Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	Carlow College, St Patrick's, College St, Carlow, R93 A003
Programme(s) Reviewed	BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Dr Patrick McGarty	Chair	Senior Lecturer, School of Health and Social Sciences, Munster Technological University (Kerry Campus), Tralee, Co. Kerry
Naomi Jackson	Report Writer	Independent Education Consultant
Helena Doody	Subject / academic representative	Senior Lecturer and Head of Social Care, TU Dublin
Dr Jarka Velartova	Subject / academic representative	Programme Director and Lecturer in Applied Social Care, Atlantic Technological University
Gavin Doyle	Sector / industry representative	Kare Local Service Leader, Moorefield Local Service
Emil Kindl	Learner representative	Learner of BA Sociology and Politics at Atlantic Technological University Sligo

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

Part 1. Introduction

The following report summarises the findings of the Independent Review Panel (the panel) on conclusion of the virtual visit and review of the documentation provided by Carlow College, St Patrick's (the provider) as part of the review and revalidation process of the BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care).

The review and revalidation process were informed by the Terms of Reference developed by the provider and approved by QQI.

The BA is a 180 ECTs, 3-year, full-time programme delivered on-campus to a maximum of one intake per year. It has been designed to ensure graduates satisfy the eligibility requirements necessary for registration as Social Care Workers as set out by CORU in their *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Work (2019).*

The provider is seeking revalidation of the programme for a five-year period, commencing with an initial intake in September 2024.

The review and revalidation of this programme was conducted in tandem with the review and revalidation of the one-year add-on programme BA Honours Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) which acts as a progression route for graduates of this programme.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Programme Review Report	Programme Review Report
2.	Programme Descriptor	Programme Descriptor
3.	Module Descriptors	Module Descriptors
4.	Datasets for Programme Review Report	Datasets for Programme Review Report
5.	Exam Papers and Assessment Details	Exam Papers and Assessment Details
6.	Monitoring Reports	Monitoring Reports
7.	Programme Specific QA Procedures	Programme Specific QA Procedures
8.	Amendments to the Programme Since Last Validation	Amendments to the Programme Since Last Validation
9.	Student Handbook	Student Handbook
10.	Programme Descriptor (current programme)	Programme Descriptor (current programme)
11.	External Examiner Reports 2019 - 2022	External Examiner Reports 2019 - 2022

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Fr Conn Ó Maoldhomhnaigh	President
2.	Dr Eric Derr	Vice President/ Head of QA & International Programmes
3.	Dr Thomas Mc Grath	Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar
4.	Dr Penny Humby	Head of Academic Programmes & Delivery
5.	Brian Barry	Director of Strategy & Operations

6.	Dr Eoghan Smith	Academic & Research Development Programme Manager
7.	Helen Whelan	Administrator – Office of the Registrar
8.	Dr John McHugh	Programme Director / Design Team Chair
9.	Monica Dowling	Placement Co-ordinator / Design Team
10.	Miriam Denn	Lecturer / Design Team
11.	Jenny Fahy	Lecturer / Design Team
12.	Stephanie Hanlon	Lecturer / Design Team
13.	Antonia Kenny	Lecturer / Design Team
14.	Michael McCarthy	Lecturer / Design Team
15.	Alison Brennan	Programme Administrator / Design Team
16.	Karen Delaney	Admissions Officer
17.	Dr Lisa Fortune	Head of Student Services
18.	Keith Baxter	IT & Students System Manager
19.	Agnes Phelan	Library
20.	Dr Candice Condon	Lecturer
21.	Clare King	Lecturer
22.	Dr Sarah Otten	Lecturer
23.	Jethro Kabia	Stage 1 Learner
24.	Jordan Stanley	Stage 1 Learner
25.	Ebunlola Esther Bamgbade	Stage 1 Learner
26.	Shannon Whittle	Stage 2 Learner
27.	Tanya Sheridan	Stage 2 Learner
28.	Michelle Francis	Stage 2 Learner
29.	Tomas Rowantree	Stage 2 Learner
30.	Inga Daskeviciene	Stage 4 Learner/ Level 7 Graduate
31.	Natalia Rudnik	Stage 4 Learner/ Level 7 Graduate
32.	Debra Sherlock	Level 7 & 8 Graduate
33.	Tracy Collins	Employer / Sector Representative
34.	Grace Dunbar	Employer / Sector Representative
35.	Michael Farrell	Employer / Sector Representative
36.	Sean Fitzpatrick	Employer / Sector Representative
37.	Barry Hade	Employer / Sector Representative
38.	Bernie Loughman	Employer / Sector Representative

2.3   Description of evaluation process

The programme review and revalidation has been conducted in accordance with the guidance issued by QQI in the 2022 publication *Programme Review Manual. A Guide for Providers on HET Programme Review and Revalidation* and the *Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (Nov. 2017)*.

The evaluation process commenced with a self-evaluation undertaken by the provider and summarised in the provider's Programme Review Report. This, along with associated supporting material and the proposed revised Programme Descriptor, which was informed by the self-evaluation, was then issued to the QQI approved panel for consideration.

Panel members were invited to share their preliminary observations in advance of the site visit and a pre-panel meeting took place on March 4th, 2024. A virtual visit took place on March 6th, 2024. During this visit the panel had the opportunity to meet with a range of stakeholders, members of the programme team and the provider's management team. The panel engaged in discussions and sought information and clarification relating to the approach to the review and looked for evidence and / or justification for proposed revisions or decisions taken in respect of the programme and the revised programme descriptor. The panel was tasked with:

a. Evaluating the effectiveness of the self-evaluation by the provider, considering the documentation provided including the Programme Review Report, and
b. Evaluating the proposed modifications and the revised programme, as documented in the Programme Descriptor and module descriptors, when considered in the context of the review findings and the QQI validation criteria.

In completing the virtual visit, the panel summarised their findings and issued the provider with preliminary feedback including the proposed recommendation to QQI and associated commendations, conditions and recommendations. Following the virtual visit, the panel worked collaboratively to agree the final panel report.

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 review was conducted in accordance with the QQI approved Terms of Reference. The provider outlined the significance of the programme validation period under review coinciding with the COVID pandemic and the need for this context to be a core factor when considering the experience of the programme to date. It is also of significance to note that this programme is CORU approved for graduates to register as Social Care Workers. As such the provider is mindful to ensure that programme revisions ensure continued alignment with CORU's *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Work (2019).*

Within the approved Terms of Reference the provider identified high level proposed modifications for consideration. Specifically:

1. The programme design, structure and content to be reviewed to ensure they are in line with the Social Care Workers Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes (CORU, 2017) and The Social Care Workers Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers (CORU, 2017).
2. The distribution of credits to be reviewed to ensure that the workload of learners is balanced across the academic year and reflects the programme and module learning outcomes.
3. Course requirements regarding attendance and participation to be reviewed to ensure that they continue to align with the Core Standards of Proficiency.

4. To review the assessment strategy to ensure that they remain formative, progressive, and support the learner in their professional development and academic journey that has professional and academic integrity at its centre.

