

Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	Carlow College, St. Patrick's
Programme(s) Reviewed	Principal Programme: BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Dr. Niall Keane	Chairperson / Subject Matter Expert (Philosophy)	University of the West of England (UWE) Bristol
Matthew Hurley	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Prof. Moynagh Sullivan	Subject Matter Expert (English)	Maynooth University
Dr. Keira Flanagan	Subject Matter Expert (Psychology)	South East Technological University
Prof. Liam Tracey	Subject Matter Expert (Theology)	St. Patrick's Pontifical University
Prof. Jennifer Redmond	Subject Matter Expert (History)	Maynooth University
Dr. Theresa O'Keefe	Subject Matter Expert (Politics & Society)	University College Cork
Ciaran Conroy	Employer Representative	Kilkenny Civic Trust
Susie Gaynor	Learner Representative	Maynooth University

All members of the independent panel declared their independence of Carlow College, St. Patrick's and that they have no conflict of interest

Part 1. Introduction

In accordance with QQI's requirements, an Independent Evaluation Panel convened on 01 March 2024 to conduct an evaluation of Carlow College's BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities programme, which is delivered primarily full-time and via a face-to-face mode of delivery.

This report articulates the Panel's findings with regard to the programme review process and the revised programme, and concludes with a number of conditions and recommendations.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Dataset	Datasets for Section 3 of the Programme Review Report
2.	Descriptor	Programme Descriptor
3.	Report	Programme Review Report
4.	Descriptor	Module Descriptors
5.	Report	Monitoring Reports
6.	Assessment Instruments	Exam Papers
7.	QA Procedures	Programme Specific Quality Assurance Procedures
8.	Report	External Examiner Reports
9.	Handbook	Student Handbook

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Dr Anthony Barron	Lecturer
2.	Dr Elaine Callinan	Lecturer
3.	Dr Dylan Colbert	Lecturer
4.	Dr Candice Condon	Design Team
5.	Dr Derek Coyle	Design Team
6.	Michelle Daly	Design Team
7.	Dr Elizabeth Dawson	Lecturer
8.	Karen Delaney	Admissions
9.	Dr Eric Derr	Vice President/ Head of QA & International Programmes
10.	Dr Regina Donlon	Lecturer
11.	Dr Mel Farrell	Lecturer
12.	Dr Amelia Fleming	Lecturer / LTA Rep
13.	Stephanie Hanlon	Design Team
14.	Dr James Heaney	Lecturer
15.	Sabrina Hurley	Admissions
16.	Dr Noel Kavanagh	Lecturer
17.	Dr Ida Milne	Design Team
18.	Dr Margaret Murphy	Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs
19.	Dr Sarah Otten	Programme Director / Design Team Chair
20.	Michael Sherman	Design Team
21.	Dr Eoghan Smith	Academic & Research Development Programme Manager

22.	Helen Whelan	Administrator – Office of the Registrar
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2.3 Description of evaluation process

Following a desk review of the programme documentation, the Panel convened virtually for a site visit on 01 March 2024. This site visit afforded the Panel an opportunity to speak with provider representatives at an institution level, programme level and module level. A number of learners were also available to speak with the Panel which provided some valuable additional insight.

The Panel discussed the breadth and depth of the programme and its modules to understand how the programme had performed over its last validation period (including the pandemic period), and how feedback collected over that time informed a range of proposed modifications. The Panel appreciated the open and honest manner in which Carlow College staff engaged in these discussions, which allowed for more constructive dialogue.

The Panel agreed on the overall strength of the programme and that the proposed revisions were appropriate to the programme moving forward. Notwithstanding this, a number of special conditions of validation were identified at the conclusion of the virtual site visit, as a means of further refining what is already an otherwise well-development programme.

The Panel is therefore pleased to make a recommendation to QQI that the programme is satisfactory subject to these three proposed special conditions of validation. These conditions are complemented by a set of eight recommendations which the Panel have noted as a matter of ongoing enhancement.

Part 3. Panel Findings on Provider Programme Review Report

The following is the panel's commentary and recommendations on the provider's programme review report. It follows the section structure of the report in headings and in sequence.

References to specific parts of the provider report will use the relevant report reference e.g. 2.2.4 Programme Management

Section A. Context and Terms of Reference for the Programme Review

Commentary:

The Panel has been asked to evaluate Carlow College's programme review process for the BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities and evaluate the revised programme, including any modifications made following the review process, against QQI's validation criteria.

The programme under evaluation is the 180-credit BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities which is primarily intended for full-time delivery via a face-to-face mode of delivery. Notably, the programme's structure has been reduced from four years to three years in duration, a change which has had a number of implications on the revised programme. These changes were also subject to evaluation by the Panel.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the context and terms of reference for the programme review and has no specific recommendations to make.

Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Carlow College, St. Patrick's is one of Ireland's oldest third-level institutions, having been in operation since 1782. The College campus is situated on a 20-acre site in Carlow Town and is a private college with charitable status. As a degree programme, the BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities is positioned within the College's Department of Humanities, which is overseen by the Office of the Registrar.

As per the Programme Descriptor, the programme "aims to produce critically-aware graduates with a comprehensive knowledge of different Arts and Humanities disciplines, and of their contribution to contemporary concerns relating to environmental sustainability, social justice, and EDI" (3.1, p. 31).

The programme review process triggered a number of high-level changes to the programme's structure, including the aforementioned change in duration, but also a move to a two-subject pathway as opposed to the free choice of modules that existed previously. The intention behind this was to align the programme to sectoral norms, with the two-subject pathway structure being common among Arts degree programmes in other universities.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the provider information and programme context and has no specific recommendations to make.

Section C. Baseline qualitative and quantitative information

Programme Data Overview

This section will include the panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Applications, Enrolment, Attrition Transfer and Progression, Award Classification and Graduate Destinations

Commentary:

Carlow College has seen an increase of more than double in the number of applications received for the programme over the last validation period (post-2018), ranging from a low of 112 in 2018/19 to a high of 226 in 2021/22, averaging out at 192 applicants per year.

