

Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	National College of Ireland ("NCI")
Programme(s) Reviewed	Principal Programme: Master of Arts in Human Resource Management Embedded Programme: Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Danny Brennan	Chair	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology and Principal DNB Education Consultants.
Matthew Hurley	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Dr Christine Cross	Irish Subject Matter Expert	Former Head of Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick
Dr David McGuire	Overseas Subject Matter Expert	Reader in HR Development, Glasgow Caledonian University
Mark Duffy	Industry / Employer Representative	Deputy Head of HR, Ryanair
Keeva Carpenter	Learner Representative	Graduate student, Griffith College (Dublin)

All members of the independent panel declared their independence of National College of Ireland and that they have no conflict of interest.

Part 1. Introduction

In accordance with QQI requirements, an Independent Evaluation Panel convened in early February 2022 to carry out an evaluation of NCI's MA in HRM and its embedded Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM.

The 90-credit MA in HRM, leading to an NFQ Level 9 Major Award, is primarily aimed at recent graduates working in the area of HRM. The programme is available both on both a full-time and part-time basis, over one or two years respectively.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Arts HRM, also leading to an NFQ Level 9 Major Award, is available as an exit award for learners who are unsuccessful in their attempt at the Research Methods and/or Dissertation module on the full-time MA programme. It is also available as an embedded award for learners on the part-time iteration of the MA programme.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference for the Review and Revalidation of the Master of Arts in Human Resource Management and Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management
2.	Agenda	Programme Review and Revalidation Agenda
3.	Descriptor	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management and Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management – Revalidation Descriptor
4.	Report	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management and Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management – Programme Review Report
5.	Module Descriptors	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management and Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management Modules
6.	Self-Evaluation	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management and Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management - Self-Evaluation against Criteria for Validation

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Professor Jimmy Hill	Vice-President, Academic Affairs and Research
2.	Karen Jones	Registrar
3.	Dr Colette Darcy	Dean, School of Business
4.	Patricia Maguire	Director, Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness
5.	Ms Bronwyn McFarlane	Programme Director

6.	Dr Caitriona Hughes	Programme Director
7.	Maurice Fitzgerald	Module Coordinator
8.	Robert MacDonald	Module Coordinator
9.	David Mothersill	Module Coordinator
10	Roger McGrath	Module Coordinator
11	Stephen Sands	Module Coordinator
12	Philip McGovern	Module Coordinator
13	Julius Nyiawung	Module Coordinator
14	Karen Murray	Module Coordinator
15	Pauline Kelly Phelan	Module Coordinator
16	James McCloskey	Module Coordinator
17	Thomas McCabe	Module Coordinator
18	Leah Kinsella	Student Support Staff
19	Karen Mooney	Student Support Staff
20	Sheila Mahon	Student Support Staff
21	Keith Brittle	Student Support Staff
22	Rachel Smith	Student Support Staff
23	Adriadny Bittencourt.	Student Support Staff
24	Learner Representatives	

2.3 Description of evaluation process

Each member of the Independent Evaluation Panel undertook their own desk review of the documentation prior to the official first meeting of the Panel on 1st February 2022. The Panel appreciates the level of detail involved in NCI's own review of its programmes. The Panel made some preliminary observations during the planning meeting and assigned areas of questions for the site visit which took place over the 2nd & 3rd of February.

The site visit took place virtually and offered the Panel to meet with senior members of NCI faculty, lecturers, student support staff, and a sample cohort of graduates from the programme. This allowed the Panel to explore the breadth and depth of NCI's programme review process as well as the programmes themselves.

The Panel appreciated the open and receptive discussions which took place, and two areas in particular stood out for commendation:

- NCI's commitment to the provision of learner supports, including academic, wellbeing and mental supports.
- NCI's integration of technology into the delivery of its programmes, highlighting in particular the dual delivery and blended options.

Extensive discussions were held in relation to learner workload and assessment load, formative assessment on modules, International HRM, and Learning & Development.

At the conclusion of the site visit, the Panel identified a total of five special conditions of and five recommendations for NCI, and the Panel is satisfied that NCI has both the expertise and resources to address these.

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 the robustness of the programme review process and assess the modified programmes to determine their eligibility for revalidation. The programmes in question are the 90-credit Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (PG21879), which is the Principal Programme, and the 60-credit Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management (PG21880), which is the embedded programme.

It was noted in the Terms of Reference received by the Panel that although the original period of validation was from September 2015 to September 2019, "The review interval for the HRM programmes in question has been extended on two occasions." (p. 3) For this reason, the last enrolment date was the 2021/22 academic year.

The Terms of Reference clearly outline the objectives of the programme review process and summarise the proposed modifications for consideration. The accelerated delivery mode has also been highlighted as a point of special consideration.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the context and Terms of Reference for the programme review and has no recommendations to make.

Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Established in 1951, the National College of Ireland ("NCI") is a Dublin-based third-level education institution delivering 120 full-time and part-time QQI accredited programmes to approximately 5,500 learners.

Among these programmes are the MA in Human Resource Management and the Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management. According to the Programme Review Report, these are "(...) currently the most popular postgraduate programmes offered by the School of Business in terms of both part-time and full-time provision." (p. 1)

In line with NCI's mission, "the College places a strong emphasis on the needs of the learner and provides a range of learning options that extend beyond traditional classroom dynamic." (Programme Review Report, 2.1.1, p. 10) This was very apparent to the Panel. NCI offers innovative flexible learning opportunities to its learners, including a dual delivery setup for those who are

unable to attend live classes. This was recognised in the learner feedback, with In addition to this, NCI has a comprehensive set of learner supports available both online and on campus.

The programmes aim "(...) to develop an in-depth understanding of the core disciplines in the area of human resources (HR)" (Programme Review Report, 2.3.1, p. 16) and the documentation explicitly details the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs).