On conclusion of the self-evaluation the provider proposed a number of the changes to the programme as follows:

1. Module titles need to reflect and signal the connection of the content with the Standards of Proficiency. Where possible explicit reference to Social Care should appear in the module title. This will support the marketing of the programme in the first instance and also support the resource-planning for the programme.
2. Learning outcomes need to explicitly reflect the Standards of Proficiency (SoP). The Design Team will establish a common approach in terms of how this is expressed. A specific MIMLO may be linked to more than one SoP.
3. Module assessments need to explicitly link to learning outcomes and be supported by marking rubrics where possible. This is to evidentially support the progressive training and development of professional Social Care workers.
4. Learning spaces to be reviewed in light of the specific professional training requirements of the programme. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on creative, practical and group-work.
5. Module reading lists need to be reviewed to reflect current research, policy and professional practice. The use of online material needs to be precise and focused.
6. Attendance and progression have been set out more clearly since CORU approval and the evidence points to good attendance rates amongst Social Care learners. Feedback from lecturing and admin staff point to a high administration load attached to tracking attendance of individual learners. We need to ensure that there is a balance between monitoring attendance and use of the information gathered in monitoring.
7. Feedback from both learners and teaching staff identify Stages 2 and 3 as being particularly challenging when it comes to assessment. This appears to be because learners complete 7 modules in both Semester 4 and Semester 5 of the programme. This is a consequence of placements in Semesters 3 and 6 being allocated 25 credits each thus leaving 35 credits (made up of seven 5 credit modules) being completed in the alternative semesters in college. The Design team recommends that the spread of credits across modules in Semesters 4 and 5 be examined and the use of cross-modular assessment be explored.
8. In reviewing learner performance through Assessment Reports, it was noted that the College/QQI Marks and Standards approach to 'Pass by compensation' needs refinement in relation to Social Care modules where SoPs are assessed through CA's and Examinations. The Design Team recommends that the practice of 'Pass by compensation' for marginal fail should not apply to Social Care modules; additionally, assessments based on evidential work based on practical work, group-work or reflective journals based on experiential work should not be replaced with an 'alternative assignment'. In such cases, learners should be required to repeat the module if there is no equivalent source of evidence to demonstrate the relevant proficiencies.
9. A review of Admissions data points to the positive development of greater diversity of learner intake. The Design Team noted that attention is needed to respond to this diversity in relation to English language requirements as application for mature learners. This would enhance existing supports in the College to target resources towards ensuring learners will have the best chance of success through their learning, education and training.

In addition to the proposed modifications listed above, the panel noted that the provider's review report listed implications for the programme in each sub-section of the report, but it was not always clear what consideration had been given to these implications and why they had not been factored into the proposed modifications. Furthermore, the list of modifications as listed did not correlate with the table of modifications in section 7 of the Review Report. In discussion the provider acknowledged the challenge of completing the documentation requirements and the understanding that not all implications needed to be taken into account at that time.

Recommendations:

R1: For future programme review instances, the provider includes more comprehensive insight in respect of identified programme implications and ensure a clear rationale for each proposed modification is included within the body of the report.

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Section B.   Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Section 2.1 of the Programme Review Report details the provider's mission, vision and values and strategic developments for the provider since the programme was last validated. This section further outlines quality assurance developments and specifically the approval of the providers quality assurance by QQI as part of the re-engagement process which was successfully completed in September 2019.

The panel notes that significant strategic change is in process for the provider, in particular relating to the evolving relationship with South-East Technological University (SETU). This was further discussed during the panel visit with a view to the panel considering potential implications for learners. The provider outlined the early stage in the formal amalgamation process but also noted the existing collaborative relationship with SETU.

Section 2.2 of the report outlines QQI as the primary validating body for the provider, with SETU also validating some postgraduate provision and being a collaborating provider in respect of a Higher Diploma award.

Section 2.2 confirms the programme under review received approval from the CORU Social Care Workers Registration Board in September 2020 and is now subject to continued monitoring of suitability by the Social Care Workers Registration Board. While the Panel were mindful of the accreditation requirements and implications, the Panel's focus for the visit was the QQI guidelines for programme review and the criteria for validation.

The revalidation of the programme remains within the provider's approved scope of provision.

Recommendations:

None

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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 panel noted the detailed baseline qualitative and quantitative data presented by the provider and the appropriate benchmarking that was embedded within this.

It was evident from the analysis within the review report and from discussion as part of the virtual visit that such data is used to inform decisions in respect of programme management, operation and learner supports.

The panel noted that the application and registration data indicate a predominance of female and applicants and learners but further acknowledged the predominance of females in social care programmes nationally. The panel queried whether the provider employed strategic initiatives to attract applications from underrepresented groups. The provider confirmed that no formal initiatives were in place but that external factors typically influence applicant demographics.

In considering the attrition and completion data the panel sought clarification whether the data was based on first day of registration figures or whether the provider operated a census point. The provider confirmed that attrition data was based on students registered on November 1st in the academic year and completion data was based on those learners presented to a Board of Examiners.

In discussing attrition and completion data the panel noted the number of learners who failed to complete stage 3 of the programme and queried whether the provider had considered the addition of an exit award at level 6 to recognise the academic attainment of these learners. The provider confirmed that a similar model had been in place previously but felt that the qualification of significance is the professionally accredited level 7 award. The provider further advised that a transcript of results is made available to learners who exit the programme prior to successful completion of the award.

Graduate destinations data was highlighted by the panel and in particular the high level of graduates who progress to employment in roles utilising the Social Care Worker title.

Analysis of the attendance data reflects a sound awareness of the factors that motivate and demotivate student attendance. The panel queried whether the 15-minute break suggestion been implemented. The provider confirmed that this has been implemented on a trial basis where lectures are timetabled back-to-back. This has been introduced along with close consideration of the learning and teaching methodology to be employed in these lessons to ensure active participation of learners to maintain engagement and motivation.

Recommendations:

R2. Investigate the possibility of embedding an exit award of Higher Certificate to formally recognise the attainment of those learners who successfully complete stages 1 and 2 but fail to meet the requirements for the degree qualification.

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:

The Programme Review Report documents the physical facilities and resources for teaching and learning and this includes the capacity of each teaching and learning space as well as the equipment and technology available. The use of Moodle as a VLE is also referenced along with Turn-It-In text matching software.

An analysis of the fitness for purpose of the resources is provided and this reflects the views of teaching faculty and learners from 2018 – 2021. The impact of moving online due to the pandemic is also highlighted here and the provider shows a strong awareness of the need to consider suitability of online delivery in a non-pandemic context. The analysis identifies the challenges of facilitating group work in settings which are not necessarily conducive to this but as the programme has progressed an increased number of flexible learning spaces are now available. A short video tour of the campus was included for the panel and during the virtual visit a brief presentation of photographs provided further insight into the diverse learning spaces and recent enhancements that had been implemented.

The contact hours specified on the validated programme schedule have been adhered to through the timetabling model employed, albeit that delivery moved online during COVID restrictions.

Practice placement is an important aspect of the programme with learners completing a placement in semesters 3 and 6. The provider has a scheduled placement preparation period in advance of each placement. This is of 2 weeks duration and a copy of the semester 3 preparation period and associated learning activities was provided for the panel. The impact on lecturing staff arising from the timing of these preparation periods and the placements is highlighted by the provider. The demand on learners is of the placement preparation period, the placement and the demands of the semesters that partner the placement semester were also highlighted by learners.

