Griffith College

Coláiste Uí Ghríofa

Independent Panel Report on a Programme Review

Provider	Griffith College [PV03057]
Programme(s) Reviewed	Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology PG24402 Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology PG24403 Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology [New minor award]
Date of Panel Event	27/11/2024

Independent Panel Members

Name	Programme Review Function	Affiliation and roles
Owen Ross	Panel Chair	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
Robin Flynn	Panel Secretary	Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager, Hibernia College
Dr Ibrahim Tolaymat	Academic/ Subject matter expert (International)	Senior Lecturer in Pharmaceutical Science, Anglia Ruskin University
Dr Rosemary O'Hara	Academic/ Subject matter expert	Lecturer in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in SETU Carlow
Dr Peter McPherson	Academic/ Subject matter expert	Senior Lecturer in Pharmaceutical Science, Ulster University
*Joe O'Brien	Industry Representative	Alexion
Maria Malik	Learner Representative	Atlantic Technological University Galway

*** Note:** It should be recorded that Joe O'Brien, the industry panel representative was unable to join on the day of the site visit due to illness and the panel Chair decided to proceed with the site visit. Subsequently the draft report was also sent to Joe for his consideration in advance of the final report.

Part 1. Introduction

This review encompasses the review of the MSc in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology and its embedded awards the Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology and the Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology, which is a new award being introduced in this round of validation. The programme and its original embedded award are due for review as per the QQI guidance on periodic review of programmes.

These programmes are offered in a collaborative fashion between Griffith College and Innopharma since 2015.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	**Document Name**
1.	Agenda and Terms of Reference	• Agenda and Terms of Reference
2.	Key Documents	• Letter of Application to QQI (from President) • Proposed Programme Documents • Programme Review Report – MSc in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology
3.	Support Documents	• Overview: Prospectus, Lecturer handbook, Staff CVs • Sample Assessment Handbook • Learner Handbooks • Facilities Overview
4.	Governance Information	• Griffith College QAE Systems • Annual Quality Reports (AQR) to QQI • QQI Awards Standards and Procedures • GC Institutional Profile • Collaborative Agreement – Innopharma and Griffith College
5.	Legacy Programmes	• Approved Programme Document • Certificate of Validation and Panel Report • Sample Assessments and Projects • External Examiner Reports • Programme Handbooks • Annual Programme Report
6.	Panel Information and Templates	• TEMPLATE_ Independent Review Report and Revalidation IER • TEMPLATE_ IER Validation Report • Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for QQI Reviewers and Evaluators • Griffith College Expert Panel Fees • Initial Comments Form

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Prof Diarmuid Hegarty	College President, GC
2.	Dr Tomás Mac Eochagáin	Director of Academic Programmes, GC
3.	Ailish Finucane, Manager	Manager, Academic Administration, GC
4.	Mary Doyle	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, GC
5.	Finbarr Sheehy	Director of Academic Programmes, IE
6.	Jennifer Clarke	Programme Director, IE
7.	Orla Callan	Managing Director, IE
8.	Luke Kiernan	Director of Technical Services, IE
9.	Paul Blunnie	Module Leader [Both MSc Programmes]
10.	Regina Regan	Module Leader / Dissertation Supervisor [Both MSc Programmes]
11.	Dr Gillian McMahon	Module Leader [MSc in PBT only]
12.	Michael Nicell	Module Leader [MSc in PBT only]
13.	Deirdre Finn	Module Leader [MSc in PQVST only]
14.	Nicola Rice	Module Leader [MSc in PQVST only]
15.	Colm O'Connor	Librarian, IE
16.	Dr Áine Behan	Dissertation Supervisor
17.	Dr Prosper Anaedu	Dissertation Supervisor
18.	Emma Flynn	Careers Advisor, GC
19.	Rob McKenna	Head Librarian, GC
20.	Sally-Anne McIver	International Office Manager, GC
21.	Sarah Ward	Learner Support Coordinator, GC
22.	Seán Martin	Learner Engagement, GC
23.	William McCarter	Learning Technologist, GC
24.	Yvonne Farrell	Faculty of Teaching and Learning, GC

2.3 Description of evaluation process

The panel had the opportunity to review the documentation in advance of the site visit, 27th November 2024. This was accompanied by an opportunity to agree an agenda for the day to ensure that all criteria for validation could be assessed through the site visit. Comments received in advance of the meeting were collated by the panel secretary, further to this the panel chair and secretary met in advance to agree further logistics related to the site visit. On the day of the site visit the panel had the opportunity to meet in private and discuss any further comments/queries that they would like to focus on during the visit itself. The chair was able to provide direction and instruction during this meeting to ensure all criteria were assessed. The provider and QAE staff were extremely approachable and open in their approach to the entire process and the quality of documentation provided was excellent.

