New Programme Validation

(SPA Award)

Section A

Report of the External Review Panel

Programme Reference Number:	S003
Faculty/School(s):	School of Science and Computing, ATU Galway Mayo
Department(s):	Department of Natural Resources and the Environment

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed

Title:	Postgraduate Certificate in Marine Spatial Planning
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	Level 9
ECTS:	40
ISCED:	0522
Duration:	1 year
Proposed Student Intake:	16 per year
Proposed Start Date:	
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Date of Review:	11 December 20223

Review Panel

Panellist Role	Title	Name	Organisation	Job Title
Chair	Mr	Eamon Walsh	ATU	Head of Dept, Online, Flexible and Professional Development
Industry/ Community Representative*	Ms	Elizabeth Tray	Bord Iascaigh Mhara	Fisheries conservation officer
Academic/Head of Department	Dr	Eugene McCarthy	ATU	Head of Department of Analytical,

				Biopharmaceutical and Medical Sciences
	Prof	Frances Lucy	ATU	ATU Lead of EU Green
Student Representative		Not available		
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) Nominee/Academic Secretary	Dr	Aodhmar Cadogan	ATU	Assistant Registrar
Recording Secretary		Eamon Walsh	ATU	HoD Online, Flexible and Professional Development

*One or two external members of panel in total.

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.

Programme Design Team

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

Dr Ian O Connor	Head of Department of Natural Resources and Environment
Dr Coilin Minto	Lecturer, ATU Galway- Mayo
Dr Roisin Nash	Lecturer, ATU Galway- Mayo
Dr Roisin Brophy	Lecturer, ATU Galway- Mayo

Introduction

The aim of this part time, online programme is to prepare graduates for marine spatial planning roles and contribute to the sustainable development of Ireland's blue economy. This will be achieved by integrating graduates' knowledge of marine ecosystems with an understanding of the relevant economic, legislative, and policy contexts, coupled with technical skills related to the role of a marine spatial planning professional.

Rationale for Programme(s)

Demand for this programme stems from a lack of expertise, and new national policy imperatives for marine spatial planning to enable development of offshore renewable energy (ORE) and realising the sustainable development of the wider marine economy. Planned development of offshore renewables, together with potential emerging sectors such as Blue Carbon will create opportunities and demand for these graduates. The HCI Pillar 1 call from the HEA specifically identified a need for programmes in Marine Spatial Planning, and that was the basis for this programme proposal. This

will also provide funding for the running of the programme. Substantial engagement with industry and government stakeholders informed the development of the content of the programme.

Validation Criteria

ATU's Developing and Validating New Taught Programmes Policy specifies that new programmes must comply with the following criteria for validation:

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.

The panel were satisfied that the programme meets ATU's validation criteria, and are satisfied that there is a strong rationale and need for the programme. They have outlined a number of recommendations which will enhance the programmes.

Findings

Overall Finding

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

Reason for Overall Finding

The panel engaged with the programme team on a number of areas.

Of particular interest to the panel was the consultation process during the development of the programme. The proposing team indicated that feedback was received from employees including

recent graduates who are working in the area and the lack of awareness of the wider picture of marine spatial planning. It was clear to the proposing team that identifying and analysing the stakeholder organisations that might be involved in projects and exploring how to communicate and engage with those organisations would be a key component of the programme. There was also feedback that consultants that were engaged in marine spatial planning were often based abroad and lacked the Irish context.

Support to the learners taking the modules online was also discussed. The team spoke of their experience of delivering online especially during the recent pandemic, fostering a sense of community amongst learners.

At this moment, once the HCI funding is completed, there is no intention of continuing the programme, however, this might be revisited.

It is difficult to estimate the target market and size, however it is clear from all engagement that there is demand for the programme and this is further supported by the strong interest in the programme via the Springboard courses website despite the lack of marketing for same. It will be interesting to (hopefully) see even stronger demand once marketing commences.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

There seems be a clear need for the programme and the panel commend the team for the development of the programme and for successfully applying and receiving the HCI funding to support the programme.

Conditions

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council that they are satisfied that the proposed programme(s) meets the validation criteria as set out in Atlantic Technological University's Developing and Validating New Programmes Policy, without any conditions.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation 1 The panel recommends that the delivery of lectures will be more clearly stated in the section 6.2 Programme Delivery i.e. will be live and recorded for those unable to attend. The scheduling of lecturers could be lunchtime or evenings, recommend that this is decided in consultation with the students.

Recommendation 2: Tailor the Assessment Strategy in each of the modules to the actual assessment components for each module (exception is the THES09012 Marine Spatial Planning Project which was tailored).

Recommendation 3: More detail is added to the indicative syllabus of some of the modules i.e. MATH09001 Marine Spatial Analysis, GEOG09005 Marine Spatial Planning: Current advances and challenges, BIOL09062 Marine Resource Management.

Recommendation 4: Additional detail is added to the module ENVI09019 Stakeholder Engagement for Marine spatial planning stakeholders to cover identification of who are the real stakeholders, stakeholder perspectives, communication strategies and use of role play and guest lecturers.

