QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training

Part 1

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	16 June 2017
Date of report	5 July 2017

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Diploma in Big Data for Business
	Award	Special Purpose Award NFQ Level 7
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions[1] OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

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[1] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

Further, in exceptional cases the 'special conditions' may be used to identify parts of the application that are considered satisfactory on a stand-alone basis. For example, an application might propose a programme to be provided at two locations but the independent evaluation report may find the application satisfactory on condition that it be provided only at one specified location and not at the other. These conditions will not however be used to recommend that QQI can be satisfied with a programme conditional on a different QQI award (e.g. at a lower NFQ level or having a different CAS award title) being sought than the one identified in the application.

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	**Role**	**Affiliation**
Colin McLean	**Chair**	**Registrar, IT Sligo**
Josephine Browne	**Secretary**	**Head of Faculty of Enterprise and Humanities, Institute of Art Design and Technology Dun Laoghaire**
Neil Hurley	**Subject Expert**	**Associate Professor, School of Computer Science, University College Dublin**
Susan McKeever	**Subject Expert**	**School of Computing, Dublin Institute of Technology**
Michael Cronin	**Subject Expert**	**School of Mathematical Science, University College Cork**
Aoife D'Arcy	**Industry Expert**	**Managing Director, The Analytics Store**
Brigid Crowley	**Subject Expert**	**Head of Department of Creative Media & Information Technology, Institute of Technology Tralee**
Ryan Donovan	**Student Representative**	**Student on the MSc in Data Analytics in the National College of Ireland**

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners
DBS Campus, Dublin	100	10

Enrolment interval *(normally 5 years)*	Date of first intake	September 2017
	Date of last intake	September 2021
Maximum number of annual intakes	2	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	100	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	12 Months FT, 12 Months PT	
Target learner groups	This programme targets mature learners who meet the minimum entry requirements for the programme and the Springboard requirements for funding. Primarily this programme's target group is those wishing to up skill in this area or who have been away from the workplace for some time and wish to refresh their skills in order to seek employment	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and Part-time	

The teaching and learning modalities	Class room lectures, Case Based learning, Practical Skills Sessions, Workshops, Tutorials, Individual and Group work, Directed e learning
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	With increased availability of information about customer preferences and actions, production processes and supply chains, there is growing recognition of the economic returns from the use of big data and analytics. The Government's Action Plan for Jobs 2013 sets out seven 'disruptive reforms' being prioritised with major potential to have a significant impact on job creation, to support enterprises or where Ireland can profit from a natural advantage or opportunity that presents itself in the economy. One of these goals is to make Ireland a leading country in Europe for big data. This programme accommodates a wide audience of learners whose specific interests in Big Data may be either technically focused or business focused.
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	Masters and/or PhD level in the following areas: Data Analytics, Economics & Mathematics, Computer Science, experience in IT Software Development.
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	1/50 Classroom, 1/25 Workshop & Practical

Programmes being replaced

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date

Other noteworthy features of the application

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluators completing this report are expected to understand **Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training 2016**.

Note that in making its determination QQI
- Will consider the findings of the validation process including the **independent evaluation report** along with the applicant's response to this report;
- May consider any other information received in respect of the process;
- May consider an account of the conduct of the process and its context noting any concerns or complaints expressed by the applicant.

The independent evaluation report must address whether the programme meets the validation criteria in general and in detail.

The independent evaluation report must, for each programme, embedded programme and module that leads to a QQI award:

(1) Outline the salient characteristics of the proposed programmes (Part 1);

(2) Outline whether and how the QQI validation criteria and sub-criteria are addressed by the application for validation citing evidence from the application documentation and other findings (e.g. from the site visit);

(3) Address whether the principal programme, and any embedded programme, and any module proposed to lead to a minor award, meets the validation criteria in general and in detail. (Part 2 and Part 3)

(4) Include one of the following overall conclusions in light of the applicable validation policies and criteria:

- Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3 of Core **policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training**);

- Satisfactory subject to proposed special6 conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (minor) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);

- Not satisfactory.

(5) Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. **If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence.** A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

All independent evaluation reports are required to provide a rationale for any proposed special conditions and recommendations to the provider as well as the overall conclusion.

