

New Programme (Major Award) External Validation Report

Section A

Report of the External Review Panel

Programme Reference Number:	
Faculty/School(s):	School of Business, Faculty of Business, Faculty of Business and Social Science
Department(s):	Department of Enterprise and Technology, Department of Business Studies, Department of Business

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed

Title:	Bachelor of Business (Hons) with named awards in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bachelor of Business (Hons) with Supply Chain Management - Bachelor of Business (Hons) with Digital Business - Bachelor of Business (Hons) with Enterprise and Innovation
Type of Award:	Major
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	8
ECTS:	240 ECTS
ISCED:	0410
Duration:	4 years
Proposed Student Intake:	45
Proposed Start Date:	September 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Full-time blended

Embedded Awards

Title:	Bachelor of Business with Supply Chain Management Bachelor of Business with Digital Business Bachelor of Business with Enterprise and Innovation
Type of Award:	Major
NFQ Level:	7
ECTS:	180
ISCED:	0410
Duration:	3 years
Proposed Student Intake:	September

Title:	Higher Certificate in Business
Type of Award:	Major
NFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	120
ISCED:	0410
Duration:	2 years

Title:	Certificate in Business
Type of Award:	Minor
NFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	60
ISCED:	0410
Duration:	1 year

Date of Review:	23 rd May 2023
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Review Panel

Panellist Role	Title	Name	Organisation	Job Title
Chair	Dr	Yvonne Kavanagh	SETU	Assistant Registrar and Director of Engineering Research and Innovation
External Academic Discipline Expert	Ms	Caroline O'Reilly	MTU	Head of Department of Management and Enterprise
External Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Roisín Lyons	University of Limerick	Lecturer in Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Industry/ Community Representative	Mr	Andrew O'Leary	EIS	Chief People Officer
Industry/ Community Representative	Ms	Mary Kearney	Menzies Distribution	Regional Director
Student Representative	Mr	Ali Usama	ATU	Postgraduate Student
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) Nominee (Academic Secretary)	Ms	Carmel Brennan	ATU	Assistant Registrar

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.

Name	Role/Organisation
Dr Billy Bennett	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Charlie Gorney	Donegal ETB
Lynne Keary	GRETB
Phyllis Heduan	GRETB
Marie Bonar	GRETB
Michael Murphy	MSLETB
Michael Langan	MSLETB
Dr Seamus Lennon	Head of School of Business, ATU Galway-Mayo
Dr Breda McTaggart	Head of Faculty of Business and Social Science, ATU Sligo
Michael Margey	Head of Faculty of Business, ATU Donegal
Tomás O'Flaherty	Head of Department of Marketing, Tourism and Sport, ATU Sligo
Valerie McTaggart	Head of Department of Social Sciences, ATU Sligo
Marie Moran	Head of Department of Business, ATU Sligo
Deirdre Lusby	Head of Department of Business and Accounting, ATU Galway-Mayo
Patricia Doherty	Head of Department of Business Studies, ATU Donegal
Bryan Coyne	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Clodagh Crowe	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Gillian O'Donovan	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Karin White	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Lorraine Murphy	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Mary McGuckin	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Clodagh Caslin	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Marie Keane	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Louise O'Gorman	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Ruth Walsh	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Diane O'Brien	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Christopher McGurrian	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Mary Malone	Lecturer, ATU Sligo
Isobel Cunningham	Lecturer, ATU Donegal
Joanne Enright	Lecturer, ATU Donegal
Eugenia Moran	Lecturer, ATU Donegal
Deirdre McClay	Lecturer, ATU Donegal
Fearghal McHugh	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Laura Hegarty	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Caitlín Ní Ghabhainn	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Colm Kelleher	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Deirdre McHugh	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Evelyn Moylan	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Miriam McSweeney	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Noel Harvey	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Rachel Shaw	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Orla Colleran	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Eilis McNulty	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Amaya Vega	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
John Kennedy	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo

Marie English	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Myles McHugh	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo
Sinead Keogh	Lecturer, ATU Galway-Mayo

Introduction

There has long been debate about the development of a unified third level system in Ireland. This came a step closer when the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris on the 6 December 2022 announced the establishment of a National Tertiary Office to develop joint further (FE) and higher education (HE) degree programmes. The aim is the development of a unified tertiary education sector whereby students will commence their third level experience in further education but will complete the remainder in higher education colleges. This new policy is being realised through the development of 13 new programmes across the country in conjunction with Further and Higher Education institutes.

Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Galway Roscommon ETB, Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB and Donegal ETB have been working on developing collaborative tertiary education programme proposals. A West/North-West FE-HE Steering Group, consisting of the CEOs of the three ETBs and President of ATU, was established and held its first meeting on 30 August 2022.

