

*Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna*  
Higher Education and Training Awards Council

**PANEL OF EXPERTS REPORT**

**PART I**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**PROVIDER**

**SETANTA COLLEGE**

**DATE OF VISITATION**

Tuesday 11 May, 2010

**PROGRAMME EVALUATED**

Higher Certificate in Arts in Strength & Conditioning  
Bachelor of Arts in Strength & Conditioning  
Bachelor of Arts(Honours) in Strength & Conditioning

**PROGRAMME  
RECOMMENDED FOR  
APPROVAL**

Higher Certificate in Arts in Strength & Conditioning  
Bachelor of Arts in Strength & Conditioning

**PANEL OF EXPERTS**

Mr Dermot Finan, Former Registrar, IT Sligo  
Mr Hugh Wiltshire, Director of Fitness, Welsh Rugby Union  
Ms Meabh Kyle, International Athletics Coach,  
Ms Mary Carey, MSc in Strength & Conditioning

**INSTITUTE STAFF**

Dr Liam Hennessey, Director of Programme  
Mr Jim Kilty, College Administrator  
Mr Des Ryan, College Tutor  
Mr Joe Gorey, College Tutor  
Mr Michael Brennan, College Tutor  
Mr Damien Young, College Tutor  
Mr Colin Buckley, College Tutor  
Ms Brona Furlong, College Administration

## **PART II**

## **FINDINGS OF PANEL OF EXPERTS**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Setanta College is a limited company involved in Sports Fitness and Coaching Education.

The mission of the college is to provide to the learner a progressive learning experience that leads to a greater specialised knowledge, awareness, understanding and management expertise coupled with strong practical competences in delivering a strength based conditioning programme in their chosen sport or area of interest.

This is done while supporting and encouraging the learner to continue his or her conditioning/coaching involvement in their chosen sport.

The college already has HETAC validation for:

- Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Physical Fitness & Conditioning for Sport (60 credits)
- Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Resistance Training & Weight Training for Sport (10 credits)

### **2.2 EXAMINATION OF THE PROGRAMME**

The panel met with academic staff of the Institute involved in the design of the programme, to examine the programme submission against the criteria for the validation of programmes as stipulated by the Council. The criteria address the requirements of the Act, provider quality assurance arrangements and specific arrangements, and specific features of programme design.

#### **2.2.1 Education and Training Requirements**

Strength and Conditioning coaching involves conditioning the individual, athlete or player to be in a position to participate regularly and efficiently at the level required by the demands of his or her activity or sport. It involves strength and conditioning knowledge, know-how and skill as well as practical competence in the conditioning process. It also demands that the coach is qualified in the specific sport he or she chooses.

Specifically in relation to those who are involved in coaching and administration most are mature adults who have either retired from a sport and get involved in sport coaching or have developed an interest and love of coaching or just being involved at some level.

Given that the coach is typically already working, may have a family and other commitments he or she does not possess the time or opportunity to engage in full time education. The proposed programmes are designed to provide graduates with the required skills.

The College has consulted with the Gaelic Players Association and various GAA county boards and clubs. It has also consulted with the IRFU at both professional and amateur levels and various club sides.

The following professional bodies have expressed a strong interest in the programme:

FAI – the Association has expressed an interest in participating

IRFU – currently running Certified Conditioning Course which has now attracted strong interest from soccer, hockey, athletics, GAA and international sport bodies including the Rugby Unions from Wales, Scotland, England, France, Portugal, Italy and New Zealand.

It is intended that graduates will be qualified to manage coaching and conditioning programmes in a cross-section of sports but in particular in their chosen sport. As many of the potential participants will be coming from a coaching background and will already be involved in coaching their chosen sport securing employment outside of the learner's sport as such is not the primary outcome of completing this programme.

Employment potential in Ireland is within all sports clubs and associations including the popular field and court game sports in Ireland.

Given the international connections of the College directors there is potential for international work-study placement for learners on the programme.

The panel was satisfied that the programme was consistent with the College's mission, that it does not constitute redundant provision and that it makes efficient use of resources. The panel was also satisfied with the College's case on the rationale for the programme and the research undertaken, including the consultation with industry, before the programme was proposed to HETAC.

### **2.2.2 Protection of Learners**

The Council will not validate any programme of education and training pursuant to Section 25 of the Act, such programme being of a duration of three months or more, unless it is satisfied that the provider concerned has arrangements in place, as specified under Section 43 of the Act, which make provision for learners where that provider ceases to provide the programme concerned.

Arrangements are being made to Transfer students to programmes similar to the programme proposed. A letter will be sent to HETAC to outline arrangements that will be agreed.

