

Appendix – Item 9



Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Trá Lí

Institute of Technology Tralee

**Validated Programme(s)
Major Modification
External Experts
ASSESSORS' REPORT**

Validated Award(s) Being Amended or Restructured	B. Eng in Agricultural Engineering B.Sc (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering (1-year add-on)					
Proposed Award Title(s)	B.Sc (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering					
Relevant School	Business, Computing & Humanities		Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	X	Health & Social Sciences	
Date of Review	May 2015					
External Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Danny Brennan former Registrar, Letterkenny IT• Dr. Tomas Norton, Harper Adam University					



Programme Development Team:	Head of School: Dr Joseph Walsh
	Head of Department: Dr Brendan O Donnell
	Programme Leader: Dr Patrick Carney
	Name of Member (Organisation):

**External
Experts'
Evaluation**

Proposal Documentation should address the following.

Please comment under each heading as appropriate:

Rationale for proposed Modifications:

The rationale for the modification is based on the view that an increasing number of students are opting for direct entry to level 8 as opposed to choosing level 7 and "topping-up" with the level 8 add-on. While the CAO evidence has not been presented to support this it is logical to assume that having this level 8 option on the CAO form will give the course wider coverage and appeal to more prospective candidates and their parents. The retention of Level 6 & 7 exit awards based is commended.

Impact of proposed Modifications on:

Award/Programme Type, Title and Level:

The modifications are consistent with the award title and level.

Programme Coherence with Aims and Objectives:

The design and content of the programme suitably meets the aim of producing graduates who possess a thorough knowledge of the scientific principles and engineering practice. Graduates of this course should be skilled enough to hold engineering design and management roles in the Agricultural Engineering Industry. The technical content of the programme is consistent with achieving the objective of developing the students design skills and the reinforcement of these skills by integrating learning outcomes with the Capstone Project module is commended.

Employment Opportunities:

The employability of the students from this course is good across many different aspects of the manufacturing industry. The course is mainly focussed on preparing students for an engineering design degree but the business and marketing subjects will prepare them for a career in the sales and marketing side of the industry.

Entry Requirements/Access:

Students with a minimum of OD3 in mathematics may find the mathematics content of the programme challenging and stating this as a minimum entry requirement may put off some higher achievers from applying. This may be something the Institute might wish to review. However, while the mathematics level of entrants may put an extra burden on the lecturers, it doesn't seem to be an issue with the current course. The exit awards will give the students options if they find it heavy going.

Progression/Transfer Opportunities:

The exit awards are suitable and present the students with options at

appropriate stages of the course.

Programme Structure and Content:

The content of the course has previously been validated and has a good mixture of engineering design, business and management subjects. The influence of industry is clear in the programme design. Modifications do not affect the content.

Programme Course Schedule:

The course schedule is appropriate and consistent with the previously validated course.

Programme Outcome Mapping to Modules Learning Outcomes:

Modifications do not affect the mapping of programme outcomes to module learning outcomes.

Coherence of Programme Themes:

Engineering design is a core theme running throughout the course and is augmented with business and environmental management in the final 2 semesters. The programme theme is coherent throughout the course and unaffected by the modifications.

Learning Experience:

The students gain a wide range of practical engineering and theoretical skills during the course and a 12 week work placement during Semester 6. The modifications do not affect the learning experience.

Learner Workload Including Assessment:

The learner workload has been previously approved and the modifications do not alter this.

Staff Expertise:

Staff expertise is appropriate

Embedded Standards/Awards:

Previous level 6 & 7 awards have been retained as exit awards and are appropriate

Review of New Modules

No new modules have been proposed.

Section 1	FINDINGS OF External Experts
	<p>The Assessors have been asked by IT Tralee to review a proposed <i>ab initio</i> 4 year Level 8 programme leading to the award of BSc (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering. The proposal incorporates exit awards at Level 6 (120 ECTS credits) and at Level 7 (180 ECTS credits).</p> <p>IT Tralee currently offers a Level 7 programme leading to the award of Bachelor of Engineering in Agricultural Engineering, with an exit award at Level 6. The Institute will continue to offer the Level 7 entry point. The Institute also offers an add-on Level 8 programme leading to the award of BSc (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering, and this programme will wither in time. Students who enter through the level 7 route will be eligible to enter year 4 (award stage) of the <i>ab initio</i> BSc (Hons) programme having achieved an average of 50% in their Level 7 award. This is commented on later in this report.</p> <p>The proposal for the new programme is driven by the belief that an increasing number of students are opting for direct entry to level 8 programmes and that by not offering that option, the Institute is missing out on a cohort of higher calibre students. While the documentation did not include an analysis of CAO data trends to back this up, nevertheless the assessors agree that this is a reasonable basis for the proposal. This is particularly so in that there is no additional resource requirement to deliver the programme.</p> <p>The entry requirements for the proposed programme are appropriate to a standard <i>ab initio</i> honours degree programme and in line with agreed norms. However, in the case of entry to an honours degree programme in an engineering discipline, the Institute might consider reviewing the mathematics requirement, currently set at OD3, in light of the relatively high mathematics content in the programme. It may be that prospective Level 8 entry students will be put off by a low mathematics entry requirement.</p> <p>The proposed programme is essentially a merger of the existing validated Level 7 and add-on Level 8 programmes to create an <i>ab initio</i> Level 8 programme. The modules delivered on the merged Level 8 programme are the same as those on the constituent Level 7 and add-on Level 8 programmes. It is proposed that the exit awards will carry across from the existing validated constituent programmes.</p> <p>In the event that the department opts to have shared delivery of modules for students who enter on both the Level 7 and Level 8 routes, the stated requirement for students who enter through the Level 7 route to achieve an average of 50% in their award to progress to year 4 may be anomalous. Their classmates who enter through the level 8 route will presumably be able to progress with a 40% average while both cohorts will have been taught</p>

and assessed on precisely the same curriculum. The assessors recommend that the Institute should consider this issue.


Having examined the submission, the assessors find the following:

- **Standards:** The minimum intended programme learning outcomes are consistent with the relevant awards standards and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award-type descriptors.
- **Access standard:** The prerequisite learning for participation in the programme and any other assumptions relating to the programme's target learners are explicit.
- **Learning:** The programme will enable its target learners to attain the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of learner effort).

We are satisfied therefore to recommend approval of the programme as follows:

The programme leading to the award of BSc (Hons) in Agricultural Engineering, with exit awards as follows:

1. Higher Certificate in Engineering (Level 6, 120 ECTS credits)
2. Bachelor of Engineering in Agricultural Engineering (Level 7, 180 ECTS credits)

Section 2	CONDITIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
Section 2.1:	<p>For the attention of the Academic Council</p> <p>The Assessors recommend that proposed Amendment/Restructuring of programme: -</p> <p>Be approved without modification <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Be approved subject to the conditions outlined below <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not approved and requires resubmission with significant modifications outlined below <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not approved for the reasons outlined below <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Section 2.2	<u>Conditions</u>
Section 2.3	<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the event of shared delivery of modules on the first three years of the programme with the level 7 entry cohort, the Institute should review the proposed requirement that students who enter through this route must achieve an average of 50% in their award to progress to the award stage of the new programme. 2. The Institute might review the mathematics entry requirement for the programme.
Section 2.4	Reasons for Rejection (if appropriate)
<p>Signed Chairman: </p> <p>Signed Secretary:</p> <p>Date: 27 May 2015</p> <p>Date:</p>	