

New SPA Programme Validation Report

Programme Reference Number:	SG_SARCH_S06 SG_SARCI_S06 SG_SARCJ_S06 SG_SINTR_S06 SG_SPREH_S06 SG_SIRIH_S06 SG_SINTR_S07 SG_SRITU_S07 SG_SBUIN_S07 SG_SBUIM_S07
Faculty/School:	Science
Department:	Environmental Science

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed

Title:	Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Archaeological Excavation and Post-excavation
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	6
EFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	10
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Archaeological Excavation and Post-excavation International
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	6
EFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	12
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Archaeological Field Studies International
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	6
EFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	18
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Introduction to Irish Archaeology
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	6
EFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	15
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland and Europe
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	6
EFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	15
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Irish Medieval History and Archaeology
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	6
EFQ Level:	6
ECTS:	12
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks

Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 7 Special Purpose Award in Introduction to Archaeological Interpretation
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	7
EFQ Level:	7
ECTS:	15
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 7 Special Purpose Award in Ritual and Meaning in Archaeology
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	7
EFQ Level:	7
ECTS:	15
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 7 Special Purpose Award in Buildings Archaeology - Online
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award
NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	7
EFQ Level:	7
ECTS:	12
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Title:	Level 7 Special Purpose Award in Buildings Archaeology - Blended
Type of Award:	Special Purpose Award

NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level:	7
EFQ Level:	7
ECTS:	12
ISCED:	0222
Duration:	15 weeks
Proposed Student Intake:	16
Proposed Start Date:	Sep. 2023
Delivery Mode(s):	Online

Date of Review:	17 May 2023
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Review Panel

Panellist Role	Name	Role and Organisation
Chair	Dr Breda McTaggart	Head of School, ATU
Academic Discipline Expert	Cian Marnell	Lecturer in Heritage Studies, ATU Galway City.
Industry/ Community Representative	Mr John Cronin	Director, John Cronin & Associates
Student Representative	Catherine White	Student, ATU
VPAAR (Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar) Nominee/Secretary	Gemma Lyons	QA Administrator Compliance, 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.

Dr Frances Lucy	Head of Department
Dr Marion Dowd	Programme Lead
Sam Moore	Programme Team
Dr Shirley Markley	Programme Team
Dr Fiona Beglane	Programme Team
Chris Read	Programme Team

Introduction

Archaeology has been taught at IT/ATU Sligo since 2003 and first entered the online space in 2020 with the launch of a three-module, Level 7 Certificate in Irish Archaeology. This certificate is offered in both blended and fully online modes. To date, it is the only accredited online award in archaeology offered by an Irish 3rd level institution. This certificate has been extremely popular. Building upon this success, a suite of new Special Purpose Awards are proposed, with four at Level 6 and three at Level 7. It is intended that each of the SPAs will be completed over two semesters. Five of the six comprise three, 5 credit modules. The exception is the Excavation SPA which will be

offered in 10 and 12 credit versions and the Field Studies SPA which is offered as 18 credits. The 12 and 18 credit versions have been designed primarily for the North American market where archaeology students are required to complete an excavation-based field school as part of their degree, with many students travelling for this opportunity.

The full suite of SPAs are:

LEVEL 6

Certificate in Introduction to Irish Archaeology (15 credit)

Certificate in Prehistoric Ireland and Europe (15 credit)

Certificate in Irish Medieval History and Archaeology (15 credit)

Certificate in Archaeological Field Studies (18 credit)

Certificate in Archaeological Excavation and Post-excavation (10 credit and 12 credit versions)

LEVEL 7

Certificate in Archaeological Interpretation (15 credits)

Certificate in the Archaeology of Ritual and Meaning (15 credits)

Certificate in Buildings Archaeology - Blended (15 credits)

Certificate in Buildings Archaeology - Online (15 credits)

See Appendix for Approved Programme Schedule.