Within the review report the provider identified possibly measures to address the challenges associated with placement and specifically the workload burden of the 35 credit semesters that are a consequence of having a 25 credit, 1 semester placement block in each of year 2 and 3. Within the report and in discussions the provider identifies the preferred option of retaining the current programme structure while including combined or cross modular assessment. It was outlined that this approach is also being pursued as it addresses the issue of over-assessment and may offer opportunities for richer learner engagement with content. The panel are of the view that this approach only addresses assessment load and fails to adequately address the workload burden and time commitment required of learners to undertake 7 modules or 35 credits in one semester.

Programme workload and the implications for both lecturers and learners are discussed in detail in the review report. This includes assessment load and the implications of the credit weighting of the current programme. In particular the report shows a strong awareness of the implications of assessment timing, assessment volume and frequency as well as the types of assessment. Both staff and student feedback highlight these matters.

Section 3.2.4 of the review report deals with learner attendance monitoring. Clear data is provided along with an overview of the systems for data recording and the monitoring mechanisms in place. The data suggests that attendance level have improved over the period under review, though it is acknowledged that this covers the covid online period and is reliant on the accuracy and completeness of data entry. The historic challenges of student attendance, or lack thereof, are clearly documented. These include a range of factors such as timetabling and assessment deadlines. The report further documents the measures implemented to address the attendance monitoring requirements of the CORU guidelines. The programme aligns access to placement with the learner's attendance record and this appears to support learner attendance. Learners are required to have a minimum of 70% attendance in lectures and tutorials to be authorised to progress to placement. The provider is proposing this is revised to 80% in the revalidated programme. The panel queried what is involved in reviewing learner attendance and how those who fall below the threshold are managed. The provider summarised their attendance monitoring and early warning system along with the mechanisms they have in place to allow learners to evidence their continued engagement with the programme.

Section 3.2.6 documents the teaching and learning strategies employed on the programme and the objective of each methodology. The provider promotes the use of constructive alignment and the integration of teaching and learning strategies that facilitate the attainment of learning outcomes and the development of graduate attributes which align with the professional Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Work.

The training provided for Field Practice Educators and rationale for the same is clearly outlined. This is a 5-unit training programme designed to align the FPE's knowledge, supervision and assessment of learners with the teaching, learning and assessment strategy of the programme and the of the Registration Board for Health and Social care (CORU). The training comprises:

- Unit 1: Introduction to CORU
- Unit 2: Practice Educators as Supervisors
- Unit 3: Assessing Students on Placement
- Unit 4: Working with Students in Difficulty
- Unit 5: Placement Policies and Support Documents

The panel noted that Practice Educators may not necessarily have completed the training before being assigned a student on placement. The training is offered by the provider but may not be taken up by the FPE due to conflicting demands.

Section 3.2.7 discusses the attainment of learning outcomes and presents clear data that shows the number of learners who attain minimum learning outcomes year by year. This is presented at high level and not on a module-by-module basis. Consideration of attainment at the first attempt is not provided. The provider recognises the need to review attainment in greater depth.

The report outlines the approach to assessment which encompasses both summative and formative assessments and incorporates diverse assessment methodologies. The issue of over-assessment is identified by the provider as a historic issue. An overview of the number and types of assessments is provided per stage.

Recommendations:

None

Section D.   Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

The panel queried the different stakeholder engagement mechanisms in place. The provider advised that engagement with stakeholders was directly impacted by Covid. Normal systems for data collection were also disrupted but in many ways collaboration increased in order to maintain student support, teaching, learning and assessment.

The programme team described an ongoing system of engagement with students through the use of module feedback mechanisms, class reps on programme boards or through the Academic Advisors. In addition to this ongoing feedback is secured from placement supervisors and placement agencies at the end of placement through a formal evaluation process. The team outlined how the use of both formal and informal feedback mechanisms supports a continuous improvement approach. An example of this was highlighted whereby facilities management was considered in the context of the student experience and the kind of learnings required by this programme. Learner feedback and lecturer feedback, led by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, has informed changes to learning spaces.

The challenges of capturing learner feedback were highlighted, and the provider acknowledge that various approaches have been employed. The current model involves the use of online surveys on a semester basis and an annual basis to respond to individual modules and aspects of teaching and learning experience. In addition, each class has 1 or 2 class reps supported by the Student Union. The class reps act as a link between the classes and the college and play a role on Programme Board. Attendance of class reps at Course Boards is noted as a challenge in some instances. When the panel probed this, it was acknowledged that this is likely due to timings in the year where matters such as assessment load prevent attendance, and the timing of the meeting in the day when many students are commuting and have transport links to connect with.

It was noted that Class Reps are trained for this role by the SU and also by NStEP. Academic Advisors secure feedback through supporting students with individual issues.

The panel questioned the mechanisms in place for closing the feedback loop where learners have put forward recommendations or raised concerns. While the provider outlined the role of the class rep in feeding back to their class and the availability of meeting minutes to support this, a systematic mechanism for closing the feedback loop for all formal feedback channels was not clearly articulated. The panel were of the view that in the absence of such mechanisms there is an increased risk of students disengaging with feedback processes.

The panel queried what mechanisms are in place to secure employer feedback, outside of placement related feedback. The programme team highlighted that availability and opportunity to engage is a core part of this and that the involvement of guest speakers and industry partners in the delivery of the programme or placement preparation provides a useful vehicle for this. It was further explained that plans are in place to develop an industry engagement forum to formalise this collaboration and feedback gathering opportunities. The panel met with placement representatives as part of the virtual visit and received positive feedback in respect of the relationship between the provider and placement settings, the availability of training, management of expectations, the preparedness of learners, and the equivalence and comparability with other providers of the provider's arrangements for and management of placement.

Recommendations

None

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme
Commentary:

The programme review report clearly evidenced the evaluation of the programme by learners and graduates and articulated the strengths and areas for further consideration identified through this process. Key areas of focus included placement preparation, placement experience, assessment types, assessment load and assessment feedback, the impact of 35 credit semesters. This was captured within the review report and reiterated by the representatives who met with the panel as part of the virtual visit.

The representatives spoke very highly of the college, their lecturers and the support staff. The writing supports, counselling service, and digital skills workshops were each highlighted as valued supports.

The impact of covid and the move to emergency remote delivery of the programme was identified as being a challenge but one in which the learners felt well supported by the college.

Recommendations:

None

Evaluation of the programme by Staff
Commentary:

The Programme Team outlined that the approach to the review was to have a broad design team to be as inclusive as possible with regular meetings on a fortnightly basis. This allowed for detailed discussions taking account of the data that had built up over 5 years. It is evident from the provider's review report that staff views were sought and clearly articulated for the panel's consideration. Section 4.2 documents the feedback received from different staff stakeholder groups. The panel noted that staff also highlight concerns with assessment timing and scheduling. Equally it was acknowledged that the college gives close consideration to this each year.

