



Griffith College

Coláiste Uí Gríofa

Faculty of Journalism and Media Communication

Master of Arts in Journalism and Public Relations

With embedded

Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism and Public Relations

Master of Arts in TV and Radio Journalism

With embedded

Postgraduate Diploma TV and Radio Journalism

Report of Expert Panel

May 2013

Part 1 General Information

1.1 Details of the Validation Event

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|----------------------------|--|
| Provider | Griffith College Dublin |
| Date of Evaluation | 29 th May 2013 |
| Programme Evaluated | Master of Arts in Journalism and Public Relations Master of Arts in TV and Radio Journalism |

Panel of Experts

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Dr Joe Ryan | Registrar Athlone Institute of Technology |
| Professor Farrel Corcoran | Dublin City University |
| Ms Jean O Halloran | Institute of Technology Tallaght |
| Mr Shane Harrison | BBC NI Dublin Correspondent |
| Ms Joan Pierce | Public Relations Practitioner |
| Ms Jill Mulhern | Rapporteur, Griffith College |

1.2 Summary

The Expert Panel, having reviewed the documentation presented by Griffith College Dublin (GCD) and considered the responses of the programme team during the course of the evaluation meeting, are recommending approval to QQI of the proposed Master of Science in Journalism in Public Relations and the Master of Science in TV and Radio Journalism subject to the conditions outlined in this report. The Panel has also made a number of recommendations which it suggests that the Programme Team should consider in relation to the programme.

The attached report addresses issues raised by the Panel in the context of the review.

Part 2 Report of the Expert Panel

2.1 Introduction

Griffith College (GC) is an independent provider of higher education and professional training. Its academic programmes are validated by QQI / HETAC and Nottingham Trent University. It also provides a range of programmes leading to the examinations of professional bodies, including those in Accountancy and in Law. The College has campuses in Dublin, Limerick and Cork. Griffith College has been providing programmes in a number of faculties since the late 1990s and currently provides programmes from Level 6 to Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

2.2 Background to the Programme Submission

The Faculty of Journalism and Media Communication has brought forward the proposals for two related Masters programmes at level 9 on the NFQ. This proposal has been discussed within the faculty and approved for submission by the College's Academic and Professional Council (APC).

2.3 Examination of the Programme

Having received documentation prior to the panel visit to GC, the Panel met with the staff of GC involved in the design of the proposed programmes to examine the submission against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated by the Council. The visit took place on Wednesday 29th May.

A number of meetings took place during the visit. The first was with the Senior Management of the College, and the Faculty, and then with the broader programme team. The following outlines those discussions, not chronologically, but under the headings from HETAC's Core Validation Policy and Criteria, initially under the three broad headings as outlined in section 3.1 and then under the elaborated criteria as outlined in section 3.2.

2.3.1 Standards

There was a lot of discussion on Learning Outcomes. There is some duplication in the documentation of learning outcomes across modules and some of the language used does not seem to be appropriate at level 9. The panel suggested engaging with the Centre for Promoting Academic Excellence (CPAE) to address this.

The question of differentiating the Postgraduate Diploma for the Master of Arts award was discussed. The panel felt that they need to be differentiated in terms of learning outcomes in a clearer manner.

2.3.2 Access Standard

Both from the documentation and the discussion with the programme team, the panel were satisfied that the entry requirements as detailed in the documentation are explicit and meet the criteria under this heading.

2.3.3 Learning

The panel expressed some concern as to the linkages between learning outcomes, teaching and assessment in the documentation. They suggested that these should be reviewed.

2.4 Elaborated Programme Validation Criteria

2.4.1 Development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes

As stated above the panel discussed the programme and module learning outcomes with the proposers. The panel raised some concerns about the taxonomy of the learning outcomes which they felt in some cases did not reflect the award standards for a level 9 award.

The panel also raised the issue of explicit programme learning outcomes for the proposed postgraduate diploma. There was a feeling that they needed to be made more distinct than simply a subset of the learning outcomes for the Masters programme. As an award in its own right it need explicit learning outcomes.

The prerequisite learning, as expressed in the entry requirements, of a level 8 degree, and the English language requirement for international students was addressed. The panel noted the recommendation on this from the recent programmatic review panel. The College estimated that approximately 40% of students across all programmes are international. Numbers in Journalism are similar, but smaller in the postgraduate programmes.