This has converted to an average enrolment of 35 learners per year since 2018, with a low of 14 in 2018/19 and a high of 52 in 2020/21. The vast majority of learners are Irish and reside in Carlow or the surrounding counties, with over 80% being between the ages of 17 and 22. Female learners account for the majority of enrolments at 62% in the 2018-2022 period.

Across the four stages of the programme's last iteration, Stage 3 had the highest recorded rates of attrition, which peaked in 2020/21 at 31%. However, this can be attributed to the lower intake numbers that year (13), from which 4 ultimately left the programme. In contrast, a Stage 1 cohort of 51 learners in the same year lost 8 learners but had an attrition rate of only 15%.

In analysing grade and award classifications, Carlow College notes that it has been challenging to identify a pattern among the data. However, some notable figures highlight that learners graduating with 2.1 degrees in 2019 were higher than the national average, while those graduate with a first-class honours were lower. External Examiner reports have not indicated any specific issue in grading, however.

Recommendations:

While the Panel has no recommendations to make which are specific to Carlow College's review of its programme data, some of the conditions and recommendations which have been identified in the independent evaluation report may nonetheless be of relevance.

Programme Delivery and Teaching & Learning Strategies

This section will include the panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Physical Facilities and Resources, Timetabling, Learner Workload, Attendance, Teacher Learner Ratios, Community of Practice Learning, Teaching and Learning Strategies, Learning Outcomes achieved, Assessment Strategies.

Commentary:

Carlow College has conducted routine checks on the adequacy of its physical facilities and resources, which have overall been deemed satisfactory by both learners and staff. Feedback received over the last validation period has also highlighted marked changes to the learning environment following the move to online programme delivery due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in a greater reliance on the virtual learning environment, the use of which has continued despite the return to face to face delivery.

The first academic year of the programme's last validation period (2018/19) introduced semesterisation and, consequently, new assessment schedules. Subsequent to this change, feedback collected by Carlow College indicated that staff wished to make changes to the assessment structure "to help with the balance of workload" (Programme Review Report, 3.2.3.2, p. 47). Some of these have already been implemented, including the "consolidation of smaller assessments to reduce overall programme assessment" and to "Re-examine assessment/exam schedule, particularly in Semester 2 where there are a number of long essays/assessments due at the end of term" (Programme Review Report, 3.2.3.3, p. 49).

Of all learners, Stage 1 learners were identified by Carlow College to have the highest rates of attrition, highlighting the particular importance of "Academic Advisors, LIRO, counselling services, tutorials, and efficient and positive feedback on learner work" (Programme Review Report, 3.2.4.3, p. 53) as means of pre-empting poor attendance rates and dropouts. Carlow College has also considered additional methods, such as "floating submission deadlines" (Programme Review Report, 3.2.4.3, p. 53) as a way of reducing learner burden and increasing retention rates.

One of the most notable changes to the teaching and learning over the last validation period was the increased reliance on the virtual learning environment, a shift which also had implications in terms of strategic variances around teaching, learning and assessment. For assessment specifically, formative assessment is incorporated in all modules and the use of continuous assessment in modules was, on average, largely favoured over written exams across all stages. The Programme Review Report further notes the variety of assessment types, such as learning logs, portfolios, journals, group work, presentations, reviews, cognitive assessments, and assessment through the VLE. While assessment variety is a noted result of these changes, the provider's report highlights that learners consistently reported feeling over assessed. This informed the decision to restructure assessment (as previously noted) to consolidate smaller assessments.

Recommendations:

While the Panel has no recommendations to make which are specific to Carlow College's review of its programme delivery and teaching and learning strategies, some conditions and recommendations have been identified relating to the revised curriculum which are detailed under Criterion 5 of the independent evaluation report.

Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

Feedback collected from learners has indicated an overall strong level of satisfaction with the programme and Carlow College. The College utilises several different methods to collect learner views on the programme, including the use of surveys, LIRO reports and via the class representative. Over the last validation period, learners expressed satisfaction with the variety of modules and accessibility of lectures, but voiced concerns in relation to over assessment. Carlow College has since responded to this by restructuring its assessments but also noted a suggestion that the College should consider teaching placement for modules other than Catechetics, such as History and English.

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this criterion.

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

A notably tumultuous validation period has led to significant variance in staff feedback about the programme. Some of the responses received during this time including challenges with learner engagement and the need for teachers to upskill in relation to technology and teaching in an online framework. However, Carlow College also noted that identifying consistent themes year-on-year has proved difficult, due to the changes the programme has seen in such a short timeframe. Fundamentally, the report recognises the need to continuously communicate and engage with staff.

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this criterion.

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

Feedback from External Examiners has been overall positive according to the Programme Review Report with learner achievement rates consistent with institutional averages. The Programme Review Report notes that commendations were made regarding the variety of assessment types and the maintenance of standards during the move to online teaching and assessment. However, the subject of over assessment was highlighted which the College hopes to have addressed through its consolidation of smaller assessments.

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this criterion.

Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

Carlow College has established and documented processes in place to address learner complaints and appeals if and when they arise. Over the last validation period, the College recorded no complaints for the programme and two formal assessment appeals, both of which occurred in the same academic year, one of which was successful.

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this criterion.

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The Panel is satisfied that Carlow College has appropriate quality assurance processes in place to support the effective provision of the programme. Since its QA procedures were approved by QQI in 2019, Carlow College has submitted an Annual Quality report (AQR) which provides evidence of the implementation and enhancement of the quality assurance system.

Carlow College operates a range of mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of provision, including Programme Boards, learner feedback, external examiner reports, and through the Learner Information and Retention Officer (LIRO).

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this criterion.

Additional Quality Assurance Systems and Processes required (e.g. online delivery / assessment)

Commentary:

Carlow College has documented quality assurance procedures to support the implementation of the work placement elements of the programme. Learners receive a handbook outlining the aims of the placement, the learning outcomes and information about what is involved in, and what to expect from, the placement.

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this criterion.

Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

The range of available modules and the ability for learners "to craft their own degree according to their interests" were highlighted as evident strengths of the programme, in addition to the smaller, more intimate nature of the programme.

The four-year duration of the programme had been identified as a weakness given the provision of three-year versions of the programme in other institutions. This, however, has been addressed in the revised programme, which has been reduced to three years.