It should be recorded that Joe O'Brien, the industry panel representative was unable to join on the day of the site visit due to illness and the panel Chair decided to proceed with the site visit. Subsequently the draft report was also sent to Joe for his consideration in advance of the final 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

3.1 Context and Terms of Reference for the Programme Review

3.1.1 Commentary

As detailed in QQI's *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* and the *Programme Review Manual 2022*, programme monitoring and review is taken as an opportunity to:

- ensure that the programme remains appropriate, and to create a supportive and effective learning environment
- ensure that the programme achieves the objectives set for it and responds to the needs of learners and the changing needs of society
- review the learner workload
- review learner progression and completion rates
- review the effectiveness of procedures for the assessment of learners
- inform updates of the programme content; delivery modes; teaching and learning methods; learning supports and resources; and information provided to learners
- update third party, industry or other stakeholders relevant to the programme(s)
- review quality assurance arrangements that are specific to that programme

Objectives of the Programmatic Review

The QQI Programme Review Manual 2022 states that the objectives of a programme review are to evaluate the programme as implemented in light of the provider's experience of providing the programme over the previous five years with a view to determining:

1. What has been learned about the programme, as an evolving process (by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence), from the experience of providing it for the past five or so years?
2. What can be concluded from a quantitative analysis of admission data, attrition rates by stage, completion rates and grades achieved by module, stage and overall?
3. What reputation do the programme and provider have with stakeholders (learners, staff, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, communities of practice, employers, other education and training providers) and in particular what views do the stakeholders have about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning the programme's history and its future?
4. What challenges and opportunities are likely to arise in the next five years and what modifications to the programme are required in light of these?
5. Whether the programme in light of its stated objectives and intended learning outcomes demonstrably addresses explicit learning needs of target learners and society?
6. What other modifications need to be made to the programme and its awards to improve or reorient it?
7. Whether the programme (modified or unmodified) meets the current QQI validation criteria (and sub-criteria) or, if not, what modifications need to be made to the programme to meet the current criteria?

8. Whether the provider continues to have the capacity and capability to provide the programme as planned (considering, for example, historical and projected enrolment numbers and profile and availability and adequacy of physical, financial and human resources) without risk of compromising educational standards or quality of provision in light of its other commitments (i.e. competing demands) and strategy?
9. What is the justification (or otherwise) for the provider continuing to offer the programme (modified or unmodified)?
10. What changes need to be made to related policies, criteria and procedures (including QA procedures)?

The providers own QA manual and processes also reflect the above guidance. The terms of reference were appropriate and in line with the above guidance and ensured that all of the above could be considered as part of the review.

3.1.2 Recommendations

None applicable.

3.2 Griffith College Information and Programme Context

3.2.1 Commentary

Innopharma Labs has worked collaboratively with Griffith College since 2013. This partnership has led to the validation by QQI of five programmes at Levels 7-9 on the National Qualifications Framework. The programmes prepare graduates for supervisory, management and leadership roles in the Biopharma and MedTech sector. Over 3,000 learners have now graduated from these programmes. The list of currently validated programmes is as follows:

- Bachelor of Arts in Pharmaceutical Business Operations (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Business Operations (Level 8)
- MSc in Digital Transformation (Life Sciences) (Level 9), with embedded award
- MSc in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology (Level 9), with embedded award
- MSc in Science in Medical Device Technology and Business (Level 9), with embedded Award

The programme presented for revalidation falls within the provider's existing scope of provision and educational strengths. The programme(s) are part of a continued collaborative provision between Griffith College and Innopharma; there was a clear demonstration that the Innopharma staff were tightly integrated into the operations that ensure smooth and consistent delivery of the programmes through Griffth College resources. It was noted that a new campus expansion strategy is in development, and this was referenced as part of the site visit. Irrespective of this, there are existing facilities and resources to ensure the continued delivery of the programmes.

3.2.2. Recommendations

None applicable.

3.3 Baseline qualitative and quantitative information - Programme Data Overview

This section should 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

3.3.1 Commentary

Learners on the programme are broadly those working in or seeking to establish a career in the pharmaceutical industry. This also includes a proportion of international learners. Learners will have typically completed a Level 8 award in a cognate field prior to entry; although RPL pathways exist for the recognition of prior work based learning. Data was presented on the number of applications vs enrolments; there is significant difference in the % of applications converting to enrolments in the PT mode vs for the FT mode. The gender profiles for both FT and PT delivery modes are approximately equal with some year to year variance except for the PT mode where there appeared to be a stark increase in the number of female applicants in the first two years of the programmes. The age profiles for both modes fit with the intended purposes of the FT and PT programmes, i.e. in attracting the those with established careers and those embarking on their career for the first time. Interestingly the profiles of the applicants country of origin shows that the FT programme significantly attracts overwhelmingly potential learners from India or Nigeria while the converse is true for the PT programme which identifies the majority applicants as Irish individuals. The enrolment data bears the same trends in terms of country of origin for applicants, age profile and gender distribution. It is also clear that the FT programme clearly attracts a greater number of enrolments compared to the PT programme in total and since 2021/2022.

Learner withdrawal was largely confined to the PG Diploma programme for the first two years of this cycle thereafter there is a notable increase in the number of learners withdrawing (+10% minimum). While there is a 30% withdrawal in learners enrolled in the PG Diploma. The withdrawal in MSc is easily explained by the impact of the pandemic. Comparing both programmes the MSc and PG Dip the overall attainment of grades is as expected with part time learners generally achieving better overall grades. The breakdown of module by module results confirm these overall trends. The impact of GenAI is discussed within the IER and this reflects conversations at the site visit day. The graduate data is promising and demonstrates that learners have good outcomes in terms of establishing a career in the area. This is useful in showing that programme is fit for purpose.

3.3.2 Recommendations

The decrease in PT enrolments may suggest a change in the learner needs of the PT applicant pool, this would support the introduction of the Certificate minor award. However as per recommendations elsewhere consideration should be given to restating the purpose and need this award serves. The data as it currently stands would suggest that there is a change in the need of those target learners.

3.4 Programme Delivery and Teaching & Learning Strategies

This section should 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.

3.4.1 Commentary

The IER provided data and analysis on the use of physical facilities and resources, digital technology, the virtual learning environment, the library, scheduling & workload and attendance. The panel is satisfied with review undertaken of these areas. Given the nature of the programme and the blended learning model of delivery, the panel discussed placements, the delivery model and teacher learner ratios with representatives of the College.