Monies paid by participants will be fully refunded should the programme cease and if the alternative transfer programme is not appropriate. The College accountants will be charged with the responsibility to outline all financial dealings in the end of year revenue fillings.

The panel requires that the College shall have full compliance with Section 43 of the Act

### **2.2.3 Quality Assurance**

The panel heard how the submission had been developed and approved internally as a result of the application of the College's quality assurance procedures. The panel was satisfied that those procedures had been applied to the development of the proposed programme and that quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure its provision, monitoring and review.

#### **2.2.4 Programme Titles and Award Titles**

Following discussion, the panel was satisfied that the title of the programme is clear, accurate and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. The panel was satisfied that the proposed title of the programme also encompasses the Council's related named award title.

#### **2.2.5 Ethics**

Issues pertaining to Ethics, Health and Safety and Learner Confidentiality will be addressed in the Induction week and will permeate all elements of the programme.

The panel is satisfied that the College will have procedures in place to ensure that any teaching and learning or research activity at any level shall be conducted in a manner that is morally and professionally ethical.

#### **2.2.6 Particular aspects of proposed programmes**

With regard to the following, the panel found:

- **Unity**

The programme design is consistent with the Council's Policy on Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects. The programme has an underlying unifying theme and the modules are bonded by linkages which are either implicit or explicit. It was also clear how the standards of knowledge, skill and competence, determined by the Council for the named award to which the programme proposes to lead, evolve throughout the programme as a whole.

- **Teaching and Learning**

Each module proposed delivered will follow the directives as set out by the Academic Council of the College. Each module will be delivered in a 12-week period and will be delivered within the following timeframe:

- Induction week x 1
- Lesson weeks x 9
- Assignment Week x 1
- Final Project week x 1

It is envisaged that each induction week will follow College guidelines and introduce students to the specific objectives and learning outcomes of each particular module and outline the prescribed or suggested reading lists and assessment procedures. In addition the following shall be elaborated on:

- Computer Literacy
- Study skills
- Time management
- Programme details regarding workshops and logbook keeping

Each module has:

- Core study content
- Practical coaching content
- Private study, reading & research
- Practical tutorial contact
- Discussion Forum
- Workshop Tutorials

In the individual module descriptors a greater consistency shall apply in the number of learning outcomes listed.

The Dissertation shall be fully described in terms of:

- structure
- management
- operation
- assessment

• **Standards**

The learning outcomes of the programme were stated in such a way that the compliance with the interim standards determined by the Council for the award of:

Higher Certificate in Arts Bachelor of Arts
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They were stated for the strands of:

Knowledge – *Breadth*

Knowledge - *Kind*

Know-How and Skill - *Range*

Know-How and Skill - *Selectivity*

Competence – *Context*

*Competence – Role*

Competence – *Learning to learn*

Competence – *Insight*

This standard was demonstrated to the panel's satisfaction on the occasion of the visit.

The panel does not recommend the accreditation of the proposed programme leading to the award of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) at this point in time.

• **Learner Assessment**

There will be Continuous Assessment tasks during each module.

There will be Logbook tasks during each module.

Learners will be required to maintain a logbook of all practical coaching sessions during a module. They will be assessed on the work by completion of the Logbook Tasks.

There will be a Modular Assignment (Essay Task) during each module.

There will be assessment at the conclusion of each module. Learners will complete this task where project are concerned and will present themselves to a central location for practical or written final module examinations.

During the practical workshop learners will be continuously assessed in demonstration techniques, session management and coaching expertise and marks awarded accordingly.

Samples of assessment tasks and examination papers were provided.

The learning outcomes of modules were linked to the assessment methods in order to indicate the achievement of outcomes by the learner.

The programme's learner assessment methods are elaborated and consistent with the Council's policy on fair and consistent assessment. The assessment methods are capable, amongst other things, of demonstrating attainment of the standards of knowledge, skill or competence, determined by the Council, for the related award.

A greater variety of assessment methodologies shall apply, particularly for the proposed level 7 programme

The College shall develop a policy on plagiarism.

- **Access, Transfer and Progression**

To qualify for entry to the course individuals will display an involvement in coaching or actively participating at a high level in a sport or a range of sports. This will be verified by submitting a written statement of their involvement from the registered club or association.

- An application form will be filled by all applicants.
- This will include details regarding the current involvement and duration of the involvement at a coaching/activity level.
- Applicant will be required to submit two referees from their current or previous coaching/activity in sport positions to vouch for their involvement and suitability.

It is likely that most of participants will be mature students. In this case they will need to have a basic coaching certificate from a national sports governing federation or an equivalent from SAQ Ireland/International.