The College has identified the potential to expand its programme offerings outside of the full-time delivery model, including part-time, evening, weekend, and online. Further, The College is looking to expand its cohort of international learners while potentially making modules more generic so as to align with overseas equivalents.

The risks posed by the cost of living crisis on learners' ability to continue participating on the programme were noted. Coupled with increased levels of anxiety among learners since the Covid-19 pandemic, an issue which has resulted in some deferrals and fails, the College expressed concern that if learner numbers drop significantly, this may impact on the programme's viability; as such, it is an area under active monitoring for which mitigating measures are being gradually introduced.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied that Carlow College has conducted a genuine self-evaluation and review of the programme and, accordingly, identified a set of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which are valuable insights to have as provision and delivery of the programme moves forward.

Section G. Revision of the programme

In this section the panel will respond to any proposals made by the provider in respect of changes to the programme arising from the review. The revised programme's readiness for validation will be reported on in more detail in the Independent Evaluation Report for Validation.

Commentary:

The following programme revisions have been proposed:

1. Minor modifications have been made to programme learning outcomes 5 and 8.
2. The duration of the programme has been reduced from four years to three years.
3. Some new modules have been added (e.g., The Irish Experience: themes in Irish History, Culture, Society; The Atlantic World in the Early Modern Period, 1472-1770), some modules have been merged, and some modules have been removed entirely (e.g., Re-Imagining Ireland, 1500-1700; Contemporary Irish Writing; Media and Communications; World War One: The Fall of Empires; Catechetics and Teaching Placement 1: Primary; Media Studies: Film 1).

4. Some module titles have been amended (e.g., Modernism and Modernity has been retitled as Reading and Modern Poetry; Ireland: Politics and Society, 1923-1980 has been retitled as Building the National Ireland: 1920s- 000s).
5. Module content has been updated.
6. Changes have been made to the teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

Recommendations:

The Panel is overall satisfied that the proposed revisions to the programme are appropriate. Notwithstanding this, the Panel has identified a number of recommendations regarding module content which Carlow College may wish to incorporate in further reviews of the programme.

Part 4. Overall Findings

In this section the panel will give its overall feedback on the conduct of the review and the findings therein. This feedback will inform future provider review processes and will also contribute to the refinement of any programmes being proposed for revalidation following this review process.

Section A. Commentary on review process:

It was evident to the Panel that Carlow College approached its programmatic review with the genuine intention to better the programme, utilising a broad range of stakeholder feedback, data from across the last validation period, and by conducting benchmarking exercises against other similar programmes and institutions.

This considered approach has ultimately resulted in a strong, robust, current and relevant programme which the Panel has confidence will prove successful among learners.

Section B. Recommendations on review process:

The Panel has not identified any conditions or recommendations specific to Carlow College's programme review process. Nonetheless, Carlow College may find some of the conditions and recommendations on the revised programme useful for future evaluations.

Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The review process has resulted in substantive changes to the programme's structure, duration and module content, among others. These changes reflect shifting perspectives on what is considered relevant, necessary, and desirable, and the Panel is satisfied that the revisions have been made based on extensive stakeholder feedback and are appropriate to the programme.

Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:

Three special conditions of validation and eight recommendations were identified by the Panel at the conclusion of the site visit and the Panel's evaluation of the programmes. These include:

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

1. Carlow College must consider how it can better and more visibly integrate the topic of intersectionality at both programme and module level, particularly to complement the College's broader work in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), to align with HEA Gender Action Implementation Plan and EC Gender Action Plan.
2. Carlow College must update and diversify its module reading lists.
3. Carlow College must ensure that learners undertaking the Psychology work placement are sufficiently informed on the structure of the placement, and are adequately supported and supervised.

Recommendations

1. The Panel recommends that Carlow College articulate how interdisciplinarity is managed and integrated at both programme and module level.
2. In view of Carlow College's intentions to grow its learner base, the Panel strongly encourages ongoing monitoring of physical and human resources, particularly in terms of:
 - Staffing
 - Staff workload;
 - Learner resources.
3. The Panel strongly advises Carlow College against cutting modules which focus more specifically on the topics of EDI, intersectionality, feminism and gender.
4. In relation to module-level content, the Panel recommends that Carlow College more visibly integrate:
 - History in Theology
 - Introduction to Sociological Theory
 - Feminist philosophy
 - Women and Gender History across modules
 - Feminist Political and Sociological approaches
 - Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality
 - Gender and Sexuality Studies
 - A gender balanced list of primary texts
5. The Panel recommends that programme design consider intersectionality and EDI at a systems level with a view to decolonising the canon and diversifying the curriculum.
6. The Panel recommends Carlow College articulate the emphasis on Pauline literature in the relevant module descriptors.
7. The Panel recommends that Carlow College invest in additional resources to support the more visible integration of EDI content (e.g. Adam Matthew Digital database)
8. The Panel recommends that Carlow College consider a pre-Degree programme to compensate for the loss of one year to the BA programme.

Signed: Neil Klein
Panel Chairperson:

Date: 24/04/2024



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Revalidation of a Programme of Education and Training

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	Carlow College, St. Patrick's
Date of site visit	01 March 2024
Date of report	28 March 2024

Section A. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities
	Award	Major
	Credit	180
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr. Niall Keane	Chairperson / Subject Matter Expert (Philosophy)	University of the West of England (UWE) Bristol
Matthew Hurley	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Prof. Moynagh Sullivan	Subject Matter Expert (English)	Maynooth University
Dr. Keira Flanagan	Subject Matter Expert (Psychology)	South East Technological University
Prof. Liam Tracey	Subject Matter Expert (Theology)	St. Patrick's Pontifical University
Prof. Jennifer Redmond	Subject Matter Expert (History)	Maynooth University
Dr. Theresa O'Keefe	Subject Matter Expert (Politics & Society)	University College Cork
Ciaran Conroy	Employer Representative	Kilkenny Civic Trust
Susie Gaynor	Learner Representative	Maynooth University

Section C. Principal Programme - BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
Carlow College, St. Patrick's	120 (full-time) 10 (other)	30 (full-time) 1 (other)

