincent Cunnane	President
Dr Terry Twomey	Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar
Dr Michael Tobin	Dean of Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online & Distance Learning
Seadna Ryan	Head of Department of Lifelong Learning
Dept Teaching Staff: Declan Doran, Geraldine McDermott, Jim Gilchrist, Kevin Farrell, Rory McLaughlin, Shona Stewart, Imelda Rea, Elaine Burke, Maura Flynn, Alex Courtney	

3.1 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXTERNAL VALIDATION PANEL

3.2 Main Findings

The External Validation Panel of Assessors recommends approval of the following programmes: Certificate in Professional, Personal, Workplace Development & Wellbeing, Certificate in Customer Service Excellence, Certificate in Operational Excellence and Higher Diploma in Business in Operational Management.

3.3 Conditions

No conditions apply.

3.4 Recommendations

1. Review the learning outcomes; rewrite to ensure the use of active verbs and outcomes of learning are measurable. Ensure the Level 8 module learning outcomes are at the appropriate level.
2. Ensure that assessment strategies are amended going forward to take into consideration the University's policies and procedures relating to academic integrity (AI).
3. Ensure consistency of hours. Specify for students whether lecture hours are live or recorded at the recruitment stage.

4. Make it clear to students that the required textbooks do not necessarily need to be purchased, unless otherwise specified. Encourage course teams to identify online texts available through the library. Ensure texts are current and up to date.
5. Provide more detail on the entry requirements in the documentation including the RPL processes, English language requirements and qualifications from non-standard applicants.
6. Ensure that at least one specified progression pathway for each of the programmes exists.
7. Include feedback strategy in documentation.
8. Ensure the current ethos of the Faculty into the design, development and delivery of programmes with an emphasis on transversal skills and meeting specific industry requirements is not lost with changes to the organisational design within the University.

Programme specific recommendations:

Certificate in Professional, Personal, Workplace Development & Wellbeing SPA

- Include CA percentages, pass/fail
- Include *Time and Stress Management* and *Developing Resilience* in content

Certificate in Customer Service Excellence SPA

- Consider more detail relating to technology, ethics, quality management and quality standards
- Include more detail relating to customer experience
- Clarify balance of interpersonal and digital customer service skills in the course

Certificate in Operational Excellence SPA

- Include an element of interpersonal skills to aid implementation of new operational skillsets required
- Consider including *contemporary issues* in the content (for example, Digital Transformation)
- Consider updating text resources, for example, *Operational Excellence*
- Expand on the topic descriptions (for example, the *Lean* principles and practices)

Higher Diploma in Business in Operational Management

- Review for clarification the sentence in entry requirements on page 5 “Elsewhere: The credits may be used to gain entry to other associated programmes depending on their prior learning and work history on either a full-time or part-time basis”.
- Consider removing the five-year experience entry requirement
- Give more detail relating to progression pathways
- Review the programme theme mapping
- Amend *Applied Practice 4* title.

- Consider inclusion of the following content:
 - o Module 1: Enterprise Resource Planning
 - o Module 2: Sustainable Finance
 - o Module 3: Technology Ethics
 - o Module 6: Leadership and Change
 - o Module 6: Developing a Change Culture

3.3 Commendations and Observations

1. The panel would like to commend the team for their active and enthusiastic engagement with the panel.
2. The panel appreciated the detailed discussions and clarifications provided by the programme team.
3. The panel commends the rich and supportive online learning environment developed by the Faculty.



Signature of Chairperson.

Date: 28th August 2023

