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

Part 1

Provider name	Dublin Business School in Collaboration with Sound Training College
Date of site visit	2 August 2018
Date of report	6 September 2018

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	BA (Hons) in Arts in Audio Production and Music Project Management
	Award	Honours Degree (Level 8)
	Credit	180 ECTS
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions[1] OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	**Role**	**Affiliation**
Danny Brennan	Chair, Secretary and Quality Assurance	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Mairéad O'Reilly	Industry representative	MÓR Sound

Shelley Anne Buckingham	Learner representative	Limerick IT
Richard Duckworth	Academic representative	Lecturer in Music Technology, Trinity College Dublin
Michael O'Dowd	Academic representative	Lecturer in Marketing & Entrepreneurship and Sound Engineering, Athlone IT)
Catherine McGuinn	Academic representative	Lecturer in Marketing, IT Sligo
Flaithrí Neff	Academic representative: (Desk review)	Lecturer in Audio Technology, Limerick IT

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
DBS and STC premises		

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	September 2018
	Date of last intake	September 2022
Maximum number of annual intakes	1	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	50	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	24	
Target learner groups	School leavers and mature learners who have a keen interest in music and audio and related technologies.	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	The programme is delivered through lectures, case-based learning, practical skills sessions, workshops, tutorials and group work. The programme modules are by their nature interconnected, combining theory and practice and will integrate this with clear application of practical skills. The ability to combine and apply the knowledge provided to differing situations and build upon such a platform to design, develop and devise new and novel solutions is the key driver of the programme.	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	This programme is designed both for school leavers and those who wish to re-skill or upskill in the audio production and music project management domain. It provides learners with a practical learning environment where theory and knowledge are used in context, and to provide an opportunity for learners to work with equipment and situations commonly found in an audio production setting. The programme is a three-year full-time programme leading to an honours degree qualification.	

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	Lecturers will be qualified to a minimum of Level 8 Honours Degree in the areas of music, music technology, audio engineering, audio production, business, innovation, project and event management.
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	For classroom sessions the ratio is 50:1; For workshops and practical sessions, the ratio is 25:1.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	**Title**	**Last enrolment date**
N/A		

Other noteworthy features of the application

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

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

The panel met with senior members of staff of Dublin Business School (DBS) and Sound Training College (STC) at the outset of the site visit. The panel expressed its concern to the senior management group about aspects of the quality of the documentation, including poor proof-reading, inconsistencies between sections and apparent contradictory statements relating to access requirements.

The panel was informed that DBS has been operating for more than 40 years. Its total enrolment is between 8000 and 9000 learners made up of 75% undergraduate and 25% post-graduate learners. 38% of the enrolment is international, including 25% from the European Union, 15% from Asia and 5% from the United States. 12% of the enrolment is made up of 'new' Irish. Learners are registered on a broad range of programmes, split equally between full-time and part-time. 60% of its programmes are validated by QQI, with the balance comprising mainly continuing professional development programmes.

DBS employs approximately 400 staff, of which 300 are academic and the balance technical, administrative and support staff. Two thirds of the academic are associate faculty and one third permanent faculty.

The institution has made a strategic decision to concentrate on five main areas:

- Employer-led programmes;
- innovation in delivery;
- Academic Quality
- transforming culture to enable growth and innovation;
- sustainable growth through collaborative programmes and transnational relationships.

In the context of the proposed collaboration DBS has partnered with STC with a view to help its vision of developing a creative media hub in the adjacent Temple Bar area.

STC has been providing educational programmes in Sound Engineering and Music Production since 1986. The panel was informed that STC favours a holistic approach to education, integrating industry-based projects into the curriculum. This focus on 'real world' projects and graduate professional development is key to the success and longevity of STC graduates, many of whom lead the music industry both nationally and internationally.

STC currently delivers a Level 8 programme with Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Creative Music Production.

The panel was informed that DBS has a number of collaborations in other discipline areas, but this is their first venture into the Audio Production/Music Technology area. For this reason, the panel has determined that this programme represents an extension of the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision.