2.4.2 Careful Attention to curriculum and programme design and content

2.4.2.1 The programme's content and learning environment must be appropriate to the programme's intended learning environment.

The panel engaged positively with the staff from the team and are satisfied that the staff are competent to deliver a programme at this level on the NFQ. Staff told the panel of their experience of taking the Special Purpose Award in Training and Education which is delivered by the CPAE and is a College requirement for all lecturers to take. They view it as a very positive aid to their teaching.

The Faculty has 11 full time and 25 part time staff, with many staff either engaged in research or professionally in industry. This balance between academia and professional experience was seen by the panel as very strong.

The link between this programme and the existing MA was discussed and the team explained that there are some modules shared. Resources, both human and physical, required to deliver the programmes were discussed and the panel were assured that a combination of existing resources and the planned resources would be adequate for the delivery. The College is currently building a new TV studio.

The question of running the programmes at other campuses was discussed. The faculty outlined the programmes that already run in Cork. The programmatic review panel recently visited Cork and have recommended that it is suitable for running Journalism programmes.

The management of the dissertation supervising process over the summer and how this would be resourced was an issue the panel were concerned about. The panel felt that the process would require a lot of planning and the allocation of work amongst staff during the summer and the communication with students as to who is available and when would need to be set out very clearly.

Availability of technical equipment and software is a requirement for these programmes. The faculty team are satisfied that the resources needed are in place and will be upgraded as required.

The question of including a work placement element was discussed and the team outlined their thinking relating to this. The programmes already have a strong practical focus. They are not proposing such an element at this time.

Media Law and Ethics were then discussed as essential elements in the discipline. The panel suggested that the content was strong but that this was not always reflected in the learning outcomes.

The research methods module was seen by the panel as very important but very content heavy for the amount of time. At level 9 this module is core and one suggestion was to look at it in conjunction with the Sociology module in order to focus more clearly on some of the topics.

One issue was the focus on a number of research methodologies and the panel suggested that limiting them to two or three might be sufficient.

There was also a discussion on the issue of News Values as a comparative topic and where it could be addressed.

Access for students with disabilities was raised as it doesn't appear in the documentation. The team stated that supports for such learners are dealt with on a College wide basis according to set out QA procedures and policies.

The College has experience of dealing with various special needs across all programmes and faculties.

The panel asked how the international student cohort cope on the existing programme, and particularly how the English language requirements are dealt with. The College pointed out that there are students from 80 nationalities currently on programmes across the College, that there is a strategic focus on the international market and that the aim is to have as wide a mix of nationalities as possible.

2.4.2.2 The programme should involve authentic learning opportunities to enable the achievement of the learning outcomes

The use of Newsdays by the faculty was seen as a very positive aspect of all programmes. These involve both writing and presentation. This led on to a discussion of group work and the challenges in addressing this. The faculty have a lot of experience across programmes and have not had problems to date.

The panel then asked about the workload for students. The team explained that the students are expected to work through a calendar year, with the dissertation being taken over the summer months. The programme director provides support workshops during the summer months.

The panel felt that the assessment strategies outlined in the documentation are both clear and appropriate. One issue raised by the panel was the apparent lack of a requirement for the dissertation to be focussed on the specialised area of programme title. The team felt that in most cases such a focus would happen but that it was not set out as a requirement.

There was a general discussion on the differentiation between the programmes and the graduates they would produce, with particular reference to the industry and how they might be viewed. The team argued that the differentiation was planned with input from people in the industry. Some of the team are professionals and spoke of seeking to hire graduates with the skills developed on these programmes.

2.4.2.3 The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression should be consistent with national policies.

The programmes as presented do not indicate that the award leads to any such entitlement.

The panel are of the view that the ECTS credits are consistent and appropriate. The College QA policy on RPL, which was agreed with HETAC, will apply to students on this programme as it does to all students in the College.

2.4.2.4 The programme should meet genuine education and training needs

The faculty have just completed a programmatic review and engaged in industry and learner surveys. They explained that these programmes have been under discussion for some time and they were satisfied that the changing nature of the industry has meant that these skills in Public Relations and in TV and Radio journalism were needed. The panel were satisfied that no issues in relation to this criteria needed to be raised.

