


QQI

 Quality and Qualifications Ireland
 Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Template Version 2.0 - 31.05.2017

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

Part 1

Provider name	IBAT College
Date of site visit	25-10-2018
Date of report	04-12-2018

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business
	Award	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
	Credit	180 ECTS
Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions¹ OR Not Satisfactory</i>		Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Embedded programme	Title	Certificate in Business
	Award	Certificate
	Credit	60 ECTS
Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>		Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

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
Mr Daniel Brennan	Chair and Secretary	Principal, DNB Higher Education Consultants
Ms Maebh Maher	Academic subject-matter expert	Head of Faculty of Business and Humanities, Institute of Technology, Carlow
Mr Denis Harris	Academic subject-matter expert	Marketing Programme Director & Lecturer in Marketing, Waterford Institute of Technology
Ms Joanna Siewierska	Learner representative	University College Dublin (NStep)
Ms Kate Bolger	Industry representative	Assistant Manager- Student Recruitment, Ernst and Young
Dr Mary Boyd	Academic subject-matter expert	Associate Head, Dept of Management, Leadership and Marketing, University of Ulster
Mr Eamon Walsh	Academic subject-matter expert	Head of Department of Accounting and Information Systems, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
IBAT College, Wellington Quay, Dublin 2	450 Daytime	120

Enrolment interval (<i>normally 5 years</i>)	Date of first intake	Mar-2019
	Date of last intake	Mar-2023
Maximum number of annual intakes	2 (FT) 1 (PT)	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	75 (FT) 25 (PT)	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	3 Years (FT) 4.5 Years (PT)	
Target learner groups		
<p>This programme is designed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prospective learners intending to pursue a career in business or management, • those intending to start their own business • those wishing to pursue a general higher education programme to develop real-world skills, in a supportive academic environment. • The programme, delivered in both FT and PT, should be attractive to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ school leavers and those graduating from FET programmes ○ mature learners ○ those in the workforce intending to transition careers or up-skill ○ those returning to the workforce after a period of absence or unemployment ○ International learners • The College will target both Irish and international learners to ensure a diverse and balanced learning environment. 		
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time (2 intakes p.a.) and part time (1 intake p.a.).	
The teaching and learning modalities		
<p>Modes used include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Tutorials • Guest Lectures • Case Studies • Practicals • Blended e-learning • Group Work • Research • Information Literacy Classes • Reflection • Support Classes and Tutorials 		

The general approach to the teaching and learning process for most modules is one which involves the following teaching and learning modes, in accordance with the College Teaching and Learning strategy and policy (Associated Polices 1.6):

- Lectures by members of the faculty, plus guest lecturers, with emphasis on academic theories and literature versus practice in organisations and the wider business context.
- Discussion, debate and reflection on business and management issues and theories.
- Presentations of real life case materials in a variety of modules.
- Analysis of case studies with a focus on both national and international business environments.
- Practical classes will provide the opportunity for learners to apply theory in simulated practice, thus reinforcing the 'hands-on' element, with self-directed follow-up, and subsequent assessment.
- Exercises requiring learners to reflect upon their own competencies.
- Independent study (including use of material provided on Moodle).
- Guidance and supervision of learners undertaking research
- Formative and timely feedback to support learning.

Brief synopsis of the programme

The following is an extract from the programme document:

This proposed BA (Honours) in Business programme is targeted at school leavers or mature learners wishing to undertake further study in business. It is designed to give a structured business and management education that provides a solid foundation for career success within an international multicultural business environment.

Learners will study a variety of business modules which will provide the future framework for the continued professional development of the graduate. The learners will focus on applied business themes which include management and strategy, economics, marketing, finance, HR and ICT and entrepreneurship in both domestic and international business environments. This will develop relevant graduate skills which will include the ability to deliver technical and tactical content to a variety of able-performers. Learners will also be able to development agreed improvement plans and forecast future sector trends.

Learner progression through the programme will ensure that they become increasingly self-confident and capable of managing their own learning experiences. Graduates will have developed self-confidence and ability to work in diverse environments and communicate at a variety of levels in order to prepare them for work within a business support and/or management role.

All subjects studied on the programme are designed to focus on developing the learner's employability skills. For example, through the Learning, Research and Professional Development module, learners will gain and develop transferable employability skills directly related to business. At level 8, the focus of the programme will shift from studying theory and its application in the workplace towards strategic management issues and critical thinking. Learners by this stage will already have gained skills to enhance their employability and so modules will become strategically focused to prepare them to become future managers within their chosen industry sector.