**Candidates for the course will be recruited from:**

- Post-leaving certificate students with sports coaching certification
- Adults who have practical experience in sports coaching but who do not have a valid university recognition and who have a sports association certification
- Adults who have progressed through sport association courses and who wish to advance their qualifications in strength and conditioning
- Adults who have attained a level 1 SAQ award or completed the IRFU's Certified Conditioning Coach award or its equivalent.
- Adults who have participated in their sports to a very high level or over a long period of activity.
- Graduates who desire a further practical coaching qualification in the area of sports conditioning
- Graduates of our two programmes SL701 and SL 702

The programme incorporates the procedures for access, transfer and progression that have been established by the Authority. The programme is in line with the requirements of the Act and the operational principles of the Authority, and accommodates a variety of access and entry requirements from applicants with expertise related discipline areas and from applicants who demonstrate extensive experiential learning in this field of study.

The entry to the programme shall be confined to mature learners with experience in coaching with National Governing Bodies for sport and it shall be offered on a part time mode.

Discussions will take place with relevant bodies to discuss progressions from this programme.

These bodies will include:

- Colleges and Universities offering Sport and Exercise undergraduate and postgraduate degrees
- Colleges and Universities offering Sport and Recreation Management undergraduate and postgraduate degrees
- Colleges and Universities offering Sport and Rehabilitation undergraduate and postgraduate degrees

- **Staffing and Physical Resources**

Lecturers for the programme have a national or international standing within their respective areas. They are selected for their advanced knowledge and skills within a practical environment. They also have substantial coaching involvement spanning several sports.

Practical tutors for workshops are selected for their practical experience in delivering course content.

The theoretical elements of the programme will be delivered through on-line lectures, reading material and theoretical assessment tasks. These presentations will be delivered from the College base in Dublin. The on-line facility will be hosted by a central server.

Workshops delivering the practical elements of the programme will be conducted at the University of Limerick and at Blackrock College in Dublin. Access to the following facilities include:

- Lecture theatre
- Classrooms
- Library
- Designated library (material supplied by Setanta college during the workshop)
- Restaurant and canteen facilities

- Gym
- Pool
- Track
- Playing pitches x 2
- Artificial pitch x 1
- Indoor hall x 1
- Accommodation
- Social area and coffee shop

The College also has the following support equipment:

- Nutrition: Dietary analysis programmes x 3
- Recovery: Vibration sinusoidal and stochastic waveforms x 3, portable cold baths x 3, Nerve Express Autonomic Nervous System assessment programmes x 3 units, Jump mats x 10 units
- Planning: Master 'Visual Coaching' programme
- Conditioning: SAQ ladders, SAQ micro and macro hurdles, viper belts, harness resistors, agility disks, breakaway belts, Olympic lifting sets x 4, Olympic dummy disks x 40, Swiss balls x 30, foam rollers x 10, truestretch Station, Slide board x 3 units, Strongman equipment – squat harness, grip plugs, towing harnesses, Medicine balls – various weights x 30 units
- Fitness testing: Medical scales x 3, heart rate polar team system x 1, heart rate polar monitors x 20 units, drop jump boxes x 10 units, Functional Movement System assessment x 10 units, fitrodyne x 10, real power x 4 systems, skinfold calipers x 10 units, Nerve Express Autonomic Nervous System assessment programmes x 3 units, speed gates (Brower system) x 10 gates, vertec jump x 1, Jump mats x 10 units, portable 2D force platform x 1 unit, Multi-stage CDs x 10, Portable CD players x 2

The panel was generally satisfied that the necessary staffing levels will be in place and were generally satisfied with the level of qualifications and competence of the staff concerned.



## **PART III                      RECOMMENDATION/COMMENT**

### **FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

#### **3.1 Recommendations:**

The panel of experts recommend the validation of the programme:

Higher Certificate in Arts in Strength & Conditioning  
Bachelor of Arts in Strength & Conditioning

for the purposes of the award of:

Higher Certificate in Arts  
Bachelor of Arts

The panel does not recommend the accreditation of the proposed programme leading to the award of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) at this point in time.

Subject to:

Council's general conditions of approval

#### **3.2 Conditions**

The panel of experts require that the Institute should take note of the following conditions and that a satisfactory response to those conditions shall be received before the validation is considered by the Academic Committee of Council.

- The entry to the programme shall be confined to mature learners with experience in coaching with National Governing Bodies for sport and it shall be offered on a part time mode.
- A greater variety of assessment methodologies shall apply, particularly for the proposed level 7 programme.
- In the individual module descriptors a greater consistency shall apply in the number of learning outcomes listed.
- The College shall develop a policy on plagiarism.
- The Dissertation shall be fully described in terms of:
  - i. structure
  - ii. management
  - iii. operation
  - iv. assessment
- The panel requires that the College shall have full compliance with Section 43 of the Act