Rationale for Programme(s)

The Royal Irish Academy published *Archaeology 2025: Strategic pathways for Archaeology in Ireland* in 2017. A key finding was the need to develop archaeology courses within the community sector and strengthen archaeology at third and fourth levels. This educational need was also emphasised in *Heritage Ireland 2030*, which recognised that built, natural and cultural heritage defines Ireland as a nation and contributes to identity, economy and to improved physical and mental wellbeing. The three objectives of *Heritage 2030* – Communities and Heritage, Leadership and Heritage, and Heritage and Partnerships – contain elements touched upon through the provision of the content of these modules in this proposed new programme. Education concerning Ireland's archaeological heritage is recognised as playing a key role in reaching these objectives, particularly with the growing interest in community heritage initiatives. These policies are also linked to the *Climate Action and Environment Adaption Planning for Built and Archaeological Heritage* which highlights the needs for educating people regarding monitoring and appreciating the built heritage resource under various Strategic Page 6 of 23 SG_SARCH_S06 2023 - Draft Academic Module Manager 3.0 Development Goals (SDGs). These SDGs are set out under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under Goals 3, 11, 13 and 17. Education and future skills concerning the future labour market and the development of AI and Automation show that careers in archaeology are not at risk of being replaced by non-human agents. Furthermore, the forthcoming *Monuments and Archaeology Heritage Bill* includes a section on the importance to promote knowledge and

awareness of built heritage. Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025 recognises a growth of lifelong learning and education. It also recognises a growing importance in cultural awareness with an emphasis on flexible lifelong learning opportunities beyond traditional schooling.

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 felt that the awards presented offered a great range of material and that the staff held a vast amount of experience to be competent in the delivery of such awards. Therefore, subject to the completion of the conditions, the panel would recommend validation.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

1. The learning material read very well, covered a broad range of topics, and was very well presented.

2. The enthusiasm and ambition of the programme team to deliver these modules in the face of the folding of the existing BSc is exemplary.
3. The experience and presentation of the team was excellent.

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. All proposed awards would be required to undertake the required costing process, this was not available, and therefore, it is unclear what is the expected student cohort size and if the Teaching & Learning strategy can accommodate this. The Team needs to undertake this work and update the Teaching & Learning strategy if needed. Modules can be appraised for any changes needed by the team.
2. Programme team to work with Registrar colleagues to review and update the programmes with the expected Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO) and Module Learning Outcomes (MLO) for L6 and L7 awards. Indicative syllabus, delivery hours, independent learning, assessment percentage breakdowns, and booklist errors need to be addressed. Some programmes at L6 appear to have errors in the schedule relating to online hours, please review.
3. The programme team needs to reduce assessments where applicable to align to policy requirements.
4. Each award should have more than one internal assessor.
5. The delivery of the awards needs to be phased so as not to offer all to the market at once.

Recommendations

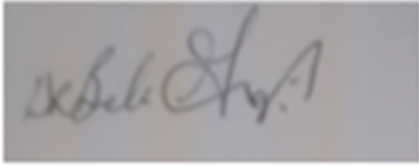
The panel advises Academic Council that the Programme Development Team and/or the Department should take cognisance of any recommendations outlined below.

1. The Programme Team should update the booklists and consider what is appropriate and needed and what is desirable for the award level and number of credits. A consistent approach to both required and recommended reading would be of value.
2. The Programme Team should review the entry requirements to align across SPAs and consider if entry to L7 should be from a cognate area.
3. The Programme Team could consider possible professional recognition for some of the awards e.g., with The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI) or other.
4. Both Certificates in Buildings Archaeology are the same learning, therefore the Programme Team would need to take care when going to market to ensure it is clear that it is only the delivery that is the difference between the awards.
5. In relation to a future degree offering, the Programme Team could consider moving archaeology into a joint award.
6. The teaching model followed regarding an excavation practical should be explained in the Teaching and Learning strategy.
7. The Programme Team could review the assessment strategies in line with recent concerns of AI challenges.

Report Approval

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

Signed:



Date: 22ND May 2023

Name: Dr Breda McTaggart
Validation Panel Chair

End of report.