The report may also propose recommendations for consideration by the provider.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).

Part 1A, does not normally require completion, and only needs to be addressed when the proposed new programme extends of the scope of provision.

After a provider has had a programme validated it may seek to extend the approved scope of provision by applying for validation of a programme that extends the scope. A more elaborate evaluation process may be required when scope is to be extended. This may require the provider to first modify its quality assurance procedures to extend their scope and have these approved by QQI.

Validation alone may extend the scope to a limited extent (e.g. within the provider's existing approved QA procedures).

1 Comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme.

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

QQI's validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey panels.

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]	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Partially to be confirmed by QQI	The Validation panel made a site visit to the Aungier Street Campus of DBS on the 16th June. During the Panel Visit the met the School Senior Team, including the School Executive Dean, Andrew Conlan Trant. The School was formed in 1975, and gained HETAC Accreditation in 1992. See http://www.dbs.ie/about-dbs/history-of-dbs for full history. The School already delivers a range of QQI Approved programmes in Business and IT up to NFQ Level 9, see http://www.dbs.ie/courses for a full list of programmes. It also has a number of programmes on the CAO, See http://www.cao.ie/courses.php?bb=courses . At the site visit the School informed the evaluators that the signed copy of the validation documents had been submitted to QQI. At the site visit the School was reminded to send confirmation letter to declare that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that the provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme, subject to confirmation of receipt of items b and c above.

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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.

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.

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]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	The Validation Panel discussed Section 2.1 with the School Management and Programme Lead.
	The Validation Panel reviewed and discussed Section 1.2 with the School and are satisfied with the QQI Awards Specified for the Principle Programme of Special Purpose Award NFQ Level 7 Diploma in Big Data for Business.
	The Validation Panel reviewed and discussed Section 2.2. and agree with the rationale for the choice of award.
	The validation panel consulted unit 3.1 of QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards and confirmed compliance.
	The Validation Panel are not aware of any applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements with regard to the award title.
	The Validation Panel reviewed and discussed minimum intended programme learning outcomes with the School. The panel also confirmed that they were consistent with the Generic award standards (https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Generic%20Major%20Awards%20-

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[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.

	%20QQI%20Awards%20Standards.pdf) The Validation Panel reviewed and discussed minimum intended module learning outcomes with the School. The panel also confirmed that they were consistent with the Generic award standards. The Validation Panel were informed by DBS that the modules were all already approved. However, as the modules were selected from a number of different programmes they had overlap and duplication in a number of Modules and contained content not relevant in a Programme in Big Data for Business. The Validation Panel felt that they could recommended the programme to QQI as satisfactory with conditions if the condition below was met. To remove overlaps and duplication from the Module Learning Outcomes The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that the programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought, subject to proposed conditions

Principal programme

Embedded programme

Module leading to a QQI award

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).

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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.

(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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The School outlined that a version of the programme was currently being delivered. In the 2016 group, 83% now in FT jobs after 6 months from a cohort of 22 students. Gender split on the current programme is 50/50. The also programme builds on the School's existing provision. In this domain the School has a Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics (http://www.dbs.ie/course/ict/higher-diploma-in-science-in-data-analytics) and a BSc (Hons) Computing (Data Analytics and Big Data) (http://www.dbs.ie/course/full-time-undergraduate/bsc-(hons)-in-computing). A number of the Schools programmes have work placement elements so the School is in regular contact with employers in this sector. The sector itself was outlined as being a broad one across a number of companies. The School outlined the rationale from the programme as being from a wide range of National Reports including the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and 2015 Action Plan for Jobs. They also focused on the 2013 report on "Assessing the Demand for Big Data and Analytic Skills, 2013-2020". The School also undertake employer's surveys and meet 300-400 employers per year. The school also outlined a recent LinkedIn search that had highlighted 334 jobs in big data. The Validation Panel requested copies of the Letters of Support from enterprises and of the surveys that the School had undertaken. These were supplied via the Chrome Books and there were no further questions from the Validation Panel.

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[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.

