Institute of Art, Design + Technology Dún Laoghaire

Programme Validation Report

Programme Validation Report for:

MA in Animation

[Level 9, 90 ECTS]

Embedded Programmes:

Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Animation [Level 9 Exit Award]

[Level 9, 60 ECTS]

Stand-alone Module Leading to a Minor Award

Certificate in Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts

[Level 9, 10 ECTS]

Date of Panel: 13 June 2024
Date of Report: 28 June 2024

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IADT Programme Validation Panel Report – MA in Animation, June 2024

Part 1 Introduction

1.1 Evaluators

Name	Role	Affiliation
Ms Carmel Brennan	Chairperson	Assistant Registrar, Atlantic Technological University (ATU)
Ms Julia Bracegirdle	Academic Expert	Co-Leader MA Animation & Senior Lecturer BA (Hons) Animation, School of Art, University of the West of England
Mr Ian Hamilton	Industry Expert	Founder, Elk Studios

1.2   Overall Recommendations

Provider Name	Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design + Technology (IADT)
Date of Panel	13 June 2024
Date of Report	28 June 2024

Principal Programme	**Title**	**Master of Arts in Animation**
	Award	Master of Arts
	Credit	90 ECTS
	ISCED Code	N/A
	Recommendation Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory	Satisfactory, subject to two conditions (and nine recommendations)
Stand-alone Module(s) Leading to a Minor Award	**Title**	**Certificate in Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts**
	Award	Postgraduate Certificate
	Credit	10 ECTS
	ISCED Code	N/A
	Recommendation Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory	As for Principal Programme
Embedded Award	**Title**	**Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Animation - Exit Award**
	Award	Postgraduate Diploma
	Credit	60 ECTS
	ISCED Code	N/A
	Recommendation Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory	As for Principal Programme

1.3   Principal Programme:

MA in Animation [L9, 90 ECTS]

Names of Centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum Number of Learners (per centre)	Minimum Number of Learners
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)	12	8

Enrolment Interval (normally 5 years)	Date of First Intake	September 2024
	Date of Last Intake	September 2029
Maximum number of annual intakes	1	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	12	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	18 Months	
Target learner groups	Level 8 graduates and recent graduates of Animation and Animation-adjacent programmes (e.g. Film, Art, Creative Computing, 3D Animation). Mature/RPL animation, design/ film professionals wishing to make career adjustments or redirections. Over the first five years, we will aim to recruit 8 Masters students per year, building to 12 students maximum. We will recruit in the first instance from our DL832 Animation recent graduates and then from the graduating cohorts of other Irish undergraduate animation programmes and other related film, media and art undergraduate programmes. Additionally, we would envisage applicants from more diverse interdisciplinary study backgrounds, providing such applicants wanted to direct their postgraduate study pathways to Animation-related frames of reference (for example, we already work with Psychology researchers who study the context, behaviour and practice of our undergraduate Animation students). Ultimately, we will use our Masters in Animation Exhibition Component as a recruitment and branding attraction for new applicants. Finally, we would recruit internationally, predominantly through our FilmEU partner institutions. For the first 3 years, we would set an upper limit of 12 Masters students commencing in any year. This Masters in Animation programme will be a broad offering, including Practice-based; Practice-led; Scholarly; and Teaching options in Animation. The programme will be flexible, capable of adaptation and will be less prescriptive than existing offerings.	
Approved countries of provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode – Full-time/Part-time	Part-time, could be delivered full-time at a later date. Taught and guided self-directed study Distance learning will be a component (especially for the regular tutorials). International (non-Dublin) students could do most of their Masters project work off-campus – this would be negotiated and planned with the Master's Programme Team and carefully monitored as the projects progresses.	