The panel met with senior management, academic and professional / support staff as part of the virtual visit. It was evident that a collegiate approach had been taken in completing the review and that all parties had a voice in the review process but also in the ongoing operation of the programme. The review report identified challenges experienced by staff in operating the programme and proposed measures to address these.

Recommendations:

None

External Examiner Feedback
Commentary:

Section 4.4. of the provider's review report outlines the role of external examiner feedback in the programme monitoring and enhancement process. Specifically it outlines how external examiner recommendations and feedback are discussed at the Programme Board and appropriate actions are proposed. These are captured in the Annual Programme Board Monitoring Report which is considered by Academic Council. Section 4.4.2 of the report summarises the comments from external examiners and the actions taken by the college in response. These are predominantly positive and where concerns are raised in respect of matters such as grade inflation or lenient grading at higher levels, there is clear action identified by the provider and subsequent commentary from the external examiner to acknowledge this. During the panel visit the programme team made regular reference to the role of, and engagement with, the external examiner as a means of protecting the integrity of the programme and supporting enhancement.

Recommendations:

None

Section E.   Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

Section 5.1.1 of the provider's review report discusses the approach adopted which encourages open dialogue between staff and students to resolves matters of concern without the need to revert to the formal complaints procedure that is in place. It was noted that only 1 formal complaint was recorded, and this was not upheld. The panel met with learner representatives as part of the virtual visit and were assured that learners were able to raise concerns directly with lecturers or with the Academic Advisors.

The panel noted that the college has only received three review requests and one recheck request since 2018 and that each review application was unsuccessful while the recheck was successful. It was further noted that each review application related to Practice Placement and Portfolio 2.

Recommendations:

None

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The provider's review report discusses the QA systems and processes in place and details the engagement in the Annual Quality Reporting process. Revisions and updates to the QA systems since approval through re-engagement are also summarised along with the additional or alternative measures that were introduced to ensure continued effectiveness of college programmes and services during the Covid contingency arrangements.

During the virtual visit the panel discussed a number of different QA processes with the provider including:

- English Language entry requirements and supports for learners with English as a second language.

The provider detailed the English Language policy that has been developed in preparation for the IEM, the standards that are set for entry, and the additional supports that are extended to learners with English as a second language.

- RPL and advanced entry

The provider outlined the use of RPL and advanced entry arrangements in place.

- Deferral procedures

The panel queried the procedures for the management of deferrals and any specific limitations associated with this. The provider outlined the close management of deferrals on a case-by-case basis.

- Attendance monitoring system

The panel sought additional information on how the attendance monitoring system worked in practice and the implications of this for both staff and learners. The provider described the role of lecturers in maintaining up to date records and the actions taken by the team when a learner's attendance is highlighted as having the potential of falling below the threshold. The panel were advised that attendance reviews take place at weeks 4, 8 and 12 of the semesters in an attempt to catch learners before attendance or lack of engagement becomes an issue. The role of the Learner Information and Retention Officer (LIRO) was also outlined.

- Learner and external stakeholder mechanisms were also discussed as outlined earlier in this report (section D).
- Programme management and oversight
  The provider discussed the role of the Programme Board and the role of the Practice Placement Advisory Committee in management of the programme.

Overall the panel is satisfied that the provider has an effective QA system in place that is being actively implemented and monitored for continued effectiveness.

Recommendations:

None

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

Commentary:

Not applicable.

Recommendations:

None

Section F.   Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

The panel is satisfied the provider has carried out a systematic review of the programme in accordance with the approved Terms of Reference. In doing so, consideration has been given to the views of diverse stakeholder groups and information obtained from data analysis.

The modifications proposed for the programme are, in the main, informed by the data collated in the review report. However, it was noted that in some instances proposed modifications were not addressed within the body of the report. These were subsequently discussed with the panel during the virtual visit.

Recommendations:

R1: For future programme review instances, the provider includes more comprehensive insight in respect of identified programme implications and ensure a clear rationale for each proposed modification is included within the body of the report.

Section G.   Revision of the programme

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

Commentary:

The panel is generally supportive of the proposed modifications to the programme. However, a condition of validation has been specified in respect of validation criterion 5 - The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose. In respect of the proposal to retain the current programme structure and increase assessment integration as a means of addressing stakeholder concerns relating to pressure of workload in those semesters which fall opposite a placement semester and include modules totalling 35 credits, the panel is of the view that this is not sufficient to address the impact on the learner.

The panel also notes a recommendation in respect of a potential for an exit award.

Recommendations:

Refer to condition of validation - Revise the programme structure to ensure that no semester requires a learner to complete more than 30 credits of learning and that the placement components are increased to 30 credits, aligning it with comparable programmes.

R2. Investigate the possibility of embedding an exit award of Higher Certificate to formally recognise the attainment of those learners who successfully complete stages 1 and 2 but fail to meet the requirements for the degree qualification.

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 acknowledges the extensive work undertaken by the provider in managing data collection and feedback processes, establishing a regular schedule of review meetings to ensure the review was a fully collaborative process, completion of data analysis and benchmarking, and the effective QA system in place that underpins the review process. The panel further acknowledges the quality of the documentation shared with the panel and the open dialogue with the panel as part of the virtual visit.

Section B.   Recommendations on review process:

R1: For future programme review instances, the provider includes more comprehensive insight in respect of identified programme implications and ensure a clear rationale for each proposed modification is included within the body of the report.

R2. Investigate the possibility of embedding an exit award of Higher Certificate to formally recognise the attainment of those learners who successfully complete stages 1 and 2 but fail to meet the requirements for the degree qualification.

Section C.   Commentary on programme revisions:

As outlined in part 3, section G, the panel is generally supportive of the proposed modifications to the programme. However, a condition of validation has been specified in respect of validation criterion 5 - The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose. In respect of the proposal to retain the current programme structure and increase assessment integration as a means of addressing stakeholder concerns relating to pressure of workload in those semesters which fall opposite a placement semester and include modules totalling 35 credits, the panel is of the view that this is not sufficient to address the impact on the learner.

Section D.   Recommendations on programme revisions:

Refer to condition of validation - Revise the programme structure to ensure that no semester requires a learner to complete more than 30 credits of learning and that the placement components are increased to 30 credits, aligning it with comparable programmes.

Signed: _____

Panel Chairperson:

Date: _26/4/24_

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

Part 1.   Provider details

Provider name	Carlow College, St Patrick's
Date of site visit	March 6th 2024 (virtual visit)
Date of report	26 April 2024

Section A.   Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)
	Award	Bachelor of Arts
	Credit	180 ECTS
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Dr Patrick McGarty	Chair	Senior Lecturer, School of Health and Social Sciences, Munster Technological University (Kerry Campus), Tralee, Co. Kerry
Naomi Jackson	Report Writer	Independent Education Consultant
Helena Doody	Subject / academic representative	Senior Lecturer and Head of Social Care, TU Dublin
Dr Jarka Velartova	Subject / academic representative	Programme Director and Lecturer in Applied Social Care, Atlantic Technological University
Gavin Doyle	Sector / industry representative	Kare Local Service Leader, Moorefield Local Service
Emil Kindl	Learner representative	Learner of BA Sociology and Politics at Atlantic Technological University Sligo

Section C.   Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners
Carlow College, St Patrick's	60	20

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	1
Maximum total number of learners per intake	60
Programme duration *(months from start to completion)*	3 calendar years

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The panel is satisfied that the proposed enrolment is reflective of demand for the programme, supports industry demand for the programme and is within the capacity and capability of the provider to deliver the programme and effectively support the proposed maximum numbers.