The panel had sight of and examined the following documents in respect of this proposal:

- Sections 5.3 and 5.4 and Annex 5b: Due Diligence Checklist of Dublin Business School Quality Assurance Handbook 2016/2017 Edition;
- Consortium Agreement between Accountancy & Business College (Ireland) trading as Dublin Business School and Sound Training College (unsigned);
- Programme Agreement between Accountancy & Business College (Ireland) trading as Dublin Business School and Sound Training College (unsigned).

During the discussion at the site visit, the panel was informed that DBS had carried out the due diligence exercise outlined in their QA Handbook and would provide the evidence to this effect. It was the intention of both parties to formally enter into the agreements as per the Consortium Agreement and the Programme Agreement.

The panel has been furnished with a copy of the due diligence checklist and is satisfied that the proposed extension of scope of provision is justified, subject to receipt by QQI of the signed copies of the Consortium Agreement and the Programme Agreement.

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	**Programme – BA (Hons) in Arts in Audio Production and Music Project Management**
	a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.
	(i) The provider has established procedures for quality assurance under Section 28.
	The panel was informed that the program at would be run under the quality assurance procedures of Dublin Business School (DBS), that are available at https://students.dbs.ie/registrar-office/policies-procedures. These procedures are approved by QQI. DBS's re-engagement with QQI has begun with a pilot phase and it is hoped that this will lead to successful completion of the reengagement process in the next academic year.
	(ii) The provider has established procedures for access, transfer and progression.
	Access:
	The panel queried the access requirements described in the programme document, particularly in relation to the absence of a mathematics requirement for leaving certificate entrants. The panel was informed during the site visit that this was an error and that a grade O6/H7 in mathematics at leaving certificate was required. The entry requirements for Leaving Certificate include 'a language' at grade O6/H7, while the A level requirement states that English is mandatory. The language of instruction is English.
	The panel proposes as a special condition of validation that the minimum entry requirements for Leaving Certificate entrants be revised to include English and Mathematics, at grade O6/H7, in order to ensure consistency and to accord with sectoral norms.
	Transfer:
	The panel was informed that transfer arrangements would be dealt with on a case by case basis.

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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.

Progression:

The programme document listed a number of potential progression options for graduates of the programme:

- MA Creative Music Technologies NUI Maynooth
- M Phil in Music and Media Technologies TCD
- Master of Arts/Master of Science in Music Technology (Taught) DKIT

Having discussed this during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the progression routes listed are realistic.

Access, Transfer and Progression is dealt with in further detail under Criterion 4.

(iii) Protection of enrolled learners (PEL) agreement

The panel was informed that the provider has satisfactory arrangements in place that are approved by QQI, to ensure the protection of its learners on the programme.

Having reviewed the information provided and following the discussion with the provider during the site visit, the panel had determined that the requirements of this sub-criterion are partially met.

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.*

The panel was informed by the provider that this had been satisfied in correspondence with QQI.

c) *The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.*

The panel was informed by the provider that this had been satisfied in correspondence with QQI.

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	*a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.* The principal programme's aims and objectives are detailed in section 2.1 of the programme document. The programme focuses on practical, applied skills in core areas such as studio techniques, critical listening and DAW and studio production and combines them with a knowledge and skill in the area of Business, Marketing and Project Management. The business modules will be delivered on a DBS campus. The provider believes this will expose the learners to a larger campus atmosphere and contribute a more rounded higher education experience. Having interrogated the evidence, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. *b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.* The award specified for the programme is a BA (Hons) in Arts in Audio Production and Music Project Management NFQ Level 8, 180 ECTS credits, in accordance with the QQI Generic Award Standards. The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. *c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).* The panel was informed that the programme team had examined a number of award standards, and opted for an Arts award, due in the main to the over-arching creative nature of the programme. Having examined the evidence and discussed the matter during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. *d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.* The panel is satisfied this is correct and therefore that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. *e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.* N/A *f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are* *(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.*

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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.