The teaching and learning modalities	Taught evening (and/or) online classes
	Tutorials (face-to-face or online)
	Guided self-directed study
	Group working
	IADT workshop and studio work (as possible/negotiable options)
	Peer presentation, review and critique
	Prompted self-reflection
	Capstone module with mapping exercises
	Exhibition component
	Scholarly dissertation (incl. alternative and innovative modes of scholarly delivery)
	Major Project work can include: Practice-based work
	Practice-led work
	Full Academic or Animation Research
	An Animation Education Project
Brief synopsis of the programme (eg who is it for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to)	Application to this Masters Programme will require an acceptable negotiated **Project Proposal** (template provided in Appendix 2). On acceptance into the Masters programme, students will engage with a dedicated **Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts** module. Students will be expected to develop and hone their individual **Masters Project Proposal**, before embarking on a substantial, guided programme of self-directed project work. Regular check-in tutorials will keep the Masters Programme Team informed on progress and will reassure each student that they're on track in terms of their learning.
	Masters Students will also be expected to engage with undergraduate students on a **Collaborative Project**. As they complete their chosen Major Project work, Masters students will engage with a **Capstone module** including an Exhibition component, in order to reflect on their learning journey and to present their finished project work to others.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff

WTE[1]	Qualifications and Experience
1	Qualified to at least MA level with specialist experience in Animation-related study including Masters by Research
1	Qualified to PhD level with specialist experience in Design, Animation, Art and/or the Cultural Industries
Visiting lecturers	Qualified to at least a Master of Arts in Animation or a cognate relevant to the programme of study discipline or a person with at least 5 years of practical and professional experience in design practice, service design and associated sectors.

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[1] WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a full-time person fully dedicated to the programme or a number of people whose time combined equals a full time person.

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Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching staff	Staff to Learner Ratio	Learning Activity Type
	From 1:5 to 2:10	Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts 10 ECTS
	From 2:5 to 2:10	Group Project Capstone
	1:1	Regular scheduled tutorials
	2:1	Face-to-face scheduled feedback sessions

Work placements for which credit is allocated	Stage number	Credit (specify units)	Total hours in the workplace
Placements only if proposed by the student as part of their Project work	2+3	Max of 60	1200 maximum

1.4   Stand-alone Module(s) Leading to a Minor Award

Certificate Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts [L9, 10 ECTS]

The Programme's **Research Methods for Visual Media and Creative Arts** (10 ECTS) will act as a Special Purpose Award. The Certificate in Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts will be advertised separately each year, open to learners who do not intend to sit the entire Masters in Animation programme. This certificate will align with the Module "*Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts*"

1.5   Embedded Programme(s)

Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Animation - Exit Award [L9, 60 ECTS]

To facilitate some learners who complete the first two semesters but cannot complete the final semester, a 12 month (60 ECTS) Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Animation exit award possibility. In these exceptional circumstances, a student may request to formally exit from a programme prior to its completion. Provided the student has attained the requisite minimum number of credits (60 ECTS), this can be considered. Students seeking to apply for the Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Animation exit award are advised to first discuss their options with their Programme Chair/Co-ordinator or Head of Department

1.6   Programme(s) being replaced

Programme being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Late Enrolment Date**
N/A	N/A	N/A

Part 2 Evaluation against the Validation Criteria

The Programme Validation meeting was conducted online on Tuesday, 18 June 2024, using Microsoft TEAMS. The Programme Validation Panel met with the President, Vice President, Academic Affairs + Registrar, Head of Faculty of Film, Art + Creative Technologies, Head of Department of Film + Media, Programme Chairs and members of the Faculty.

The Programme Validation Panel members were issued with the proposed Programme Document before the meeting. This document presents a proposal for the validation of an *MA in Animation*. The Panel considered the proposal aligned with twelve Validation Criteria (full descriptions are outlined in Appendix 1)

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

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (Commencement) (No. 2) Order 2019 (SI No. 540 of 2019), made 5 November 2019, IADT may make awards up to Level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications, and became a designated awarding body, on 1 January 2020. Following a review of the documentation provided and presentations and discussions with IADT Management and representatives from the Programme Team, the Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that IADT meets the prerequisites of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 and is eligible to apply for validation of the **Master of Arts in Animation**.

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

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme Document sets out the rationale for this programme being a Level 9 Master of Arts in Animation. The core knowledge skills and competencies for Level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) are aligned with the appropriate discipline Award Standards, in this case the award standards for Art and Design. Having considered and discussed the objectives and outcomes of the programme with the programme team, the Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that the aims and objectives are clearly defined in the programme proposal document, and this programme is consistent with the awards sought. **Commendation #1** The Programme Documentation provided to the panel was comprehensive and of high standard.