	The School outlined that the programme is Springboard funded with Level 6 entry from a broad range of business programmes. They will not be data analysts. It is targeted at the economically inactive who are unemployed and wish to reskill.
	The School identified key skills in L7 as being data savvy and understanding business and strategy.
	The Validation reviewed Sections 2.7 where the School compared the proposed program me with similar programmes in the College of Computing Technology. The validation panel were satisfied the proposed programme was of a similar standard and structure.
	The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting National Reports are satisfied that it meets genuine education and training needs.
	The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that 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).

Principal programme

Embedded programme

Modules

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 QQI'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].

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[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 and 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

	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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The arrangements for access, transfer and progression are detailed in Section 4 and the Schools admissions Policy and Procedures are in Chapter 5 of its Quality Assurance Handbook (http://students.dbs.ie/docs/default-source/default-document-library/quality_assurance_handbook_2016-176b2e1fb5c20164af846cff00008abfc9.pdf?sfvrsn=0).
	The Validation Panel discussed Section 4.2 Entry procedures and criteria for the programme including procedures recognition of prior learning with the School.
	The Validation Panel requested copies of the Graduates Survey that the School undertakes annually. These were supplied using the Chrome Books.
	The Validation Panel were supplied with sample marketing materials and were of the opinion that it was written in a style and standard applicable to the programme.
	The Validation Panel confirmed that the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for non-native English speakers.
	The Validation Panel discussed the learning required by learners prior to enrolling on the programme as detailed is Section 3.5 and are of the opinion it's at an appropriate level.
	The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory.

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

Principal programme

Embedded programme

Modules

1 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]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	The Validation Panel reviewed and discussed Section 5 and individual module documentation with the programme team.
	The Validation Panel considered the overarching curriculum structure as set out in section 5.2. Section 5.2 outlined the rationale for the curriculum structure.
	The module and stages are suitably structured and a number of embedded awards are provided. An overview of the module-level outlines is given in section 5.1.2.

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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

The Validation Panel were of the opinion that the programme duration was in line with what was normal for this type of programme.

The Validation Panel welcomed the inclusion of modules on Personal Development in the programme.

The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that the programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose are satisfactory, subject to proposed conditions and recommendations outlined below.

Conditions – MODULES - Level 7 Diploma in Big Data for Business

Condition Number	**Condition**
1	Create a new module – Data Visualisation and Big Data – (10 credit)
2	The theme "Big Data" to run through every module
3	The current delivery schedule for modules be modified to reflect positive progression through the programme
4	Remove overlaps and duplication from the Module Learning Outcomes
5*	**Maths and Statistics** – review the content and remove unnecessary maths and expand the statistics.

Recommendations - Level 7 Diploma in Big Data for Business

Module Number	Module Title	Recommendation
1	Data Base	None
2	Digital Planning and Management	Include 'Digital Marketing' in Module title
3	Communications	None
4	Information Systems and Data Base	None
5	Management	Remove the word "advanced" from the Module Learning Outcomes
6	Maths and Statistics	See conditions*

Principal programme

Embedded programme

2   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 unit (**Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**.

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The Validation Panel reviewed the programme document (Section 7 and appendix 2) and supporting QQI documentation. In Section 1.2 on staffing it was stated that staff delivering the programme must have a Masters and /or PhD. However, this was not the case for all the Staff CV's that had been supplied. The School undertook to review this. Staff CVs to be updated to reflect current level of Masters and PhD qualifications. The CV's that had been supplied had not been in a consistent format and it is recommended to the School to introduce a standard template for CV's for future submissions.

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[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.

| | The Validation Panel noted that DBS are currently recruiting new staff to be involved in both programmes. The School were reminded of QQI's requirement that the full complement of staff (FT and PT) require to be in place before a programme recruits.

The Validation Panel were of the view that the Staff outlined had the correct competence mix to deliver the programme.

The school has a set of staff appraisal procedures. The Panel were informed Staff are able to apply for Research Scholarships, which would allow them to undertake research.

The School explained that staff performance is managed on an ongoing basis. Interventions are made when required but in the extreme cases where performance does not improve staff are removed from the module. This is done on a continuous improvement basis. It was noted that staff retention of both FT and PT is high.