In response to a call from the HEA and SOLAS for collaborative tertiary education programmes, ATU and the ETBs presented four programmes as an initial proposal. One of these programmes is the Bachelor of Business Honours in Business with Specialisms in Enterprise and Innovation, Digital Business and Supply Chain Management.

Rationale for Programme(s)

Whilst the impetus for Tertiary Education programmes originated with the Minister for Higher Education, the decision on the specific programmes was based on the external landscape and evidence base when developing the presented awards. Specifically, at the scoping of the project stage, the team reviewed available policy perspectives and data sets, considered data from IDA, Skillnet, and the Further Education and Training (FET) sector and considered research findings from the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences in this field. The results of this early work indicated that the proposed model and presented programmes reflect the needs and aspirations of respective stakeholders. Each strand also reflects the strengths of each college. Additionally, these awards are anticipated to be of interest and value to the region's students and employers, providing much-needed skills relevant to regional sustainability and growth. The programme application and delivery mode go some way towards removing barriers to higher education through local provision and direct application.

The aim is to provide multi-site, flexible access to higher education. The FET sector will deliver the first year of all awards on multiple locations, in some instances in areas where higher education is not traditionally offered. After completing year one, the students will continue their ATU studies on the Galway, Sligo and Donegal campuses. Irrespective of the location that the student undertakes stage 1 they will be provided with the opportunity to continue their degree on any ATU campus offering the named awards. To enhance student choice and align with the specialisms in each

college, each campus will offer a unique named award. In line with the ladder system traditionally offered in the Further Education and Technological Higher Education sector students will have the opportunity to exit after each stage of the programme with an award appropriate to the level and volume of learning completed. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the programme and entry and exit routes.