2.4.2.5 The programme should be viable

Minimum and maximum intakes were discussed. The team stated that the max would be 10 to 15 per programme would be the maximum that they could manage, but this is a resource issue. Also the viability of the programmes was raised. The Faculty believe that they will be popular and viable.

The panel asked about the faculty growth and plans for the future. The development of specialised programmes and cross-faculty programmes has been part of the development. The question of three separate MAs, as against having streams was discussed. The team stated that they wanted to validate the programmes in their own right.

2.4.2.6 Programme Assessment strategy and module assessment strategies consistent with Assessment and Standards.

The panel expressed concern that the documentation has some inconsistency between learning and assessment outcomes not matching up. The panel suggested that the team should review these and engage with the Centre for Promoting Academic Excellence in relation to it.

2.4.2.7 Arrangements for learner protection

The College management team informed the panel of bonding arrangements they have with other providers which cover learner protection for all students of the College.

2.4.2.8 Appropriate Quality Assurance arrangement

The programme will be run under the Quality Assurance arrangements that have been agreed with HETAC and the panel are satisfied that these are comprehensive.

2.4 RECOMMENDATION / COMMENT

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

2.4.1 Major Award

The panel of experts recommend the validation of the following programmes:

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| NFQ Level | <i>Level 9</i> |
| Programme | <i>Master of Arts in Journalism and Public Relations</i> |
| ECTS | <i>90 ECTS</i> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| NFQ Level | <i>Level 9</i> |
| Programme | <i>Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism and Public Relations</i> |
| ECTS | <i>60 ECTS</i> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| NFQ Level | <i>Level 9</i> |
| Programme | <i>Master of Arts in TV and Radio Journalism</i> |
| ECTS | <i>90 ECTS</i> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| NFQ Level | <i>Level 9</i> |
| Programme | <i>Postgraduate Diploma in TV and Radio Journalism</i> |
| ECTS | <i>60 ECTS</i> |

2.4.2 Conditions

The panel is recommending that QQI validate the proposed programmes subject to the following conditions.

1. The Faculty need to revise the alignment of Teaching and Learning, Assessment and learning outcomes both at programme level and module level.
2. The Faculty need to review the taxonomy of all learning outcomes at programme and module level to ensure they are appropriate for level 9 learning outcomes.
3. The Faculty need to document clearly how they will manage the Dissertation mentoring through the summer months
4. The Faculty need to clearly articulate distinct learning outcomes for the Postgraduate Diplomas in both documents

2.4.3 Recommendations

The panel of experts also made the following recommendations:

1. The panel recognise recommendation 10 of the recent programmatic review relating to the IELTS requirement for international students.
2. The team should review the section of the documentation relating to demand for the programme, with reference to reports of bodies such as Forfas
3. The team should consider including an interview as part of the application process to ensure they have some background knowledge in the particular disciplines
4. The team should consider the mix of topics between the Research Methods module in conjunction with the Sociology of the Media module with a view to strengthening the student understanding of the need for research.
5. The Faculty should consider adding a section to the Critical Self-Evaluation Report outlining the process used in its production.
6. The team should consider making it a requirement that student dissertations are focussed on the area of the specialisation in each programme.
7. There are some inconsistencies in contact hours between module descriptors and programme schedules that should be corrected.

Appendix 1

College Staff met during the evaluation meeting

Mr Diarmuid Hegarty, President Griffith College
Mr Tomás Mac Eochagáin, Director of Academic Programmes
Mr Eamonn Nolan, Head of Academic Programmes
Ms Ailish Finucane, Head of Academic Administration
Mr Rob McKenna, College Librarian

Mr Niall Meehan, Head of Faculty of Journalism and Media Communication
Mr Robbie Smyth, Deputy Head of Faculty
Dr Jane Carrigan, Programme Director
Ms Ann Marie O Donoghue, Programme Director Griffith College Cork
Mr Ronan Brady, Lecturer
Ms Siobhan Gaffney, Lecturer
Mr John O Donavan, Lecturer
Ms Catherine Heaney, Lecturer
Mr Alan Gill, Lecturer
Mr Stephan O Leary, Lecturer
Mr Kevin McDermott, Lecturer
Dr Maurice Coakley, Lecturer
Mr Liam Grant, Lecturer
Ms Alice Childs, Lecturer
Ms Tanya Doyle, Lecturer
Ms Deirdre Kerins, Lecturer

