

Programme Validation Report

Microcredential Programme

Programme Validation Report for:

**Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative
Industries**

[Level 8, 5 ECTS]

Date of Panel: 4 May 2022

Date of Report: 20 May 2022

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Microcredential Programme

Part 1. Provider details

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Provider name | Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology Kill Avenue, Dún Laoghaire Co. Dublin, Ireland, A96 KH79 |
| Date of report | |

Section A. Overall recommendations

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| Programme | Title | Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries |
| | Award | Special Purpose Award |
| | Credit | 5 |
| | NFQ Level | 8 |
| | Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i> | Satisfactory |

Section B. Expert Panel

| Name | Role | Affiliation |
|------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Dr Seamus Cannon | Chair | Former Director of the Blackrock Education Centre |
| Aideen Barry | Industry Expert | Lecturer, Limerick School of Art and Design |
| Dr Feargal Fitzpatrick | Academic Expert | Head of Media, NCAD |

Section C. Programme Profile Information (as supplied by provider)

| Brief synopsis of the programme |
|---|
| <p>The Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries supports learners employed in the creative and cultural industries to upskill and reskill with a short course in foundational and/or applied skills. Designed to accommodate learners working within the creative and cultural industries the Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries will allow learners to participate in practical workshops, seminars, and tutorials so that they may critically engage with learning in their chosen fields and support their career progression and development.</p> |
| Target learner groups |
| <p>Evaluative research undertaken by IADT at CFA related to the profile of learners undertaking pilot L8 and L9 programmes in IADT in 2021 (Balfe, 2022a).¹ Students on the six CFA certificates offered by IADT were asked to complete an anonymous online survey to evaluate their overall impressions of learning. This survey gathered both quantitative and qualitative data, through closed and open text questions. Students were asked to reflect upon their motivations for taking the course, their preference of delivery type, and the creative attributes of learning which they value most, amongst other aspects of course delivery.</p> <p>Working from the data provided in the student evaluations, the average profile of the CFA student at IADT is a mid-career professional within the Film/TV/Media, Design, or UX Design sectors. This student is looking for opportunities to study an accredited course in a blended environment, so they can balance professional, personal, and familial commitments. The student is motivated to uptake learning opportunities by the desire to develop their professional profile, update their existing skillsets, and learn new skills to stay up-to-date with current and emerging technologies. The student has an interest in design concepts and wants to integrate design thinking skills with technological capabilities. The student wishes to develop project management skills for the creative industries, and to build professional networks with their peers. As a learner, the student is interested in building narratives through storytelling and collaboration. In the classroom they wish to be challenged and critically engaged, and their learning is led by curiosity and empathy.</p> <p>This learner profile accurately encompasses the <i>Change Maker</i>, a student profile at the centre of the Creative Attributes Framework. A <i>Change Maker</i> is defined as an individual with ‘The vision to imagine futures that have not yet been created. The agency to give expression and shape solutions’ (M-Co, 2021, p. 17). The <i>Change Maker</i> encompasses skills from the four attribute fields; <i>Think, Explore, Connect, & Do</i>. The tension within these overlapping skills is reflective of contemporary trends and theories; tension between creative freedom and commercialization, the need to learn new technological skills while refining traditional practice.</p> <p>The learner profile also draws parallels with recent research on the emerging needs of the creative sector. The <i>Together for Design</i> report (EGFSN, 2020) highlighted the current challenges facing practitioners in the Design sector. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The pace of technology means skillsets become obsolete more quickly.• Designers need to be able develop multi-disciplinary ideas/skillsets and critical thinking skills.• Designers need to work with strategy and the language of business in design. |

¹ Emma Balfe, *Evaluations of Student Feedback on CFA Pilots at IADT: Findings and Recommendations*. January 2022

- Designers must learn how to collaborate and work in teams.
 - Gaps in design education and research across discovery and business models.
 - Design/business SMEs difficult to fund upskilling courses for staff.
 - A need for guidance and support in ethical design.
- (M-Co, 2021, p. 8).