Proposed modules, per stage, include:

Stage 1: Business Mathematics and Statistics; ICT in Business; Introduction to Business; Learning and Development; Marketing Fundamentals; Microeconomics; Consumer Behaviour; Financial Accounting; Macroeconomics; Management Principles; Principles of Business Law.

Stage 2: Digital and Social Media Marketing; Ethics and Regulatory Compliance; Human Resource Management (HRM) Fundamentals; Information Systems Management; Management Accounting; Operations Management; Business Law; Applied Project Management; Business Intelligence; Economic Analysis and Sustainability; Effective Communications for Business; Marketing Communications and Sales

Award Stage: Data Analytics for Business; Financial Management; Innovation, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship; Personal and Professional Development; Research Methods; Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM); Corporate Finance; Corporate Governance; Data Security Management; Organisational Leadership; Strategic Management; and Business Project.

Graduates can move into a variety of roles within the sector. Possible roles for graduates from this programme include business analyst; customer care trainee; general business administration; general manager; hr support officer/admin trainee; marketer; marketing officer/trainee; management development trainee; own business/self-employment; trainee assistant manager/trainee manager.

In summary, the course provides a strong grounding in fundamental business concepts, ideas, practices and methodologies and leads to a level 8 award recognised worldwide.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff

WTE	Qualifications and experience
1	Programme Director
1	Programme Administration Manager
10	<p>Academic Staff</p> <p>IBAT College Dublin has established the following minimum criteria for the appointment of academic staff. Normally a lecturer is required to have a qualification above the level at which they are being appointed to teach, and the minimum academic criteria are set at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An honours degree (2.2 or higher) in a relevant Level 8 programme (NFQ), or equivalent in a discipline relevant to programmes. • Three years' relevant post-qualification experience. • Excellent communication and presentation skills. <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualification in teaching and learning. • Postgraduate qualification. • Relevant teaching, course design, and/or research experience. • Supervision of projects at undergraduate level and possibly postgraduate level. • Specific specialised experience, as described in the relevant module descriptors.

Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff

Staff to learner ratio	Learning activity type
1:75	Classroom delivery (face-to-face)
1:25	Practical classes (e.g. IT laboratories)
1:30	Tutorials

1:1	Project supervision
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Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
	Not Applicable	

Embedded programme²

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
IBAT College, Wellington Quay, Dublin 2	450 Daytime	120

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake: March 2019
	Date of last intake: March 2023
Maximum number of annual intakes	2 (FT) 1 (PT)
Maximum total number of learners per intake	75 (FT) 25 (PT)
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	1 year (FT) 1.5 years (PT)
Target learner groups	
<p>This programme is designed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prospective learners intending to pursue a career in business or management, • those intending to start their own business • those wishing to pursue a general higher education programme to develop real-world skills, in a supportive academic environment. • The programme, delivered in both FT and PT, should be attractive to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ school leavers and those graduating from FET programmes ○ mature learners ○ those in the workforce intending to transition careers or up-skill ○ those returning to the workforce after a period of absence or unemployment ○ International learners • The College will target both Irish and international learners to ensure a diverse and balanced learning environment. 	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-	Full time (2 intakes p.a.) and part time (1 intake p.a.).

² This only needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards.

time/Part-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	
<p>Modes used include the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Tutorials • Guest Lectures • Case Studies • Practicals • Blended e-learning • Group Work • Research • Information Literacy Classes • Reflection • Support Classes and Tutorials <p>The general approach to the teaching and learning process for most modules is one which involves the following teaching and learning modes, in accordance with the College Teaching and Learning strategy and policy (Associated Policies 1.6):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures by members of the faculty, plus guest lecturers, with emphasis on academic theories and literature versus practice in organisations and the wider business context. • Discussion, debate and reflection on business and management issues and theories. • Presentations of real life case materials in a variety of modules. • Analysis of case studies with a focus on both national and international business environments. • Practical classes will provide the opportunity for learners to apply theory in simulated practice, thus reinforcing the 'hands-on' element, with self-directed follow-up, and subsequent assessment. • Exercises requiring learners to reflect upon their own competencies. • Independent study (including use of material provided on Moodle). • Guidance and supervision of learners undertaking research • Formative and timely feedback to support learning. 	
Brief synopsis of the programme	
<p>This Certificate in Business programme is an exit award, targeted at school leavers or mature learners wishing to undertake further study in business, but for a variety of reasons are unable to complete the three-year parent programme. It is designed as an exit award where learners have achieved the 60 ECTS credits associated with stage 1 of the BA (Hons) in Business programme.</p> <p>Proposed modules on the programme, include:</p> <p>Stage 1: Business Mathematics and Statistics; ICT in Business; Introduction to Business; Learning and Development; Marketing Fundamentals; Microeconomics; Consumer Behaviour; Financial Accounting; Macroeconomics; Management Principles; Principles of Business Law.</p>	