Yes, and therefore the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

> (ii) *Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.*

Yes, and therefore the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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.[5]*

Section 2.4 of the programme document explicitly specify the MIPLOs for the programme.

Having examined the evidence and discussed the matter during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

> (ii) *The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.*

Section 10 of the programme document maps the MIPLOs against the Generic Award Standards. The panel examined this table and having discussed the matter during the site visit, it is satisfied that satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

h) *Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.*

The panel examined the proposed MIMLOs, as described in the programme document. While in general, the MIMLOs were explicitly specified in the programme document, the panel believes that some of the active verbs used in the MIMLOs are not appropriate for a higher education programme; for example, the verb 'understand' is used extensively.

Having interrogated the evidence and discussed the matter during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are partially met.

The panel proposes as a special condition of validation that the MIMLOs should be re-written succinctly, based on the existing set, following the provider's standard template and using appropriate verbs.

i) *Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.*

N/A

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

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.[6]

   b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
      (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
      (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
      (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
      (iv) There is evidence[7] of learner demand for the programme.
      (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[8].
      (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[9]

   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	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.[10]* The panel was informed that the collaborating partner, STC, has very significant experience in offering programmes in Audio and Music Production. It also works closely with the industry. The programme team had extensive engagement with the industry during the development phase. Letters of support from a number of

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[6] 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.

[7] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

[9] 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.

[10] 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.

industry leaders, including Ten Ton Production, Ltd., iZotope, Inc., were included in the programme document. The panel was informed that the concept of including the business strand in the programme was generally supported by the industry contact and, having examined the evidence, the panel is satisfied that this is so. The programme team also carried out surveys of learners and graduates of its other programmes. The result of this consultation was supportive of the initiative and evidence to this effect was detailed in the programme document.

Having interrogated the evidence and discussed the matter during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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.*

The provider quoted a recent IMRO report entitled "THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC VALUE OF MUSIC TO IRELAND 2017" that puts the value of the industry to the Irish economy at €703 million – including music-related consumer expenditure and supply-chain impacts. It also cites a Department of Transport Tourism and Sport report "PEOPLE, PLACE AND POLICY GROWING TOURISM TO 2025" March 2015 which points to destination tourism and the importance of events, music, cultural and business to the sector and to driving tourist numbers.

Having considered the evidence, the panel is satisfied that the provider has established 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.*

The provider compared its proposed programme to two other programme – DKIT's BA (Hons) in the Production of Music and Audio and the University of Surrey's BSc (Hons)/BMus (Hons) in Music and Sound Recording (Tonmeister).

It informed the panel that all the programmes look at the Sound Production aspects of this domain and to differing extents the technology which now in employed in this area. However, the programme under consideration looks further to include the wider realm of the business aspects of Audio Production in a variety of contexts. Through the inclusion of a music business module and the business planning and marketing modules, the DBS/STC graduates not only have the creative and technical know-how but also the project management skills and business knowledge of the music industry.

Having considered the evidence, the panel is satisfied that the provider has established a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.

>   (iii) *There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).*

See section 3 (a) above.

>   (iv) *There is evidence[11] of learner demand for the programme.*

See section 3 (a) above.

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[11] This might be predictive or indirect.

	(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[12]. See section 3 (a) above. *(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[13]* The provider cites the IMRO report which recommends four proposals in respect of a National Music Strategy, one of which is "creative skills development through advanced training and education services that will ensure musicians realise their potential, and that the 'business of music' is understood" as evidence in this respect. Having discussed the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. c) *There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.* The programme document states that regular consultation with industry partners, sector professionals and learner feedback are key features of the programme management. Having discussed the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met 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.* N/A e) *The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.* The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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[12] It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
[13] 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.

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[14].