The learner profile derived from the student evaluation surveys accurately reflects the challenges highlighted in the *Together for Design* (EGFSN, 2020) report.² Respondents to our survey were motivated by the need to upskill to keep up with emerging technologies, they were eager to learn business strategy and project management skills, they valued critical thinking skills and believed them to be most essential to learning, and they sought collaboration and networking opportunities with their peers. Furthermore, if we consider the skills needs highlighted in the *Skills Needs Analysis Report for the Screen Sector in Ireland 2019 -2020* (Screen Skills Ireland, 2020),³ which included the need for ‘problem-solving, management and leadership skills’ (M-Co, 2021, p. 8), the accuracy of the learner profile is yet again made clear.

Rationale for Programme

The Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries follows the same module architecture: a L8 5 ECTS programme that allows for the delivery of flexible/bespoke content for learners. The Certificate is designed to provide focused upskilling or reskilling in particular disciplinary areas. This Certificate presents the learner with the opportunity to gain practical knowledge and understanding of other disciplines and practices within the creative and cultural industries. Learners can gain new skills, understanding and reflect on how these relate to their core professional practices. As the design of the Certificate accommodates a range of subject pathway, content will be specified in detail in each iteration and provides learners with an opportunity to study an elective pathway focused on creative practices, methods, theories and/or techniques outside of their current disciplinary or professional field.

This award has been designed to accommodate the needs of learners from the creative and cultural industries and as such the QQI Award standards for Art and Design are the appropriate benchmark here. The programme team is satisfied that award title of **Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries** reflects the appropriate award for learners who successfully complete the programme. It is a Special Purpose Award of 5 ECTS and the appropriate title of the award is **Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries**

Evidence of learner demand

CFA Research (Balfe, 2021, 2022) has evidenced the appetite and need for Professional Skills for Creative Industries in a structured and accredited environment. The graduate outcome surveys conducted by IADT’s Careers Office has indicated that 30% of graduates are actively engaged in further study to change or improve their career options, with 26% of graduate respondents identifying further study as an opportunity for future employment, or ongoing professional development. Only 3% of graduate respondents were primarily motivated in further study by an interest in the course content, suggesting the largest motivations for further study is driven by career progression and upskilling.

² Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2020) *Together For Design: Digital, product and Strategic Design Skills of the Future*. Dublin: National Skills Council. Available at: <http://www.egfsn.ie/expert-group-on-future-skill-group/all-publications/2020/together-for-design.pdf> (Accessed: 20 January 2022).

³ Screen Skills Ireland (2020) *Skills Needs Analysis Report for the Screen Sector in Ireland 2019 -2020*. Dublin.

| Duration and Enrolment | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| | First Intake Date | Duration (months) | Cohorts / Intakes per Annum | Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake | |
| | | | Maximum | Minimum | Maximum |
| Full-Time | June 2022 | 1 Term/Terms (2-3 weeks (depending on mode of delivery)) | 120 Maximum enrolment per annum | 10 | 12 |
| Part-Time | | | | | |

Panel Commentary on Section C: Programme Profile Information

This should set out the panel's views on the adequacy of the case made by the provider for the approval of this programme as a viable, stand alone offering for the target learner group. The panel should take into account the proposed rationale, evidence of market demand, learner numbers, entry criteria, and marketing information. The information on objectives, MIPLO's and marketing information, rationale, should also be checked.

Where the proposed award is at a different NFQ level to that of its parent programme e.g. where the programme is taken from Stage 1 of a validated Level 8 programme, the panel should check the MIPLO to Level Indicator mapping for consistency.

The following Validation Criteria as they apply to this programme should be borne in mind, while also recognising that the programme of which this microcredential is a module, has already been deemed to have met these criteria.

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)*

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

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

Criterion 12: *The programme is well managed*

Rationale, Learner Demand, Viability:

The Panel was satisfied with the rationale, learner demand and viability and believes this programme fits within the institute's Strategic Plan. They felt the programme concept, and implementation strategy, are well informed and soundly based.