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	1 (full-time) 1 (other)
Maximum total number of learners per intake	120
Programme duration (<i>months from start to completion</i>)	3 years (full-time) 4-6 years (part-time accumulation of credits)
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:	
The Panel is satisfied with the proposed enrolment for the programme and has no specific recommendations to make.	
Target learner groups	
<p>"The revised programme is intended for learners who are interested in a broad range of disciplines, who seek to find complementarities between those disciplines, and who would like to specialise in discipline areas. The programme provides a broad introduction to English literature, History, Philosophy, Theology, Psychology, and Politics & Society, before learners select their discipline pathways at the end of first year. The programme is particularly suited to those learners who are curious about ideas, who know they want to study two of these subjects in-depth, or conversely, who may not be sure what subjects they wish to pursue. The BA (Hons) in Arts and Humanities offers a unique opportunity to apply skills and knowledge across a range of disciplines, and for learners to develop the skills and competencies to interpret, understand, critique and enjoy Arts and Humanities disciplines."</p> <p>[Extracted from Programme Descriptor, 1C.1.13, pp. 26-27]</p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time Other (Part-time accumulation of credits)
The teaching and learning modalities	
Face-to-Face	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	
<p>"This is a three-year, joint honours in Arts & Humanities programme. It contains six core subjects: Philosophy, Theology & Catechetics, English & the Creative Imagination, History, Psychology, and Politics & Society. In first year, learners must take one module in each of the six subjects. At the end of first year, learners will nominate the two subjects they wish to specialise in. In second and</p>	

third year, learners will take a mixture of core and elective modules in their two chosen subjects. They will have the option of doing a Dissertation in one of the subjects in third year, and also of taking a workplace experience module in semester two of third year.

The BA Hons in Arts & Humanities programme aims to produce critically-aware graduates with a comprehensive knowledge of different Arts and Humanities disciplines, and of their contribution to contemporary concerns relating to environmental sustainability, social justice, and EDI. Graduates of the BA (Hons) in Humanities have gone on to postgraduate study in areas such as English, History, Philosophy, Theology, Psychology, and Media. The structure of the BA (Hons) in Arts and Humanities allows learners to take any combination of the six subjects. Particularly, the combinations of English, History, Religion and Politics & Society allow learners to choose a pairing that allows them to teach these subjects at second level. Many learners who complete the programme progress to the Professional Masters in Education (PME). Along with teaching, graduates of the programme have found employment in areas such as the civil service, library and archives, politics, pastoral care, marketing and HR, management, tourism and heritage, insurance, administration and retail."

[Extracted from Programme Descriptor, 1C.1.12, p. 26]

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE
English Lecturer Level 9 or above. For specialist modules, e.g. drama or creative writing, the lecturer will need requisite experience.	2.5
History Lecturer Level 9 or above.	2.5
Philosophy Lecturer Level 9 or above.	2.5
Psychology Lecturer Level 9 or above.	2.5
Theology Lecturer Level 9 or above.	2.5
Politics & Society Lecturer Level 9 or above. For applied modules, e.g. Advocacy or Political Communication & Campaign Management, the lecturer will need requisite experience.	2.5
Writing Development Tutor A qualification at a minimum of honours degree level is essential. A qualification at Master's degree level (or equivalent) is desirable.	.16
Learning Support Tutor (Disability) A relevant qualification, minimum of honours degree level is essential. Completed training in Educational Needs Assessment, or equivalent, is essential	.33

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Lectures	1:120
Tutorials	1:20
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:	

The Panel is satisfied with the proposed programme outline and that Carlow College has a suitably qualified and experienced cohort of staff for effective management and delivery of the programme. As such, the Panel has no specific recommendations to make.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
PG23978	BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	2023
PG23979	BA in Arts and Humanities	2023

Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

The Panel would like to commend:

- a. Carlow College's open and constructive engagement with the panel during the site visit.
- b. Carlow College's implementation of UDL actions in programme design and at module level development and delivery.
- c. The quality and experience of Carlow College's staff.
- d. The quality of Carlow College's creative writing programme and its community and widening participation links to VISUAL.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable). Having examined appropriate QA / Governance procedures, comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme. (Especially relevant for move to online delivery / assessment)

Not applicable.

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

The panel should complete this section with commentary against each criterion to support the recommendation given in the 'Satisfactory?' column i.e. Yes, No, or Partially.

If 'Yes', there should be a comment citing the evidence for this finding. Likewise, there should be an explanation as to why the panel have concluded that the criterion has either not been met or only partially so.

Criterion 1. The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme

<p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.¹</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	The Panel is satisfied that Carlow College meets the prerequisites to apply for validation of the programme and is in compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

¹This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

Criterion 2. **The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought**

- a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
- b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
 - (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
- c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
- d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.
- e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
- f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
 - (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
 - (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
- g) For each programme and embedded programme
 - (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.²
 - (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
- h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
- i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.³

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	The Programme Descriptor outlines a clear sets of aims for graduates of the programme and these are complemented by defined programme and module learning outcomes (PLOs/MLOs). Carlow College utilises the Generic Higher Education and Training awards standards for an Honours Bachelor's Degree at level 8. The choice of QQI award is specified and consistent with QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (2017) and QQI's Policy for Determining Awards Standards (2014), while the programme title is accurate, appropriate and consistent with the award.

² Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

³ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

Criterion 3. **The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)**

<p>a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.⁴</p> <p>b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.</p> <p>(i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.</p> <p>(ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.</p> <p>(iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).</p> <p>(iv) There is evidence⁵ of learner demand for the programme.</p> <p>(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁶.</p> <p>(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁷</p> <p>c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.</p> <p>e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.</p>
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	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>The programme review process and subsequent modifications made to the programme evidence a positive engagement with stakeholders, so as to identify how to maintain the programme's currency and relevance, while also future-proofing the programme for the coming validation period.</p> <p>The Programme Descriptor outlines the rationale for the programme, particularly around the reduction from four years to three, and the aims and objectives of the programme as clearly specified.</p> <p>An analysis of learner data since the programme's inception has shown a steady rise in learner numbers, and this is an area under heavier monitoring from Carlow College due to the lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on learners.</p> <p>Although Carlow College had identified its four-year version of the programme as a potential weakness in view of other institutions offering</p>

⁴ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

⁵ This might be predictive or indirect.