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[15]) 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
Partially	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[16].*

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[14] 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

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

[16] 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

Access:

The panel reviewed the information in the programme document relating to access for learners with Leaving Certificate and A Levels, and noted:

- The entry requirements for Leaving Certificate include 'a language' at grade O6/H7, while the A level requirement states that English is mandatory;
- the entry requirements for Leaving Certificate includes the sentence 'The Maths requirement for some degree programmes is a minimum of a D3 grade', while the A level requirement explicitly includes a Mathematics requirement.

The panel proposes as a special condition of validation that the minimum entry requirements for Leaving Certificate entrants be revised to include English and Mathematics, at grade O6/H7, in order to ensure consistency and to accord with sectoral norms.

Transfer and Progression:

The provider identified a number of potential transfer and progression routes in the programme document. Having reviewed these options, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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.*

The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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[17]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.*

This is stated in the programme document and hence the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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).*

See 4(a) above.

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.*

The programme document details the RPL policy and procedures that are available. Applications are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Advanced entry to stage 2 of the programme is available from the provider's Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Technology and from the Special Purpose Award, Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Technology, which are the subject of a parallel validation process.

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

Having considered the matter and discussed it during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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.

Having considered the matter and discussed it during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

N/A

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[18].

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.[19]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment

[18] 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.

[19] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

Yes	*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.*
	The panel queried if the course was fully up-to-date and had systems in place to 'future-proof' it in light of constantly changing technologies. In particular, the panel asked if consideration had been given to explicitly include Cat 5 cabling, networking and wireless technologies, perhaps by the inclusion of a technical IT module. The provider clarified that it agrees that such elements are important, and these are covered in the practical elements of the modules.
Yes	*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.*
	Learners have the option in the award stage to opt for a Professional Studio Production module or a Professional Live Production module. In all cases the award year includes a Capstone Project with 20 ECTS credits.
	Having discussed the matter during the site visit, the panel is is satisfied that this choice offers learners two appropriate options.
	The panel is therefore satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.
Partially	*c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended programme learning outcomes.*
	The panel discussed each module in the programme with the programme team and has made the following observations: • There is a lack of consistency in the presentation of the curriculum, with some modules having significantly more detail in the indicative content and sample assessment materials than others. Describing the indicative content in bullet points might help remediate this. • While interdependency of modules is an important feature of programme design, an excess of overlap between modules leads to a lack of clarity in assessment design. This is evident in the case referred to in the commentary on Criterion 10(e) below, where an assessment exercise for a module assesses material not covered in that module. • The panel believes in general the programme structure would be improved if the module titles reflected the stream and content and the progressive nature of the learning • There is a lack of consistency in the presentation of the modules in terms of their duration, with some modules being described as linear (year-long) on the programme schedule and as a semester in the descriptor. • There is a lack of consistency in relation to presentation of Aims and Objectives, with 'Aims' replaced by 'Description' and 'Objectives' replaced by 'Aims' in some cases. • The panel asked about some 10 credit modules that might be described as composite modules that could be split into two 5 credit modules over 2 semesters, for example 'Audio Workstations and Mixing Skills'. The programme team responded that the composite design allows for more integration in delivery and assessment.

- The panel queried why the particular business modules were chosen. The programme team responded that the modules chosen are the most appropriate to achieve the Aims and Objectives of the programme. The strategy is that 'Marketing Essentials and Business Planning' in stage 1 leads to 'Digital Marketing' and 'Creativity and Business' in stage 2, and culminates in 'Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship' and 'Event Operations' in the award stage.

The panel is recommending that the reading lists for the Marketing modules should include Marketing Institute Website.

- The panel asked if the programme team had considered including elements of 'finance' and 'cash flow' in the business modules. The team agreed that these are important elements and would be covered.

Notwithstanding this, the panel is recommending to the programme team that they be explicitly mentioned in the module descriptors, as knowledge of finance and cash flow is essential for running a business.