Proposed Award - consistency with NFQ:

Having discussed the objectives and outcomes of the programme with the Programme Team, the panel was satisfied the programme is consistent with the award level sought.

Learner Interests: - (Information, QA, Supports, Benefits / Skills accruing from programme):

The panel was satisfied that there are sound assessment strategies in place for the programme and recognised that assessment is closely aligned with the content particular to the programme that will be provided.

Section D. Programme Content, Delivery and Assessment

| Summary of specifications for teaching staff | | |
|--|---|------|
| Role | Profile | WTE |
| Programme Coordinator | The Programme Coordinator lead should be qualified to at least or equivalent <i>level 9 qualification</i> and with a relevant Third Level Teaching and Learning qualification and/or equivalent relevant and comparable professional experience | 0.25 |
| Lecturer | Qualified to at least Bachelors of Arts (Hons) in Art, Design or cognate disciplines, or a person with at least 5 years' practical experience in a professional capacity, with contemporary experience of the professional landscape within the Creative and Cultural industries. | 0.33 |

| Mode(s) of Delivery |
|--|
| Full-time/Lecture/Studio Practice/Project/Blended Learning |

| Assessment Strategy |
|---|
| <p>Assessment procedures are flexible to meet individual circumstances within the limits of the Institute's and Faculty's assessment policies. These assessment policies are reviewed and updated annually as part of the review of assessment by the programme board. These policies are adhered to at both programme and module level.</p> <p>The programme minimum intended learning outcomes match the appropriate QQI awards standards. Assessment tasks are developed through constructive alignment of outcomes with learning and teaching strategies, translated into methods of assessment appropriate to the module and its goals. Assessment procedures are fair, consistent, and as far as possible valid and reliable and subject to regular review. External examiners review these procedures annually.</p> <p>Assessment tasks are developed for each module of the programme, are accompanied by grading schemes, and communicated to students appropriately. Student feedback is essential for learning and is given in an ongoing basis in classes, seminars, through the Institute VLE, and by email. Continuous and formative assessment is built into the learning and teaching strategy through class feedback sessions on assessment tasks prior to submission as well as individual and group feedback on completion of continuous assessment tasks. Formal summative feedback is provided to all learners upon the completion of each module and its component learning and assessment tasks.</p> <p>The programme team develop, revise, and manage the assessment tasks. It is aligned to Institute regulations as outlined in the IADT Quality Manual and other relevant policies such as the Institute Plagiarism Policy. Module assessment strategies are developed by lecturers in alignment with the programme assessment strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment briefs, marking criteria are issued to students in good time and suitable time is allocated to the completion of assessment tasks. Feedback sheets are used to provide student feedback and progress learning for each of their assignments. |

- All work is appropriately referenced and adheres to the requirements of the *Institute Plagiarism Policy*.
- Typically, assignments are marked by the module lecturer(s).
- Assignment feedback and grades are issued to students within *three* weeks of the submission date. Where this is not possible this is communicated to students as required. Assignments may be returned to students.
- Institute policy on repeat assessments and Institute policy on the capping of grades for repeat assignments are adhered to.
- Retention of assessment – assignments and examinations are retained in accordance with Institute policy and GDPR regulations.
- Appeals – the programme adheres to the Institute Appeals policy as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Deferral of module assessment (including exams) is permitted in exceptional cases. This should be discussed with the Programme Chair. Forms for deferral are available in the Faculty Office.

Panel Commentary on Quality Assurance of the Programme

This should set out the panel's views on (1) how the provider has quality assured the programme development process and (ii) how it proposes to quality assure the programme when validated

The following Validation Criteria as they apply to this programme should be borne in mind:

Criterion 12: *The programme is well managed.*

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

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

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

Criterion 10: *There are sound assessment strategies*

QA of programme development process:

The Panel was satisfied with the programme development process and the programme documentation was commended, for the level of research completed. It was noted that the module descriptors were interesting and adaptable to different audiences and the balance is good.