Eligibility criteria for entry onto the programmes is clearly stated, with a Level 8 Honours Degree typically required and sought by NCI. Where an applicant is a non-native English speaker, evidence must be provided demonstrating minimum English language competency of 6.5 in the Academic IELTS test. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) may also be available to learners with other relevant work experience who do not otherwise satisfy the typical requirements.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the provider information and programme context for the programme review and has no 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:

The impact of Covid-19 restrictions on the ability of international learners to accept their offer was apparent, with application data showing a 6% decrease on the total number of international applications translating to registered students between 2019/20 and 2020/21. NCI anticipates that "As restrictions on travel are lifted, (...) the numbers of international learners accepting places on the programme will increase." (Programme Review Report, 3.1.1.3, p. 21)

On the other hand, the acceptance rate of domestic applicants experienced an all-time high of 95%, again possibly due to Covid-19 and the surge in learners seeking to upskill and return to education. Similarly, the acceptance rate onto the part-time Postgraduate Diploma rose by 33% in 2020/21.

Enrolment data for both the MA and Postgraduate Diploma shows consistent growth since 2015, and enrolment figures for the full-time MA in particular has more than doubled. Over 80% of these learners are in the 20-34 age demographic and predominantly female, when looking at the gender breakdown of the programmes.

The breakdown of nationalities on the programme shows that over 50% of the learner cohort between 2015 and 2020 was Irish, followed by Nigeria and 17% and India at 12%.

The Panel is satisfied that NCI's application and enrolment data overall shows a strong demand for the programme and the Panel is satisfied that the Programme Team have reflected upon this data to inform decision-making.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the programme data provided and has not identified any recommendations under this criterion.

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:

Physical Facilities and Resources

In order to ensure NCI's resource library remains up-to-date and aligned with the intended blended provision, investment must be made into the provision of essential reading material in e-copy format so as to cater to learners who may be unable to attend live classes.

Indeed, this was touched upon in the Programme Review Report (3.2.1.2, p. 38) which stated that NCI's "(...) Library Services have invested significantly in online books and great online database access to ensure learners have access to top quality journals and literature."

While the Panel welcomes this, the extent of the investment is somewhat unclear, leaving room for doubt that all *essential* reading material (or at least as much as possible) would be covered.

In respect of this, the Panel advises that NCI should aim to provide any essential reading material in both e-book and hard copy formats.

Learner Workload

The intensive nature of the programme in part-time mode was acknowledged within the Programme Review Report and there are a number of support mechanisms in place for learners who may be struggling due to the heavy workload.

Although the Panel has confidence in NCI's supports system, there should also be, where possible, pre-emptive measures in place to get ahead of issues before they become particularly problematic for the learner. One means of achieving this is with the implementation of a continuously-reviewed monitoring plan to ascertain how learners are coping with their respective workload.

The development of this plan is a stipulation of the Panel.

Assessment

As part of the programme review process, some mostly minor updates were made to module assessments as part of the programme review process. In general, the Panel observed a particular tendency toward the use of continuous assessment as the primary means of assessment, with some modules also incorporating a proctored written exam. The assessment strategy was reinforced by NCI's noted shift toward Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, as well as in the Programme Review Report, which states that "the mix of continuous assessment, projects (case studies, work scenarios) and examinations will continue to be utilised to ensure that learners are exposed to different assessment strategies." (3.2.7.3, p. 51)

However, the utilisation of formative assessment appeared, on paper at least, more limited. While the Panel does not wish to be prescriptive, it is nonetheless important for learners to have ample opportunities to receive feedback on their progress so that they can identify areas to focus on in their own learning. In respect of this, the Panel is of the view that it is important for NCI to conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added.

The Programme Review Report establishes the proposed assessment strategies for the revised programme based on the findings and evaluation of feedback from stakeholders. This Report states that “As learners may be required to complete a project or continuous assessment as part of their overall modules assessment, self-directed learning will continue over the course of the semester out of the block-delivered contact hours.” (3.2.7.1, p. 51)

It became apparent to the Panel over the course of the evaluation that the issuing of assignments was inconsistent, with some lecturers issuing theirs at the start of a module and others waiting until nearer the end to do so. Due to the block delivery model of the programme, a concern was raised that this structure may put unnecessary pressure on learners, particularly those who are balancing assessment load and a full-time job. In an effort to avoid this, the Panel was of the view that NCI should, where possible, issue assignment at the start of each module.

As detailed in the IER, the Panel noted the breadth of content and amount of assessment involved in some of the 5-credit modules, and queried whether this was realistic. *The Science of Decision-Making* was one such module, the assessment for which comprises three pieces of continuous assessment (a reflective journal, a group report and a group presentation) and a terminal exam.

In response to the learner feedback detailed with the Programme Review Report, it is stated that “The programme team will review ... the assessment burden across the modules.” (4.1.3, p. 55). Taking cognisance of the fact that some modules appear misaligned in terms of their assessment load versus credit weighting, the Panel was of the view that this should be looked at by NCI as part of its review process due to the implications it can have in terms of cultivating a burdening assessment load that NCI otherwise wishes to avoid.

Finally, the Panel would advise NCI to review its deadline for the submission of the dissertation in due to a perceived inconsistency between the September and January intakes which would award those learners entering in January an additional two months to complete their work.

‘Fully Online’ Delivery

Due to the lack of published QQI guidelines pertaining to programme delivery in an fully online framework, it is not currently possible for the Panel to approve such. For this reason, it is a stipulation of validation that NCI remove references to ‘fully online’ delivery from the documentation, such as is In the Programme Review Report and Revalidation Descriptor.

Recommendations:

1. NCI must conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added.
2. Given the intensive nature of the programme in part-time mode, the lack of breaks and the quick turnaround time, NCI must ensure that there is a monitoring plan in place pertaining to student wellbeing, ensuring that learner workload is kept under review.
3. NCI should, where possible, issue assignments at the start of each module.
4. NCI must remove “*fully online*” from the list of teaching and learning modalities on the proposed programme schedule, as well as any other references to ‘*fully online*’ delivery in the programme documentation.
5. The Panel recommends that NCI review its approach to the allocation of credits in terms of assessment to ensure that assessment load consistently aligns with credit weighting (i.e. that no 10-credit module is assessed in the same manner as a 5-credit module).
6. NCI should review the deadline for submission of the dissertation to ensure fairness and consistency for all learners.
7. It is recommended that NCI provide any essential reading texts in both e-book and hard copy formats, and that consideration is given to such provision in future programmatic reviews, particularly on blended programmes.

Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

The Programme Review Report outlined a process by which it collected feedback from a number of focus groups comprised of full-time and part-time learners. Feedback such as this is instrumental in informing future changes to a programme, and ensuring the programmes are running effectively.

Some of the comments expressed by learners included a general appreciation of the design of the programme and the guest speakers brought in on modules, and the feeling of genuine commitment from many staff members. The flexibility of remote learning was also highlighted as a positive. On the other hand, other comments raised issues that some of the module content and assessments felt outdated or irrelevant, there was overlap between module material, and that supports around mental health were lacking. A need for more flexibility between core modules and electives was also commented upon to allow learners greater control over their course of study to bring this in line with their current or intended career path.

As part of the review process, NCI aimed to address the issue of outdated module content through the updating of modules, particularly since the programme was last validated in 2015 and the world has experienced significant shifts since then. It was further planned for the Programme Team to review modules and assessments with the aim of removing any overlap of content. The issue of flexibility would be addressed via “the offering of electives on the programme that will provide learners the opportunity to tailor their studies more to areas that they feel are more relevant for them and their career aspirations. The Panel welcomes NCI’s proactive response to this feedback.

Part of this feedback also included a suggestion that more focus on international elements of HRM would be beneficial, particularly for international learners or those seeking to work abroad. This suggestion tied into an issue raised by the Panel in relation to lack of clear integration of International HRM in module content. Although a module entitled *International HRM* is included on both the MA and Postgraduate Diploma, this is an elective, and is therefore only available in cases where enough learners express interest.

During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the BA in HRM Strategy and Practice in addition to the MA in HRM, and it was noted that one of the reasons International HRM is not discussed in a standalone module on the BA programme is because it’s offered at MA level. However, due to the fact the module at MA level is elective only, there may be instances where learners enter and exit the programmes without ever directly studying this topic.

While acknowledging the reassurance for lecturers that international elements are nonetheless integrated in other modules, this was not clear in the documentation. For this reason, the Panel recommends that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with NCI's response to the feedback provided by learners as part of the review process, but recommends, in relation to the programme, that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

Although the Programme Team is scheduled to meet formally twice in any given year, there were three recorded meetings in 2021. This allowed staff to review the programmes in terms of robustness, programme currency, and the impact (if any) of new CIPD standards. These meetings also provided staff with an opportunity to consider and act upon feedback and recommendations captured in class representative meetings, external examiner reports and programme team feedback.

Elective modules were introduced to provide more choice to learners wishing to tailor their learning more to their own personal circumstances (a point raised in the learner feedback). In addition to this, the *Talent Development* underwent developmental work and has since expanded into a *Managing and Developing Talent* module. Stemming from this, however, the Panel sought to understand why Learning & Development had only been partially integrated on this module and why it did not have its own full, standalone module.

The scope of content already covered by the programme was cited as the primary reason for this, and that incorporation of Learning & Development within the existing modules made the most sense rather than dedicating it its own module.

While recognising the challenges in this regard, the Panel held the view that the Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.

Recommendations:

1. The Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

The Programme Team noted positive engagement with External Examiners, who have provided beneficial, but overall positive feedback on the programmes' assessments. The modules *Leading and Managing* and *International HRM* were highlighted as particularly interesting. There were no programme implications identified in relation to the analysis of the data collected from External Examiner feedback.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the external examiner feedback and has no recommendations to make in relation to this.

Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

The Panel is satisfied that NCI's processes pertaining to learner complaints and appeals are sufficiently robust. NCI aims to foster open communication, part of which involves close engagement with class representatives, in order to address any issues at the earlier possible point. Nonetheless, clear systems of escalation are in place where required.

Recommendations:

The Panel has not identified any recommendations under this criterion.

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The Panel is satisfied that NCI has a well-developed, provider-owned and fit-for-purpose quality framework supporting its programme provision. Notwithstanding this, the Programme Team highlight difficulties in access reliable data to inform decision-making during the review process.

It was noted in the Programme Review Report, however, that the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE) Team is "(...) in the process of refreshing the annual monitoring reports and these will recommence in the new year." (5.2.2, p. 68)

The Panel welcomes and encourages continued development in this area.

Recommendations:

The Panel has not identified any recommendations under this criterion.

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

Commentary:

The MA and Postgraduate Diploma in HRM are intended for blended delivery. This means that the programme will include elements of both traditional, classroom-based delivery, in addition to online delivery supported by NCI's digital infrastructure. As with most providers, due to the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, classes were moved fully online in order to allow NCI to continue delivery of its programmes. This move was supported by QQI's Covid-19 contingency arrangements which are in place until August 2022.

The Programme Review Report highlights the opportunities provided by this blended delivery during the pandemic in terms of opening up "opportunities to consider our assessment strategy and the use of technology in particular in assessment." (3.2.5.3, p. 49)

While the Panel has no specific concerns in relation to NCI's quality assurance systems and processes relating to blended delivery, the Panel did observe an absence of any clear roadmap

in relation to the return to the face-to-face element of NCI's blended provision. The development of such was therefore identified as a condition of validation.

Recommendations:

1. The Panel is satisfied that NCI's quality assurance systems and processes pertaining to blended learning and assessment are robust and effective. However, it is a condition of validation that NCI must devise a plan for the return to the face-to face element of NCI's blended delivery (for those learners who can avail of it) as soon as possible.

Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

The Panel recognises the strong reputation of NCI and the MA and Postgraduate Diploma within the HR sector. This is reflected in the increasing learner numbers, as well as the quality and employability rates of graduates. The primary weakness was identified as programme currency, given the rapidly changing landscape of the industry. Notwithstanding this, the Panel is satisfied that NCI has actively considered and acted upon stakeholder feedback and the demands of the industry in its review of the programmes, and there is no doubt over the need for such programmes to continue running.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with NCI's summary analysis of the programmes and has no recommendations to make in relation to this.

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:

Considering the findings and analysis of the review of the existing programmes, these following modifications are being proposed by NCI to the revised programmes:

1. It is proposed that the programme titles will be as follows:
 - Masters in Human Resource Management
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management
2. It is proposed that the award will be a Level 9 Postgraduate award.
3. There are a number of proposed updates to the minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
4. The proposed duration of the programmes is as follows:
 - MA in Human Resource Management: Full-time and Part-time
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management: Part-time
5. It is proposed to increase the learner intake size due to increased demand.
6. It is proposed to add the following new electives:

Strategic Reward Management, Organisational Design and Development, HR Analytics and Evidence Based Decision-Making, and The Science of Decision-Making.

