

PAEC/A1/4.2.1.2

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann Quality and Qualifications Ireland	
EXPERT PANEL REPORT	
PART 1	GENERAL INFORMATION
Provider	Irish Prison Service College (IPS)
Location	Portlaoise, Co. Laois
Visit Date	22 May 2013
Programme(s) Evaluated	Diploma in Applied Prison Management and Leadership
Programme(s) Recommended for Approval	Diploma in Applied Prison Management and Leadership
Panel of Experts	
Mr. Danny Brennan	Former Registrar of Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Quality Assurance expert and Bologna expert
Dr. Michael Tobin	Head of Department of Lifelong Learning, Athlone Institute of Technology
Commandant Sean Holly	Officer in Charge of NCO Training, Irish Army
Professor Shane Kilcommins	Lecturer in Law, University College Cork Director of the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development
Ms Roisin Sweeney	Manager, Programme Accreditation Unit, QQI
SUMMARY	
<p>The Expert Panel, having reviewed the documentation presented by IPS College and considered the responses of the programme team during the course of the site visit, recommend the approval of the programme Diploma in Applied Prison Management and Leadership (120 ECTS) subject to the conditions and recommendations outlined in section 3.</p>	
PART 2	FINDINGS OF PANEL OF EXPERTS
2.1 Introduction	
<p>The Irish Prison Service (IPS) operates as an executive agency within the Department of Justice and Equality. It is headed by a Director General supported by 6 Directors. The Irish Prison Service College – formerly the IPS Training and Development Centre – is a support unit of the Human Resources Directorate within IPS. It is charged with</p>	

training and developing all grades of IPS personnel and its programmes are confined to IPS staff.

2.2 Examination of the Programme

The panel met with management and staff of IPS College involved in the design of the programme, to examine the programme submission against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated in the *Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010*. The criteria address the requirements of the provider quality assurance arrangements and specific arrangements, and specific features of programme design.

IPS College outlined the development of the programme in the context of the IPS 3 year strategic plan published in early 2013. All recruit Prison Officers undertake the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care which has been delivered in conjunction with the Institute of Technology Sligo since 2007. The panel sought clarification of the link with IT Sligo and was advised that it is an on going relationship in the context of the Higher Certificate.

The panel sought clarification on why the programme leads to a special purpose award rather than a major award. IPS College outlined that the proposed Diploma is an applied programme targeted at IPS staff at supervisory level and higher. The College has focused on designing a programme to be delivered within the unique resources of IPS College itself. In future it may look to develop other programmes potentially leading to a Level 7 or Level 8 major award.

2.1.1 Education and Training Requirements

The panel was satisfied that the programme was consistent with the IPS corporate strategy and makes efficient use of the unique resources available to the College. The panel was also satisfied with the provider's case on the rationale for the programme to lead to a Level 7 Special Purpose award and the research undertaken, including specific sectoral consultation, before the programme was proposed to QQI. The panel welcomed the acknowledgement by IPS College to consider development of other programmes in the future in line with its corporate strategy.

2.1.2 Protection of Enrolled Learners

Validation of a programme of education and training pursuant to Section 25 of the 2012 Act, is subject to QQI being satisfied that the provider concerned has arrangements in place in accordance with QQI policy on Protection for Enrolled Learners.

2.1.3 Quality Assurance

The panel heard how the submission had been developed and approved internally as a result of the IPS College quality assurance procedures. The panel was satisfied that those procedures had been applied to the development of the proposed programme and that quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure its provision, monitoring and review.

2.1.4 Programme Title(s) and Award Title(s)

The panel requested justification of the title of the proposed programme given that the IPS is training its own managers. IPS College advised that as well as management, IPS is training learners to show and practice leadership in the Service. Many of the participants will already have some management skills and these will be further developed.

Following discussion, the panel was satisfied that the title of the programme is clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. The panel was satisfied that the proposed title of the programme also encompasses the appropriate related named award title.

2.1.5 Ethics

It is expected that providers will have procedures in place to ensure that any teaching and learning or research activity at any level shall be conducted in a manner that is morally and professionally ethical.

2.1.6 Particular Aspects of Proposed Programme(s)

With regard to the following, the panel found:

Unity

The programme design is consistent with HETAC's Assessment and Standards 2009 as adopted by QQI. The programme has an underlying unifying theme and the modules are bonded by linkages which are either implicit or explicit. It was also clear how the standards of knowledge, skill and competence, determined by the Council for the named award to which the programme proposes to lead, evolve throughout the programme as a whole.

Teaching and Learning

The proposed approaches to teaching and learning were indicated and justified. IPS College has a learner centred education and training ethos including a focus on lifelong learning. The College utilises a blended learning approach. Learners will be working within the prison service thus experience work based learning as well as direct contact with tutors.

Teacher-Learner Dialogue

The modes of interaction between the teaching staff and the learners were elaborated upon satisfactorily. The blended learning approach is achieved through provision of study material online, provision of an online tutor, attendance at skills and study tutorials, completion of work based assignments and self directed learning.