Recommendation (1): The panel recommended that additional detail be added to provide more clarity about programme content and resources. For example; the section on Tax refers to "ROS.ie", but expanding with more detail about this resource would be beneficial).

Recommendation (2): Some modifications to the programme documentation such as small but important edits to ensure consistency. For Example; Information about the learning hours breakdown, referenced on page 25 and page 34 of the programme document.

QA of Programme Resourcing (Human and ICT) and Resilience:

It was agreed by the panel that there are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff and resources available to implement the programmes as planned and the Panel acknowledged the quality of the staff CVs included in the documentation and noted they were very thorough and industry-focused. The panel was satisfied with elaboration from the team about the plans such as using mentors from industry, which would ensure existing resources and full-time staff are not stretched.

Recommendation (3): The Panel suggested the Team consider bringing experts in to provide brief talks too (e.g. representative from Revenue to talk about Tax).

QA of Assessment:

The panel was satisfied that there are sound assessment strategies and recognised it is tied to the programme content. It was noted that the option to create an artefact by the students (producing a deliverable) is a very good concept and ensures the learning is experiential and useful to the students.

Recommendation (4) The panel felt providing some sample assessments in the documentation would help clarify what is expected of a student.

Part 2. Overall recommendation to QQI

2.1 Programme: Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries

| Select one | |
|------------|---|
| X | 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

Overall the Panel was satisfied and enthusiastic about this programme and welcomed it as a relevant addition to the suite of programmes offered by IADT via the CFA.

Recommendations to the Provider

1. The panel recommended that additional detail be added to provide more clarity about programme content and resources. For example; the section on Tax refers to “ROS.ie”, but expanding with more detail about this resource would be beneficial).
2. Some modifications to the programme documentation such as small but important edits to ensure consistency. For Example; Information about the learning hours breakdown, referenced on page 25 and page 34 of the programme document.
3. The Panel suggested the Team consider bringing experts in to provide brief talks too (e.g. representative from Revenue to talk about Tax).
4. The panel felt providing some sample assessments in the documentation would help clarify what is expected of a student.

Any other observations:

- The Panel welcomed, in particular, the presentation by Dr E Sisson about Creative Futures Academy, in addition to the introduction by the Registrar about IADT
- The panel commended the team and institute on the development of this programme and believes it will be a great addition to the suite of programmes offered by IADT.
- The panel commended CFA and the programme team on the quality of the documentation, which was of a high standard and noted that the programme was well designed and very well researched.
- In relation to assessment, the concept of the students producing an Artefact was commended as a very practical option ensuring learning is experiential and practical for the learners.
- They recognised that it is an open, flexible programme with opportunities to slightly adapt as necessary to different cohorts of students, while still meeting the learning outcomes.

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

None

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 Seamus Cannon**

Signed: *Seamus Cannon*
Seamus Cannon [May 26, 2022 09:15 GMT+1]

Date: May 26, 2022

2.2 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.

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FACULTY RESPONSE

The panel accepts all of the recommendations and thanks the Validation Panel for their thoughtful and considered responses.

Certificate in Professional Skills for Creative Industries

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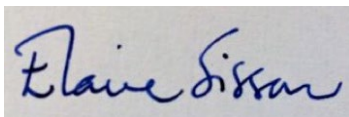
Recommendation (4) The panel felt providing some sample assessments in the documentation would help clarify what is expected of a student

IADT Response

The documentation will now include the additions noted including correction of minor edits and inconsistencies.

The benefit of the design of both Certificates is that it allows us to create bespoke content to meet particular constituencies of learners. We are already engaging internal and external expertise on Certs currently being run (for example sessions with Screen Ireland, and with LinkedIN) and we will continue to seek contributions from industry/sectoral expertise where possible.

In addition to supplying sample briefs as part of the programme documentation, we will include samples of assessments in programme handbooks and/or briefs circulated to learners to provide clarity for what is expected from students. Similarly, expanded information about resources pertinent to the course being offered (via weblinks, podcasts, videos etc) will be included in briefing papers and student communications on assessment.



June 2022