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2.3   Criterion 3

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

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme Document represents the views of all relevant stakeholders, and the Faculty, Department and Programme Team developed the programme and learning outcomes informed by research, surveys, and benchmarking against similar programmes, nationally and internationally. The programme's learning outcomes and related module learning outcomes have been mapped against the QQI awards standards for Art and Design. The Programme Team outlined the rationale and evidence of learner demand following engagement and research with current students and alumni, industry, and External Examiner feedback. The Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that the programmes met the criteria around the concept, implementation, and interpretation of QQI standards.

2.4   Criterion 4

The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme Validation Panel were satisfied overall that the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory. The Panel discussed with the Programme Development Team the minimum requirements and suggested that these be made clearer to outline options available and criteria for prospective students coming from disciplines other than Animation. **Recommendation # 1:** The Panel recommended that the programme team list the related programmes that can be used for entry in addition to the Animation degree. It is also recommended to clearly articulate the selection mechanism, should applications exceed places available.

2.5   Criterion 5

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

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Partially	The Programme Validation Panel reviewed the programme's written curriculum and discussed each of the modules with the Programme Team. They commended the Programme Document's quality and noted how the programme provides students with options in relation to different animation styles that can be used. The Panel discussed and explored further with the Programme Team different aspects of the content and structure of the curriculum, including timeframes, collaboration and student workloads. The embedded PG Diploma Exit Award was welcomed by the Panel. However, they suggested outlining the Programme Learning Outcomes in the document. They also suggested updating the Programme Document and removing the reference to the formation of individual reading lists for each student. Overall, the members of the Panel were satisfied that the written curriculum is well structured, but outlined a couple of conditions and a recommendation to ensure it is fit for purpose. **Commendation #2:** The programme avoids a particular animation style or output, which provides students with options to explore ways in which animation can be used. **Condition #1**: The Panel requested that the Programme document be updated to specify the Programme Learning Outcomes for the Postgraduate Diploma Exit Award. **Condition #2**: Review the duration of the Research Methods module and the timeline and scale of its assessments, with a view to ensuring that students can successfully complete the learning and assessments and that there is parity of workload for students regardless of the output they choose. **Recommendation #2**: Consider how learning from other programme modules (e.g. Cert in Teaching + Learning) will be integrated into the programme to avoid students receiving double credit for learning. **Recommendation #3**: Remove the reference to "reading list will be formed for each student" from the Reading Lists in the Programme Document

2.6 Criterion 6

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

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme Validation Panel considered the information provided in the Programme Document and the CVs of the staff and they met with a number of the faculty on the Programme Team. The Team discussed with the Panel the multi-disciplinary range and experience of staff, the benefits of cross-faculty collaboration, and visiting lecturers. The Programme Validation Panel was satisfied that sufficient qualified and capable programme staff are available to implement this programme as planned. **Commendation #3:** The Panel noted that the staff whom they met were open and obviously enthusiastic about their discipline. They are student-focused and will engender a positive ethos in the programme. **Recommendation #4:** Provide support and upskilling for staff undertaking postgraduate supervision for the first time and clarify the nature of project supervision in the Programme Document.

2.7 Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme document outlines the facilities and physical resources available on the IADT campus. The meeting took place online, so the Panel members did not visit the physical campus, but some were already familiar with the IADT campus, and they were advised of the developments of the new Digital Media building on the IADT Campus, currently under construction (due to open in Academic Year 2024-25). The Programme Team clarified the resources available and that students will have a dedicated space on campus and confirmed there will be facilities available for, e.g. Stop Motion, etc. The Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that sufficient physical resources will be available to implement this programme as planned.

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2.8   Criterion 8

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

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The learning environments support social, cultural, and intellectual development through engagement with their peers, lecturers and the wider community. The Panel noted the benefits of the National Film School and the affiliation of the Institute with FilmEU The Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that the learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners. **Recommendation #5**: The Panel recommended exploiting Film EU opportunities to benefit the programme and its students. **Recommendation #6:** Provide learners who do not come from an animation background with opportunities and/or resources to upskill in basic proficiency in the animation technology they intend to use.