Target learner groups

Target learners for the BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care) include Leaving Certificate students, FETAC students, Mature students, ACCS, Advanced Entry Students (restricted to other CORU approved programmes) and international students. The intention is to continue to expand and cater for the learning needs of the local population and the demands of local Social Care services and employers.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full Time

The teaching and learning modalities

Face to face only

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 aim of the Programme is to provide learners with the knowledge, skills and experiences that will enable them to function as competent practitioners, and to meet the professional and academic eligibility requirements necessary for registration as Social Care Workers as set out by CORU in their Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Work (2019). Those proficiencies are set out under 5 Domains and are mapped (separately) against the module learning outcomes. Careful attention is given to the progressive aspect of learning and professional development. On achieving this award, the majority of learners progress to the BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care), with some choosing to proceed directly to professional registration and the world of social care work.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE

Programme Director - A minimum level 9/10 qualification in relevant academic discipline plus eligibility to register with CORU (SCWRB) plus Educational Management and Leadership experience	1
Practice Placement Co-Ordinator - A minimum level 9 qualification in relevant academic discipline plus eligibility to register with CORU (SCWRB). Practice experience at management level in professional area desirable.	1
Lecturer (Practice Tutor) - A minimum level 9 qualification in relevant academic discipline plus eligibility to register with CORU (SCWRB	3
Lecturer - A minimum level 9 qualification in relevant academic discipline.	3.5

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Lecture	1:60
Placement Supervision	1:1
Tutorial	1:20
Group work	1:15
Experiential groupwork	1:12
Workshop	1:20
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing: The panel is satisfied that the provider has the number of appropriately qualified staff to support the delivery of the proposed programme.	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
PG23971	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)	September 2023

Section D.   Other noteworthy features of the application

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

Not applicable

Part 2.   Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

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

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

a)	

a)   The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.

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.

c)   The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[1]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel has satisfied itself that criteria 1 a, b and c have each been addressed by the provider. The application includes a signed declaration and aligns with the approved scope of provision.

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[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**

<div style="border:1px solid">

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

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

</div>

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Partially	The panel is partially satisfied that criterion 2 has been addressed. The programme aims and objectives are clearly articulated and were further discussed during the virtual visit. The award title is clear, unambiguous, has meaning and is clearly justified by the associated professional requirements for the title of Social Care Worker. MIPLOs are clearly articulated and reflect the graduate attributes and align with the professional standards required to permit CORU registration as a Social Care Worker, the fundamental purpose of the programme. MIMLOs are documented within the module descriptors and, along with MIPLOs, are mapped against award standards, as well as aligned with assessment strategies. However, the panel noted that in a number of MIMLOs the word 'understand' or 'understanding' is defined as what the learner must demonstrate. The panel explained the ambiguity of this in a learning outcomes context and the challenge for learners to clearly interpret what is required to attain the MIMLO. It was further noted that some MIMLOs in stage 3 were more aligned to a lower level of the framework and don't necessarily align with the language of the award standards which outline, for example, the ability to think critically, problem solve, analyse, assess, plan, implement, critically reflect, and evaluate.

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[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.

		Condition 1. Learning outcomes to be reviewed and revised to ensure level appropriateness and removal of ambiguity in respect of assessing understanding.
		As no embedded award is included within the programme design there was no discussion of these. However, the panel reiterates the recommendation from the programme review evaluation:
		Recommendation 1: Investigate the possibility of embedding an exit award of Higher Certificate to formally recognise the attainment of those learners who successfully complete stages 1 and 2 but fail to meet the requirements for the degree qualification.

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)**

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]

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.
  (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
  (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.
  (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
  (iv) There is evidence[5] of learner demand for the programme.
  (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[6].
  (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[7]

c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

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.

e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	It was evident to the panel through the documentation provided and the discussions during the virtual visit that consideration of the views of diverse stakeholders informed the programme as proposed. In the main the programme is well aligned with comparable programmes that qualify graduates to register with CORU. See comments under criterion 5 for more detailed discussion of this. The interpretation of the award standards was clearly evident in the mapping provided within the document and was further explained by the programme team in discussions as part of the virtual visit. There is sound evidence of demand for the programme from industry and from learners, with extensive employment opportunities for graduates. Engagement of industry, learners and graduates has contributed to the design of the revised programme. Notwithstanding this, the panel is of the view that opportunities for industry and service-user engagement could be further increased.

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[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.

| | | **Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a plan for service user and field tutor involvement in the Practice Placement Advisory Committee.** |
| | | |

Criterion 4.   **The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory**

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 satisfied[8].

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.

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 (CEFRL[9]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.

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).

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.

f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
  (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, 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.

g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel is satisfied that criterion 4 has been met by the provider. The documentation provided evidence satisfaction of the requirements detailed in a-g. The panel queried the English language entry requirements, and the provider detailed the policy in place and provided a copy of this for the panel. Discussion in respect of RPL and advanced took place as the panel sought clarification on how this operated and potential implications for learners particularly in relation to professional body requirements. The provider described the case specific approach employed. While the panel were satisfied with what was outlined, this would be useful clarification to include in information for learners. **Recommendation 3: Information contained within the programme document and any public materials includes more detailed and specific information on RPL and advanced entry to ensure learners are fully informed and understand the potential implications.**

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[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)

| | | The panel noted the limitations on inward transfer and the justification of this due to professional body registration limitations. |
| | | Progression arrangements for the programme include the level 8 one-year add-on BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies (professional social care) offered by the provider. However it was noted that the majority of programme graduates progress into relevant employment. |

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

a)	The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
b)	In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
c)	Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
d)	The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.
e)	The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[10].
f)	The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
g)	The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
h)	The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
i)	Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
j)	The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.[11]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Partially	Having evaluated the programme structure and the programme's curriculum content, the panel is of the view that criterion 5 has been partially satisfied.
		The programme has been designed to satisfy the CORU professional Standards of Proficiency and the QQI award standards and validation criteria. The panel recognises the challenges of accommodating and responding to the requirements of the different bodies. Nonetheless, the panel is of the view that the current structure is not in the best interest of learners. Specifically, the model in year 2 and year 3 of having a 25-credit placement block in one semester and 35 credits of taught modules in the opposite semester is imbalanced and has the potential to disadvantage learners. It is further noted that comparable programmes which qualify graduates for registration with CORU include placement blocks of 30 credits.
		Condition 2: Revise the programme structure to ensure learners are not required to complete greater than 30 credits in any semester. In revising the structure align the credit weight of placement blocks with comparable programmes as a 30-credit module.
		Discussions took place with the programme team in respect of different module groupings and the curriculum content of these.
		The common thread of creative studies modules that run through the programme was queried by the panel. The programme team advised the

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[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

panel that this thread evolved on the back of learner feedback which outlined how the creative studies modules had helped in better equipping learners for their placement experience.