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE	Qualifications and experience
	1	Programme Director
	1	Programme Administration Manager
	10	<p>IBAT College Dublin has established the following minimum criteria for the appointment of academic staff. Normally a lecturer is required to have a qualification above the level at which they are being appointed to teach, and the minimum academic criteria are set at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An honours degree (2.2 or higher) in a relevant Level 8 programme (NFQ), or equivalent in a discipline relevant to programmes. • Three years' relevant post-qualification experience. • Excellent communication and presentation skills. <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualification in teaching and learning. • Postgraduate qualification. • Relevant teaching, course design, and/or research experience. • Supervision of projects at undergraduate level and possibly postgraduate level. • Specific specialised experience, as described in the relevant module descriptors.
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	Staff to learner ratio*	Learning activity type
	1:75	Classroom Delivery (face-to-face) Maximum
	1:25	Practical Classes (e.g. IT Laboratories) Maximum
	1:30	Tutorials

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
	Not Applicable	

Other noteworthy features of the application

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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.

IBAT college's quality assurance of programmes within this scope of provision was approved by QQI in June 2018.

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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.³ 	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	IBAT College's quality assurance of programmes was approved by QQI in June 2018. Therefore, this element of the criterion is satisfied.

Criterion 2

The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>. 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 	

³ 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.

<p>(i) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.⁴</p> <p>(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards.</p> <p>h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</p> <p>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</p> <p>For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.⁵</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	<p>The programme document states that 'the proposed BA (Hons) in Business is designed to be a broad business programme relevant to the requirements of the modern global marketplace, and the programme has been developed based on feedback from the College's stakeholders.' The panel was impressed with the level of engagement with industry and other stakeholders conducted by the College, during the programme development process.</p> <p>The provider pitches the programme as a general business programme that is distinguished from other 3-year honours degree offerings by its Business Intelligence and Data Analytics theme. While the panel accepts this, it does not believe this can be described as a specialism in the programme, as the level of their treatment would not warrant this.</p> <p>While the award is an Honours Bachelor of Arts, the programme team explained that it took account of the Business Awards Standards, as well as the generic standards, in the development. The panel believes this is appropriate, in the circumstances.</p> <p>The panel examined the programme's Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes' (MIPLOs) and believe these are appropriate and consistent with the award standards.</p> <p>The panel also examined Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes' (MIMLOs) and has a number of comments relating to these that are detailed under Criterion 5. Similar comments apply to the embedded programme, Certificate in Arts in Business.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>The panel examined the programme's Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes' (MIPLOs) at level 6 and believe these are appropriate and consistent with the award standards.</p>

⁴ Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

⁵ 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.

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 evidence⁷ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁸.
 - (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	<p>The panel was impressed with the level of consultation that took place during the development of the programme. The stakeholders consulted included employers through its Business Advisory Group as well as through a series of focus groups and one-to-one consultations. The feedback was supportive of the programme and recruiters who were consulted separately also endorsed the programme. The panel believes the College should continue to maintain and develop these relationships with industry as it will enhance the currency of the programme.</p> <p>The College also engaged in a consultative process with current learners in the College which indicated evidence of learner demand for the programme.</p> <p>The panel noted that there are no elective modules in then programme nor is there a work-placement. The programme document states <i>'the revised programme has</i></p>

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.