2.9   Criterion 9

There are sound teaching and learning strategies

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	Learners are enabled to meet the Learning Outcomes using a diverse and blended set of Teaching Strategies. The Teaching strategies for this programme have been developed, giving consideration to the Signature Pedagogies of the Discipline, National Quality Framework, Learner needs, Academic standards, Industry / Professional requirements, and IADT's Teaching and Learning policy and guidelines. There was discussion about the Module Titles across the programme and the Programme Validation Panel noted that the titles of the modules may be unclear outside the institute and suggested the Programme Team consider renaming them. The Programme Validation Panel agreed that the teaching and learning strategies were sound and fit for purpose. **Recommendation #7**: Consider the titles of modules. As written, they may be confusing on promotional material and transcripts for applicants, students and employers. Consider whether there are alternative titles which more transparently reflect the learning being undertaken by students but are also flexible enough to avoid over-defining. As the programme evolves, consider whether named awards to reflect the student pathway on the programme are desirable and feasible. **Recommendation #8:** Consider how staff should be involved in student pitches and projects with external organisations to preserve relationships and protect the college's reputation.

2.10 Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme Document outlines the programme assessment strategy and module assessment strategies. Programme assessment procedures are consistent with IADT's Quality Framework and Learning and Teaching Assessment Strategy, and related policies and procedures. The Programme Validation Panel considered the assessment strategies outlined in the Programme Documentation and, as discussed with the Programme Team, were satisfied overall. They noted and liked the learning agreement and suggested it be incorporated into the module marking schemes. They also highlighted some updates required in the Programme Document regarding the breakdown of assessments. **Recommendation #9**: In the Programme Document, review the breakdown of assessments in module descriptors to ensure that they are correct and consistent throughout. Review assessment weightings in the Capstone and Exhibit module to ensure that the weighting reflects student workload. Also, consider including the development of learning agreements into module marking schemes.

2.11 Criterion 11

Learners enrolled on the programme are well-informed, guided and cared for

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	The Programme Validation Panel discussed various aspects of the students expected experience and the supports and services available to them. They discussed the supervision of students, where each will be assigned a primary supervisor, which will be a pastoral role, who will support and guide the students through the programme and coursework. The Programme teams also discussed the other student supports available, which actively help students with time management research methodologies, etc. The Panel also noted and commended the flexible nature of the programme, which will benefit the students. The Panel concurred that there are suitable arrangements in place to ensure learners are well informed, guided and cared for, and as discussed, they were satisfied with the mechanisms in place. **Commendation #4:** The flexible design of the programme is student-centred and takes account of the needs of the student cohorts targeted.

2.12 Criterion 12	
The programme is well-managed	

Satisfactory (Yes, No, Partially)	Comment
Yes	Following the review of the Programme Documentation and discussions with the Management and Programme Team members, the Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that the programme will be professionally managed.

Part 3 Overall Recommendation

3.1   Principal Programme
Master of Arts in Animation [Level 9, 90 ECTS]

Select One	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that IADT can be satisfied in the context of Unit 2.3 of Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training)
X	**Satisfactory, subject to proposed special conditions**; 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
	Not satisfactory

3.1.1   Reasons for the Overall Recommendation (Principal Programme)
The Programme Validation Panel were satisfied that all the criteria were met, as demonstrated in the Programme Document and information provided by management and the Programme Team. The Panel were satisfied to recommend this programme, *Master of Arts in Animation* for validation with 4 commendations, 2 conditions, and 9 recommendations as outlined below.

3.2   Stand-alone Module(s) Leading to a Minor Award:
Cert in Research Methods for Visual Media + Creative Arts [Level 9, 10 ECTS]

Select One	
	Satisfactory
X	**Satisfactory, subject to proposed special conditions** (as above)
	Not satisfactory

3.2.1.   Reasons for the Overall Recommendation (Stand-alone Module(s) Leading to a Minor Award)
As for the Principal Programme, under the twelve criteria.

3.3   Embedded Programme
PG Diploma in Arts in Animation – Exit Award [Level 9, 60 ECTS]

Select One	
	Satisfactory
X	**Satisfactory, subject to proposed special conditions** (as above)
	Not satisfactory

3.3.1.   Reasons for the Overall Recommendation (Embedded Programme)
As for the Principal Programme, under the twelve criteria.

3.3   Summary of Recommended Special Conditions of Validation

3.3.1   **Condition #1:** The Panel requested the Programme document be updated to specify the Programme Learning Outcomes for the Postgraduate Diploma Exit Award.