- The panel also considered the Learning to Learn Module. It asked if any thought had been given to including a section on basic file management in this module. The programme team explained that this technique was inculcated through the technical modules as learners could be working on different computers and platforms and the need for accurate file maintenance techniques was vital.
- The panel discussed the importance of critical listening on such a programme with the programme team and in particular the module 'Critical Listening and DAW Skills'. The provider stated that critical listening is key and is developed constantly through the modules and stages of the programme. Notwithstanding this, it is not clear to the panel, resulting from references made in the sample assessment materials, whether the DAW skills element is actually being taught in this module or in the 'Studio Techniques' module.

The panel recommends that the provider considers rebalancing these two modules to include DAW Skills elements in the 'Studio Techniques' module.

Having considered the matter in general, the panel is proposing as a special condition of validation that the programme modules be re-drafted to be clearer and more consistent in terms of content and aims and objectives and in their duration and placement in the semester. Module titles should reflect the stream and content and the progressive nature of the learning. Modules should have up-to-date reading lists.

d) *The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.*

The panel had sight of a draft Programme Handbook for Learners, and was satisfied with its content. Notwithstanding this, section 5(a) above is relevant in respect of the requirement relating to module titles.

	e) *The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[20].*
	The panel considered the evidence and is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.
	f) *The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.*
	The panel noted discrepancies relating to the description of modules as linear or semesterised in the programme document. This has been dealt with in criterion 5(a) above.
	g) *The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.*
	The panel is satisfied that this has been achieved.
	h) *The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.*
	The panel is satisfied that this has been achieved.
	i) *Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.*
	N/A
	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.[21]*
	The panel is satisfied that this has been achieved.

Criterion 6

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

a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to-practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).

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[20] 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.
[21] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[22] (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[23] opportunities[24].

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	a) *The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).* The programme document states that lecturers will be qualified to a minimum of Level 8 Honours Degree in the areas of music, music technology, audio engineering, audio production, business, innovation, project and event management. The provider proposes to allocate 3 whole-time-equivalent (WTE) academic staff to each cohort. Having considered the matter and discussed it with the provider, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. b) *The programme has an identified complement of staff[25] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.* The programme staff will be drawn from existing DBS and STC faculty. Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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[22] 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.

[23] 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.

[24] 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.

[25] 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.

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.

Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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[26] opportunities[27].

During the site visit, the panel discussed the opportunities and requirements for staff to engage in continuing professional development (CPD). The panel believes in the case of programmes such as this that CPD might include attendance at trade shows where relevant cutting-edge technology is on view.

The panel's attention was drawn to Chapter 10 of the DBS Quality Assurance Handbook, which deals with staff development.

The panel was informed that a pilot project offering CPD type modules for technology use in classrooms, different types of pedagogy, etc. had been run for DBS staff. This is currently being evaluated with a view to rolling it out to more staff, including staff from STC. DBS has a reciprocal arrangement with Griffith College, where library staff from Griffith attend the DBS programme on librarianship and faculty from DBS attend modules on the MA in Education at Griffith.

The panel commends the provider on this initiative.

Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.

The panel' attention was drawn to the annual performance appraisal section in the Chapter 10 of the Quality Assurance Handbook. The provider regards this as a key tool in identifying knowledge gaps or training needs for individual faculty staff members, that may have come to the attention of a Faculty Manager through learner feedback, for example. The panel believes this is an appropriate mechanism for dealing with this issue and having considered the matter, it is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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[26] 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.

[27] 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.

	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.*
	The panel was informed that there are processes in place to deal with eventuality should it arise and therefore, having considered the matter, it is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).

b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:
   (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)
   (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
   (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
   (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
   (v) technical support
   (vi) administrative support
   (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable

c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).

d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
   (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
   (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.

e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	a) *The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).*
	During the site visit, the panel visited three premises owned/leased by STC and the Button Factory, which is a professional 700 capacity venue with all technical house personnel being STC graduates. The Button Factory offers its facilities during teaching hours (9am – 3pm) for practical tutorial training and in the evenings for student production projects. All these facilities would be used for the delivery of the

programme. The panel examined the range and level of the equipment and facilities available.

