

New Minor/Supplemental/SPA Programme Validation Report

Programme Reference Number:	
Faculty/School:	School of Engineering, Galway-Mayo
Department:	Department of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed

Title:	Postgraduate Certificate in Blockchain for Managers
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ Level:	9
ECTS:	30
ISCED:	0710
Duration:	1 stage
Proposed Student Intake:	30
Proposed Start Date:	September 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Part-time Online Delivery

Date of Review:	15 th May 2023
------------------------	---------------------------

Review Panel

Panellist Role	Name	Role and Organisation
Chair	Thomas Dowling	Head of Faculty of Engineering and Technology, ATU Donegal
External Academic Discipline Expert	Rania el-Gazzar	Associate Professor, University of South-Eastern Norway
Academic/Head of Department	Mark Melling	Lecturer, ATU Donegal
Student Representative	Belinda Boyle	Student, ATU Donegal
VPAAR (Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar) Nominee/Secretary	Carmel Brennan	Assistant Registrar, ATU

All external members of the panel have declared that they are independent of ATU (Atlantic Technological University), and all have declared that they have no conflict of interest.

Proposing Staff

The panel met the staff listed below during the review process.

Professor Graham Heaslip	Head of School of Engineering, ATU Galway-Mayo
Dr Carine Gachon	Head of Transcend Project, ATU Galway-Mayo
Dr Trevor Clohessy	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo

Introduction

This programme is targeted at managers in any organisation that are looking at using blockchain to achieve data transparency, traceability, security, privacy, real time analytics, etc. These could be graduates of level 8 engineering, computing, finance, business or technology degrees or equivalent.

Blockchain technology is a decentralized and distributed digital ledger system that is used to record transactions across many computers so that the record cannot be altered retroactively without the alteration of all subsequent blocks and the consensus of the network. Each block in the chain contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data. Because each block is connected to the one before it and the one after it, the blockchain forms a secure and tamper-resistant record of all transactions that have occurred on the network. This technology has gained popularity due to its ability to provide transparency, security, and efficiency in various industries, including supply chain management, and finance.

Blockchain management refers to the process of incorporating blockchain technology into the supply chain management system of a business or organization. This involves using a blockchain-based platform to track and verify every step of the supply chain, from the sourcing of raw materials to the delivery of finished products to customers. By integrating blockchain technology into the supply chain, businesses can create a secure and transparent record of every transaction that takes place within the supply chain network. This allows for greater visibility, accountability, and traceability, which can help to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance trust between all parties involved in the supply chain. Additionally, blockchain supply chain integration can help to combat fraud, counterfeit products, and other supply chain-related issues by providing a tamper-proof record of all transactions.

Rationale for Programme

Blockchain is at an early stage and national standards have not been developed in most countries. Ireland is leading the way in the integration of blockchain in public policy (Department of Finance, 2019). Ultimately, Ireland is working towards becoming a major player in the blockchain industry, and therefore this programme's main objective is to provide the local ecosystem with the required experts versed in the cross disciplinary nature of blockchain management.

Validation Criteria

1. The programme aims and learning outcomes are clear and aligned with the proposed award title.
2. The rationale for the programme is well informed and justified.
3. The design of the programme is suitably structured and fit for purpose.
4. The design of the programme ensures that students can successfully achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes.
5. The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is well planned and appropriate for the discipline area and type of award.
6. Assessment techniques are fair, valid, reliable, consistent and a credible measure of the academic standard attained by students.
7. The planned resources, including staff, physical, online, library and student supports, sufficiently support the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme.
8. The programme facilitates lifelong learning for a diverse student population by setting out appropriate entry requirements and opportunities for access, transfer, and progression.
9. There is demand for potential graduates from the programme.
10. The learning environment and mode of delivery are consistent with the needs of the intended students of the programme and accessible and appropriate support services for students have been provided for.
11. Students will be well informed on the requirements of the programme, guided to relevant resources and supported in their studies in a caring environment.

Findings

Overall Finding

Validated without changes	
Validated subject to condition(s) and/or recommendation(s)	X
Rejected	

Reason for Overall Finding

The panel welcomes this programme and recognises that there is a need for upskilling in this discipline. However, the programme aims do not align with the programme title and need to be rewritten. In addition, the Programme Learning Outcomes are too ambitious given the target cohort and the scale of the programme, and needs to be reviewed and revised to ensure that they are achievable.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

1. The development of a novel and necessary programme.
2. The programme team's ambition and vision in seeking to meet the need for graduates and industry in this important area.

Conditions

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council that, subject to satisfying any condition(s) detailed below, the panel is satisfied that the proposed programme meets the validation criteria as set out in Atlantic Technological University's Developing and Validating New Programmes Policy.

1. The Programme Learning Outcomes are unduly ambitious given then target cohort and the scale of the programme, and need to be reviewed and revised to ensure that they are achievable. Review the Programme Learning Outcomes to ensure that the volume is appropriate to a Special Purpose Award.
2. Ensure that there is alignment between the programme title and the programme aims. This may require a change in the title to reflect the programme aims which strongly reflect supply chain management or a revision of the aims.
3. Review indicative content to ensure that the topics can reasonably be covered to an appropriate depth within the programme's timeframe. Consider reducing the module learning outcomes in relation to technology, placing more emphasis on the strategic use of blockchain.
4. Revise the entry requirements to specify that a H2.2 level 8 award is required. Consider additional specific degrees as meeting the entry requirements e.g., law. However, the entry requirements continue to specify relevant disciplines.


Recommendations

The panel advises Academic Council that the Programme Development Team and/or the Department should take cognisance of any recommendations outlined below.

5. Review the programme and module assessment strategy to ensure that the variety of methodologies are appropriate, and that neither student or individual module learning outcomes are over-assessed.
6. Ensure that the depth and rigour of this level 9 programme are reflected appropriately and consistently in the language used in the document.
7. Revise the section on 'Employment Potential for Graduates' to ensure that it is realistic in terms of the impact of this programme on graduate employment prospects.
8. Develop a clear marketing message for the programme to ensure that the expectations of potential students are realistic and achievable.

Report Approval

This report has been agreed by the evaluation panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Signed: 	
Name: Thomas Dowling Validation Panel Chair	Date 19/05/2023