The distribution of assessments, and other course activities is balanced, allowing learners to engage meaningfully with the material without becoming overwhelmed. The time and effort required for each task are reasonable and consistent with the NFQ level and MIPLOs. Overall, the workload effectively supports the intended LOs and provides a manageable yet challenging academic experience for learners. The ratios of staff to learner were reviewed and are deemed to be effective, during the site visit the panel had the opportunity to interrogate this further and were satisfied that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure a suitable distribution of dissertation supervisors to facilitate student choice and avoid overwhelming new supervisors. This approach is also evident in the community of practice of learning and in discussions with the programme director as regards the rewriting of some module(s). There are a range of both formal and informal supports for faculty, including the Griffth College MA in Education, Learning and Development.

Assessment strategies were reviewed in the documentation and discussed as part of the site visit. The programme team have proposed the increased inclusion of case studies and case study material as one avenue to circumvent the use of GenAI in written assessments.

3.4.2 Recommendations

As per recommendation elsewhere

> *The panel would ask that the programme team maintain a watching brief to monitor the development of AI in terms of the risk it poses to assessment in all modules. Specifically, the programme team should consider the status of the viva either in terms of increasing the marks allocated to this element or it should become pass/fail. Regardless the importance of this needs to be restated to all students.*

Part 4. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

4.1 Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

4.1.1 Commentary

During the site visit the panel had the opportunity to meet with a number of learners who were either current graduates or from a number of distinct cohorts. This was extremely informative and much of the findings from this session agreed with findings from the documentation or from the other site visit sessions. The graduates and learners of the programme think highly of the programme and found that it added significantly either to their existing careers or aided them in developing their career. Comments were noted on the support for mature or working learners re-entering education. The content and the workload of the programme were confirmed to be challenging, but in a positive way. Multiple learners raised queries in regard to a single module – strategy, in both the written documentation and the verbal feedback. Learners reported multiple opportunities to provide feedback to the College on modules, as well as responsive faculty and administrative staff to queries emailed directly.

4.1.2 Recommendations

The panel recommends that the rationale and importance for inclusion of the strategy module should be restated.

4.2 Evaluation of the programme by Staff

4.2.1 Commentary

Staff are both full time and part-time and those part-time staff are often working in the industry and this was noted to bring advantages to the programme in terms of currency. There are both formal and informal sources of data for this section however all staff were supportive of the programme and confident in its potential to deliver the desired outcomes for learners.

4.2.2 Recommendations

None applicable.

4.3 External Examiner Feedback

4.3.1 Commentary

There are established procedures for the appointment and reporting by external examiners. The examiners notes that the marking rubrics are consistent, and results are reliable; one examiner did note the need to act in the face of GenAI, as per discussions elsewhere. Interestingly the examiner noted that strategy module was pivotal to the programme itself. Both examiners were satisfied that there was sufficient feedback to learners and that the feedback matched the grading rubrics.
Overall, the examiners were happy and supportive of the programme and commented on its distinctiveness.

4.3.2 Recommendations

None applicable.

Part 5. Programme Quality Assurance

5.1 Complaints, appeals and commendations

5.1.1 Commentary

The panel had the opportunity to discuss the appeals process during the panel visit. Moreover, there was an extensive discussion in relation to the process surrounding student academic misconduct findings. There were no formal complaints during the period under review. The documents describe the class rep system as an opportunity to resolve issues were appropriate.

5.1.2 Recommendations

None applicable.

5.2 Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

5.2.1 Commentary

The panel is satisfied that the programme is well managed and there is a means of filing an annual report for the programme. Overarching this is a College wide system of academic governance and QA including the QAE team and Director of Academic Programmes. These support the programme director who is assisted by a programme administrator module leads. The collaborative delivery of the programme is underpinned by the College collaborative provision policy.

5.2.2 Recommendations

None applicable

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

5.3.1 Commentary

No further issues were identified.

5.3.2 Recommendations

None applicable.

Part 6. Summary Analysis of the programme

6.1 Commentary

A SWOT analysis summaries the programme as a whole, including the benefits and opportunities including the integration with the Innopharma labs (opportunity) and the demand from learners and benefits to learners (strengths) alongside the challenges of large class sizes, and maintaining the learning experience in these circumstances.

Over all the experience of stakeholders of the programme has been positive, the programme team and provider have identified and mitigated areas that could be potential weaknesses and the data supplied in the review is both complete and supportive of the actions proposed within.

6.2 Recommendations

None

Part 7. 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.

7.1 Commentary:

Changes proposed in the revised programme are as described on P73 of the review documentation. These are minor in nature and supported by the data and analysis that accompany them.

7.2 Recommendations:

None applicable.

Part 8. 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.

8.1 Commentary on review process

The panel thanks the programme team on a very comprehensive review process, and an evident deep consideration for the future design of the programme while balancing the requirements of the learners.

Part 9. Recommendations on review process

None applicable

Part 10. Commentary on programme revisions

The panel considered that these as described were appropriate and that panel is satisfied that the proposed programme, subject to Recommendations for consideration set out elsewhere, is suitable and fit for purpose.

Part 11. Recommendations on programme revisions:

None applicable.