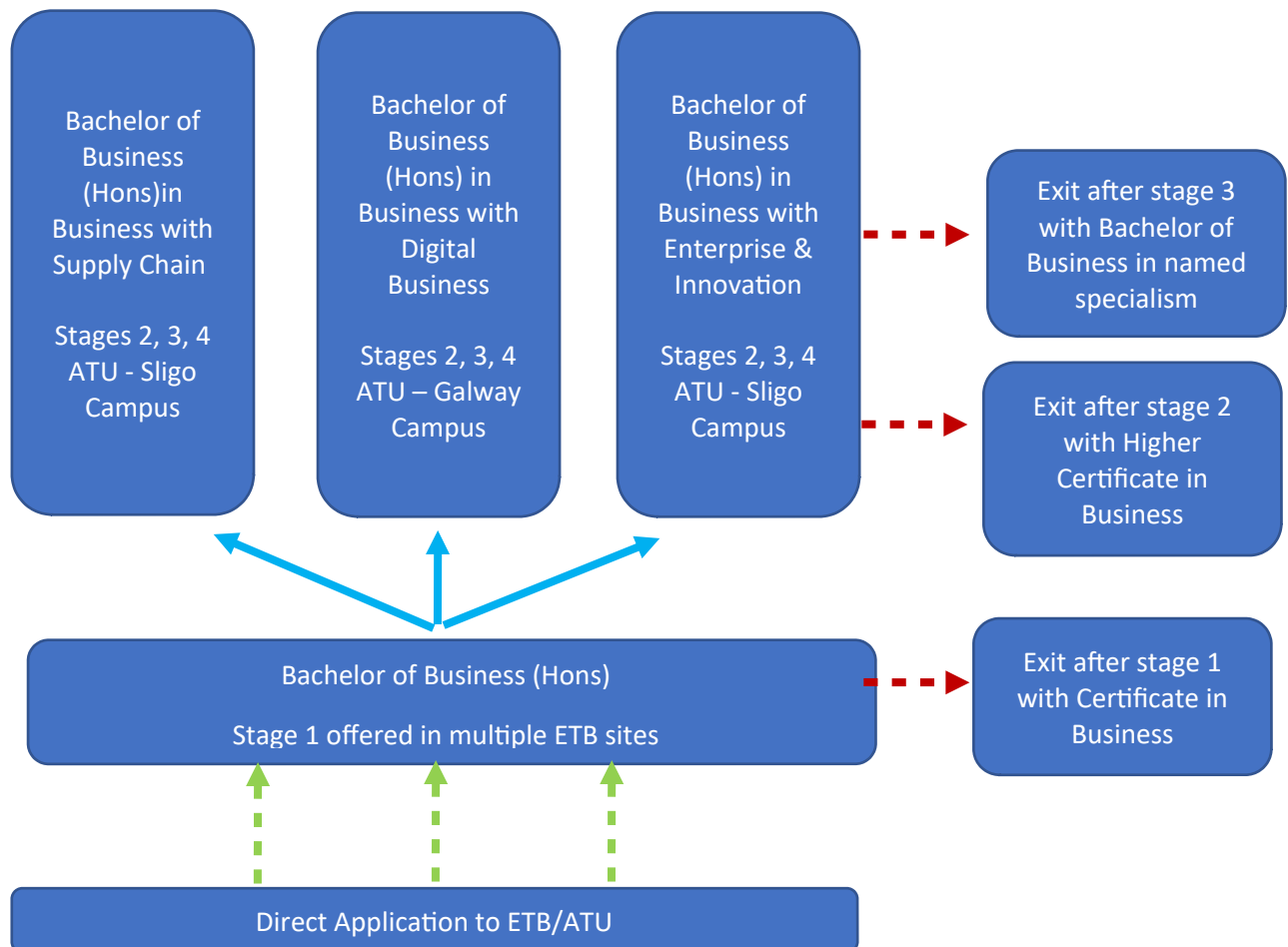


Figure 1 Outline of flexible, multisite delivery

The entry requirements for the programme are in Appendix A, with Programme Learning Outcomes listed in Appendix B and the Approved Programme Schedule in Appendix C. In each instance these are the updated versions following any amendments made in response to this validation report.

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.

Findings

Overall Finding

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

Reason for Overall Finding

Having reviewed the documentation provided and met with the Programme Development Team, the panel concludes that the programmes listed are fit for purpose and comply with the validation criteria stipulated.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

1. The development of cross university and ETB awards with embedded commonality in a short timescale is commended.
2. Developing programmes informed by learner focussed research will enhance the delivery of the programme and is commended.
3. The panel commended the enthusiasm and engagement of the Programme Development Team with this pioneering programme type.
4. The array of novel pedagogies and applied projects with industry were commended.

5. The panel noted and commended the consistent commitment to social and sustainable development goals across multiple modules and programmes.

Conditions

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

1. Since year one of this programme will be delivered at sites different to year 2,3,4, a derogation from the progress and carry facility for students progressing from stage 1 to stage 2, should be included, given the target cohort and the practical difficulties that would ensue.

Recommendations

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

1. Consider the minimum number of students required on each site to make each of the programmes feasible with particular reference to stage one. Clarify how and when decisions relating to feasibility will be made and how this will be communicated in advance to students.
2. Articulate the programme management structures and roles, and the resources allocated to same, given the complexity of managing the programme across multiple locations and organisations. There needs to be specific support for development of modular communities of practice supporting teaching, learning and assessment activities within modules, particularly in relation to the delivery of stage one of the programme.
3. The Memorandum of Agreement should provide for visits to delivery sites as part of the quality assurance process prior to and during the delivery of the programme.
4. Provide further detail on how the programme is structured and tested for blended and common delivery, ensuring a feasible timetable and positive student experience. Document the calendar that will apply for students undertaking stage one of the programme.
5. Expand on the assessment strategy for the programme, particularly in relation to how consistency will be achieved across multiple sites. Formal mechanisms need to be implemented to support this. These should include internal module assessment moderation and provision of direction to the external examiner as to the common modules delivered on multiple sites.
6. Review the software and equipment requirements for these programmes ensuring availability on each delivery site, to provide equality of access and experience for all students. Articulate how technical support will be provided and by whom.
7. Provide evidence of support from the ETBs and industry for the programmes presented.
8. Map modules in the programmes to the transferable skills articulated in the programme learning outcomes, showing how they will be achieved across the assessment strategy. Pay particular attention to the development of teamwork skills. Where gaps are identified, module(s) should be revised to explicitly include the development of transferable skills.
9. Create draft CA schedules. These should show that students are not being over assessed at particular points in the semester, that there is an appropriate mix of assessments. Ensure

there are sufficient opportunities for formative feedback especially in modules which are 100% course work assessment.

10. Consider the teaching strategy and the delivery of modules in stage 1 and whether the delivery should include tutorials as a mechanism for practicing and reinforcing module content.
11. All modules should consistently indicate independent learning to demonstrate alignment with ECTS workload.
12. Review resources on all modules to ensure that all are up to date and that all references are complete and accurate.
13. The Supply Chain Management programme should consider including an alternative to work placement.
14. Ensure that the work placement module in the Digital Business programme is listed in the correct semester. Provide an option for an Erasmus semester opposite the work placement in the Digital Business degree.
15. Consider inclusion of cybersecurity, data governance and artificial intelligence in the Digital Business degree given their importance. This may require amendments to modules. Students on the Digital Business degree should be clear about the knowledge and skills they will attain, and the types of roles open to them.
16. Review the module learning outcomes in the Digital Business programme to ensure that they are articulated appropriately for the level of the module.
17. Ensure that the technical skills a student will obtain in the Enterprise and Innovation programme are clearly articulated to ensure student's initial employability.
18. The Enterprise and Innovation programme should consider including further accounting content in stage 3 to ensure that graduates have the requisite knowledge and skills to support the development of a business plan and to equip them for employment should they choose to exit at that point in the programme.

Report Approval

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

Signed: Dr Yvonne Kavanagh Validation Panel Chair	Date
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