Staff are able to apply for Research Scholarships, which would allow them to undertake research. This process involves the successful staff having reduced teaching hours to facilitate their studies.

The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation is of the view that there are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned. |
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Principal programme

Embedded programme

Module

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 (**Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**.

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. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Section 8 of the Programme document set out the School physical resources that would be used for the delivery of the proposed programmes.

The School stated that the programmes would be delivered in the Anger Street and Castle campus. The Validation Panel carried out a tour of the campus physical facilities and the resources available.   The physical resources include computer labs, flat classrooms and student collaboration areas.

The School has over 73 lecture rooms across five buildings, each equipped with the latest AV equipment. Dedicated study rooms in both libraries are available to learners throughout the year. There are currently 13 computer labs in the college.

The school explained that most of the lectures for the proposed programmes would be given in computer labs. Learners would have access to the full suite of software in the labs.

The School are currently piloting the use of a mobile chrome book lab and the Validation Panel used this facility during their visit. The School are also completing the final trials of a cloud-hosted solution for their software provision for students using Azure. This was demonstrated to the Validation Panel on their tour.

Student have access to the vpn on site and to MS Office 365 and Moodle offsite.

Software required for teaching is installed on the PCs and Macs in the student network. Learners are supported by Moodle Virtual Learning Environment.

The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation is of the view that there are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned. |

Principal programme

Embedded programme

16

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The Validation Panel also viewed common areas and rooms situated in various locations throughout the campus buildings. These include student break out areas in Castle House, student canteen and lounge in Aungier Street campus building. A document describing in detail the facilities and resources available to all learners at DBS was made available to the Evaluation Team with the link: httip@//www.dbs-students.com/pdf/registrar/lcss.pdf. The Computer Services department provides IT support for all technology based services throughout the college. The department provides support to learners both on and off-campus. Learners are provided with Microsoft Outlook 365 accounts which currently include: Outlook in the cloud mail with 10gb of online storage Office in the cloud, including Word, Excel, Powerpoint and OneNote 7gb of file storage in the cloud called Skydrive, this allows students and lecturers to share files and collaborate Messenger (instant chat) in the cloud. As technology is ever evolving, the platforms, software and resources are reviewed regularly to ensure learners provided with up-to-date IT support. The School uses Moodle as its Online Learning Platform. Student have access to the vpn on site and to Moodle offsite. The School outlined their use of an attendance monitoring system as part of their retention initiatives. They also use Moodle and library engagement as indicators and are developing Learning Analytics. They have a dedicated retention officer but feel retention is the role of everyone. The Library also have identified that learners who do not engage with their services within the first few weeks are more at risk of non-completion and explained the processes they use to engage these learners. The Validation Panel visited the Library where the services to learners from the Library Service were outlined. The School explained that the library recently won a national student services award. The library is open until 10pm every day and on

	Saturdays and some Sundays. Classes are run in the library on essay writing etc. All staff in Library have a Level 9 qualification and there is a designated postgraduate librarian. The Validation Panel were also given a demonstration of the Student Information System and of the Assignment Planning Software. The Validation Panel commended the Library for the range of supports that they give to learners. The approach to Student Services were described by the school. This included 2 careers weeks with past graduates coming to tell their story. The School also have a student welfare officer and a disability officer to meet the need of students. The physical resources available on campus for this programme are sufficient to implement the programme including the Library and learning supports. The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation is of the view that the Learning Environment is consistent with the needs of the programme learners.

Principal programme

Embedded programme

Module

3 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**

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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.

| Yes | The Validation Panel discussed the overarching Teaching Strategies and Modes that were outlined in Section 1.2 and 5.6 with School Programme team. The School outlined their approach to teaching.

The Validation Panel discussed the teaching strategy for each module during its examination of each module. They spoke with the module leader for each module and discussed the teaching strategy for each individual module.

The School outlined that some of the programmes teaching and learning strategy was the delivery of Directed E Learning. This involves the student interacting with a range of resources prior to and after classes. Lecturing staff curate this collection of materials.

The Validation Panel recommended to the School to produce an overall programme assessment schedule to ensure that Learners workload is balanced.