7. It is proposed that *Mediation and Conflict Management*, which has been an elective on the Postgraduate Diploma in HRM, will now be extended to the MA in HRM (Full-time) programme also.
8. It is proposed that *Investigating a Business Issue from a HRM Perspective*, which has been an elective on the Postgraduate Diploma, will now be extended to the MA in HRM (Full-time) programme also.
9. It is proposed that International HRM will be moved from a core module to an elective modules on both programmes.
10. It is proposed that the title of the *Talent Development* modules will be changed to *Managing and Developing Talent*.
11. There are a number of proposed updates to module content.
12. There has been a proposed update to the Teaching and Learning Strategy.
13. There has been a proposed update to the Assessment Strategy.
14. There has been a necessary increase in staffing due to increased learner numbers on programmes.
15. There has been a proposed update to NCI's physical resources to reflect blended learning requirements.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied that the proposed changes reflect necessary updates to the programmes and are based upon sound rationale. Notwithstanding this, the Panel has identified a number of special conditions and recommendations for NCI in its ongoing programme review. These are detailed in the next section and in the IER.

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:

The Panel recognises the significant amount of work carried out in preparation for this programmatic review, and appreciates the clear attention to quality that permeates the documentation. It is clear to the Panel that NCI's strong quality culture provides the robust framework on which the review process can be conducted.

Section B. Recommendations on review process:

The Panel is satisfied that NCI's review process was appropriately informed by detailed stakeholder feedback and empirical data. The Panel therefore has no recommendations specific to NCI's review process. Notwithstanding this, the Panel has identified a number of programme-specific special conditions and recommendations which are likely to impact on future programmatic reviews.

Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The Panel is satisfied that there is a genuine rationale for the proposed revisions to the programmes. However, the Panel has also identified a number of special conditions and recommendations in relation to the revised programmes. These are detailed below and in the IER.

Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:

As detailed in the Independent Evaluation Report, a total of five conditions of validation and a further five recommendations were identified in relation to the MA in HRM, while five conditions of validation and four recommendations were identified in relation to the embedded Postgraduate Diploma in HRM. However, most of these conditions and recommendations are the same for both programmes, with the exception of Recommendation 5 which is specific to the Dissertation and therefore pertains to the MA only.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

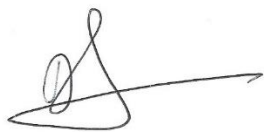
1. NCI must conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added.
2. Given the intensive nature of the programme in part-time mode, the lack of breaks and the quick turnaround time, NCI must ensure that there is a monitoring plan in place pertaining to student wellbeing, ensuring that learner workload is kept under

review.

3. NCI should, where possible, issue assignments at the start of each module.
4. NCI must devise a plan for the return to the face-to face element of NCI's blended delivery (for those learners who can avail of it) as soon as possible.
5. NCI must remove '*fully online*' from the list of teaching and learning modalities on the proposed programme schedule, as well as any other references to '*fully online*' delivery in the programme documentation.

Recommendations

1. The Panel recommends that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.
2. The Panel recommends that NCI review its approach to the allocation of credits in terms of assessment to ensure that assessment load consistently aligns with credit weighting (i.e. that no 10-credit module is assessed in the same manner as a 5-credit module).
3. NCI should review the deadline for submission of the dissertation to ensure fairness and consistency for all learners.
4. NCI should aim to provide any essential reading texts in **both** e-book and hard copy forms.
5. The Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.



Signed:

Panel Chairperson:

Date: 4 April 2022

**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	National College of Ireland ("NCI")
Date of site visit	2 & 3 February 2022
Date of report	10 March 2022

Section E. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management
	Award	Major
	Credit	90
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Embedded programme 1	Title	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management
	Award	Major
	Credit	60
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Section F. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Danny Brennan	Chair	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology and Principal, DNB Education Consultants
Matthew Hurley	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Dr Christine Cross	Irish Subject Matter Expert	Former Head of Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick
Dr David McGuire	Overseas Subject Matter Expert	Reader in HR Development, Glasgow Caledonian University
Mark Duffy	Industry / Employer Representative	Deputy Head of HR, Ryanair
Keeva Carpenter	Learner Representative	Graduate student, Griffith College (Dublin)

Section G. Principal Programme – Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
National College of Ireland, IFSC, Mayor Street, Dublin 1	200	30 (15 per intake)

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2022
Maximum number of annual intakes	2
Maximum total number of learners per intake	100
Intake Schedule (<i>e.g. September, January</i>)	September, January
Programme duration (<i>months from start to completion</i>)	1 year, full-time (12 months) 2 years, part-time (24 months)
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment: The Panel is satisfied with the programme's proposed enrolment and intake schedule.	

Target learner groups	
<p>"This course is aimed primarily at individuals seeking an academic qualification at postgraduate level while also wishing to advance their career to assume positions at senior management level with a specific focus on human resource management."</p> <p>"Target learners on the MAHRM full-time programme are primarily recent undergraduates, including graduates from NCI Level 8 programmes, such graduates from other programmes in Ireland, and international students."</p> <p>"The target learners for the part-time MAHRM and PGDHRM programmes are primarily those currently working in the field of Human Resource Management, or those working in management positions with an interest in developing a new career in the field. Increasingly we are witnessing a growing number of applicants who have HR responsibility as part of their senior management roles and desire a HR qualification to complement this."</p> <p><i>[Extracted from Revalidation Descriptor, p. 9]</i></p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and part-time
The teaching and learning modalities	
Blended (100%)	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	
"The programme seeks to develop, via its teaching and learning strategies, an understanding of core disciplines in the field of Human Resources, and to show how these link together to enable	

employees to address the tasks they face in a rapidly changing environment. This programme provides learners interested in immediate employment in the area of Human Resources with the analytical and theoretical skills, tools and techniques to operate practically across a wide range of HR functions.”