	<p><i>been repositioned as a business degree comprising core subjects such as management, marketing and finance etc. underpinned by practical professional development, and ICT skills including business intelligence and data analytics, to facilitate robust decision-making in a modern business environment'</i></p> <p>In line with this the panel suggested that the college might help address the absence of module choice for the learner and work placement by introducing an elective module <i>Professional Practice Project</i> into the award stage, alongside the <i>Business Project module</i>. The associated <i>Research Methods</i> module should be revised and linked to these respectively. This would have the dual advantages of giving choice to learners, and also introducing an element of working with industry in developing and carrying out the Professional Practice Module.</p> <p>The panel was informed that the College is working to deliver the full-time programme over 3-4 days per week. This suits learners and facilitates the timetabling of lecturing staff. The programme in part-time mode runs on two evenings per week with one Saturday per semester. Part-time learners take 40 ECTS credits per year.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments and recommendations, with the exception of the comments relating to the introduction of an elective module, also apply in the case of this programme.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The college should continue to maintain and develop its relationships with industry. 2. The college should consider introducing an elective module <i>Professional Practice Project</i> into the award stage, alongside the <i>Business Project module</i>. The associated <i>Research Methods</i> module should be revised and linked to these respectively.
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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 satisfied¹⁰.
- 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

¹⁰ 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

	<p>to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR¹¹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, 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. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	<p>Access:</p> <p>The programme document outlined the entry requirements for the programme.</p> <p>Sub-criterion c above states:</p> <p><i>‘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 (CEFR¹²) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award’</i></p> <p>The panel queried if the proposed English language requirements for entry satisfied this criterion. The programme team stated that these have been informed by national norms as articulated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA Applicants for 2018 entry – Thea, IUA and RCSI • CEFR B2 is classified as upper intermediate relating to an IELTS (Academic) band of 5.5 - 6.5. • B2+ is interpreted as the upper end of this scale ‘Strong Vantage’ and therefore equivalent to a score of not less than IELTS 6. <p>The programme team outlined the College’s procedures for recognition of prior learning and the panel was satisfied.</p> <p>Progression:</p> <p>The programme document outlines in Appendix 5 a list of negotiated progression opportunities for which graduates would be eligible.</p> <p>The programme documentation included a draft Student Handbook. The panel believes this would benefit from a re-drafting to make it more accessible to learners.</p>

¹¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

¹² http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

	<p>Embedded Award:</p> <p>The comments on access are relevant in the context of this programme also, while the reference to progression are not relevant.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>1. The college should revise the language and contents in the Learner Handbook to make it more accessible to learners.</p>
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Criterion 5

<p>The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹³.</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>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.¹⁴</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	<p>The panel discussed the structure of the programme with the programme team. The panel has identified a number of issues with the proposed modules, including titles, sequencing, MIMLOs and content and some degree of repetition between modules.</p> <p>The panel has also identified issues with the assessment breakdown of the elements of module assessments.</p> <p><i>Sequencing of Modules:</i></p>

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

The panel believes the module *Effective Communication for Business* currently in Semester 4 is a fundamental module and should be moved to the first Semester. It also believes the module *Consumer Behaviour* currently in Semester 2 would be more appropriately treated in Semester 4. The programme team should take the opportunity to re-consider the MIMLOs, if required.

As a result of these changes, Stage 1 of the Principal Programme and the single stage of the Embedded Programme would then comprise the following modules: *Business Mathematics, Statistics, ICT in Business, Introduction to Business, Learning and Development, Effective Communication for Business, Marketing Fundamentals, Microeconomics, Financial Accounting, Macroeconomics, Management Principles, Principles of Business Law.*

Business Mathematics and Statistics

The panel sought a rationale for the 10-credit linear module, *Business Mathematics and Statistics* rather than splitting it into two separate 5 credit modules. While the panel understands the rationale presented, it nevertheless believes the programme team should consider splitting this module into two separate modules.

ICT in Business:

Excel is not covered in this module. The panel believes this is a deficit and key elements used in business must be covered. There is a topic on Business Intelligence that should be removed as it's duplication. This will necessitate re-consideration of the MIMLOs and assessment.

The panel believes the college should consider adopting a 100% continuous assessment for this module.

Marketing Fundamentals:

The panel believes the content is excessive. The team should take the opportunity to remove material that is covered elsewhere.

Ethics and Regulatory Compliance:

The panel considered the breakdown of assessment for this module currently stated as 85% theory and 15% CA. The panel considers this might be adjusted to 70%/30%.

Operations Management:

The panel noted that Group Based Assessment accounted for 80% which it considers high. It believes the college might consider reviewing its Academic Framework to ensure consistency across modules including the breakdown of assessments between CA and Examinations. It might also take the opportunity to consider the proportion of assessments given for group projects and how it's administered.

Business Intelligence:

The panel considered this module. It believes the programme team should consider revising the module to include such topics as data cleansing, decision trees, scenario planning.