The panel noted that direct contact accounts for circa 5% of total semester time and queried how learners are being directed on the expected 95% of time of self directed learning. The College advised that it had modelled this based on experience of a Criminology programme in Waterford Institute of Technology.

Standards

The programme learning outcomes were devised with reference to HETAC generic standards

The panel advised that the transferable skills should be articulated as an outcome in the programme learning outcomes.

The panel sought clarification on the workload required given that the learner cohort are working full time. IPS College acknowledged that learners will have to make a significant personal commitment to the programme. However learners have the advantage of a work based learning environment in which to apply the learning. They also have access to a virtual learning environment accessible at any time and can apply for formal study leave.

The panel indicated that such information should be articulated in the programme document.

The panel recommended that the Professional Development Practice module 1 include risk methodology and the reading list include mental health and suicide prevention readings.

The panel requested clarification on the approach to apportioning ECTS across all modules. The College advised that those modules directly related to prison management were designed at 10 ECTS whilst the behavioural modules were designed at 5 ECTS.

The panel advised the College to consider combining the Leadership and Prisoncraft modules. In relation to the module on Principles of Irish Law, the panel suggested it be renamed as 'Rule of Law' with a focus on proportionality of punishment. It was also noted that the reading list seemed dated and should be updated.

The panel recommended that the module on Equality and Diversity include specific reference to the Equality Authority and include recent reports on prisons in the reading list

In the module Prison Law the panel advised amending prisoner complaints to 'fairness procedures' to reflect both staff and prisoner procedures.

Learner Assessment

The panel sought clarification on the range of assessment techniques classified as continuous assessment in the programme submission. IPS College advised that the techniques include tactical decision games, reflective journals and simulation exercises.

The panel queried whether the work placement is delivered as a structured programme, including mentoring. The College advised that the learner shadows an officer and produces a learner portfolio and reflective journal to show the learning achieved.

It was suggested that the provider include a problem based learning scenario in the capstone assessment.

The panel advised the provider to more clearly articulate how the assessment is mapped to the programme learning outcomes and to the module learning outcomes. Whilst evident from the discussion it should be more clearly evidenced in the programme document. The panel acknowledged that the assessment methods are capable, amongst other things, of demonstrating attainment of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by QQI, for the related award.

Access, Transfer and Progression

The programme incorporates the procedures for access, transfer and progression as currently adopted by QQI. The target group of learners for this programme are IPS staff principally focusing on those at Assistant Governor level. Learners who have completed the IPS distance leadership programme may be also considered. Recognition of prior learning procedures are in place.

Staffing and Physical Resources

The panel was satisfied that the necessary staffing levels will be in place and were generally satisfied with the level of qualifications and competence of the staff concerned. Curriculum Vitae for all teaching and training staff were provided and the panel was impressed with the experience, qualifications and dedication of the IPS staff.

The panel toured the IPS College campus including the situation rooms and model prison and was impressed with the facilities and learning resources.	
PART 3	RECOMMENDATION/COMMENT
3.1 Recommendation	
<p>The panel of experts recommend the validation of the programme:</p> <p>Diploma in Applied Prison Management and Leadership for the purposes of the award of: Level 7 Diploma in Applied Prison Management and Leadership (120 ECTS)</p> <p>Subject to: QQI's general conditions of approval under Section 84 Transition and Savings Provision, 2012 Act</p>	
3.2 Conditions	
<p>The panel of experts require that IPS College should take note of the following conditions and that a satisfactory response to those conditions shall be received before the validation is considered by QQI:</p> <p>The provider is required to revise the programme document to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a section on the IPS College response to the new IPS strategic plan as it relates to the IPS College education and training plan b) a revision of programme learning outcomes to include transferable skills c) a review of the module credit weightings as presented with a view to combining some and more accurately reflect the coherence of the programme d) map assessment to programme learning outcomes and to module learning outcomes e) identify the maximum direct contact hours intended for modules and increase the contact time to more accurately reflect higher education norms 	
3.3 Recommendations	
<p>The provider is advised to consider the following recommendations in relation to the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Clarify the weekly workload per module so that the total working effort is consistent b) Show the breakdown on Table 3.3, p21, Volume2 and how it maps to end of the modules c) Assessment: include in the programme document the actual assessment (s) to be used in each module to include the breakdown e.g. reflective journal = X%, tactical game = Y%, capstone = Z% d) Clarify and identify whether a particular assessment must be passed in order to achieve that particular module 	

- e) Weight each assessment
- f) Work placement must be included as a form of assessment
- g) Investigate using appropriate external specialists/guest lecturers to supplement the learning and allow for this to be included in assessment for example through the reflective journal
- h) Develop a timeline per module indicating the schedule for contact time versus assessment, this will assist staff and learners

Appendix 1: IPS College Staff	
Mr John McGuckin	Governor
Mr Des O Shea	Assistant Governor
Mr Richie Roche	Assistant Governor
Mr Ray O Keeffe	Chief Officer (Registrar IPSC)
Ms Elizabeth Donovan	Assistant Chief Officer
Dr Tony White	Chair Interim Academic Council

1.