“A concerted effort has been made to include a significant amount of case study material and practical work in order to demonstrate the application of principles and theories delivered within programme. Students will develop a specialised set of skills and knowledge in Human Resource Management, in particular the ability to analyse business needs and deliver effective solutions that optimise the HR & Personnel resources of the organisation. They will have an understanding of the strategic contribution of HR knowledge to effective organisational change and development, which will require an understanding of the business context and the acquisition of important diagnostic skills. Skills such as diagnosis, communication and influencing will also be fostered to help them implement strategic human resource development initiatives.”

[Extracted from Revalidation Descriptor, p. 9]

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE
Programme Director Minimum of a Level 9 qualification but ideally a PhD.	1
Programme Teaching Team Minimum of a Level 9 qualification. A PhD and/or significant industry experience.	14
Programme Co-Ordinator A Level 8 honours degree and significant administration experience.	1
Career Advisor/Coach A qualified career coach.	1

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Lectures	1:100
Workshops	1:100
Dissertation Supervision	1:5

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

The Panel is satisfied that the NCI has suitably qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver the programme effectively.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
PG21879	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management	2020/21

Section C.1: Embedded Programme – Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
National College of Ireland, IFSC, Mayor Street, Dublin 1	100	15

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2022
Maximum number of annual intakes	1 (Part-time)
Maximum total number of learners per intake	100 (Part-time)
Intake Schedule (<i>e.g. September, January</i>)	September
Programme duration (<i>months from start to completion</i>)	1 Year
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:	
The Panel is satisfied with the programme's proposed enrolment and intake schedule.	

Target learner groups	
<p>"The target learners for the proposed Postgraduate Diploma programme are primarily those currently working in the field of Human Resource Management, or those working in management positions with an interest in developing a new career in the field. Increasingly we are witnessing a growing number of applicants who have HR responsibility as part of their senior management roles and desire a HR qualification to complement this."</p> <p><i>[Extracted from Revalidation Descriptor, p. 12]</i></p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Part-time
The teaching and learning modalities:	
Blended (100%)	
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>"The Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM is both an exit and embedded award."</p> <p>"The Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM is an exit award for those learners who attempt and fail the Research Methods and/or Dissertation module on the full-time MA in HRM programme. The option to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in HRM from the full-time version of the programme is at the discretion of the Registrar."</p> <p>"The Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM is an embedded award for those learners on the part-time version of the MA in HRM programme. The Postgraduate Diploma comprises 60 credits. Should a learner successfully pass the Postgraduate Diploma in HRM they have the option of returning the following academic year to complete a further 30 credits comprising of 10 credit</p>	

Research Methods module and a 20 credit Dissertation to attain the full MA in HRM 90 credit award.”

“The Postgraduate Diploma in HRM part-time is targeted at those currently working in the field of HR who are seeking a level 9 qualification which is aligned to the CIPD professional awards standards. The programme also allows flexibility to learners who may not wish to commit to a full 90 credits level 9 programme from the outset but rather have a preference to complete a 60 credit Postgraduate Diploma in the first instance.”

[Extracted from Revalidation Descriptor, p. 12]

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE
Programme Director Minimum of a Level 9 qualification but ideally a PhD.	1
Programme Teaching Team Minimum of a Level 9 qualification. A PhD and/or significant industry experience.	14
Programme Co-Ordinator A Level 8 honours degree and significant administration experience.	1
Career Advisor/Coach A qualified career coach.	1

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Lectures	1:100
Workshops	1:100

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

The Panel is satisfied that the NCI has suitably qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver the programme effectively.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
PG21880	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management	2020/21

Section H. Other noteworthy features of the application

The Panel would like to highlight the following two areas, which stood out for particular commendation:

1. The Panel commends NCI's commitment to the provision of learner supports, including academic, wellbeing and mental health supports.
2. The Panel commends NCI's integration of technology into the delivery of its programmes, highlighting in particular the dual delivery and blended options.

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)

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
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that NCI has met the prerequisites to apply for validation of the programme, and that NCI is in compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory and professional requirements.</p> <p>The panel was assured that the application for validation had been signed by the appropriate senior person within NCI, but the panel did not have sight of this.</p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

¹ This 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

<p>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</p> <p>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.</p> <p>(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</p> <p>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</p> <p>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</p> <p>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p> <p>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are</p> <p>(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.</p> <p>(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.</p> <p>g) For each programme and embedded programme</p> <p>(i) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.²</p> <p>(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards.</p> <p>h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</p> <p>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</p> <p>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</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that QQI's requirements under this criterion have been addressed.</p> <p>The programme has been mapped against QQI's Business Awards Standards, and the programme title is both consistent with the award sought and clear to prospective learners.</p> <p>The Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) are specified in the Revalidation Descriptor, and the Panel is satisfied that these are consistent with the awards standards.</p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

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>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that NCI has identified sufficient learner demand for the programme, with the Programme Review Report noting that “The Postgraduate Diploma in HRM and MA in HRM are currently the most popular postgraduate programmes offered by the School of Business in terms of both part-time and full-time provision.” (P. 1)</p> <p>Furthermore, NCI has a number of mechanisms in place to maintain the programme’s currency and ensure that any updates are conducted in consultation with stakeholders, a matter which is particularly important due to the programme’s alignment with the CIPD professional awards standards.</p> <p>Although the intended delivery mode is 100% blended, the Panel also observed that ‘<i>fully online</i>’ was listed in the documentation, which the Panel understands to be NCI’s means of future-proofing the programme’s delivery modes. However, it must be noted that as there are currently no published QQI guidelines on the delivery of programmes</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>in a fully online framework (outside of QQi's Covid-19 contingency arrangements), it is therefore not within the Panel's remit to recommend approval of such. In respect of this, the Panel has identified a special condition of validation:</p> <p><i>NCI must remove "fully online" from the list of teaching and learning modalities on the proposed programme schedule, as well as any other references to "fully online" delivery in the programme documentation.</i></p> <p><i>[Condition 5]</i></p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

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
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that QQI's requirements under this criterion have been adequately addressed. The admission criteria and minimum entry requirements for both general learning and language proficiency are clearly specified within the Revalidation Descriptor. Arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) are also detailed.</p> <p>A progression destination has been identified for learners who wish to continue on to a PhD following successful completion of this programme.</p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The access, transfer and progression (ATP) arrangements for the embedded programmes are largely the same as the principal programme.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the Postgraduate Diploma is an embedded award for learners on the part-time version of the MA in HRM, while it is an exit only award for learners on the full-time programme.</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)