Business Law:

The panel discussed this module with the programme team. It believes the topic 'Company Law' should be consolidated into this and the topic 'Insurance Law' should also be included. The topic GDPR is covered elsewhere and should be deleted from this module.

Marketing Communications and Sales:

The panel discussed this module with the programme team. The panel was of the opinion that the title was inappropriate and initially stipulated that it should be amended to *Marketing Strategy*, and the MIMLOs content and assessment revised to reflect the new title. The provider responded with a revised module that includes more content in respect of sales, and revised module title, *Marketing Communication and Sales Management*. The panel is satisfied with the revised module content and title.

Data Analytics for Business:

The panel discussed this module with the programme team. The panel initially believed the content as described was at a very advanced level. The team explained at the site visit that the students would in fact be given datasets which are already prepared and ready to import Tableau and/or Power BI. The panel believes this is a more realistic approach and should be re-written to clarify this methodology.

The panel also believes the assessment should be 100% CA.

Financial Management and Corporate Finance:

The panel considered these modules, with *Financial Management* in Semester 5 followed by *Corporate Finance* in Semester 6. The panel believes that the sequence should be reversed in terms of increasing levels of difficulty, as *Financial Management* is more advanced.

Data Security Management:

The panel considered this module. It believes that some of the content is too technical for a Business degree. This must be revised and replaced to reflect user awareness e.g. encryption for laptops, USB key management, cybersecurity awareness for end-users etc., rather than concentrating on firewalls and intrusion detection which is more appropriate for IT professionals. The title and associated MIMLOs should be changed to *Information Security Management* to reflect the new focus.

Embedded Award:

The comments in respect of modules at stage 1 should also be read in the context of this proposed programme and the conditions and recommendations below as they apply to Stage 1 of the principal programme only.

Conditions:

1. The module *Effective Communication for Business* be moved from Semester 4 to Semester 1 and replaced by *Consumer Behaviour* in Semester 4. As a result, Stage 1 of the Principal Programme and the single stage of the Embedded Programme to comprise the following modules: *Business Mathematics, Statistics, ICT in Business, Introduction to Business, Learning and Development, Effective Communication for Business, Marketing Fundamentals, Microeconomics, Financial Accounting, Macroeconomics, Management Principles, Principles of Business Law*.
2. The MIMLOs, content and assessment for the module *ICT in Business* should be amended to include the following topics:
 - a. "Organise, format and display business data using EXCEL"
 - b. "Build a business relevant spreadsheet and demonstrate formatting techniques, presentation style and use of basic functions and formulae"
3. The module *Corporate Finance* be moved from Semester 6 to Semester 5, to replace *Financial Management* which should be moved to Semester 6.
4. The MIMLOs, content and assessment of the module *Strategic Management* in Semester 6 be revised to make it more level appropriate as learners in the award year should be able to critically analyse the external and internal environments of organisations through the use of various strategy models such as Porter's Five Forces Model and Porter's Value Chain Model. PESTEL is introduced in Year 1 and can inform a further strategic analysis of a sector or industry but should not form the basis of the assessment at this level.
5. The title of the module *Data Security Management* be changed to *Information Security Management* and the MIMLOs, content and assessment be amended to reflect the new title.

Recommendations:

1. The college should consider splitting the 10-credit module *Business Mathematics and Statistics* into two 5 credit modules *Business Mathematics* and *Statistics*.
2. The College should review the *Marketing Fundamentals* with a view to reducing the content and deleting that which is covered in other modules.
3. The topic 'Company Law' should be consolidated into the module *Business Law* which should also be amended to include the topic 'Insurance Law'. The topic GDPR should be removed from *Business Law* module as it's treated elsewhere.
4. The college should consider adopting 100% continuous assessment for all the IT modules in the programme.
5. The college should consider adjusting the assessment for the module *Ethics and Regulatory Compliance* to 70/30.