Proposed Programme Schedule

Annex 5 Proposed Programme Schedule

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|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Name of Provider | | | Griffith College | | | | | | | | | |
| Programme Title | | | Master of Arts in Journalism and Public Relations | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Title | | | Master of Arts | | | | | | | | | |
| Stage Exit Award Title | | | Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism and Public Relations | | | | | | | | | |
| Modes of Delivery: | | | FT / PT / ACCS / Blended | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Class | Award NFQ level | Award EQF level | Stage | Stage NFQ Level | Stage EQF Level | Stage Credits | Date Effective | ISCED Subject Code | | | | |
| Major | 9 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 90 | Sept 2013 | 32 | | | | |
| Module Title | | Semester | Module | | ECTS Credits | Total Learner Effort Module (hours) | | | Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) | | | |
| | | | Status | NFQ Level | | Total Hours | Contact Hours | Hours Independent Work | C.A. % | Proj. % | Prac. % | Final Exam. % |
| 1. Media Law and Ethics | | 1 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 40 | | | 60 |
| 2. Research Methods | | 1 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 100 | | | |
| 3. Sociology of the Media | | 1 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 100 | | | |

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| 4. Writing and Reporting | 1 | M | 9 | 15 | 300 | 108 | 192 | 100 | | | |
| 5. Communication & Audience Theories | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 40 | 60 | | |
| 6. Political Communication | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 48 | 62 | 100 | | | |
| 7. Public Relations Theory & Practice | 2 | M | 9 | 10 | 240 | 70 | 170 | 100 | | | |
| 8. Online Media | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 50 | 50 | | |
| 9. Corporate Public Relations | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 60 | 60 | 100 | | | |
| 10. Dissertation | 3 | M | 9 | 30 | 600 | 72 | 528 | | 100 | | |

Special Condition: Where any module on the programme schedule has more than one assessment element, to successfully complete the module, learners must achieved a weighted average of 40% or greater, and at least 35% in each of the assessment elements. This applies to all modules at all stages of the programme.

Special Condition: Learners who successfully complete the taught modules, may graduate with a postgraduate diploma in Journalism and Public Relations

| Name of Provider | | | Griffith College | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Programme Title | | | Master of Arts in TV and Radio Journalism | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Title | | | Master of Arts | | | | | | | | | |
| Stage Exit Award Title | | | Postgraduate Diploma in TV and Radio Journalism | | | | | | | | | |
| Modes of Delivery: | | | FT / PT / ACCS / Blended | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Class | Award NFQ level | Award EQF level | Stage | Stage NFQ Level | Stage EQF Level | Stage Credits | Date Effective | ISCED Subject Code | | | | |
| Major | 9 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 90 | Sept 2013 | 32 | | | | |
| Module Title | | Semester | Module | | ECTS Credits | Total Learner Effort Module (hours) | | | Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) | | | |
| | | | Status | NFQ Level | | Total Hours | Contact Hours | Hours Independent Work | C.A. % | Proj. % | Prac. % | Final Exam. % |
| 1. Media Law and Ethics | | 1 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 40 | | | 60 |
| 2. Research Methods | | 1 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 100 | | | |
| 3. Sociology of the Media | | 1 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 100 | | | |
| 4. Writing and Reporting | | 1 | M | 9 | 15 | 300 | 108 | 192 | 100 | | | |
| 5. Communications & | | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 40 | 60 | | |

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|--|---------|---|---|----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| Audience Theories | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Radio and TV News and Current Affairs | 2 | M | 9 | 10 | 240 | 72 | 168 | 100 | | | |
| 7. Video Journalism | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 48 | 72 | | 100 | | |
| 8. Digital Journalism | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | 100 | | | |
| 9. Radio Documentary Research and Production | 2 | M | 9 | 5 | 120 | 36 | 84 | | 100 | | |
| 10. Dissertation | 2 and 3 | M | 9 | 30 | 600 | 72 | 528 | | 100 | | |