3.3.2   **Condition #2**: Review the duration of the Research Methods module and the timeline and scale of its assessments, with a view to ensuring that students can successfully complete the learning and assessments and that there is parity of workload for students regardless of the output they choose.

3.4   Summary of Recommendations to the Provider

3.4.1   **Recommendation # 1** The Panel recommended that the programme team list the related programmes that can be used for entry in addition to the Animation degree. It is also recommended to clearly articulate the selection mechanism, should applications exceed places available.

3.4.2   **Recommendation #2**: Consider how learning from other programme modules (e.g. Cert in Teaching + Learning) will be integrated into the programme to avoid students receiving double credit for learning.

3.4.3   **Recommendation #3**: Remove the reference to "reading list will be formed for each student" from the Reading Lists in the Programme Document.

3.4.4   **Recommendation #4:** Provide support and upskilling for staff undertaking postgraduate supervision for the first time and clarify the nature of project supervision in the Programme Document.

3.4.5   **Recommendation #5**: The Panel recommended exploiting FilmEU opportunities to benefit the programme and its students.

3.4.6   **Recommendation #6:** Provide learners who do not come from an animation background with opportunities and/or resources to upskill in basic proficiency in the animation technology they intend to use.

3.4.7   **Recommendation #7**: Consider the titles of modules. As written, they may be confusing on promotional material and transcripts for applicants, students and employers. Consider whether there are alternative titles which more transparently reflect the learning being undertaken by students but are also flexible enough to avoid over-defining. As the programme evolves, consider whether named awards to reflect the student pathway on the programme are desirable and feasible.

3.4.8   **Recommendation #8**: Consider how staff should be involved in student pitches and projects with external organisations to preserve relationships and protect the college's reputation.

3.4.9   **Recommendation #9**: In the Programme Document, review the breakdown of assessments in module descriptors to ensure that they are correct and consistent throughout. Review assessment weightings in the Capstone and Exhibit module to ensure that the weighting reflects student workload. Also, consider including the development of learning agreements into module marking schemes.

3.5 Summary of Commendations to the Provider

3.5.1 **Commendation #1** The Programme Documentation provided to the panel was comprehensive and of high standard.
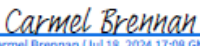
3.5.2 **Commendation #2:** The programme avoids a particular animation style or output, which provides students with options to explore ways in which animation can be used.

3.5.3 **Commendation #3:** The Panel noted that the staff whom they met were open and obviously enthusiastic about their discipline. They are student-focused and will engender a positive ethos in the programme.

3.5.4 **Commendation #4** The flexible design of the programme is student-centred and takes account of the needs of the student cohorts targeted.

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3.6   Signature of Chairperson

This report for the validation of *MA in Animation [Level 9, 90 ECTS]*, has been agreed by the evaluation panel and is signed on their behalf by the Chairperson.

Panel Chairperson Name	Ms Carmel Brennan
Panel Chairperson Signature	*Carmel Brennan* Carmel Brennan (Jul 18, 2024 17:08 GMT+1)
Date	Jul 18, 2024

3.7   Disclaimer

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

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

Appendix 1: IADT Programme Validation Criteria – Full Descriptions

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.[2]

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[3]
(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.
(i)	For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[4]

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

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

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

Criterion 3	
The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)	
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.[5]
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[6] of learner demand for the programme.
	(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[7]
	(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs[8]
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

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

[6] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

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

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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 IADT'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[9]
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[10]) 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.

[9] Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further, higher education, and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings
- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

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

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Criterion 5	
The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose	
a)	The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions
b)	In so far as it is feasible, the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs
c)	Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes
d)	The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff
e)	The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[11]
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[12]

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[13] (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[14] opportunities[15].
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.

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[11] This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.
In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.
[12] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified
[13] Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.
[14] Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.
[15] Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

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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. 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

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

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Criterion 9	
There are sound teaching and learning strategies	
a)	The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes
b)	The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes
c)	The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload)
d)	Learning is monitored/supervised
e)	Individualised guidance, support[16] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme

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[17]
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[18]
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[19]
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[20]

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

[17] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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

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

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	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[21]
i)	If the programme aims to enrol international students, it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[22] 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)

	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[23] 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.