	6. The module <i>Data Analytics</i> should be rewritten to clarify the content and delivery methodology outlined to the panel.
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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).
- b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹⁵ (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 development¹⁶ opportunities¹⁷.
- 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 staffing model in place comprises a mix of full-time and part-time staff, with the majority of academic staff being on part-time contracts. The panel was informed that The Programme Administration Manager (F/T) will manage the programme and the appointment of a Head of School is imminent and will take over as Programme Director, currently an acting post held by the Academic Director. The panel was assured that additional lecturers would be sourced from the existing staff group, or may be additionally recruited, if necessary, to support individual module requirements.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

	<p>Given this undertaking and the availability of part-time staffing resources in Dublin, the panel is satisfied that the appropriate faculty will be available to deliver the programme.</p> <p>The panel asked if it was a requirement for academic staff to have a teaching and learning qualification. The Academic Director stated that this was a goal they were working towards.</p> <p>The panel queried if the budget available for CPD for academics, shown in Appendix 4 at €5,000 per annum was adequate. The Academic Director stated that this was adequate, given the profile of the staff and the College's ability to link in with the HE networks in the city.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p>
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Criterion 7

<p>There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 <p>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).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planned intake (first five years) and (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	The programme will be delivered in the College's main campus. It is proposed to decant other teaching activities to the College's other campus on a phased basis as this programme proceeds through the stages. The main campus has adequate resources to deliver the programme.

	<p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p>
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Criterion 8

<p>The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	<p>The panel was informed that the College was developing two handbooks - a general institutional handbook and a specific programme handbook. The draft learner handbook that the panel had sight of would be revised to make it more accessible in line with the panel's recommendation. The College is conscious of the diverse backgrounds of its learners and in an effort to help them integrate, is considering including a health, welfare and nutrition piece in the handbook.</p> <p>The College's experience is that learners want networking opportunities to help them engage with their fellow students and with the social and cultural aspects of society in Ireland. The College is committed to rolling out networking events as it develops and expands. The aim is to ensure international learners are more Irish aware and Irish students are more aware of international cultures.</p> <p>The College includes learners on the various governance bodies, as specified in their recently approved QA procedures. It delivers training to class representatives to help them in their role.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p> <p>The recommendations outlined under Criterion 4 are relevant here also.</p>

Criterion 9

<p>There are sound teaching and learning strategies</p> <p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p>
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<p>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).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁸ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	<p>The programme document stated that the College had recently reviewed its overall teaching and learning strategy, introduced an academic framework, re-established the Teaching and Learning Committee and put Teaching and Learning at the heart of its Quality Enhancement plan.</p> <p>The panel welcomed the development of an academic framework and noted this was a work in progress and would be subject to constant review under the auspices of the Academic Council.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p>

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*¹⁹
- 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.²⁰
- 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.²¹
- 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.²²

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ See the section on transitional arrangements.

²⁰ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

²¹ 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.

²² 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).

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	<p>The panel understands that as part of the development of its academic framework, the college has developed a protocol for assessing group work, but it would like to see it going further to develop a consistent approach to the proportion of an assessment that may be awarded for group work. It should also develop a consistent approach to the breakdown of assessments between continuous assessment and examinations.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The college should develop its academic framework to ensure consistency across modules in the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Breakdown of assessments between continuous assessment and examination. b. Proportion of assessments given for group projects and the modalities for such treating such assessments.

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.
- h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²³.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*²⁴ 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.

²³ 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).

²⁴ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

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	<p>The panel noted the section in the programme document that deals with learner supports. It recognises that it is challenging for a smaller provider to offer the fully comprehensive range of supports that might be available in a larger provider, such as on-site medical or counselling facilities. However, it is satisfied that the College offers an appropriate range of supports, given its scale of operations.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p>

Criterion 12

The programme is well managed	
<p>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.</p> <p>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-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance²⁵ is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	The College has had its Quality Assurance procedures recently approved by QQI. The governance model in these procedures includes the involvement of external persons of standing in key roles.

²⁵ See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

	<p>The panel was informed that the College has a rigorous attendance monitoring system in place and while this is currently a paper-based system, it is fit-for-purpose. It is considering various technical solutions for this but has not decided on a replacement system as yet.</p> <p>The College also has an appropriate Learner Management System, that is fit-for-purpose.</p> <p>Following its discussions with the senior staff and programme team during the site visit, the panel is satisfied that the College is committed to providing a quality programme and range of services to its learners and has the capacity to do so.</p> <p>Embedded Programme:</p> <p>These comments also apply in the case of this programme.</p>
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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); ²⁶
	Not satisfactory.