The panel was informed that learners would have access to a number of the professional facilities free of charge after 4p.m. The panel was generally satisfied that the equipment and the teaching rooms were appropriate and fit-for-purpose for the delivery of the technical aspects of the programme.

The panel also visited the main DBS library. It employs 9 librarians, all of whom have professional qualifications in librarianship. They include a research librarian, a teaching and learning specialist librarian and a learner support specialist librarian. The panel was impressed with the systems in place including the range of electronic journals and e-books.

Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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)*

Moodle is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in use in DBS and it is proposed that STC staff will receive training in its use.

    (iii) *printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment*
    (iv) *suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable*
    (v) *technical support*

The panel met with a number of the technical support staff on their tour of the STC facilities. DBS also employs appropriate technical support and IT staff.

    (vi) *administrative support*
    (vii) *company placements/internships – if applicable*

N/A

Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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).*

N/A

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.*

The programme document contained details of the proposed enrolment for five years and the associated costs and income for the period.

	The minimum enrolment in year 1 is set at 10, with the maximum at 60. These are set at 15 and 60 respectively for years 2-5.
	While the panel does not have the capacity to analyse the financial data in detail, it nonetheless believes that the five-year plan appears feasible, and therefore the panel believes the requirements of the sub-criterion are met.
	The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.
	N/A

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	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.* The panel was informed that the provider's view is that the use of Moodle supports classroom-based teaching in these programmes and learners are made aware that it is not a substitute for attendance. All lecture notes, assessment tasks, assessment results and feedback, and grade criteria will be communicated via Moodle. Learners submit their assessments through Moodle which allows the Programme Leader to measure each learner's engagement with their assessment and also allows them to identify learners who are falling behind. Module Leaders can also monitor Moodle to ascertain if learners are accessing any additional reading. Guest lectures from leading industry experts will form an important aspect of participant learning by contextualising the module material in an industrial setting. Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met. 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.* The panel was informed that learners will be informed on schedules and activities through mechanisms such as module guides, assessment schedules and appropriate documentation, made available by the Programme Team and by individual lecturers.

	Learners will be made aware of the support available from Student Services, the Student Welfare Officer and Career Services. These services will likewise make available any additional resources available for learners.
	Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.
	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.*
	N/A

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[28] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	a) *The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.* The panel was informed that the programme modules are by their nature interconnected, combining theory and practice and will integrate this with clear application of practical skills. The ability to combine and apply the knowledge provided to differing situations and build upon such a platform to design, develop and devise new and novel solutions is the key driver of the programme. Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.
Yes	b) *The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.* See section 9 (a) above.
Yes	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).* Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.
Yes	d) *Learning is monitored/supervised.* See section 8(a) above in respect of the use of Moodle. Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.
Yes	e) *Individualised guidance, support[29] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.* See section 8(a) above in respect of the use of Moodle. Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

[28] 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.

[29] 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.

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*[30]
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.[31]
d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.
e) There is a satisfactory written **programme assessment strategy** for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.[32]
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.[33]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	a) *All assessment is undertaken consistently with Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[34] Yes b) *The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.* Yes 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.*[35] The panel was informed that the programme assessment regime is 100% continuous assessment. The panel queried if certain elements, perhaps in the business modules, might include some terminal examinations. The programme team responded that the general delivery model with the interaction between the modules is more effectively assessed through a 100% continuous assessment rubric. Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are met.

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[30] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

[32] 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.

[33] 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).

[34] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.

Yes

*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.[36]*

Section 5.10 of the programme document details the assessment strategy for the programme and this is further developed in the individual module descriptors. In the case of the 'Critical Listening and DAW Skills' module, there is evidence that an assessment is described which seeks to assess a topic that is not included in the MIMLOs for the module.

The panel proposes as a special condition of validation that the assessments described must reflect the curriculum.

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.

These is included in the individual module descriptors.

g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.

The panel's attention was drawn to Chapter 8 of the DBS QA Handbook which includes detailed procedures to address this.

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.[37]

Yes.

Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this sub-criterion are partially met.

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Criterion 11

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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.