⁶ It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

⁷ There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

		<p>similar programmes of three-years' duration, the Panel is cognisant that reducing the programme by a year has implications in terms of the loss of module time and learning opportunities. To accommodate for this, the Panel opined that the introduction of a pre-Degree programme may help compensate for the loss of the additional year, and would expose learners to foundational information, skills and competencies relevant to the full Degree programme.</p> <p>The following recommendation has been identified in respect of this:</p> <p>Recommendation 1 The Panel recommends that Carlow College consider a pre-Degree programme to compensate for the loss of one year to the BA programme.</p>
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Criterion 4. **The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory**

<p>a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied⁸.</p> <p>b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR⁹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).</p> <p>e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; (iii) Has long-lasting significance. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>Learners entering via the CAO application route must achieve a minimum of a H5 or above in two higher-level subjects, as well as a minimum of four O6s.</p> <p>Learners entering from a FET background must demonstrate attainment of a full QQI/FE award at levels 5 or 6 in a cognate discipline, with their FE grade mapping to a CAO equivalent of 243 points.</p> <p>Learners whose first language is not English must also provide evidence of English language proficiency with a minimum IELTS score of 6.5.</p> <p>The Programme Descriptor continues to outline access pathways for both mature learners and learners who might wish to have their prior learning formally recognised.</p> <p>No inward or outward transfer arrangements have been identified; however, a number of outward progression opportunities have been</p>

⁸ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider’s evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

⁹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

		noted in the Programme Descriptor leading to Master's programmes and a Professional Master of Education.
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Criterion 5. **The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose**

- a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
- b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
- c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
- d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff.
- e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹⁰.
- f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
- g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
- h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
- i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
- j) The programme **duration** (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its **fulltime equivalent contact time** (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.¹¹

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Partially	<p>On the whole, the Panel was satisfied that the revised programme, its schedule and structure had been genuinely considered and systematically documented. The Panel found module credit allocations appropriate and consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>The most significant changes to the structure and curriculum of the programme in this validation include a reduction in the duration of the programme from four years to three years, an expansion in subject offering from five to six subjects, and the decision to restructure the programme as a two-subject joint honours degree. Naturally, this has several implications on the curriculum, a matter which the Panel explored at length during the virtual site visit. Firstly, the Panel observed limitations in the integration of intersectionality at both programme and module level. Despite positive discussions with Carlow College staff regarding how intersectionality is discussed within modules and the College-level developments in this area (which the Panel was pleased to hear), the documentation did not reflect this. Similarly, module reading lists were considered inadequately diverse and in need of updating.</p> <p>In respect of this, the following special conditions of validation has been identified:</p>

¹⁰ This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

¹¹ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

		<p>Condition 1 Carlow College must consider how it can better and more visibly integrate the topic of intersectionality at both programme and module level, particularly to complement the College's broader work in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), to align with HEA Gender Action Implementation Plan and EC Gender Action Plan.</p> <p>Condition 2 Carlow College must update and diversify its module reading lists.</p> <p>The Panel discussed the concept of interdisciplinarity with College representatives, who provided examples of how this is interwoven into programme and module content. One such example was religion, conflict and peace, which may be discussed from a theological perspective but which learners will be invited to discuss and engage with to draw on differing perspectives.</p> <p>While teaching staff responded positively to this discussion, the Panel found the articulation of this within the documentation to be limited. In view of this, the following recommendation has been identified:</p> <p>Recommendation 2 The Panel recommends that Carlow College articulate how interdisciplinarity is managed and integrated at both programme and module level.</p> <p>Given the restructuring which has taken place to the programme, which has seen the four-year programme be reduced to a three-year programme, the Panel expressed some concern that this may result in the diminishment or complete removal of certain modules and topics. In view of this, should the situation arise where Carlow College finds itself removing specific content, the Panel strongly advises the College to retain modules and module content focused on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), intersectionality, feminism, and gender.</p> <p>The following recommendation has been identified in respect of this:</p> <p>Recommendation 3 The Panel strongly advises Carlow College against cutting modules which focus more specifically on the topics of EDI, intersectionality, feminism and gender.</p> <p>As the Panel reviewed and evaluated the module descriptors, some notable content gaps became apparent. This is not to say that these topics and themes are not at all addressed, but that they could be made more visible within individual modules, or even as a thread across the programme. These areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History in Theology • Introduction to Sociological Theory • Feminist philosophy • Women and Gender History across modules
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist Political and Sociological approaches • Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality • Gender and Sexuality Studies • A gender balanced list of primary texts <p>Further to this, the Panel was of the view that intersectionality and EDI should be considered at a programme design level, which would allow thematic threads to weave through the programme and better reflect the wider work being done by Carlow College around EDI.</p> <p>The following recommendations have been identified in respect of this:</p> <p>Recommendation 4 In relation to module-level content, the Panel recommends that Carlow College more visibly integrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History in Theology • Introduction to Sociological Theory • Feminist philosophy • Women and Gender History across modules • Feminist Political and Sociological approaches • Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality • Gender and Sexuality Studies • A gender balanced list of primary texts <p>Recommendation 5 The Panel recommends that programme design consider intersectionality and EDI at a systems level with a view to decolonising the canon and diversifying the curriculum.</p> <p>On evaluation of the Theology modules, the Panel found there to be little, if any, reference to Pauline literature, an absence which the Panel found peculiar given the significance of this body of work. In response, representatives from Carlow College noted that up until 2018, there was a specific module covering Pauline literature, but that this was removed following a restructuring of credit allocations. However, Pauline literature remains a topic of discussion within other modules, including Women in the Bible and Theology.</p> <p>Where it is the case that Pauline literature is indeed discussed within a module or modules, the Panel was of the view that this could be more clearly articulated within that module's descriptor, as any such references were limited at the time of the Panel's evaluation.</p> <p>The following recommendation has been identified in respect of this:</p> <p>Recommendation 6 The Panel recommends Carlow College articulate the emphasis on Pauline literature in the relevant module descriptors.</p>
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Criterion 6. **There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹² (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners’ achievements as required.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development¹³ opportunities¹⁴.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>The Panel recognises the significant expertise and qualifications of Carlow College's staff and is satisfied that the specification of the programme's staffing requirements is appropriate to the demands of the programme.</p> <p>Underpinning this, Carlow College has an established set of procedures around staff recruitment, management and development. However, as Carlow College already has appropriate staff in situ for the effective delivery of the programme, there are no noted plans to conduct further recruitment.</p>