Signed: _____

Panel Chairperson:

5/1/2025

Date: _____

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	Griffith College [PV03057]
Date of site visit	27/11/2024
Date of report	05/01/2025

Section A. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	**Title**	Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology PG24402
	Award	Major
	Credit	90 ECTS
	Recommendation	Satisfactory

Embedded programme 1	**Title**	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology PG24403
	Award	Major
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation	Satisfactory

Embedded programme 2	**Title**	Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology [New Minor Award]
	Award	Certificate
	Credit	25 ECTS
	Recommendation	Satisfactory

Part 2. Expert Panel

Name	Programme Review Function	Affiliation and roles
Owen Ross	Panel Chair	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
Robin Flynn	Panel Secretary	Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager, Hibernia College
Dr Ibrahim Tolaymat	Academic/ Subject matter expert (International)	Senior Lecturer in Pharmaceutical Science, Anglia Ruskin University
Dr Rosemary O'Hara	Academic/ Subject matter expert	Lecturer in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in SETU Carlow
Dr Peter McPherson	Academic/ Subject matter expert	Senior Lecturer in Pharmaceutical Science, Ulster University
Joe O'Brien	Employer Representative	Site Engineering Lead, Alexion, Athlone
Maria Malik	Learner Representative	Atlantic Technological University Galway

All members of the independent Panel declared their independence of Griffith College and that they have no conflict of interest.

Part 3. Principal Programme: Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	**Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)*	**Minimum number of learners**
Griffith College	440	10

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	Sept. 2025
Maximum number of annual intakes	2
Maximum total number of learners per intake	220
Programme duration *(months from start to completion*	FT: 12 months PT:18 months
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:	

Target learner groups

This programme is aimed at individuals who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in the areas of (bio)pharmaceutical manufacturing, regulation, technology transfer, operational excellence, and clinical trial management in the life science industry. All roles are equally applicable to male and female. The typical candidate works in manufacturing, engineering, regulatory control, process development, process improvement, or related areas in the life science industry.

Typical candidates may be implementing new technologies, quality systems, optimising processes, utilising the application of process analytical technologies (PAT), manufacturing product, and managing the associated support processes such as regulation, supply chain, facilities, utilities and project management. Typical candidates would be:

- mature learners who are in operational, managerial, quality, engineering, process development, regulatory, data management & analytics, compliance, process transformation, project management roles within life science or related industries. These learners may be managing digital transformations of manufacturing processes, implementation of process analytical technologies, drivers of business improvements, product designers, technology transfer projects, compliance initiative implementations, quality improvement initiatives, business case development, contract management or remote manufacturing. Many of these learners may be on executive / management / supervisory development programmes. These include both Irish and international learners
- graduate learners who have completed a level 8 degree and wish to develop their manufacturing, regulatory, quality, validation, operational excellence competencies to pursue a career in the life science industry
- international learners who wish to study in a country with a reputation for strong regulatory compliance in the life science sector

The typical learner may currently be employed in the life science industry, or may also be in the manufacturing, regulatory or other related industries. Typical roles for successful graduates of this programme include:

- operations roles – managers / supervisors / process engineers
- process validation / product validation / computer systems validation

- digital transformation / automation / PAT deployment
- business intelligence / data analysis
- engineering / new product introduction / product programme manager
- regulatory affairs / compliance specialist
- medical vigilance / surveillance and risk management
- process improvement specialists / managers
- quality assurance specialist / manager.

Targeted learners who have already completed an honours degree programme at NFQ level 8 in a cognate field, and who are keen to progress their qualification to master's or postgraduate level. All learners are required to be proficient in English. Where a candidate's first language is not English, they are required to provide proof of proficiency in the English language through satisfactory performance on an internationally recognised test. The English language entry requirements for the programme are CEF B2+ or equivalent. Candidates with English language levels below CEF B2+ must first reach this minimum standard before enrolling on the academic programme.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time, part-time and blended

The teaching and learning modalities

Full time and part-time

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)

The programme is a 90-credit Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The programme provides a broad scientific and technological knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry, the processes for manufacturing, technology transfer, clinical trials, and business improvement as well as the associated regulatory requirements.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	**WTE**
Programme Directors must be qualified to Master's level in life science. Lecturing experience required. Skills required for the role include people management, administrative and organisational skills, including the use of IT systems, and excellent communications skills. In addition, it is desirable that the individual would hold a teaching qualification, experience in academic management / administration, and a working knowledge of programme development and higher education QAE procedures.	1
Lecturers are required to hold at least a master's degree in their cognate areas or an equivalent qualification for delivery at early stages. Lecturers are also encouraged to have, or to be in the process of acquiring, a Certificate in Education, Learning and Development from Griffith College, or equivalent qualification.	8
It is desirable that Programme Administrators would hold a certificate or diploma, plus 1 to 2 years administrative experience. Good knowledge of Microsoft Office, with experience working with IT databases, excellent organisation skills with the ability to prioritise and multi-task, and strong customer service skills.	1
Librarians must be qualified to NFQ level 9 in library studies or equivalent. In addition, it is desirable that the individual would hold a teaching qualification, and experience in library and or information management / administration, and a working knowledge of the provision of teaching, learning, assessment and learner supports.	

Learning technologists must hold a third level qualification, at level 9 on the NFQ, in education, learning technology/design, or related discipline, or equivalent. Previous experience in designing and facilitating professional training, producing multimedia learning resources and administrating LMS platforms is required.	0.2
QAE/Pogramme Development staff ideally hold a third level qualification, at level 9 on the NFQ, in a cognate area. Previous experience of implementing/managing programme development and quality assurance procedures in higher education. Direct experience of teaching / lecturing / tutoring students in higher education would be an advantage. In addition, relevant skills in advanced research and report writing interpersonal, communications and time management.	0.1

Learning Activity	**Ratio of learners to teaching staff**
Lectures	1:130
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
PG24402	Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	August 2025

Part 4. Embedded Programme 1: Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	**Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)*	**Minimum number of learners**
Griffith College	340	10

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	Sept. 2025
Maximum number of annual intakes	2
Maximum total number of learners per intake	170
Programme duration *(months from start to completion*	FT: 12 Months PT: 12 Months
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:	

Target learner groups

This programme is aimed at individuals who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in the areas of (bio)pharmaceutical manufacturing, regulation, technology transfer, operational excellence, and clinical trial management in the life science industry. All roles are equally applicable to male and female. The typical candidate works in manufacturing, engineering, regulatory control, process development, process improvement, or related areas in the life science industry.