Discussion of the psychology modules that run through the programme informed the panel that revisions has arisen to ensure continued alignment with the American Psychology Association and PSI. Learners are introduced to different psychology models and consider these in the context of the full lifespan of the person. This then extends into what can go wrong, social psychology and psychology of mental health. Within the programme, the full spectrum from pre-natal to adulthood, how the mind is developing and what can happen through life is considered. The psychology content is research driven and practice focused with an interdisciplinary and applied social care context. It has been specifically designed for social care and the requirements of this programme including in the year 2 looking at applying psychology to the placement experience.

The Practice Placement modules and their implementation from placement preparation, sourcing and approving placements, supervision and support in placement, and assessment of the practice placement components of the programme were discussed in detail. The programme team outlined the training that is included in the placement preparation period of 2 weeks which takes place in advance of each placement block. This includes mandatory requirements and there is also scope for learners to select training that will be best suited to their specific placement setting. The training completed for the year 3 placement has to be different and additional to that which was completed for year 2 placement. Children First training has already been completed by all learners in year 1 but some settings require the student to complete it again. HSELand certification is used as part of placement preparation but this is also embedded within other modules so learners are accruing certification as they progress through the programme. It was acknowledged that this can be additional work for learners but they are happy to take this on.

As part of the monitoring of learners in placement the provider requires learners to complete a "week 1 form" at the end of the first week to notify the college of progress and their placement plan. At week 3 the college contacts the Field Practice Educator for a progress report by telephone. Mid-way through placement learners attend college for an on-campus mid-placement review day. In weeks 11-13 College Practice Tutors complete a visit to each placement meeting with the learner and the Field Practice Educator to discuss progress and inform the skills-based assessment.

There are rigorous learner attendance requirements of the programme that impact on a learner being authorised to complete a placement and the placement itself has specific attendance requirements. In any instance of a learner being absent from placement preparation or the mid placement review meeting on-campus, there are alternative measures which require the learner to do a piece of work that shows their preparedness for placement. If there is a difficulty with a learner in placement, a placement visit will take place with a view to implementing a support plan. Placement preparation sessions don't count towards placement hours.

The panel was satisfied that the placement aspects of the programme are well managed and operate effectively in a manner that supports learners and is also mindful of the responsibilities of the setting and obligations to service users. Notwithstanding this, the panel is of the

view that further enhancements could strengthen the existing approach and therefore offers the following recommendations:

Recommendation 4: Review and revise the placement preparation programme for learners to reduce the workload burden and include some self-directed learning such as HSEland to reduce the requirement to attend college for a 2-week training programme.

Recommendation 5: Increase the college engagement with learners during placement to further strengthen the support available either through the addition of a further placement visit or a second on-campus review day.

The decision to remove Introduction to Social Policy from year 1 was raised by the panel who questioned where learners would now access this foundational knowledge. The programme team outlined where the subject is now addressed within both year one and the two modules. It was highlighted that the introductory element is addressed within the stage 1 module "Introduction to Irish Government, Politics and Policy" and in second year in "Legal Studies and Principles and Practice" there is a strong emphasis on social policy integrated within that. Social policy is then picked up again in the third year. The panel acknowledged the approach taken by the provider but nonetheless felt the year two content would benefit from further consideration.

Recommendation 6: Review the social policy content in year 2.

The year one module "Introduction to Sociology" attracted detailed discussion with the panel questioning the justification for aspects of the curriculum content and the absence of the application to the social care context. The panel were of the view that while the module was clearly an introductory one, the module content was heavy for students who were not training to be sociologists.

Recommendation 7: Review the content of the Introduction to Sociology module to make it more relevant to the role of the social care worker.

In addition to discussing individual or clusters of modules in detail, the panel also sought to establish where key topics were addressed within the curriculum. These included:
- Assessment of risk and risk management in services
- Social pedagogy and the use of social pedagogy tools
- Trauma informed care and trauma informed practise
- Advocacy and advocating for others
- Ethics and legal capacity

In each instance the programme team were able to highlight areas of the programme where some content related to the specific subjects highlighted. It was the view of the panel that the documentation would benefit from being more explicit in order to signpost future lecturers appropriately and ensure learners were fully informed of the intended content of modules.

Recommendation 8: Where curriculum content is not explicitly addressed in the documentation that this is more clearly signposted, and that legal capacity is explicitly addressed within the Ethics for Social Care module.

Criterion 6.   **There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">
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).

b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[12] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.

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.

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 development[13] opportunities[14].

e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.

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.
</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)**</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Principal Programme**</td><td>Yes</td><td>The panel is satisfied the criterion 6 is fully addressed. In reviewing documents and meeting with the provider sub-criteria a – f were considered.

The panel met with a significant number of the provider's academic, management, and professional / support staff and heard in detail about the role of different members of the programme team. This comprises of a combination of lecturers, placement coordinator and placement tutors who deal with the academic and professional practice elements of the programme, and also professional / support roles including the Academic Advisor role that some lecturers also undertake, the staff in the academic resource centre, disability support services, counselling services, and the Learning Information and Retention Officer role.

In addition to the provider's staff and programme team, the panel were briefed on the role of the Field Practice Educator and their responsibilities towards learners in the placement setting. The training of the Field Practice Educator was also discussed.</td></tr>
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[12] Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

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

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

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

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).

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:
   (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

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).

d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
   (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
   (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.

e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel is satisfied that criterion 7 is fully addressed. Notwithstanding that the strategic plans of the institution and the changing relationship with SETU may impact on the 5-year plan for the programme, a plan was provided, and the panel was satisfied that this was reasonable and had given due consideration to the resource requirements of the programme.

The provider acknowledged that the biggest resource challenge is securing quality placements. Pressures of the work situation can be challenging for settings and can impact on their capacity to take students and for them to be super nummary. The provider outlined the relationship building mechanisms in place and the availability of over 200 MoU's with placement providers. The challenge of competing for placements when other providers are looking for them at around the same time in the year is an added factor. |

Criterion 8.   **The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">
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.
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.
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.
</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory?**
(yes, no,
partially)</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Principal Programme**</td><td>Yes</td><td>The panel is satisfied that criterion 8 is fully addressed.
A virtual tour of the campus was provided for the panel and a brief presentation of different learning spaces was also provided. These included

Creative room – flexible learning space for movement, puppets, work with musical instruments etc.
Traditional classroom layouts with moveable furniture
Group work layout rooms with white boards positioned throughout the room
Multi-purpose spaces with breakout area
Computer lab

It was evident to the panel that there are diverse room types and work has been undertaken to match spaces to programme needs. Increasing accessibility has been a priority focus for the provider through the challenge of this in a building of such age is acknowledged.
Detailed discussions about placement sourcing, minimum requirements and approval mechanisms assured the panel of the measures in place to secure placements that were fit for purpose and suited to the needs of learners on the programme. The panel queried who held responsibility for assessing the suitability of a potential placement. The provider explained that this is completed under the remit of the Practice Placement Advisory Committee and is typically completed by the placement coordinator. On occasion external tutors who have supervised students previously and fully informed about the placement requirements have been authorised to complete the placement assessment.
The panel queried how reasonable accommodations for learners with specified needs were addressed in the placement context. The programme team described the process of the learner engaging with internal services to ensure support needs are identified and factored in for all aspects of their programme experience. In circumstances where specific requirements need to be considered for placement, a risk assessment is conducted, and this is then followed through with the potential placement provider.</td></tr>
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Criterion 9.   **There are sound teaching and learning strategies**

a)	The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.	
b)	The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.	
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).	
d)	Learning is monitored/supervised.	
e)	Individualised guidance, support15 and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.	