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[21] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).
[22] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)
[23] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

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MA in Animation

[Level 9, 90 ECTS]

**Programme Validation Report:
FACULTY RESPONSE**

Note from the Programme Development Team

We are very grateful to the panel for their careful reading of our document. We found the responses to it to be thoughtful and constructive- a huge help in fact, in refining the document and bringing it up to the appropriate standard. We hope we have responded satisfactorily to the panel's conditions and recommendations, though of course we remain open to revisiting, and making any further amendments as the panel sees fit.

Sincere thanks,

David Quinn and Michael Connerty

Recommended Special Conditions of Validation

Condition #1: The Panel requested the Programme document be updated to specify the Programme Learning Outcomes for the Postgraduate Diploma Exit Award.

Response: A comprehensive descriptor for the Postgraduate Diploma Exit Award, including Learning Outcomes, has been added as Appendix 7 (also noted where the Diploma is referenced in the main body of the document).

Condition #2: Review the duration of the Research Methods module and the timeline and scale of its assessments, with a view to ensuring that students can successfully complete the learning and assessments and that there is parity of workload for students regardless of the output they choose.

Response: Amendments have been made to the Research Methods module descriptor which can be summarised as follows:

-Duration of module changed from 5 to 10 weeks total. As previously, the first five weeks are centred on taught in-person lectures, with weeks 6-10 devoted to independent work on the module assignment, with tutorial support. This will give students 6-7 weeks from brief to submission of the primary module assignment.

-In addition, the specified wordcount has been reduced from 3000 to 2500 words.

We have also clarified the orientation of this module towards a broad range of learners, by making very minor global amendments to the wording of MIPLOs #3, #4, and #6. This makes the context for this module more broad and inclusive- substituting "creative arts" for "animation" in order to avoid discipline specificity (while having a minimal effect on the overall programme descriptor, where discipline specificity remains explicit in the other MIPLOs). It is necessary that this module should be accessible to sister disciplines across our Faculty and across the sector.

(NOTE: It is possible that this module will also be run separately at another point in the academic calendar, thus assisting another Faculty MA programme.)

Recommendations to the Provider

Recommendation #1 The Panel recommended that the programme team list the related programmes that can be used for entry in addition to the Animation degree. It is also recommended to clearly articulate the selection mechanism, should applications exceed places available.

Response: The Applicant Assessment and Feedback sheet has been added as Appendix #3 in the interests of clarifying entry criteria. Just to also note that feedback from our 2024-25 applicants on the clarity and helpfulness of these assessment sheets has been very positive.

The Applicant Assessment and Feedback sheet is graded out of 600 points (a legacy of its origins in our Faculty's undergraduate applicant assessment procedure). The threshold for acceptance onto the Masters Programme is 400 out of 600.

Text added to Section 3.2 Profile of Learners on the Programme (Target Learners)": "An indicative list of related programmes appropriate for entry to the Masters in Animation would include a number of BA Animation programmes currently offered within Ireland, e.g. Ballyfermot College of Further Education, Technological University of the Shannon (Athlone) and the Atlantic Technological University (Letterkenny). Additionally a number of 'sister' programmes in our Faculty at IADT, including, but not limited to, Film, Television, Design for Film, and Art would be appropriate in this context. We would welcome applications from similar programmes across the UK and Europe. Regardless of the background of the applicant, it is essential that the proposed project be based within the animation discipline, which should not be merely secondary."

Recommendation #2: Consider how learning from other programme modules (e.g. Cert in Teaching + Learning) will be integrated into the programme to avoid students receiving double credit for learning.

Response: Any receipt of 'double-credit' was never the intention of the Masters in Animation programme team and we'll do everything possible to avoid such confusion. We are still waiting for final expert guidance from senior members of IADT's Teaching and Learning Committee of Academic Council on this issue, but would still prefer to allow the possibility for our Masters students to negotiate (with the Masters Programme Team, albeit in rare circumstances) directly relevant learning from existing IADT modules as credited elective components on our Masters in Animation study programme.

Recommendation #3: Remove the reference to "reading list will be formed for each student" from the Reading Lists in the Programme Document.

Response: Text replaced with "each student will independently generate a reading list of relevant texts" in each module descriptor.

Recommendation #4: Provide support and upskilling for staff undertaking postgraduate supervision for the first time and clarify the nature of project supervision in the Programme Document.

