



**SOUTH EAST TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

***COURSE EVALUATION 2***

**ASSESSORS' REPORT TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**COURSE EVALUATED:** Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice

**SCHOOL:** Humanities

**DEPARTMENT:** 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 School of Humanities at South East Technological University to develop a Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice (Level 9; 90 Credits). In accordance with the regulations governing the evaluation of new programme proposals, as set out in the South East Technological University Waterford *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:

- Majella O'Shea, Education Policy and Organisation Development Consultant and Executive
- Sean Aylward, Former Secretary General of Department of Justice
- Dr Louise Bennett, Academic Council Representative, SETU Waterford
- Paul Delaney, Coordinator, Cornmarket Project, Wexford Local Development, Wexford
- Dr Deirdre Healy, Associate Professor, UCD Sutherland School of Law, UCD, Dublin
- Dr Colette Moloney, Assistant Registrar, SETU Waterford
- Dr Catherine O'Sullivan, Lecturer Criminal Law, Criminology, UCC, Cork
- Eoin Ussher, Student Representative, Queens University, Belfast

In accordance with the regulations set out in the aforementioned *Programme Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy and Procedures*, a review meeting took place on 13 October 2022. 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 School of Humanities
- Dr Michael Bergin, Head of Department of Law and Criminal Justice
- Dr Geraldine Cleere, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice
- Dr Sinead Conneely, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice
- Dr Niamh Maguire, Senior Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice
- Dr Jennifer O'Mahoney, Lecturer, Department of Law and Criminal Justice

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 School on the impressive programme submission and on proposing a timely, necessary and important addition to training and qualifications in the sector. The panel **recommends approval of the Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice** until the next School Review in the School of Humanities. **Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined below, and the successful review of the revised document by the panel; 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*

- A number of typographical errors and inconsistencies were noted in the proposal e.g. the module titled ‘Terrorism & Political Violence’ is also referred to as ‘Terrorism, Political Violence and Organised Crime’ in the document *et cetera*. **The document must be proofread to eliminate the typographical errors and to ensure a consistent use of module titles in the document.**
- The level of detail on the proposed assessment varied between modules; **the module descriptors must be reviewed to ensure that detail on the breakdown and type of assessment proposed is included and that the level of detail provided on assessment is consistent across modules.**
- The proposed assessment schedule for the programme requires the completion of significant pieces of assessment early in semester and requires all to be submitted by week 12 of term. **The proposed assessment schedule must be reconsidered to allow learners to complete**

**the smaller more formative assessment pieces early in the semester, and utilise the full 15-week semester to facilitate learners in spreading the workload.**

- The reading lists on some module descriptors appeared dated; **the reading lists should be reviewed to ensure that, in addition to foundational texts, all include current publications, journals, and e-resources, and list the most recent editions of same.**
- As part of programme learning outcome 8, it is proposed that a graduate will have ‘an ability to create professional relationships with criminal justice and third sector agencies in the field, including the ability to work with others, as part of a team or on one’s own initiative to set and achieve goals’. It is not clear from the module descriptors, however, where the element of teamwork is developed and assessed in order that the learner may achieve programme learning outcome 8. **The document must be reviewed to ensure that the development of teamwork skills is clearly articulated in the relevant module descriptor(s).**
- In discussion with the panel, the team articulated a more varied and imaginative teaching and learning methodology than that discussed in the relevant section of the proposal. **The team must review the relevant methodology section in the document and elaborate on the proposed hybrid delivery model and the advantages of same for this programme.**
- The description of the delivery model for the programme is not consistent in the document. On page 4, for example, it is stated that ‘Class contact will take place one day per fortnight in semesters 1 & 2 with the alternative fortnight delivered online through both synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods.’ Later in the same page, the delivery model is described as: ‘The 10 credit modules will have 2 contact hours per week (1 face-to-face and 1 online) and 5 credit modules will have 1.5 hours per week (1 face-to-face and .5 online)’. **The description of the delivery model in the document must be reviewed for consistency.**

### 2.3 *Recommendations*

- **The team should consider their use of terminology re the civic and voluntary organisations and refer to the sector as ‘Civil Society’ rather than ‘3<sup>rd</sup> Sector’.**
- The panel believe that the programme will be attractive to practitioners currently working in the law and criminal justice areas. These practitioners, however, may not immediately meet the entry requirements on the basis of certified learning but could potentially qualify on the basis of equivalent experiential learning. **The Recognition of Prior Learning**

**pathway is included in the entry requirements but should be given more prominence in the description of the entry requirements and in publicity material so that experienced practitioners, without a Level 8 degree, will be aware that they may still qualify for entry to the programme.**

- **To facilitate potential candidates who are currently in employment, the School should consider offering a part-time pathway for the programme in the future, perhaps allowing the learner to complete the programme part-time over two years.**
- **To enhance the programme further and cater for a more diverse learner interest, the School should consider introducing a range of elective and specialist modules to the programme in the future.**
- **The School should also consider using a more varied range of assessment, to cater for the different learner types.**
- The programme team carried out market research prior to the development of the programme. This research was referenced in the proposal document and discussed in more detail at the panel meeting. **The School should enhance the proposal document by including greater detail on the market research undertaken.**
- The workload for the 5-credit modules should be reconsidered as it did not appear to be proportionate with that of the 10-credit modules. **The team should review what curriculum is necessary and desirable in the 5-credit modules with a view to reducing the workload to allow time for self-directed learning and reflection.** It was not clear if it is proposed to deliver the modules, particularly the 5-credit modules, simultaneously or consecutively in each semester. **The School should include an indicative programme delivery schedule in the document to clarify the proposed delivery of the programme.**
- The reading lists currently rely heavily on books however a mix of offline and online resources may be more suitable for remote learners. **Given the hybrid nature of the programme, the team should review the reading resources proposed to ensure that a range of appropriate resources are available to learners who may be working remotely.**

- The programme should be mapped to the relevant SETU Waterford Award Standards, rather than the QQI Standards, and it would appear appropriate that programme learning outcome 5, would also contribute to the achievement of the ‘Competence-Insight’ category. The School should also consider including ‘dialogue with learning practitioners in the field’ in programme learning outcome 7.
- The following are recommendations on individual modules:

<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Criminal Justice & Penal Process	<b>The module descriptor should be reviewed to ensure that it is explicitly stated that ‘policing’ is covered in the module.</b>
Victims of Crime	<b>Domestic violence victims should be specifically referred to in the module descriptor.</b>

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Majella O’Shea (Chair)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by**  
**Academic Council:** \_\_\_\_\_