¹² Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme’s provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

¹³ Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

¹⁴ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff’s professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

Criterion 7. There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme’s learning environments including the workplace learning environment) (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable (v) technical support (vi) administrative support (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable <p>c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planned intake (first five years) and (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>Carlow College delivers the programme from its 20-acre campus in Carlow Town. Enrolled learners are provided access to college email, productivity and collaboration tools, a virtual learning environment (VLE) (Moodle), cloud storage, workstations, and library facilities.</p> <p>The College operates a device loan scheme to enable learner access to digital tools needed for effective participation on the programme, such as the Moodle VLE.</p> <p>The Panel acknowledges Carlow College's plan to steadily grow its number of learners and recognition that such expansion can have significant resource implications. In particular, it is crucial that learner access to resources and supports is not diminished by the expansion (but rather than Carlow College would invest in additional resources and supports to maintain accessibility), and that staff are not unduly burdened with additional workloads (which may necessitate further recruitment activities).</p> <p>The following recommendation has been identified in respect of this:</p> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Recommendation 7 In view of Carlow College's intentions to grow its learner base, the Panel strongly encourages ongoing monitoring of physical and human resources, particularly in terms of:</p> </div>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Staff workload; • Learner resources. <p>On evaluation of the stated programme-specific resources, the Panel noted an absence of some prominent digital databases, including the Adam Matthew Digital database and the Routledge History of Feminism database, both of which have extensive resources on gender and intersectionality that could be of use in multiple modules. The Panel is of the view that investment in such additional resources may support the more visible integration of content related to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).</p> <p>The following recommendation has been identified in respect of this:</p> <p>Recommendation 8 The Panel recommends that Carlow College invest in additional resources to support the more visible integration of EDI content (e.g. Adam Matthew Digital database)</p>
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Criterion 8. **The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners**

<p>a) The programme’s physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme’s learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.</p> <p>c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>Carlow College identifies five different learning environments which learners experience during their time on the programme. These are consistent with the stated programme learning outcomes and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical environment, which encompasses the physical spaces in which learning takes place, both in and out of the classroom, as well as access for learners with limited mobility; • Social learning environment, which encompasses peer-to-peer interaction and knowledge sharing; • Cultural learning environment, which encompasses mutual respect, recognition of diversity, and motivation; • Intellectual environment, which encompasses critical thinking, reflective practice and inquiry-based learning; • Virtual learning environment, which encompasses staff and learner engagement with online platforms and digital tools to enhance teaching and learning. <p>The Panel recognises Carlow College's driven approach to enhancement across all five learning environments and its responsive approach to facilitating learner access, support and inclusion.</p>

Criterion 9. **There are sound teaching and learning strategies**

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁵ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
	<p>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</p>	<p>Comment</p>
<p>BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Carlow College maintains an institutional Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy which provides the framework for the programme-level strategy, and Carlow College has helpfully mapped the objectives of the institutional strategy to the programme-specific strategies. For example.</p> <p>Consequently, the programme employs a wide range of deep learning, inclusive learning, collaborative learning, enquiry-based learning opportunities, including group work, tutorials, flipped classrooms; multi-modal presentation of materials, use of the VLE; facilitation of opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing; field trips; work placement; research skills; and peer observation (Programme Descriptor, 6.5, pp. 81-82).</p> <p>Application of theory is considered an integral part of the programme's teaching and learning strategy, and this is typically achieved at module level through the use of specific assessment types.</p>

¹⁵ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Criterion 10. **There are sound assessment strategies**

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i>¹⁶</p> <p>b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.¹⁷</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.¹⁸</p> <p>f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.¹⁹</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>As with the teaching and learning strategy, Carlow College's programme-level assessment strategy is informed by the institutional Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.</p> <p>Particular emphasis is placed on the incorporation of UDL (Universal Design for Learning), the core principles of which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple means of engagement • Multiple means of representation • Multiple means of action/expression <p>In practice, this means giving genuine consideration to the choice, relevance, modality and variety of assessment activities, encouraging collaboration, the incorporation of self-assessment and reflection, and the central role of feedback.</p> <p>The Programme Descriptor outlines a clear summative assessment strategy which highlights the variety of assessment types across modules and module streams.</p>

¹⁶ See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁷ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

¹⁸ The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁹ If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

Criterion 11. **Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for**

<p>a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</p> <p>f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²⁰.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i>²¹ and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.</p> <p>j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that Carlow College has a comprehensive range of academic and non-academic support services and resources available to learners, and that these are both accessible and visible.</p> <p>Enrolled learners have access to (as per Section 10.1.1 of the Programme Descriptor, pp. 112-113):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Academic Advisor, who can offer guidance and support in relation to academic matters (all learners are allocated an Academic Advisor); • Carlow College's Academic Resource Office, which can facilitate learner access to academic support services, such as a Writing Support Tutor, learning development classes/workshops, digital skills workshops, and accommodations and supports for learners with additional needs; • Counselling services • Health services • Careers office • Chaplaincy <p>During the site visit, the Panel explored the work placement element of the programme. For English and History learners, Carlow College has</p>

²⁰ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

²¹ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

		<p>relationships with county museums and local libraries which has provided work placement opportunities. However, for Psychology students, placement has proved more challenging due to the limited availability of suitable opportunities. This has meant that most students enter into volunteer work with local organisations.</p> <p>In view of this, the Panel highlighted the need for learners to be fully informed on what to expect from the structure of the placement, and to be supported in undertaking the work, particularly given that it may differ from what students in other streams are exposed to.</p> <p>The following special condition of validation has been identified in respect of this:</p> <p>Condition 3 Carlow College must ensure that learners undertaking the Psychology work placement are sufficiently informed on the structure of the placement, and are adequately supported and supervised.</p>
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Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

- a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider’s general or institutional procedures.
- b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.
- c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.
- d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.
- e) Quality assurance²² is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.
- f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI’s statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.
- g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.
- h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that the programme, its structure, content, teaching and learning strategies, assessment strategies, and management framework interface effectively with Carlow College's existing QQI-approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>Some of the arrangements in place to facilitate this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing monitoring and review by the programme's respective Programme Board; • The assignment of an Academic Advisor, who can provide guidance and support in relating to academic matters, to each learner; • An Academic Resource Office, which is in place to provide important services and resources to learners; • A Learner Information and Retention Officer

²² See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 Principal programme: BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
X	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (minor) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The programme almost fully meets the validation criteria.