Response: The following text has been added to Section 7.4 "Arrangements for Approval of Staff who will have a Formal Role in this Programme", in order to clarify the supervisory role: "The training of co-supervisors will be achieved through mentorship and early co-supervision with experienced Masters supervisors. The supervisor and co-supervisor will be the first point of contact for students on the MA programme. The supervisor plays a key role in negotiating and establishing with the individual student the parameters and feasibility of the proposed project, including time management/project planning and considerations around support and resourcing. The supervisor acts as liaison with relevant Animation and Faculty tutors as well as, where relevant or required, outside parties. The supervisor provides regular feedback on student progress and establishes structures for tutorial engagement."

Recommendation #5: The Panel recommended exploiting FilmEU opportunities to benefit the programme and its students.

Response: The following text has been added to Section 1.2 "Contextual Information about the Provider and its other Programmes": "Via the IADT's FilmEU initiative, the Institute is building relationships with a number of European colleges, including Luca (Belgium), DFM (Estonia), and Lusofana (Portugal). As the MA in Animation programme develops we will seek collaborative opportunities with these and other institutions, including mobilities for students and staff, and the integration of incoming FilmEU Masters candidates."

Recommendation #6: Provide learners who do not come from an animation background with opportunities and/or resources to upskill in basic proficiency in the animation technology they intend to use.

Response: There will be limited opportunities to access tutorial expertise from the Undergrad programme around specific technologies, skills and approaches- however, this will not mean structured programmes of class. The team did consider this upskilling option, but were persuaded by the External Examiner's advice and their own experience with undergraduate learning. It will be made clear to all applicants that this is not an upskilling programme.

Recommendation #7: Consider the titles of modules. As written, they may be confusing on promotional material and transcripts for applicants, students and employers. Consider whether there are alternative titles which more transparently reflect the learning being undertaken by students but are also flexible enough to avoid over-defining. As the programme evolves, consider whether named awards to reflect the student pathway on the programme are desirable and feasible.

Response: We appreciate the rationale behind this recommendation, however, for now, we feel it will be prudent to keep the module titles 'open' for now, with the understanding that they can be adapted as the programme evolves- as with the named student pathways as suggested by the panel.

MA in Animation - Faculty response to Programme Validation Panel Report

Recommendation #8: Consider how staff should be involved in student pitches and projects with external organisations to preserve relationships and protect the college's reputation.

Response: As an undergraduate programme we have extensive experience of working with external partners including charities, NGOs and civic organisations. While there will be academic supervision around these activities, it will be important to preserve student self-direction. Ultimately part of the value of these activities derives from the fact that students are responsible for the direction of the projects.
From the forthcoming article "National examples of practice to tackle sexual harassment and violence at Third Level: the UCC Bystander Intervention programme and IADT Moving Parts campaign," by Louise Crowley (UCC), Claire McGing (IADT), and David Quin (IADT):
"*Through this pedagogical approach, initially developed from the "bottom-up" by individual lecturers on the animation degree, IADT has visualised and disseminated the work of numerous charities, NGOs, state agencies and HEIs to target audiences, culminating in the development of strong external partnerships. Recent examples include projects such as 'Moving Parts' and animated shorts focusing on consent education for minority students, transgender and non-binary experiences, cultural awareness of the Irish Traveller community, Athena Swan and EDI activities in HEIs, youth mental health, and living with an acquired brain injury.*"

Recommendation #9: In the Programme Document, review the breakdown of assessments in module descriptors to ensure that they are correct and consistent throughout. Review assessment weightings in the Capstone and Exhibit module to ensure that the weighting reflects student workload. Also, consider including the development of learning agreements into module marking schemes.

Response: We have identified and amended assessment breakdowns for consistency throughout the document. The breakdown of marks within this module will be Capstone Workshop: 60% and Exhibition Component: 40%.

Summary of Commendations to the Provider

Commendation #1 The Programme Documentation provided to the panel was comprehensive and of high standard.

Commendation #2: The programme avoids a particular animation style or output, which provides students with options to explore ways in which animation can be used.

Commendation #3: The Panel noted that the staff whom they met were open and obviously enthusiastic about their discipline. They are student-focused and will engender a positive ethos in the programme.

Commendation #4 The flexible design of the programme is student-centred and takes account of the needs of the student cohorts targeted.