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[36] 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.

[37] 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).

e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.

f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.

g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.

h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[38].

i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[39] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.

j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	*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.* The panel had sight of a draft learner handbook which is designed to provide the learner with a summary of resources, regulation, policies, and procedures for the programme. The panel is satisfied that the final version of this document will provide the learner with appropriate information on the programme procedures and the range of services available to learners. *b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.* The panel met with the Head of Student Services who informed it of the range of services offered. **The panel commends the provider on its comprehensive approach to student welfare and supports, including library services co-ordinated by the Learning Support Librarian.** *c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.* This is included in the Learner Handbook and further detailed on the provider's website. *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.* N/A

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[38] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

[39] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

	e) *The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.* *f)* *There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.* *g)* *The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.* *h)* *The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[40].* The STC premises are wheelchair accessible with the exception of access to one floor which requires descending 5 steps currently. The panel was informed that it is proposed to install a chair lift in this case to accommodate wheelchair users. *i)* *If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students[41] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.* *j)* *The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).* Having considered the matter, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.

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.

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[40] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

[41] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

> e) Quality assurance[42] 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
Partially	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.* The panel has commented in Part 1A on the quality of the documentation produced. **The panel therefore proposes as a special condition of validation that a new programme document be prepared that is free of typos and grammatical errors, using a consistent style and formatting template. The revised document should include an introduction that describes the programme philosophy and design and the delivery methodology.** The programme will operate under the QA procedures of DBS. The panel has commented previously, in section 1, on the issue of the stated entry requirements to the principal programme. 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.* DBS currently has a number of collaborative programmes and section 5..4 and 5.5 of its QA Handbook describes the procedures that apply to such collaborations. 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[43] 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*

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

	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.

Overall recommendation to QQI

1.1 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;
X	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);
	Not satisfactory.

1.1.1 Reasons[44] for the overall recommendation

The panel has determined that the requirements of the majority of validation sub-criteria have been fully met, while a small number have been partially met.

The panel's determinations, in respect of the sub-criteria, the requirements of which that have been **fully** met, are detailed and justified in the body of the report.

The following table outlines the basis for the panel's determinations in respect of the sub-criteria, the requirements of which that have been **partially** met:

Sub-criterion Number	Reason for Determination
Part 1 A and section 12(a) (proposed condition of validation 1)	The panel found that the quality of the documentation provided fell short of what was required. Its misgivings included poor proof-reading, inconsistencies between sections and apparent contradictory statements relating to access requirements. Further details are provided in the listed sections of this report.
1 (a) (proposed condition of validation 2)	There are contradictory statements in the programme document relating to entry requirements in respect of English and Mathematics. The language of instruction is English and therefore the panel has determined that this must be amended to reflect the appropriate sectoral norms.
2 (h); 5(a); 5(b) and 5(c) (proposed conditions of validation 3 and 4)	The panel has determined that the module titles could better describe the content and their placing in the programme if they were re-titled to include the stream and the progressive nature of the learning. The panel has also determined that the module descriptors must be reviewed to ensure consistency in content description and

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[44] 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.

	their correct placement in semesters. This review must result in a revised set of MIMLOs based on the existing set but using appropriate verbs. These amendments would result in a programme that more accurately reflects its content to potential learners and other stakeholders, without compromising the MIPLOs. Further details are provided in the listed sections of this report.
10 (e) (proposed condition of validation 7)	The panel noted that a proposed assessment in one module proposed to assess material that was not listed in the curriculum or its associated MIMLO.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

The panel proposes as special conditions of validation:

1. That a new programme document be prepared that is free of typos and grammatical errors, using a consistent style and formatting template. The revised document should include an introduction that describes the programme philosophy and design and the delivery methodology.
2. That the minimum entry requirements for Leaving Certificate entrants, be revised to include English and Mathematics, at grade O6/H7, as requirements in order to ensure consistency and to accord with sectoral norms.
3. That the MIMLOs should be re-written succinctly following the provider's standard template and using appropriate verbs.
4. That the programme modules be re-drafted to be clearer and more consistent in terms of content and aims and objectives and in their duration and placement in the semester. Module titles should reflect the stream and content and the progressive nature of the learning. Modules should have up-to-date reading lists.
5. That the module assessments described must reflect the curriculum.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. The panel recommends that the programme team consider including elements of 'finance' and 'cash flow' in the business modules, as knowledge of these is essential for running a business.
2. The panel recommends that the provider considers rebalancing the modules 'Critical Listening and DAW Skills' and 'Studio Techniques' to include DAW Skills elements in the 'Studio Techniques' module.
3. The panel recommends that the reading lists for the Marketing modules should include Marketing Institute Website.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Danny Brennan   Date: 6 September 2018

Signed:

1.2   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

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School in Collaboration with Sound Training College
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Audio Production & Music Project Management
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Hons)
Stage Exit Award Title[3]	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full Time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, seminars interactive group work, specific learning groups as defined by area of academic need, workshops, presentations, educator/teacher review, case-based learning, problem based learning

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8	7	Stage 1	6	5	60	1st Sept 2018	0212

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module Status[8]	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units / ECTS Credits	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[9]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Critical Listening and Fundamental Mixing Skills	Linear	M	6	10	250	72	58	120		40	60		
Studio Recording Principles and Techniques	Linear	M	6	10	250	72	58	120		70		30	
Electronic Music Composition and Production	Linear	M	6	10	250	72	58	120		50	50		
Fundamental Acoustics and Psychoacoustics for Production	Linear	M	6	10	250	72	58	120		50	50		
Marketing Essentials and Business Planning	Linear	M	6	10	250	72	58	120		100			
Introduction to Studio Production and Client Project Management	Linear	M	6	5	125	36	29	60		100			
Learning to Learn	Linear	M	6	5	125	36	29	60		100			
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													

[8] Mandatory (m) or elective (E)
[9] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School in Collaboration with Sound Training College
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Audio Production and Music Project Management
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts(Hons)
Stage Exit Award Title[3]	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full Time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, seminars interactive group work, specific learning groups as defined by area of academic need, workshops, presentations, educator/teacher review, case-based learning, problem based learning

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8	7	Stage 2			60	1st Sept 2018	0212

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number[5]	Total Student Effort Module (hours)						Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status [10]	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units / ECTS Credits	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[11]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Commercial Studio Production and Client Project Management	Linear	M		10	250	72	58	120		60	40		
Creative Studio Recording and Studio Mixing	Linear	M		10	250	72	58	120		50	50		
Practical Composition	Linear	M		10	250	72	58	120		100			
Applied Software Post-Production and Mixing	Linear	M		10	250	72	58	120		100			
Sound Reinforcement and Performance Technologies	Linear	M		10	250	72	58	120		100			
Digital Marketing	Semester 1	M		5	125	24	50	51		30	70		
Creativity in Business	Semester 2	M		5	125	36	29	60		20	80		
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													
None													

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[10] Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

[11] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School in Collaboration with Sound Training College
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Audio Production & Music Project Management
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Hons)
Stage Exit Award Title[3]	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full Time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, seminars interactive group work, specific learning groups as defined by area of academic need, workshops, presentations, educator/teacher review, case-based learning, problem based learning

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8	7	Award	8	7	60	1st Sept 2018	0212

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number[5]	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
		Status [12]	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units / ECTS Credits	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[13]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Capstone Project	Linear	M	8	20 ECTS	500	50	50	400			100		
Event Operations	Semester 1	M	8	10 ECTS	250	72	58	120		100			
Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Semester 2	M	8	10 ECTS	250	72	58	120		100			
Professional Studio Production	Linear	E	8	10 ECTS	250	72	58	120		30	70		
Professional Live Production	Linear	E	8	10 ECTS	250	72	58	120		30	70		
Audio Programming and Game Audio	Linear	M	8	10 ECTS	250	72	58	120		100			
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													
None													