Commendations

1. The Panel commends:
 - a. Carlow College's open and constructive engagement with the panel during the site visit.
 - b. Carlow College's implementation of UDL actions in programme design and at module level development and delivery.
 - c. The quality and experience of Carlow College's staff.
 - d. The quality of Carlow College's creative writing programme and its community and widening participation links to VISUAL.

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

1. Carlow College must consider how it can better and more visibly integrate the topic of intersectionality at both programme and module level, particularly to complement the College's broader work in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), to align with HEA Gender Action Implementation Plan and EC Gender Action Plan.
2. Carlow College must update and diversify its module reading lists.
3. Carlow College must ensure that learners undertaking the Psychology work placement are sufficiently informed on the structure of the placement, and are adequately supported and supervised.

Recommendations

1. The Panel recommends that Carlow College articulate how interdisciplinarity is managed and integrated at both programme and module level.
2. In view of Carlow College's intentions to grow its learner base, the Panel strongly encourages ongoing monitoring of physical and human resources, particularly in terms of:
 - Staffing
 - Staff workload;
 - Learner resources.
3. The Panel strongly advises Carlow College against cutting modules which focus more specifically on the topics of EDI, intersectionality, feminism and gender.
4. In relation to module-level content, the Panel recommends that Carlow College more visibly integrate:
 - History in Theology
 - Introduction to Sociological Theory
 - Feminist philosophy
 - Women and Gender History across modules
 - Feminist Political and Sociological approaches
 - Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality
 - Gender and Sexuality Studies
 - A gender balanced list of primary texts
5. The Panel recommends that programme design consider intersectionality and EDI at a systems level with a view to decolonising the canon and diversifying the curriculum.
6. The Panel recommends Carlow College articulate the emphasis on Pauline literature in the relevant module descriptors.
7. The Panel recommends that Carlow College invest in additional resources to support the more visible integration of EDI content (e.g. Adam Matthew Digital database)
8. The Panel recommends that Carlow College consider a pre-Degree programme to compensate for the loss of one year to the BA programme.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. Carlow College must consider how it can better and more visibly integrate the topic of intersectionality at both programme and module level, particularly to complement the College's broader work in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), to align with HEA Gender Action Implementation Plan and EC Gender Action Plan.
2. Carlow College must update and diversify its module reading lists.
3. Carlow College must ensure that learners undertaking the Psychology work placement are sufficiently informed on the structure of the placement, and are adequately supported and supervised.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. The Panel recommends that Carlow College articulate how interdisciplinarity is managed and integrated at both programme and module level.
2. In view of Carlow College's intentions to grow its learner base, the Panel strongly encourages ongoing monitoring of physical and human resources, particularly in terms of:
 - Staffing
 - Staff workload;
 - Learner resources.
3. The Panel strongly advises Carlow College against cutting modules which focus more specifically on the topics of EDI, intersectionality, feminism and gender.
4. In relation to module-level content, the Panel recommends that Carlow College more visibly integrate:
 - History in Theology
 - Introduction to Sociological Theory
 - Feminist philosophy
 - Women and Gender History across modules
 - Feminist Political and Sociological approaches
 - Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality
 - Gender and Sexuality Studies
 - A gender balanced list of primary texts
5. The Panel recommends that programme design consider intersectionality and EDI at a systems level with a view to decolonising the canon and diversifying the curriculum.
6. The Panel recommends Carlow College articulate the emphasis on Pauline literature in the relevant module descriptors.
7. The Panel recommends that Carlow College invest in additional resources to support the more visible integration of EDI content (e.g. Adam Matthew Digital database)
8. The Panel recommends that Carlow College consider a pre-Degree programme to compensate for the loss of one year to the BA programme.

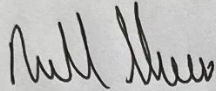
Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: NIALH KEANE

Date: 27TH APRIL 2024

Signed:



3.2 Disclaimer

The Report of the External Review Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

Part 4. Proposed programme schedules (post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)

4.1 1B.5 Proposed Programme Schedule(s)														
Name of Provider:		Carlow College, St Patrick's												
Programme Title (Principal)		BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities				QQI Award Title		BA (Honours)			ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title (if relevant)									Stage ECTS		60
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		Face to Face			Blended			Hybrid			Online		Workplace Learning	
		✓												
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		In-person face-to-face			Synchronous			Asynchronous			Work Based			
		✓												
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Proctored Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online		Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work based		
		✓		✓										
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)														
Total Student Effort Module (hours)									Assessment – Allocation of Marks					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Academic & Digital Skills	1	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Ancient Greek Philosophy	1	M	5	125	28		97		100					

The Irish Experience: Themes in Irish History, Culture and Society	1	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Introduction to Theology	1	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Introduction to Literary Studies	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Introduction to Psychology	1	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Inequality, Crisis & Change: Sociological Perspectives	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Arts and Humanities: Interdisciplinary World View	2	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Contemporary Politics and Public Policy	2	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Fiction, Criticism and Interpretation	2	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Psychology: Core Concepts	2	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				
The Atlantic World in the Early Modern Period, 1472-1770	2	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Medieval Philosophy	2	E	5	125	28		97		30	70				
Theological Themes in the Creative Arts	2	E	5	125	28		97		100					