Typical candidates may be implementing new technologies, quality systems, optimising processes, utilising the application of process analytical technologies (PAT), manufacturing product, and managing the associated support processes such as regulation, supply chain, facilities, utilities and project management. Typical candidates would be:

- mature learners who are in operational, managerial, quality, engineering, process development, regulatory, data management & analytics, compliance, process transformation, project management roles within life science or related industries. These learners may be managing digital transformations of manufacturing processes, implementation of process analytical technologies, drivers of business improvements, product designers, technology transfer projects, compliance initiative implementations, quality improvement initiatives, business case development, contract management or remote manufacturing. Many of these learners may be on executive / management / supervisory development programmes. These include both Irish and international learners
- graduate learners who have completed a level 8 degree and wish to develop their manufacturing, regulatory, quality, validation, operational excellence competencies to pursue a career in the life science industry
- international learners who wish to study in a country with a reputation for strong regulatory compliance in the life science sector

The typical learner may currently be employed in the life science industry, or may also be in the manufacturing, regulatory or other related industries. Typical roles for successful graduates of this programme include:

- operations roles – managers / supervisors / process engineers

- process validation / product validation / computer systems validation
- digital transformation / automation / PAT deployment
- business intelligence / data analysis
- engineering / new product introduction / product programme manager
- regulatory affairs / compliance specialist
- medical vigilance / surveillance and risk management
- process improvement specialists / managers
- quality assurance specialist / manager.

Targeted learners who have already completed an honours degree programme at NFQ level 8 in a cognate field, and who are keen to progress their qualification to master's or postgraduate level. All learners are required to be proficient in English. Where a candidate's first language is not English, they are required to provide proof of proficiency in the English language through satisfactory performance on an internationally recognised test. The English language entry requirements for the programme are CEF B2+ or equivalent. Candidates with English language levels below CEF B2+ must first reach this minimum standard before enrolling on the academic programme.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time, part-time and blended

The teaching and learning modalities

Full time and part-time

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)

The programme is a 60-credit Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The programme provides a broad scientific and technological knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry, the processes for manufacturing, technology transfer, clinical trials, and business improvement as well as the associated regulatory requirements.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	**WTE**
Programme Directors must be qualified to Master's level in life science. Lecturing experience required. Skills required for the role include people management, administrative and organisational skills, including the use of IT systems, and excellent communications skills. In addition, it is desirable that the individual would hold a teaching qualification, experience in academic management / administration, and a working knowledge of programme development and higher education QAE procedures.	1
Lecturers are required to hold at least a master's degree in their cognate areas or an equivalent qualification for delivery at early stages. Lecturers are also encouraged to have, or to be in the process of acquiring, a Certificate in Education, Learning and Development from Griffith College, or equivalent qualification.	8
It is desirable that Programme Administrators would hold a certificate or diploma, plus 1 to 2 years administrative experience. Good knowledge of Microsoft Office, with experience working with IT databases, excellent organisation skills with the ability to prioritise and multi-task, and strong customer service skills.	1
Librarians must be qualified to NFQ level 9 in library studies or equivalent. In addition, it is desirable that the individual would hold a teaching qualification, and experience in	

library and or information management / administration, and a working knowledge of the provision of teaching, learning, assessment and learner supports.	
Learning technologists must hold a third level qualification, at level 9 on the NFQ, in education, learning technology/design, or related discipline, or equivalent. Previous experience in designing and facilitating professional training, producing multimedia learning resources and administrating LMS platforms is required.	0.2
QAE/Pogramme Development staff ideally hold a third level qualification, at level 9 on the NFQ, in a cognate area. Previous experience of implementing/managing programme development and quality assurance procedures in higher education. Direct experience of teaching / lecturing / tutoring students in higher education would be an advantage. In addition, relevant skills in advanced research and report writing interpersonal, communications and time management.	0.1

Learning Activity	**Ratio of learners to teaching staff**
Lectures	1:130
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
PG24403	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	August 2025

Part 5. Embedded Programme 2: Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	**Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)*	**Minimum number of learners**
Griffith College	180	10

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	Sept. 2025
Maximum number of annual intakes	2
Maximum total number of learners per intake	90
Programme duration *(months from start to completion*	FT: 6 months PT: 6 months
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment: The panel is satisfied with the proposed enrolment.	

Target learner groups

This programme is aimed at individuals who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in the areas of (bio)pharmaceutical manufacturing, regulation, technology transfer, operational excellence, and clinical trial management in the life science industry. All roles are equally applicable to male and female. The typical candidate works in manufacturing, engineering, regulatory control, process development, process improvement, or related areas in the life science industry.