Criterion 5. The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹⁰.</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>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</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in HRM	Partially	<p>With the exception of the MSc in Finance, all of NCI's programmes at level 9 are block delivered. This includes the MA in HRM and the embedded Postgraduate Diploma. A single block would typically be delivered over three weeks for full-time learners and six weeks for part-time learners. While recognising the many benefits which block delivery can have, some learners may also find it challenging, particularly in terms of assessment.</p> <p>In addition to this, the intensive nature of the programme was noted, with p. 56 of the Revalidation Descriptor stating, "The MA in HRM and the PG Diploma in HRM are by their nature very intensive. Applicants to the programme are counselled regarding the level of effort and time, which a course at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications requires."</p> <p>In respect of this, the Panel has identified a special condition of validation:</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><i>Given the intensive nature of the programme, NCI must ensure that there is a monitoring plan in place pertaining to student wellbeing and that learner workload is kept under review.</i></p> <p><i>[Condition 2]</i></p> <p>Both NCI's BA(H) in HRM Strategy and Practice and the MA in HRM, as well as these programmes' embedded programmes, were reviewed by the Panel as part of a single Revalidation process. In its review, the Panel was keen to explore how NCI had incorporated new and emerging areas of interest in HRM within the programmes. International HRM was highlighted due to its particular growing importance.</p> <p>At undergraduate level, International HRM is integrated across a number of different modules, but not addressed in a standalone module; the primary rationale being that International HRM is addressed in its own module at postgraduate level. On the other hand, at postgraduate level, International HRM is integrated across various modules and also addressed in a standalone module.</p> <p>In reviewing the documentation, the Panel observed a lack of clarity regarding <i>how</i> International HRM is integrated across modules. In addition to this, the Panel noted that the <i>International HRM</i> module was listed as an <i>Elective</i> on both the MA and Postgraduate Diploma programmes.</p> <p>The Panel expressed some concern that, on the surface at least, a learner may enter onto the BA programme and progress to the MA programme, successfully completing both, while having never clearly studied International HRM.</p> <p>In respect of this, the Panel would like to make a recommendation to NCI:</p> <p><i>The Panel recommends that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.</i></p> <p><i>[Recommendation 1]</i></p> <p>The Panel sought to understand NCI's rationale for not having a full module on Learning and Development (L&D), particularly when there are 15 modules on the programme and L&D makes up only half of one of these.</p> <p>Representatives noted that although L&D is not addressed in a standalone module (as is the case on the undergraduate programme), it is linked in with the content on other modules, and is thus addressed in this manner.</p> <p>While recognising the already challenging task of incorporating such a broad range of potential content into the limited time available, the Panel nonetheless maintained that L&D, given its importance in HRM, should be more prominent at postgraduate and MA level. The Panel was of the view that NCI may be able to facilitate this by reflecting upon the current credit allocation for modules on the programme, which assigns a total of 45 credits to mandatory modules and an additional 15 credits (one 10 credit and one 5 credit) to the elective modules. Were this structure to be rebalanced to 50/10, as opposed to 45/15, there may be</p>
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		<p>room to explore an area like L&D in more depth within the mandatory modules.</p> <p>Representatives for NCI noted that a 50/10 model had been considered previously, but that it made more logistical sense to have a 10 credit elective and a 5 credit elective, and thus chose the 45/15 model. Notwithstanding this, the Panel maintains that L&D is an area in which more emphasis would undoubtedly be beneficial. In respect of this, the Panel would like to make a recommendation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Recommendation 3]</i></p> <p>NCI is proposing a maximum of two intakes per year onto the MA programme where demand warrants such. Each intake would consist of one taught year followed by a Dissertation. However, the Panel noted an inconsistency in the deadline of the Dissertation across these two intakes. The first intake would occur in September and end in May of the following year, with the Dissertation due in August, giving learners a total of three months to complete it. The second intake would occur in January and end in December, with the Dissertation due in May of the following year, giving learners a total of five months to complete it.</p> <p>The Panel emphasised that fairness and consistency of approach is crucial, and that it would be important for NCI to review this deadline to ensure such. In respect of this, the Panel would like to make a recommendation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>NCI should review the deadline for submission of the dissertation to ensure fairness and consistency for all learners.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Recommendation 5]</i></p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Partially	With the exception of <i>Recommendation 5</i> , which pertains to the principal programme only, the other conditions and recommendations identified above also apply to the embedded programme.

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
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>A specification of the programme's staffing requirements has been provided, and the Panel is satisfied that NCI has the necessary qualified and experienced staff in place to be able to deliver the programme effectively.</p> <p>Approved procedures are in place pertaining to the management of staff, and the Panel was impressed by NCI's proactive approach to staff development. All faculty members — full-time and associate faculty — have access to NCI's Teaching Enhancement Hub, which provides professional development resources around a number of core areas, including Teaching Effectiveness, Inclusive Practice, Digital Capability, and Reflection and Development. Within these areas, faculty can explore topics such as pedagogy, working with groups, teaching for critical thinking, academic integrity, digital learning resources, and reflective practice.</p> <p>Programmes are evaluated by programme staff, along with other stakeholders, and this feedback informs any future changes or revisions which may be made.</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.

Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.
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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
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The 'live' elements of the programme will be delivered from NCI's purpose-built, well-equipped IFSC campus, and a five-year plan for the programme, including the planned intake and projected costs of delivery, has been detailed in the Revalidation Descriptor.</p> <p>The programme is run in a blended mode, whereby some elements are delivered online and other elements are delivered in a more traditional 'live' setting. NCI has made significant investments to enhance its blended offering, including virtual desktop functionality (allowing learners remote access to relevant software) and a dual delivery setup, whereby lecturers are live-streamed and recorded, and therefore accessible to remote learners.</p> <p>Learners have full access to NCI's range of support services, including the Library Help Centre, Maths Support, Student Counselling and Disability Support Services, as well as the online mental wellbeing platform, SilverCloud. These services are further explored under Criterion 11.</p> <p>When considering this impressive level of investment in NCI's physical and digital resources, the Panel noted this should also extend to programme and module reading materials. While acknowledging the challenges which sometimes arise with the procurement of e-reading materials, the Panel was nonetheless of the view that access to such materials should not be restricted to hard copies only.</p> <p>In respect of this, the Panel would like to make a recommendation:</p>

		<p><i>NCI should aim to provide any essential reading texts in both e-book and hard copy formats.</i></p> <p><i>[Recommendation 4]</i></p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

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
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>Over the past number of years, NCI has been rolling out a dual delivery setup which facilitates the live-streaming of lectures, offering further learning opportunities to those who are unable to attend live lectures. Dual delivery also creates a more interactive learning environment for remote learners, as lecturers have the ability to open breakout rooms as part of class activities. Once a lecture has finished, the recording is made available online for learners to revisit as a revision tool.</p> <p>In addition to the dual delivery setup, NCI also provides a virtual desktop environment, whereby learners can access any necessary application or piece of software online. This is particularly useful to learners who are not always able to travel into the NCI campus to access these tools.</p> <p>Learners also have full access to NCI's impressive range of online support services. These are further expanded upon under Criterion 11.</p> <p>The Panel is of the view that these technological investments will prove invaluable to NCI's blended delivery and enhancing the overall learner experience. In respect of this, the Panel would like to offer a commendation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Panel commends NCI's integration of technology into the delivery of its programmes, highlighting in particular the dual delivery and blended options.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Commendation 2]</i></p> <p>Although intended for blended delivery, at the time of the Panel's evaluation, the programme had not yet returned to any form of face-to-face delivery; rather the programme was still running in a fully online capacity following the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and QQI's emergency measures which allowed providers to deliver their programmes online.</p> <p>However, taking cognisance of the fact that these measures are due to expire in August 2022, the Panel was of the view that NCI must begin to prepare for the return of the face-to-face elements of the programme. This was primarily prompted by the lack of any clear plan around such a return.</p>

		<p>In respect of this, a special condition of validation has been identified:</p> <p><i>NCI must devise a plan for the return to the face-to face element of NCI's blended delivery (for those learners who can avail of it) as soon as possible.</i></p> <p><i>[Condition 4]</i></p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

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, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that QQI's requirements under this criterion have been adequately addressed.</p> <p>The programme is block delivered via a blended framework, meaning that learners undertake one module at a time through a combination of online and classroom-based learning opportunities. NCI has also recently rolled out a dual delivery system, allowing lectures to be live-streamed. This allows learners who may be unable to join the live lecture to still participate.</p> <p>Problem-based learning is employed as a principal pedagogical strategy to maintain learner engagement. This is in combination with a variety of different resources and materials, such as industry databases, podcasts and web content.</p> <p>A variety of assessment methods are used within a UDL (Universal Design for Learning) framework, including case studies, presentations, projects, and reports.</p> <p>Learner progress is monitored on an ongoing basis by the Programme Team, and a range of support services (such as those outlined under Criterion 11) are available to learners throughout their time on the programme.</p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

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>¹⁵</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.¹⁶</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written <i>programme assessment strategy</i> for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.¹⁷</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.¹⁸</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>On review of the individual programme modules, the Panel observed a particular tendency toward the use of continuous assessment, with some modules also incorporating a proctored written exam. This may be attributed to NCI's shift toward Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, and offering more flexibility and choice to lecturers and learners in terms of assessment.</p> <p>Within these assessment structures, however, the Panel noted that the use of formative assessment was more limited. In many cases, module descriptors stated that formative assessments <i>may</i> be used or provided. While acknowledging the NCI's preference to use incorporate UDL principle, and the benefits this approach can have, the Panel was also of the view that this does not need to be at the expense of formative assessment, which can provide learners with a good opportunity to receive feedback from lecturers and build upon their own learning.</p> <p>With this in mind, the Panel identified a special condition of validation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>NCI must conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Condition 1]</i></p> <p>It was noted that the issuing of assignments across different modules was sometimes inconsistent. Specifically, some lecturers issued</p>

¹⁵ See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁶ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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).

		<p>assignments at the start of their modules, while others waited until the module was almost finished.</p> <p>However, as the programme is block-delivered, the issuing of assignments towards or at the end of a module may give rise to increased pressure on learners; the reason being that learners would be preparing to start a new module while at the same time only starting the assignment for the previous module. Where the assignment for the next module is then issued at the start, this would result in overlapping assignments, increasing (albeit unintentionally) the workload burden on learners. This may be particularly challenging for learners who are also working outside of their studies.</p> <p>In respect of this, the Panel has identified a special condition of validation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>NCI should, where possible, issue assignments at the start of each module.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Condition 3]</i></p> <p>In reviewing the modules, the Panel noted the breadth of content and amount of assessment involved in some of the 5-credit modules, and queried whether this was realistic. <i>People Resourcing</i> and <i>Employee Relations</i> were two such modules highlighted by the Panel. Representatives for NCI acknowledged the challenge of covering everything but emphasised the importance of ensuring learners leave with the critical skills to allow them to progress in their chosen career.</p> <p>Another 5-credit module, <i>The Science of Decision-Making</i>, was noted by the Panel for its hefty assessment load, which includes three pieces of continuous assessment (a reflective journal, a group report and a group presentation) and a terminal exam. The rationale for this structure was that the reflective journal allows learners to apply what they learn to how they think, the group report and presentation focuses learners on making decisions as a group, and the terminal exam allows learner to assess their overall knowledge.</p> <p>Without wishing to be prescriptive in how NCI chooses to structure its assessment, the Panel is also cognisant of learner workload and ensuring assessment load aligns with the module's respective credit weighting. With this in mind, the Panel would like to make a recommendation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Panel recommends that NCI review its approach to the allocation of credits in terms of assessment to ensure that assessment load consistently aligns with credit weighting (i.e. that no 10-credit module is assessed in the same manner as a 5-credit module).</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Recommendation 2]</i></p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

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 disabilities¹⁹.</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>²⁰ 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
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>The Panel would like to highlight NCI's impressive range of both academic and non-academic supports, to which all enrolled learners have full access. This includes the Library Help Centre, Maths Support, Student Counselling and Disability Support Services, as previously noted under Criterion 7.</p> <p>A Learning Support Service is available to learners who wish to improve their academic writing skills, research skills or note-taking skills, among others. Similarly, a Mathematics Support Service is available to learners looking to improve their understanding of various relevant mathematical concepts.</p> <p>Learners undertaking the Dissertation are duly supervised and well looked after, with a range of support systems in place to guide learners as they navigate through the work.</p> <p>The provision of a 24/7 online mental health and wellbeing platform, SilverCloud, stood out for particular commendation. This service is available to all learners and is designed to assist those who may be struggling with anxiety, exam stress, or depression. NCI may also refer</p>

¹⁹ 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).