The School described their attendance monitoring system and use of Moodle and library engagement as indicators and are developing Learning Analytics.

The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that there are sound teaching and learning strategies. |
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Principal programme

Embedded programme

Module

4   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.

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[17] See the section on transitional arrangements.
[18] This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

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]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The Validation Panel discussed the assessment strategy for each module during its examination of each module. They spoke with the module leader for each module. It was noted that there was one missing assessment and that another module had the incorrect assessment. The School will revise these. The Validation Panel agree that the programme's assessment procedures are consistent with the assessment procedures in the School Quality Assurance Handbook. The Validation Panel agree that the sample assessments provided are fair and consistent for the assessment of learners. The Validation Panel reviewed Appendix 5 Scheme of Assessment and have found it to be satisfactory. The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that there are sound assessment strategies are satisfactory, subject to the conditions.

Principal programme

Embedded programme

Module

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[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).

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The School provided information on the Programme management including Learning Supports, reasonable accommodation and the Student Experience Department. The panel were also supplied with sample timetables and student programme handbooks. The School outlined their plans to make the handbooks a source of information for learners by using links to relevant documents on their website. Draft and copies of existing handbooks were examined and found to be satisfactory. Information on appeals and complaints procedures is available in the QA Handbook which is available on the DBS website. Specific appeals and complaints forms are individually available on the website and from DBS reception. The School also have a Student Welfare Officer and a Disability Officer to meet the need of students. The School also outlined the Induction process that Learners go through at the start of their programme. The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for.

Principal programme

Embedded programme

Module

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[21] 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	The Validation Panel examined the Schools Quality Assurance Handbook and were of the opinion that the programme and its development complied with its requirements.

The Validation Panel requested sample copies of Programme Team Minutes and of External Assessor Reports. These were supplied on the Chrome Books and the Validation Panel had no further questions.

The Validation Panel having reviewed the programme document and supporting QQI documentation, is of the view that the programme is well managed. |

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[21] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

4.1 Principal programme

4.2 Embedded programme

4.3 Module

5 Overall recommendation to QQI

5.1 Principal programme

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
√	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[22]
	Not satisfactory.

5.1.1 Reasons[23] for the overall recommendation

5.2 Embedded programme

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[24]

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[22] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

[23] Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

[24] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

	Not satisfactory.

5.2.1 Reasons[25] for the overall recommendation

5.3 Module

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[26]
	Not satisfactory.

5.3.1 Reasons[27] for the overall recommendation

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

LEVEL 7: DIPLOMA IN BIG DATA FOR BUSINESS – Special Purpose Award

The panel were informed by DBS that the modules were all already approved. However as the modules were selected from a number of different programmes they had overlap and duplication in a number of Modules and contained content not relevant in a Programme in Big Data for Business.

The panel felt that they could recommended the programme to QQI as satisfactory with conditions if the conditions below were met.

Conditions - MODULES

Condition Number	Condition
1	Create a new module – Data Visualisation and Big Data – (10 credit)
2	The theme "Big Data" to run through every module
3	The current delivery schedule for modules be modified to reflect positive progression through the programme
4	Remove overlaps and duplication from the Module Learning Outcomes

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[25] Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

[26] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

5*	**Maths and Statistics** – review the content and remove unnecessary maths and expand the statistics.

These Conditions to be satisfied with one month of DBS receiving the Panel report.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Recommendations - Level 7 Diploma in Big Data for Business

Module Number	Module Title	Recommendation
1	Data Base	None
2	Digital Planning and Management	Include 'Digital Marketing' in Module title
3	Communications	None
4	Information Systems and Data Base	None
5	Management	Remove the word "advanced" from the Module Learning Outcomes
6	Maths and Statistics	See conditions*

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

This report has been agreed by the evaluation panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Panel chairperson: Colin McLean   Date: 5th July 2017

Signed:

5.4   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 QQI 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 QQI 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.

Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

Part 4: Detailed evaluation of the programme's modules and stages that do not directly lead to QQI awards

The commentary in Part 2 will have regard to the modules and address issues concerning them.

However, should any of the modules require extensive this may be included here. Commentary on the modules in Part 4 is only required on an exceptional basis.

Not applicable