Typical candidates may be implementing new technologies, quality systems, optimising processes, utilising the application of process analytical technologies (PAT), manufacturing product, and managing the associated support processes such as regulation, supply chain, facilities, utilities and project management. Typical candidates would be:

- mature learners who are in operational, managerial, quality, engineering, process development, regulatory, data management & analytics, compliance, process transformation, project management roles within life science or related industries. These learners may be managing digital transformations of manufacturing processes, implementation of process analytical technologies, drivers of business improvements, product designers, technology transfer projects, compliance initiative implementations, quality improvement initiatives, business case development, contract management or remote manufacturing. Many of these learners may be on executive / management / supervisory development programmes. These include both Irish and international learners
- graduate learners who have completed a level 8 degree and wish to develop their manufacturing, regulatory, quality, validation, operational excellence competencies to pursue a career in the life science industry
- international learners who wish to study in a country with a reputation for strong regulatory compliance in the life science sector

The typical learner may currently be employed in the life science industry, or may also be in the manufacturing, regulatory or other related industries. Typical roles for successful graduates of this programme include:

- operations roles – managers / supervisors / process engineers
- process validation / product validation / computer systems validation
- digital transformation / automation / PAT deployment
- business intelligence / data analysis

- engineering / new product introduction / product programme manager
- regulatory affairs / compliance specialist
- medical vigilance / surveillance and risk management
- process improvement specialists / managers
- quality assurance specialist / manager.

Targeted learners who have already completed an honours degree programme at NFQ level 8 in a cognate field, and who are keen to progress their qualification to master's or postgraduate level. All learners are required to be proficient in English. Where a candidate's first language is not English, they are required to provide proof of proficiency in the English language through satisfactory performance on an internationally recognised test. The English language entry requirements for the programme are CEF B2+ or equivalent. Candidates with English language levels below CEF B2+ must first reach this minimum standard before enrolling on the academic programme.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time, part-time and blended

The teaching and learning modalities

Full time and part-time

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)

The programme is a 25-credit certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The programme provides a broad scientific and technological knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry, the processes for manufacturing, technology transfer, as well as the associated regulatory requirements.

This programme typically targets individuals who already possess a bachelor's degree in a related field such as pharmaceutical sciences, chemistry, engineering, or a related discipline. The programme is targeted at those working in or seeking to work in the pharmaceutical industry. Typical learners include, manufacturing, regulatory, quality, engineering, operational excellence and process technology personnel.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	**WTE**
Programme Directors must be qualified to Master's level in life science. Lecturing experience required. Skills required for the role include people management, administrative and organisational skills, including the use of IT systems, and excellent communications skills. In addition, it is desirable that the individual would hold a teaching qualification, experience in academic management / administration, and a working knowledge of programme development and higher education QAE procedures.	1
Lecturers are required to hold at least a master's degree in their cognate areas or an equivalent qualification for delivery at early stages. Lecturers are also encouraged to have, or to be in the process of acquiring, a Certificate in Education, Learning and Development from Griffith College, or equivalent qualification.	8
It is desirable that Programme Administrators would hold a certificate or diploma, plus 1 to 2 years administrative experience. Good knowledge of Microsoft Office, with experience working with IT databases, excellent organisation skills with the ability to prioritise and multi-task, and strong customer service skills.	1
Librarians must be qualified to NFQ level 9 in library studies or equivalent. In addition, it is desirable that the individual would hold a teaching qualification, and experience in	

library and or information management / administration, and a working knowledge of the provision of teaching, learning, assessment and learner supports.	
Learning technologists must hold a third level qualification, at level 9 on the NFQ, in education, learning technology/design, or related discipline, or equivalent. Previous experience in designing and facilitating professional training, producing multimedia learning resources and administrating LMS platforms is required.	0.2
QAE/Pogramme Development staff ideally hold a third level qualification, at level 9 on the NFQ, in a cognate area. Previous experience of implementing/managing programme development and quality assurance procedures in higher education. Direct experience of teaching / lecturing / tutoring students in higher education would be an advantage. In addition, relevant skills in advanced research and report writing interpersonal, communications and time management.	0.1

Learning Activity	**Ratio of learners to teaching staff**
Lectures	1:130
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
N/A	**N/A**	**N/A**

Part 6. 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)

Part 7. Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

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.		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The panel were satisfied through the provided documentation that the provider is eligible to apply for validation and specifically meets the requirements of Section 44 of the 2012 Act and all other regulatory requirements. During the site visit the panel had the opportunity to meet with the College President and other senior members of staff who confirmed that all applicable criteria were addressed.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	As above
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	As above

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

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

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The MSc and PG Diploma programmes are clearly designed to align with QQI criteria for the award sought. These map to the QQI award standards and this has been conducted within the documentation. The MIPLOs are clear and coherent, this programme coherence is evident at the module level also. This will ensure that learners gain the proposed knowledge and skills to benefit them. The information available to prospective learners is also accessible to enable them to make rationale and informed decisions.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	As above.
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	**Recommendation 1** The panel recommends that the value of the 25 ECTS Certificate as an award within its own right is restated and the merits of this programme as an offering on its own need to be better stated within the validation documents.