4.2 1B.5 Proposed Programme Schedule(s)															
Name of Provider:		Carlow College, St Patrick's													
Programme Title (Principal)		BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities			QQI Award Title		BA (Honours)		ECTS	180					
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		2	Exit Award Title (if relevant)						Stage ECTS	60					
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		Face to Face		Blended		Hybrid		Online		Workplace Learning					
		✓													
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		In-person face-to-face			Synchronous			Asynchronous		Work Based					
		✓													
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Proctored Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online		Project		Practical Skills Demonstration	Work based				
		✓		✓				✓		✓					
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)								Assessment – Allocation of Marks							
Module Title		Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Reading Romantic Poetry		1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Theatre of the European Renaissance		1	E	5	125	28		97		100					

Creative Writing: An Introduction to Writing Poetry	1	E	5	125	24		101		70	30				
Gothic & Horror	1	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Society & Change in 19 th Century Ireland 1800-1890	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Revolutions in the Transatlantic World, 1763-1877	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Public History, Cultural Heritage & Commemoration	1	E	5	125	28		97		50		50			
Tyrants, Traders & Towns: The Vikings & Ireland	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
General Ethics: Guiding Rules	1	E	5	125	28		97		30	70				
Modern Philosophy 1600-1800	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Existentialism: Philosophy, Literature and Social Justice	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Feminist Political Thought	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Child Developmental Psychology	1	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
The Psychopathology of Mental Disorders	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Educational Psychology	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Work & Organisational Psychology	1	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Christology: Encountering Jesus of Nazareth	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
The Bible: Interpretation & Inspiration	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Prophetic Literature	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				

Sacramental Theology	1	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
Political Philosophy 1 : From City State to Contractarianism	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Social Policy and the Environment	1	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Development Education & Sustainable Developmental Goals	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Economic and Social Analysis	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Inventing America: 19 th Century American Literature	2	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Literature of the Victorian Age	2	E	5	125	28		97		50	50				
Irish Studies: Literature and Revolution in Ireland 1890-1937	2	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Performance in Drama 1	2	E	5	125	24		101		50			50		
Nation States, Empires & Global Conflicts, 1877-1945	2	E	5	125	28		97		50	50				
Insurrection to Independence: Ireland 1900-1925	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
The Emergence of the City in 19 th Century America	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Women and Gender in Medieval Europe	2	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
General Ethics: The Good Life	2	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Modern Philosophy 1800-1960	2	E	5	125	28		97		30	70				
Human Rights: A Philosophical Approach	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					

Philosophy, Society & Literature	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Psychological Research Methods and Ethics	2	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Social Psychology	2	E	5	125	28		97		30	70				
Clinical Psychology & Mental Health	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Cyber Psychology	2	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Women in the Bible and Theology	2	E	5	125	28		97		40	60				
World Religions	2	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Religions, Conflict and Peace	2	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Synoptic Literature	2	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
Theological Anthropology in Contemporary Culture	2	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Political Philosophy 2: Enlightenment to Communitarianism	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Research Methods for Political & Social Sciences	2	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Sociology, Interculturalism & Cultural Competence	2	E	5	125	28		97		100					

4.3 1B.5 Proposed Programme Schedule(s)														
Name of Provider:		Carlow College, St Patrick's												
Programme Title (Principal)		BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities			QQI Award Title		BA (Honours) in Arts and Humanities		ECTS	180				
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		Award	Exit Award Title (if relevant)						Stage ECTS	60				
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		Face to Face		Blended		Hybrid		Online		Workplace Learning				
		✓								✓				
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		In-person face-to-face			Synchronous		Asynchronous			Work Based				
		✓								✓				
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Proctored Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online		Project		Practical Skills Demonstration	Work based			
		✓		✓						✓				
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)														
Total Student Effort Module (hours)								Assessment – Allocation of Marks						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Seminar & Dissertation	1&2	E	10	250	26		224		100					
Reading Modern Poetry	1	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
Creative Writing: Advanced Poetry	1	E	5	125	24		101		70	30				

Modern Drama in Performance	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Performance in Drama 2	1	E	5	125	24		101	50					50	
Healing the People: History of Public Health & Medicine 1800-2023	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Power & Belief: The Cult of the Saints in the Medieval World	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
The Rise of Fascism	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
The Troubles: From Conflict to Conciliation 1968-1998	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Political Philosophy 1 : From City State to Contractarianism	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Critical Theory In A Digital Age	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Humans & Other Animals	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Philosophy & Psychoanalytic Theory	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Personality Psychology	1	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
Advanced Social Psychology	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
Forensic Psychology	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Health Psychology	1	E	5	125	28		97		100					
The Bible and Applied Christian Ethics	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Catechetics & Ethos	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Johannine Literature	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Trinity: A God One and Three	1	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
Social Policy & Social Theory: Intersections, Challenges & Solutions	1	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Creativity & Digital Media Skills	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					

Pedagogy for Politics & Society	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Political Communications & Campaign Management	1	E	5	125	24		101		100					
World Literatures	2	E	5	125	24		101	60	40					
Beyond the Human - From Postmodernism to Posthumanism	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Creative Writing: Fiction	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Reading Post War British & American Poetry	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Building the Nation: Ireland 1920s-2000s	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
The Impact of Migration on an Island Nation, 1700-2000	2	E	5	125	24		101	60	40					
Propaganda & Politics: Ireland 1918-1937	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Power & Control in the Cold War Era, from 1945 to Brexit	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Political Philosophy 2: Enlightenment to Communitarianism	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Care and Capitalism	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Language & Self: Structuralism to Postmodernism	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Philosophies of Religions	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Cognitive Psychology & Biopsychology	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Community Psychology	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Counselling Psychology	2	E	5	125	28		97		100					

Positive Psychology	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
World Religions	2	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Religions, Conflict and Peace	2	E	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Workplace Learning Experience	2	E	5	125	16		85	24	100					
Ecclesiology: Our Apostolic Church Today	2	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
The God Question	2	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				
Borders, Migration & Citizenship	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Community Arts	2	E	5	125	24		61	40	50		50			
International Human Rights	2	E	5	125	24		101		100					
Introduction to International Relations	2	E	5	125	24		101		30	70				