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel is satisfied that criterion 9 has been fully addressed. Consideration of teaching and learning strategies spans both the on-campus and the placement-based learning aspects of the programme. The panel queried how the programme team manages increased technology exposure that reflects the social care environment. The programme team outlined the use of technology in diverse ways in teaching and learning and the possibilities being introduced into the programme. It was also outlined how the college is placed to further expand in this area through the CPD available to support that and the growing availability of technology in the classrooms. The provider advised that keeping up with the technologies and the engagement with them is an ongoing agenda item for staff training and development. The panel heard about the proactive nature of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and examples of different projects and initiatives which they have led on. Throughout the day the panel also heard about advancements in respect of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and were exposed to a range of examples of how these are influencing teaching, learning and assessment practice.

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

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

a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[16]

b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.

c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.[17]

d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.

e) There is a satisfactory written **programme assessment strategy** for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.[18]

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.

g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.

h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.[19]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Partially	The panel is satisfied that criterion 9 is partially met. There are clear policies, procedures and regulations in place in respect of assessment, although it is noted that there is some derogation from the norm with the inclusion of special regulations in respect of pass by compensation (not applicable to specific modules) and the introduction of "must pass" assessment components. The panel sought clarification on these and discussed the potential implications of them. The overall assessment strategy was clearly laid out and discussed in detail with the panel. Consideration was given to the different assessment types, the assessment volume in terms of number and size, and the assessment scheduling. Discussion also took place in relation to academic integrity and, in particular, the advancement of artificial intelligence and the impact of this for teaching, learning and assessment. Specific discussion took place in respect of assessment for placement. This also verified the special regulation that learners must pass each placement outright and are only entitled to one repeat attempt, except where approved extenuating circumstances apply. In reviewing the assessment strategy the panel observed that a number of assessments assessed only one MIMLO and that there remained a largely siloed approach to assessment in general. It was noted that a number of modules included 3 assessments, which was deemed excessive for 5 credits. While the need to develop academic skills and written capabilities is acknowledged by the panel, it was also observed that in many instances modules include very traditional exam-based or

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[16] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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

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

| | | essay assessments which don't lend themselves to the applied nature of the programme.

Discussion of the must pass regulation proposed by the provider highlighted that this is specific to practical skills assessments within a module. The requirement is that the practical skills assessment must be passed independently regardless of the overall module mark. The panel queried the implications for this in relation to progression with credit and the no repeat for honours convention in cases where the learner has a module pass mark but did not pass the component.

Following discussions relating to assessment, the panel has specified a special condition of validation:

Condition 3: Review and revise the programme assessment strategy with a view to addressing over-assessment, ensuring suitability of assessment methodologies for the applied nature of the programme, and maximising opportunities for integration. In revising the assessment strategy, explicitly articulate the special regulation regarding must pass assessments and outline the implications of this in relation to matters such as no repeat for honours and progression with credit deficit. |
|---|---|---|

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

<table>
<tr><td>a)</td><td>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.</td></tr>
<tr><td>b)</td><td>Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</td></tr>
<tr><td>c)</td><td>Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</td></tr>
<tr><td>d)</td><td>If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</td></tr>
<tr><td>e)</td><td>The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</td></tr>
<tr><td>f)</td><td>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.</td></tr>
<tr><td>g)</td><td>The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>h)</td><td>The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[20].</td></tr>
<tr><td>i)</td><td>If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students[21] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.</td></tr>
<tr><td>j)</td><td>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).</td></tr>
</table>

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel is satisfied that criterion 11 is fully addressed. The panel were informed of the diverse range of supports available for learners during their campus and placement-based parts of their programme. The college offers extensive writing and digital literacy supports and specific supports for learners with English as a second language. The disability support service manages the identification and implementation of reasonable accommodations where required. The increased application of UDL in teaching, learning and assessment was also noted by the panel. The panel were provided with access to the digital learning environment and also provided with copies of the handbooks used on the programme. It was evident to the panel that learners benefit from being able to directly approach lecturers but also that Academic Advisors and LIR Officer is a valuable resource.

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[20] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).
[21] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

		It was noted that the college operates a settling survey for all first years in week 5 to help identify any issues and challenges learners are experiencing. The attendance monitoring systems and the early warning mechanisms within this are examples of the retention initiatives employed.

Criterion 12.   **The programme is well managed**

a)	The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures.	
b)	The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.	
c)	There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.	
d)	There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.	
e)	Quality assurance[22] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.	
f)	The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.	
g)	The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.	
h)	There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.	

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel is satisfied that criterion 12 has been fully addressed. It was evident from the documentation and discussions that the provider implements the approved QA arrangements as documented and that these are proving effective. Ongoing programme monitoring arrangements and annual reporting were identified and noted as consistent with practice across the sector. In discussions throughout the course of the virtual visit the panel heard about the role of the Programme Board and the Practice Placement Advisory Committee (PPAC), their membership and responsibilities. It was noted that the PPAC comprised of provider staff only and the panel identified a recommendation to further enhance the existing arrangements. See recommendation 2. **Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a plan for service user and field tutor involvement in the Practice Placement Advisory Committee.** Discussion in respect of mechanisms to secure feedback took place with the panel enquiring what arrangements were in place for external stakeholder feedback to support the continued enhancement of the programme. The panel also queried how the college secured learner feedback. The provider advised of the formal and informal mechanisms in place including the module surveys, class rep arrangements, participation in Programme Board, and the Academic Advisor system. The challenge of securing learner rep attendance at Programme Boards was noted. The panel welcomed the arrangements and acknowledged the evidence of their use in the documents provided as part of the application. Other

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[22] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

		than the updates provided to class members by class reps after Programme Board meetings, it wasn't clear if there are formal mechanisms in place to close the feedback loop. Following discussions relating to programme management, quality assurance and governance, the panel proposes the following recommendations: **Recommendation 9: Introduce formal mechanisms for engaging with, and securing feedback from, industry as part of the ongoing programme management and enhancement**. **Recommendation 10: Investigate opportunities to strengthen learner rep participation in programme monitoring and enhancement, and in doing so more clearly define the mechanisms for closing the feedback loop with learners when information is provided through the various feedback channels the provider employs.**

Part 3.   Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1   Principal programme:

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

The panel is supportive of recommending the programme for validation, subject to the provider satisfying the special conditions of validation, as the provider has evidenced attainment of the core validation criteria and the capacity to address the conditions of validation.

Commendations

Commendation 1: The panel wishes to acknowledge the quality of the validation application and the extensive work undertaken by the provider in progressing this.

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

Condition 1: Learning outcomes to be reviewed and revised to ensure level appropriateness and removal of ambiguity in respect of assessing understanding.