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.
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 of learner demand for the programme.
    (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant.
    (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.
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**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The programme(s) have been developed from a long running collaboration and benefit from this productive and successful relationship. The staff through their experience and often PT work in the area can inform the programme concept from the outset. The programme concept is also informed by engagement with regulatory bodies and industry bodies. The flexibility in delivery – FT v PT and in person and blended will suit a variety of learners who wish to engage and this represents a key benefit of the programme. The programme(s) are designed to meet a growing demand in learners/graduates who are well informed and skilled in the area of Pharmaceutical QA. This was identified as a growing area for the industry globally, and for Ireland was a specific area in which much future growth is envisaged. The programme has been conceived with regard to the major relevant themes present within the industry. However, greater care could be taken to ensure reference to sustainability and SDGS are more explicit. **Recommendation 4** **The panel accepts that the theme of sustainability is present throughout the programme but would like to see it more explicitly referenced in the programme documentation.**

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	As above
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	As above

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.
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) 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**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The College has well established ATP policies and procedures to support the implementation of the entry requirements and these are aligned to the QQI standards. The programme entry requirements are clearly stated within the documentation, and these are consistent with the programme itself. This includes having a 2.2 award in a related degree. There are established criteria for minimum English (CEFR B2+) and Maths (O6 or H7 in LC Maths). There is a mode of entry for mature learners using related experience from their work history. Further to this the College has the ability to require applicants to undertake an admission interview and the rubric for assessing performance in this interview are laid down in the validation documentation. This interview is intended for those who may wish to avail of entry to the programme without traditional qualifications. There are established RPL procedures in place for applicants seeking either entry or exemptions at a module level. The validation documents lay down the requirements for applicants to avail of these. The College also has an RPL means to facilitate PG Diploma learners to return and complete the MSc, this does not attract a fee which aids in the removal of access barriers. There are no PRSB requirements applicable to these programmes.

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	As above.
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	As above.

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.
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.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The program curriculum is designed to ensure it is well-structured and fit for purpose, meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders alike. Each module is carefully aligned with the program's overarching objectives, providing a clear progression of knowledge and skills. The curriculum integrates foundational knowledge with practical applications, ensuring learners can translate their understanding into real-world contexts effectively. Key themes and competencies are scaffolded across the program to build a cohesive learning journey, with each component logically sequenced to reinforce prior learning and prepare for subsequent challenges. Learning objectives are clearly defined and measurable, enabling participants to track their progress and stay focused on achieving desired outcomes. The curriculum incorporates a diverse range of teaching and assessment methods, including case studies, project-based tasks, and collaborative activities, to accommodate diverse learners, encourage engagement and allow for formative learning. **Recommendation 4** **The panel recommends that the rationale and importance for inclusion of the strategy module should be restated.**
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business	Yes	As above

and Technology		
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	**Recommendation 1** **The panel recommends that the value of the 25 ECTS Certificate as an award within its own right is restated and the merits of this programme as an offering on its own need to be better stated within the validation documents.**

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

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 (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 opportunities.
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.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	There are detailed descriptions in the documentation on the staffing requirements both in terms of qualifications and ratios. In addition, there was an extensive discussion on the dissertation supervisor allocation process to reassure the panel that there was sufficient staffing resource to enable this could be successful. Documentation exists to demonstrate that staff must possess the necessary academic qualifications and practical experience relevant to their roles within the program. To enhance capacity, staff undergo regular professional development, including training on emerging trends, pedagogical strategies, and technological tools. This commitment to continuous learning ensures the team remains current and adaptable to the program's evolving needs. This was evident during the site visit where the recent bootcamp on GenAI in dissertation writing was discussed and is an exemplar on approaches to staying current. There is also an internal training programme for academic staff to develop fundamental teaching/pedagogical skills. There was also a demonstration of the peer to peer learning opportunity for faculty though the buddy system in operation for dissertation supervisors and a graded ramp up in the number of dissertations to be supervised.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology		

Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology		

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**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	During the panel visit, and College presentation there was an opportunity to question the provider about the availability of physical resources to support the delivery. The panel were informed of the ongoing use of all Griffth College physical sites, which enables the College to deliver where there is both capacity and this is underpinned by a campus expansion plan being developed through the president's office. The programme learners would also be able to avail of the opportunity to visit the Innopharma site in Sandyford for demonstration purposes. However, during the learner stakeholder session it was apparent that learners would benefit from exposure to an industrial environment, this could be purely for information purposes only. In particular for international learners who may using the programme as an opportunity to launch a new career direction. Multiple members of the student session identified this as a weakness in their experience. **Recommendation 3** **The panel recommends that the programme team facilitate a visit to an industrial site, even if this is not included in the written curriculum, and if this could occur within the early weeks of the programme.**
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in		

Pharmaceutical Business and Technology		
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology		

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

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.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	In both the documentation and the panel visit it was apparent that the learning environment was consistent with the needs of the learners and fit for purpose in terms of delivering on the programme aims and objectives. There was an opportunity to speak with both academic faculty and staff involved in delivering the programme and to discuss the specific resources available, e.g. library for dissertation etc. It was also apparent that the programme offered an excellent environment in which learners could interact, test ideas, develop transversal skills, and cement academic knowledge. Using Mahara the programme team had learnt important lessons from other programmes. This should be commended. **Commendation1** **The panel would like to commend the programme team on their development of their approach to peer to peer learning and its implementation within the Mahara system. The faculty were honest with the difficulties and challenges in implementing this, but the student session demonstrated that this was positively received. Specifically, when comparing the experiences of older and current cohorts of students in a related programme.** During the learner stakeholder session it was apparent that learners would benefit from exposure to an industrial environment, this could be purely for information purposes only. **Recommendation 3** **The panel recommends that the programme team facilitate a visit to an industrial site, even if this is not included in the written curriculum, and if this could occur within the early weeks of the programme.**
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	As above
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	As above

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, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The documentation details a well-considered approach to teaching and learning. That incorporates a variety of methods and approaches. These are learner centric, ensure collaboration and peer to peer learning and offer ample opportunity for feedback and formative assessment. Teaching approaches emphasise real-world learning and is also aligned with industry-driven learning outcomes, preparing graduates for success. The faculty appear dedicated and there was an ample demonstration of the support for learners including in the dissertation phase of the programme. The ECTS weighting of the modules and overall programmes is fit for the award and level at which it is made. It also aligns with the proposed delivery method and schedules (FT and PT). It will allow learners to meeting the MIPLOs.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	

