



## **SOUTH EAST TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

### ***COURSE EVALUATION 2***

### **ASSESSORS' REPORT TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

<b>COURSE EVALUATED:</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Custodial Care (Level 7, 60 credits, add-on degree)  Certificate in Management and Leadership in Custodial Care (Level 7, 10 credits, Minor Award <i>linked to</i> Bachelor of Arts in Custodial Care)
<b>FACULTY:</b>	Arts and Humanities
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Department of Law and Criminal Justice

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The following is a review report to Academic Council from the panel of assessors on the proposal from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at South East Technological University to develop a Bachelor of Arts in Custodial Care (Level 7, 60 credits) and a linked Minor Award Certificate in Management and Leadership in Custodial Care (Level 7, 10 credits). In accordance with the regulations governing the evaluation of new programme proposals, as set out in the South East Technological University *Programme Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy and Procedures*, the programme proposal was reviewed by a panel of assessors.

The panel of assessors who contributed to this report were:

- Dr Áine Ní Shé, Head of Dept of Mathematics, Munster Technological University (Chair)
- Sean Aylward, Former Secretary General at Department of Justice
- Dr Colette Barry, Assistant Professor in Criminology, University College Dublin
- Dr Joe Garrihy, Associate Professor of Criminology, Maynooth University
- Mary O'Connor, Student Representative, Mary Immaculate College, Thurles
- Dr Colette Moloney, Assistant Registrar, South East Technological University Waterford
- Aubrey Storey, Academic Council Representative, South East Technological University Waterford

In accordance with the regulations set out in the aforementioned *Programme Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy and Procedures*, a review meeting took place on 29 April 2025. The review meeting was conducted virtually via Teams. In the course of the meeting, the panel of assessors met with the programme development team. The following members of the South East Technological University team were present:

- Dr Suzanne Denieffe, Head of Faculty of Arts and Humanities, South East Technological University
- Dr Michael Bergin, Head of Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University
- Fabrice Bartholin, Lecturer, Department of Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Tourism, South East Technological University
- Dr Fionnuala Brennan, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University

- Dr Geraldine Cleere, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University
- Dr Sinead Conneely, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University
- Anna Flynn, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University
- Dr Clare Hogan, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University
- Dr Cathal Ryan, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice, South East Technological University

The assessors wish to thank the members of the development team for engaging generously and openly with the review process.

## **2. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS**

### *2.1 General Remarks*

The panel commends the Faculty on the quality and readability of the proposal document and on the supports in place to enhance the learner online experience. The panel also compliments the Faculty on their track record of meeting the training needs of the sector, particularly on the collaboration with the Irish Prison Service to deliver the Higher Certificate in Arts in Custodial Care. The panel **recommends approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Custodial Care (Level 7, 60 credits) and a linked Minor Award Certificate in Management and Leadership in Custodial Care (Level 7, 10 credits) until the next School Review in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined below; and the submission of a summary document describing the responses and actions of the School to address the conditions and recommendations made by the review panel.**

Areas for attention have been emboldened in the text for convenience of reference. Action is required on items marked ‘Conditions’ and such action is mandatory if the programme is to be approved; action is highly recommended on items marked ‘Recommendations’.

## 2.2 Conditions

- In the proposal document it was suggested that entry to the programme could be extended to professions outside the prison service, however, in discussion with the panel the team were more specific in their requirements for entry. **The Faculty team should review the proposed entry requirements to ensure that there is clarity in the disciplines or cognate areas of the Higher Certificate required for entry and also articulate any work experience or current workplace necessary.**
- **The focus and context of the ‘Law at Work’ module should be reconsidered.** Currently, the module concentrates on the legal aspects of an employee’s employment rights whereas a module which is more focused on the legal frame underpinning the work of a prison officer would be more appropriate e.g. the rights of prisoners *et cetera*.
- **The module descriptors should be entered on the SETU module catalogue when access to same is available.**

## 2.3 Recommendations

- In discussion with the panel, the team described the Faculty’s longstanding collaboration with the Irish Prison Service in the delivery of the Higher Certificate in Arts in Custodial Care and the extensive consultation process undertaken in the design of the proposed programme to ensure that it met the needs of, and would be supported by, the Irish Prison Service. **The history of collaboration with the Irish Prison Service and the engagement with the body in the development of the current programme should be articulated more extensively in the proposal document.**
- The titles of the modules which contribute to the Minor Award Certificate in Management and Leadership in Custodial Care are quite general; the content of the modules, and indeed the title of the Minor Award itself, however, are specific to Custodial Care. **The title of the two modules on the Certificate in Management and Leadership in Custodial Care – ‘Advanced Communication Skills’ and ‘Management and Leadership’– should be reviewed to better reflect the content of the modules.**
- It is indicated on page 1 of the document that the Faculty have received a ‘number of queries from former HCCC [Higher Certificate in Arts in Custodial Care] students and graduates

about follow on options with SETU over recent years’ and Appendix 4 gives the outcomes of surveys with the student cohort in 2021 and 2023. **A more detailed, evidenced-based discussion of the demand for the programme in the main body of the proposal document, particularly interpreting the results of the surveys, would enhance the proposal.**

- The delivery model for the programme is proposed as ‘blended’ but the precise nature of the delivery intended is not articulated in the document. In discussion with the panel, the team described a well-considered delivery model consisting of online and in-person delivery. **The faculty team should reflect the discussion re delivery at the review meeting in the proposal document and student handbook to give students a clear understanding of the in-person, on campus commitment across the semester, and the availability of synchronous or non-synchronous online lectures.**
- **Given the specialist nature of the programme, the Faculty should look to enhance the student learning and experience by supplementing in-house expertise with practitioner knowledge in the form of visiting lecturers *et cetera*.**
- **One bespoke module in communication, ‘Advanced Communication Skills’, is proposed for the programme but in addition the team should review all other modules on the programme and articulate where elements of communication will be incorporated in the content and assessment in these modules.**
- **The team should review the level and type of research activity appropriate to the programme type and NFQ Level. In particular, the team should consider the relationship between the ‘Research Skills and Academic Writing’ and ‘Independent Study’ modules, and the types of assignments and assessment appropriate for each.**
- **The following are recommendations on individual modules:**

Module Title	Recommendation
Advanced Communication Skills	<b>The team should consider how a greater emphasis on verbal communication could be included in the module e.g. include a presentation, role play <i>et cetera</i>.</b>

Module Title	Recommendation
Research Skills and Academic Writing	A research proposal is required in the assessment of both this and the 'Independent Study' module. <b>The proposed assessment in the module should be reviewed to be more relevant to the level of, and stage in, the programme and to give more variety in assessment e.g. an annotated bibliography <i>et cetera</i> and a synthesis of literature may be more relevant here.</b>
Independent Study	There is a research proposal required as per module descriptor but this does not appear to be captured in the assessment breakdown. <b>The assessment of the module should be reviewed to ensure that the research proposal, if maintained, contributes to the assessment of the module but preferably that a greater variety of assessment is proposed e.g. a self-reflective log and/or a presentation.</b> This would both reduce the risk of inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence and enhance learner communication skills.

Signed:

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Dr Áine Ní Shé (Chair)

Date:

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