Condition 2: Revise the programme structure to ensure learners are not required to complete greater than 30 credits in any semester. In revising the structure align the credit weight of placement blocks with comparable programmes as a 30-credit module.

Condition 3: Review and revise the programme assessment strategy with a view to addressing over-assessment, ensuring suitability of assessment methodologies for the applied nature of the programme, and maximising opportunities for integration. In revising the assessment strategy, explicitly articulate the special regulation regarding must pass assessments and outline the implications of this in relation to matters such as no repeat for honours and progression with credit deficit.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Recommendation 1: Investigate the possibility of embedding an exit award of Higher Certificate to formally recognise the attainment of those learners who successfully complete stages 1 and 2 but fail to meet the requirements for the degree qualification.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a plan for service user and field tutor involvement in the Practice Placement Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 3: Information contained within the programme document and any public materials includes more detailed and specific information on RPL and advanced entry to ensure learners are fully informed and understand the potential implications.

Recommendation 4: Review and revise the placement preparation programme for learners to reduce the workload burden and include some self-directed learning such as HSEland to reduce the requirement to attend college for a 2-week training programme.

Recommendation 5: Increase the college engagement with learners during placement to further strengthen the support available either through the addition of a further placement visit or a second on-campus review day.

Recommendation 6: Review the social policy content in year 2.

Recommendation 7: Review the content of the Introduction to Sociology module to make it more relevant to the role of the social care worker.

Recommendation 8: Where curriculum content is not explicitly addressed in the documentation that this is more clearly signposted, and that legal capacity is explicitly addressed within the Ethics for Social Care module.

Recommendation 9: Introduce formal mechanisms for engaging with, and securing feedback from, industry as part of the ongoing programme management and enhancement.

Recommendation 10: Investigate opportunities to strengthen learner rep participation in programme monitoring and enhancement, and in doing so more clearly define the mechanisms for closing the feedback loop with learners when information is provided through the various feedback channels the provider employs.

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: ___26 / 4 / 24___

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.

1B.5 Proposed Programme Schedule(s)

Name of Provider:	Carlow College, St Patricks				
Programme Title *(Principal)*	BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)	**QQI Award Title**	Bachelor of Arts	**ECTS**	180
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)	1	**Exit Award Title** *(if relevant)*		**Stage ECTS**	60

Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.	Face to Face	Blended	Hybrid	Online	Workplace Learning
	✓				

Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.	In-person face-to-face	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based
	✓			

Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.	Continuous Assessment	Proctored Exam – in person	Proctored Exam – online	Project	Practical Skills Demonstration	Work based
	✓	✓				

Modules in this stage **

Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Communications and People Skills*	1	M	5	125	24		101		100					
Creative Studies: Exploring Creativity*	1	M	5	125	24		101		100					
Introduction to Academic and Digital Skills	1	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Introduction to Professional Social Care*	1	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				

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Introduction to Psychology	1	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Introduction to Sociology	1	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Semester Two														
Creative Studies: The Arts and Social Care*	2	M	5	125	24		101		100					
Disability in Social Care; A Human Rights Based Approach	2	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Introduction to Irish Social Policy & Politics	2	M	5	125	28		97		50	50				
Principles and Practice of Professional Social Care 1*	2	M	5	125	28		97		100					
Psychology and the Developing Self	2	M	5	125	28		97		30	70				
Sociology, Interculturalism and Cultural Competence *	2	M	5	125	28		97		100					

Communications and People Skills, Creative Studies: Exploring Creativity; Introduction to Professional Social Care, Creative Studies: The Arts and Social Care, Principles and Practice of Professional Social Care 1 & Sociology, Interculturalism and Cultural Competence contain MUST PASS assessments. These are assessments that require the achievement of a minimum pass grade irrespective of the overall average mark in order for the module to be passed overall.

1B.5 Proposed Programme Schedule(s)														
Name of Provider:	Carlow College, St Patricks													
Programme Title *(Principal)*	BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)			**QQI Award Title**			Bachelor of Arts					**ECTS**		180
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)	2		**Exit Award Title** *(if relevant)*									**Stage ECTS**		60

Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.

Face to Face	Blended	Hybrid	Online	Workplace Learning
✓				✓

Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.

In-person face-to-face	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based
✓			✓

Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.

Continuous Assessment	Proctored Exam – in person	Proctored Exam – online	Project	Practical Skills Demonstration	Work based
✓	✓		✓		✓

Modules in this stage (add rows as required)

Module Title	Total Student Effort Module (hours)								Assessment – Allocation of Marks *(from the module assessment strategy)*						
	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
SEMESTER ONE														
Practice Placement and Portfolio 1*	1	M	30	750	95		255	400	20			80	P**	
SEMSTER TWO														
Creativity, Innovation and Play in Social Care*	2	M	5	125	24		101		100					
Ethics for Social Care*	2	M	5	125	28		97		80				20	
Group Dynamics and Facilitation*	2	M	5	125	24		101		50				50	
Legal Studies for Social Care 1	2	M	5	125	24		101		40	60				

Principles, Policy and Practice of Professional Social Care 2*	2	M	5	125	28		97		40	60				
Social Psychology for Social Care*	2	M	5	125	28		97		100					

Practice Placement and Portfolio 1, Creativity, Innovation and Play in Social Care, Ethics for Social Care, Group Dynamics and Facilitation, Principles, Policy and Practice of Professional Social Care 2, Social Psychology for Social Care contains MUST PASS assessments. These are assessments that require the achievement of a minimum pass grade irrespective of the overall average mark in order for the module.

**Practice Placement is restricted to two attempts.

1B.5 Proposed Programme Schedule(s)															
Name of Provider:	Carlow College, St Patricks														
Programme Title *(Principal)*	BA in Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)			**QQI Award Title**			Bachelor of Arts					**ECTS**		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)	Award		**Exit Award Title** *(if relevant)*									**Stage ECTS**		60	

Programme Delivery Mode - ✓*one as appropriate.*

Face to Face	Blended	Hybrid	Online	Workplace Learning
✓				✓

Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓*one or more as appropriate.*

In-person face-to-face	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based
✓			✓

Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓*one or more as appropriate.*

Continuous Assessment	Proctored Exam – in person	Proctored Exam – online	Project	Practical Skills Demonstration	Work based
✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Modules in this stage **

Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Children and Families: Social and Legal Perspectives for Professional Social Care	1	M	5	125	24		101		100					
Communications and Counselling Skills *	1	M	5	125	28		97		50	50				
Contemporary Issues in Social Policy	1	M	5	125	24		101		40	60				
Principles, Professionalism and Practice of Social Care*	1	M	5	125	28		97		20				80	
Psychology of Mental Health *	1	M	5	125	24		101		30	70				

Research Methods and Evidence Informed Practice*	1	M	5	125	24		101		30			70		
SEMSTER TWO														
Practice Placement & Portfolio 2*	2	M	30	750	95		255	400	20			80	P**	

Communications and Counselling Skills, Principles, Professionalism and Practice of Social Care, Psychology of Mental Health, Research Methods and Evidence Informed Practice , Practice Placement & Portfolio 2 contains MUST PASS assessments. These are assessments that require the achievement of a minimum pass grade irrespective of the overall average mark in order for the module to be passed.

** Practice Placement is restricted to two attempts