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***
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.
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.
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.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	Assessment approaches are aligned with QQI guidance in this area, the provider also demonstrates that they are cognisant of developments external to the programme which may impact and interact with assessment strategies. Assessments are mapped to MIPLOS, ensuring that learners are evaluated on the knowledge and skills they are expected to acquire for success. The assessment methods are fair, transparent and consistent. A discussion during the panel visit suggests that the provider is expending time and resources to effectively considering and engaging with the impact of generative AI on assessment and teaching in general. This is especially relevant in a programme where there is a long-form written assessment such as a thesis. The faculty outlined a number of touch points at which they can assess and determine if the learner is making fair progress with their dissertation topic. They also outlined how they intend on using these touchpoints as a means of monitoring academic integrity and checking if there is a sudden dramatic improvement or change in the learners writing content or style that might be indicative of the use of GenAI. While the panel recognise the rapidly changing nature of this area they do make the following recommendation. **Recommendation 2** **The panel would ask that the programme team maintain a watching brief to monitor the development of AI in terms of the risk it poses to assessment in all modules. Specifically, the programme team should consider the status of the viva either in terms of increasing the marks allocated to this element or it should become pass/fail. Regardless the importance of this needs to be restated to all students.**

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	As above
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology	Yes	As above.

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

a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.
b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.
e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.
f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.
g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.
h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities.
i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students* 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.
j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	Through documentation and the site visit the panel had the opportunity to speak with a range of staff from the provider that are dedicated to student support. Learners are provided with detailed and accessible information about the programme, assessment strategies, and available support services. A system is in place to care for learners' mental health and welfare. Some of the academic contact points above provide opportunities to identify learners in need of support. Particularly of note was the career support service on offer to learners, there was a full "wrap-around" system in place and this was extended until the learner had gained employment. For international learners there was specific support mechanisms in place to identify and meet needs that arose. In addition there is a foundational English year that serves to equip learners for the programme itself before joining the programme. There are also checkpoints to ensure engagement with and progression on this foundational English programme.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology		

Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology		

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 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**
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology	Yes	The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion. The programme is supported by provider's approved Quality Assurance Framework content and structure. The programme has been designed in accordance with the QA Framework and the operational and management arrangements are clearly articulated. The programme has also been mapped to the applicable QQI Generic Awards Standards. There is a programme committee in place which reports to the provider academic and professional council. There is also a timetable for yearly reviews and reports. There is also an existing collaborative agreement in place between Griffth College and Innopharma which underpins the programme itself.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology		
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology		

Part 8. Overall recommendation to QQI

8.1 Principal programme: Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The panel would recommend revalidation of the programmes as currently proposed, the panel found them to be in compliance with and meeting all standards as set out by QQI in relation to the validation of programmes and embedded programmes.
    a. To note that on the day of the panel site visit the industry member of the panel was not able to attend due to illness, however their notes and input have been taken into account when drafting this report.
2. The panel were impressed with the documentation provided in advance of the site visit. It should be noted that there was an extensive review of the existing programme that was supported by both qualitative and quantitative data. There was a deep and meaningful engagement with stakeholders across the spectrum. The outcomes of this engagement were reflected in the documentation, validation proposal and discussions throughout the day.
3. During the site visit the panel found the Faculty team to be extremely enthusiastic and committed to the continued success of the programme and its learners. There was a sense of pride amongst those who were involved in any aspect of the delivery of the programme both in terms of the individual learner outcomes but also the standing of the programme within the industry/sector.
4. The panel were impressed by the developments the programme team had made to develop engaging and beneficial learning opportunities for the learners, e.g. Mahara group/peer to peer learning tasks. The positive impact of these were further evident in the learner feedback session. The panel also noted the efforts that the provider expended in enforcing the utility of modules, and developing approaches to ensure academic integrity of assessment in the face of a dynamic set of circumstances.

Commendations

1. The panel would like to commend the programme team on their development of their approach to peer to peer learning and its implementation within the Mahara system. The faculty were honest with the difficulties and challenges in implementing this, but the student session demonstrated that this was positively received; specifically, when comparing the experiences of older and current cohorts of students.

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

Not applicable.

8.2 Embedded programme 1: Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business and Technology

Select one	
Yes	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

As above

Commendations

As above

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

Not applicable

8.3 Embedded programme 2: Certificate in Pharmaceutical Technology

Select one	
Yes	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

As above

Commendations

As above

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

Not applicable.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

Not applicable

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. The panel recommends that the value of the 25 ECTS Certificate as an award within its own right is restated and the merits of this programme as an offering on its own need to be better stated within the validation documents.
2. The panel would ask that the programme team maintain a watching brief to monitor the development of AI in terms of the risk it poses to assessment in all modules. Specifically, the programme team should consider the status of the viva either in terms of increasing the marks allocated to this element or it should become pass/fail. Regardless the importance of this needs to be restated to all students.
3. The panel recommends that the programme team facilitate a visit to an industrial site, even if this is not included in the written curriculum, and if this could occur within the early weeks of the programme.
4. The panel recommends that the rationale and importance for inclusion of the strategy module should be restated.
5. The panel accepts that the theme of sustainability is present throughout the programme but would like to see it more explicitly referenced in the programme documentation.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Dr Owen Ross Date: 05 / 01/2025

Signed: 

8.4 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.

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Part 9. Proposed programme schedules (post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)