That the programme is satisfactory subject the following **Special Conditions**:

A revised Programme Document be prepared that takes account of the following:

1. The module *Effective Communication for Business* be moved from Semester 4 to Semester 1 and replaced by *Consumer Behaviour* in Semester 4. As a result, Stage 1 of the Principal Programme and the single stage of the Embedded Programme to comprise the following modules: *Business Mathematics, Statistics, ICT in Business, Introduction to Business, Learning and Development, Effective Communication for Business, Marketing Fundamentals, Microeconomics, Financial Accounting, Macroeconomics, Management Principles, Principles of Business Law*.
2. The MIMLOs, content and assessment²⁶ for the module *ICT in Business* should be amended to include the following topics:

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.

- a. “Organise, format and display business data using EXCEL”
 - b. “Build a business relevant spreadsheet and demonstrate formatting techniques, presentation style and use of basic functions and formulae”
3. The module *Corporate Finance* be moved from Semester 6 to Semester 5, to replace *Financial Management* which should be moved to Semester 6.
 4. The MIMLOs, content and assessment of the module *Strategic Management* in Semester 6 be revised to make it more level appropriate as learners in the award year should be able to critically analyse the external and internal environments of organisations through the use of various strategy models such as Porter’s Five Forces Model and Porter’s Value Chain Model. PESTEL is introduced in Year 1 and can inform a further strategic analysis of a sector or industry but should not form the basis of the assessment at this level.
 5. The title of the module *Data Security Management* be changed to *Information Security Management* and the MIMLOs, content and assessment be amended to reflect the new title.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Recommendations:

1. The college should consider introducing an elective module *Professional Practice Project* into the award stage, alongside the *Business Project module*. The associated *Research Methods* module should be revised and linked to these respectively.
2. The college should consider splitting the 10-credit module *Business Mathematics and Statistics* into two 5 credit modules *Business Mathematics* and *Statistics*.
3. The College should review the *Marketing Fundamentals* with a view to reducing the content and deleting that which is covered in other modules.
4. The topic ‘Company Law’ should be consolidated into the module *Business Law* which should also be amended to include the topic ‘Insurance Law’. The topic GDPR should be removed from *Business Law* module as it’s treated elsewhere.
5. The college should consider adopting 100% continuous assessment for all the IT modules in the programme.
6. The college should consider adjusting the assessment for the module *Ethics and Regulatory Compliance* to 70/30.
7. The module *Data Analytics* should be rewritten to clarify the content and delivery methodology outlined to the panel.
8. The college should revise the language and contents in the Learner Handbook to make it more accessible to learners.
9. The college should continue to maintain and develop its relationships with industry.
10. The college should develop its academic framework to ensure consistency across modules in the following:
 - a. Breakdown of assessments between continuous assessment and examination.

- b. Proportion of assessments given for group projects and the modalities for such treating such assessments.

1.2 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;
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); ²⁷
	Not satisfactory.

1.2.1 Reasons²⁸ for the overall recommendation

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

Embedded Programme

That the programme is satisfactory subject the following **Special Conditions**:

A revised Programme Document be prepared that takes account of the following:

1. The module *Effective Communication for Business* be moved from Semester 4 to Semester 1 and replaced by *Consumer Behaviour* in Semester 4. As a result, Stage 1 of the Principal Programme and the single stage of the Embedded Programme to comprise the following modules: *Business Mathematics, Statistics, ICT in Business, Introduction to Business, Learning and Development, Effective Communication for Business, Marketing Fundamentals, Microeconomics, Financial Accounting, Macroeconomics, Management Principles, Principles of Business Law*.
2. The MIMLOs, content and assessment for the module *ICT in Business* should be amended to include the following topics:
 - a. "Organise, format and display business data using EXCEL"
 - b. "Build a business relevant spreadsheet and demonstrate formatting techniques, presentation style and use of basic functions and formulae"

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Recommendations:

1. The college should consider splitting the 10-credit module *Business Mathematics and Statistics* into two 5 credit modules *Business Mathematics* and *Statistics*.
2. The College should review the *Marketing Fundamentals* with a view to reducing the content and deleting that which is covered in other modules.
3. The college should consider adopting 100% continuous assessment for all the IT modules in the programme.
4. The college should revise the language and contents in the Learner Handbook to make it more accessible to learners.
5. The college should continue to maintain and develop its relationships with industry.
6. The college should develop its academic framework to ensure consistency across modules in the following:
 - a. Breakdown of assessments between continuous assessment and examination.
 - b. Proportion of assessments given for group projects and the modalities for such treating such assessments.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Signed:



Panel chairperson:

Date: 4 December 2018

1.3 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.