²⁰ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

		<p>learners on to a professional counsellor, with SilverCloud being used as an interim service until an appointment has been arranged.</p> <p>In acknowledgement of the above, the Panel would like to offer NCI a commendation:</p> <p><i>The Panel commends NCI's commitment to the provision of learner supports, including academic, wellbeing and mental health supports.</i></p> <p><i>[Commendation 1]</i></p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

<p>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.</p> <p>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-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance²¹ is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in HRM	Yes	<p>NCI's quality assurance procedures have been previously approved by QQI, and the Panel is satisfied that the programme interfaces effectively with these, the procedures are appropriately aligned with QQI's own guidelines, and the effectiveness of these procedures is routinely monitored.</p> <p>As noted under Criterion 3, NCI has a number of mechanisms in place to ensure the programme is updated in consultation with stakeholders, and the Panel is satisfied that NCI has appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to do this.</p> <p>With consideration of the <i>conditions</i> and <i>recommendation</i> identified, the Panel is nonetheless confident that NCI has the resources and capacity to address these promptly and effectively.</p>
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM	Yes	As per principal programme.

²¹ See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 Principal programme: Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

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;
✓	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 principal programme almost fully meets the validation criteria, with a number pre-validation conditions outlined below to address the areas of concern identified by the Panel.

Commendations

1. The Panel commends NCI's commitment to the provision of learner supports, including academic, wellbeing and mental health supports.
2. The Panel commends NCI's integration of technology into the delivery of its programmes, highlighting in particular the dual delivery and blended options.

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

1. NCI must conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added.
2. Given the intensive nature of the programme in part-time mode, the lack of breaks and the quick turnaround time, NCI must ensure that there is a monitoring plan in place pertaining to student wellbeing, ensuring that learner workload is kept under review.
3. NCI should, where possible, issue assignments at the start of each module.
4. NCI must devise a plan for the return to the face-to face element of NCI's blended delivery (for those learners who can avail of it) as soon as possible.
5. NCI must remove '*fully online*' from the list of teaching and learning modalities on the proposed programme schedule, as well as any other references to '*fully online*' delivery in the programme documentation.

Recommendations – MA in Human Resource Management

1. The Panel recommends that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.
2. The Panel recommends that NCI review its approach to the allocation of credits in terms of assessment to ensure that assessment load consistently aligns with credit weighting (i.e. that no 10-credit module is assessed in the same manner as a 5-credit module).
3. The Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.
4. NCI should aim to provide any essential reading texts in **both** e-book and hard copy formats.
5. NCI should review the deadline for submission of the dissertation to ensure fairness and consistency for all learners.

Embedded programme 1: Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in HRM

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;
✓	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 embedded programme almost fully meets the validation criteria, with a number pre-validation conditions outlined below to address the areas of concern identified by the Panel.

Commendations

1. The Panel commends NCI's commitment to the provision of learner supports, including academic, wellbeing and mental health supports.
2. The Panel commends NCI's integration of technology into the delivery of its programmes, highlighting in particular the dual delivery and blended options.

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

1. NCI must conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added as a more appropriate assessment choice.
2. Given the intensive nature of the programme, the lack of breaks and the quick turnaround time, NCI must ensure that there is a monitoring plan in place pertaining to student wellbeing, ensuring that learner workload is kept under review.
3. NCI should, where possible, issue assignments at the start of each module.
4. NCI must devise a plan for the return to the face-to face element of NCI's blended delivery (for those learners who can avail of it) as soon as possible.
5. NCI must remove '*fully online*' from the list of teaching and learning modalities on the proposed programme schedule, as well as any other references to '*fully online*' delivery in the programme documentation.

Recommendations – Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management

1. The Panel recommends that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.
2. The Panel recommends that NCI review its approach to the allocation of credits in terms of assessment to ensure that assessment load consistently aligns with credit weighting (i.e. that

no 10-credit module is assessed in the same manner as a 5-credit module).

3. The Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.
4. NCI should aim to provide any essential reading texts in **both** e-book and hard copy forms.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

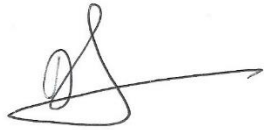
6. NCI must conduct a review of the programme modules to consider where formative assessment may be added.
7. Given the intensive nature of the programme in part-time mode, the lack of breaks and the quick turnaround time, NCI must ensure that there is a monitoring plan in place pertaining to student wellbeing, ensuring that learner workload is kept under review.
8. NCI should, where possible, issue assignments at the start of each module.
9. NCI must devise a plan for the return to the face-to face element of NCI's blended delivery (for those learners who can avail of it) as soon as possible.
10. NCI must remove '*fully online*' from the list of teaching and learning modalities on the proposed programme schedule, as well as any other references to '*fully online*' delivery in the programme documentation.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

6. The Panel recommends that NCI produce a mapping for how International HRM is integrated across modules on the programme.
7. The Panel recommends that NCI review its approach to the allocation of credits in terms of assessment to ensure that assessment load consistently aligns with credit weighting (i.e. that no 10-credit module is assessed in the same manner as a 5-credit module).
8. NCI should review the deadline for submission of the dissertation to ensure fairness and consistency for all learners.
9. NCI should aim to provide any essential reading texts in **both** e-book and hard copy forms.
10. The Programme Team should reflect upon increasing the emphasis placed on Learning and Development within the programme, possibly through a rebalancing between mandatory and elective modules.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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



Signed:

Panel Chairperson:

Date: 4 April 2022

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)*