Recommendation 5: Consider the quantum of assessments over 2 semesters and reflect on the possibility of shared assessment or reduction of the number of assessments. Recommend some formative activities in the early weeks of the programme in some modules to settle the student into their learning.

Recommendation 6: Consider the use of an in person induction session or early workshop to enable student to meet in person and build the class group spirit. Consult with staff and students as to the best time for same.

Recommendation 7: Review the title of the module ECAN09004 Marine Policy and Economics to include regulation and/or legislation.

Recommendation 8: Complete a review of the delivery and assessment after the first delivery of the programme. As a new ATU lecturer will be involved in the delivery of a significant number of modules, the programme is encourage to meet regularly to provide mentorship and ensure that the ATU QA requirements are understood and implemented.

Minor fixes

Use of the terms ecological / environmental / ecosystem

Section 6.1 Semester 2 total credits missing (page 5).

Section 3.1 Spelling of Department, mixed use of full word and abbreviation (page 6).

A number of fields on the opening page blank, need to be completed in full:

Work Supervision hours in project module and %100 CA fix (page 30)

LO1 in ECON09004: Synthise??(page 23)

Check font and online resources Page 24 and generally check fonts, are set to the NORMAL style in the text boxes. Check booklist page 24

THES0902, indicative syllabus no 5 legal AND regulatory not the same thing? No 7 spelling of spatial

Noted that the CV's attached strongly support the strengths of the proposing team, remove for the long term programme documentation.

Report Approval

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

Signed: Name Validation Panel Chair	Date

Appendices

Note: Appendices are added post-validation as part of the response to the report showing any amendments.

Appendix A Entry Requirements

The minimum entry requirements for this programme are:

Candidates must hold a cognate level 8 Bachelor (Hons) degree with a minimum grade classification of H2.2 or equivalent. Cognate degrees for this programme include marine science, marine biology, oceanography, marine ecology, geography, planning, economics, law, civil engineering.

Candidates who do not meet the H2.2 performance standard in a Level 8 award will be required to pass a qualifying assignment at a H2.2 performance standard as established by the Programme Board and approved by the Registrar.

English Language Requirements

English Language Requirements will be as determined by ATU and as published in the Access, Transfer and Progression code. The current requirements are as follows:

Non-EU applicants who are not English speakers must have a minimum score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 6.0 in each component) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent. All results must have been achieved within 2 years of application to ATU.

EU applicants who are not English speakers are recommended to have a minimum score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 6.0 in each component) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent.

Recognition of Prior Learning

In accordance with its policies, ATU is committed to the principles of transparency, equity and fairness in recognition of prior learning (RPL) and to the principle of valuing all learning regardless of the mode or place of its acquisition. Recognition of Prior Learning may be used to gain access to this programme.

Applications

Applications for this programme are made to the university.

Appendix B Programme Learning Outcomes

On completion of this programme the learner will/should be able to:

Primary Award Standard Outcome Version 1.0

		Programme Learning Outcome	HKB	HKK	HKR	HKS	HCC	HCR	HCL	HCI
☐	1	Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the theory, concepts and methods associated with marine spatial planning	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
☐	2	Employ advanced methods for acquiring, integrating, analysing and drawing inference from data required to develop marine spatial planning proposals within existing and emerging regulatory frameworks	✘	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
☐	3	Lead effective Stakeholder Engagement processes, with emphasis on issues related to maritime spatial planning.	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘
☐	4	Integrate policy, economic and ecological perspectives in a multidiciplinary approach to the sustainable management of the marine environment	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘	✔

Appendix C Approved Programme Schedule

Approved Programme Schedule - GA_SMARI_S09 Postgraduate Certificate in Marine Spatial Planning

Stage 1

Delivery	Code	Module Title	Level	Credit	M/E	OL	OL IL	CA	PJ	PC	FE	Total
SEM 1	ENVI09019	Stakeholder Engagement for Marine Spatial Planning	09	05	M	2.00	6.25	60	0	40	0	100
SEM 1	MATH09001	Marine Spatial Analysis	09	10	M	4.00	10.00	0	40	60	0	100
SEM 1	ECON09004	Marine Policy and Economics	09	05	M	2.00	6.25	50	50	0	0	100
SEM 2	GEOG09005	Marine Spatial Planning: current advances and challenges	09	05	M	2.00	6.25	100	0	0	0	100
SEM 2	BIOL09062	Marine Resource Management	09	05	M	2.00	6.25	40	60	0	0	100
SEM 2	THES09012	Marine Spatial Planning Project	09	10	M	1.25	11.75	0	100	0	0	100
		Credit Total		40								

Area Effective Term	Credits Required	Award Classification Percentage
202300	40	100 %

Stage / Semester Average Weekly Contact Hours	OL
Semester 1	8.00
Semester 2	5.25
Stage Total Average Weekly Contact Hours	6.62

Note: Average weekly hours for programmes with more than two semesters per stage and which have year-long modules may not calculate correctly

Key
M/E - Mandatory/Elective, OL - Online Learning Hours, IL - Independent Learning Hours, CA - Coursework Assessment, PJ - Project, PC - Practical, FE - Final Exam,