



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

## Part 1 A

<b>Provider name</b>	DBS
<b>Date of site visit</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2019
<b>Date of report</b>	29 <sup>h</sup> August 2019
<b>Is this a re-validation report (Yes/No)</b>	Yes

## Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Master of Science in Marketing
	<b>Award</b>	Master of Science
	<b>Credit<sup>1</sup></b>	90 ECTS
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions<sup>2</sup> OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

<b>Embedded programme<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing
	<b>Award</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Science

<sup>1</sup> Specify the credit units because more than one system of units is in use. E.g. 20 (ECTS).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Copy this panel for each embedded programme.

	<b>Exit award (Yes/No)</b>	Yes
	<b>Credit</b>	60 ECTS
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

#### Evaluators

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr Michael Hall	Chair	Head of Department of Health and Leisure Studies, Institute of Technology, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Dr Patricia McHugh	Panel Member	Lecturer in Marketing and Programme Director, MSc Digital Marketing, School of Business and Economics, NUI Galway
Bairbre Brennan	Panel Member	Assistant Lecturer Technological University Dublin
Jordan Bowe	Student/Learner representative	Marketing Student National College of Ireland
Ian Bolton	Independent Industry Representative	Managing Director Colours International
Mary Jennings	Secretary	Communications Consultant

## Part 1 B

### Master of Science in Marketing (Principal Programme)

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
DBS Dublin Campus	150	15

<b>Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)</b>	<b>Date of first intake</b>	September 2019
	<b>Date of last intake</b>	September 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	Two – September and January	
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)</b>	150	
<b>Programme duration (months from start to completion)</b>	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks across 12 months. Part-time: 4 semesters of 12 weeks each across 24 months	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	This programme is aimed at learners with a second class second division (2.2) honours bachelor degree in business or marketing who wish to specialise in the field of marketing with a view to entering industry. It will also be of interest to learners who have completed their undergraduate degree in marketing and wish to specialise in this area. An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA will also be considered. If an individual holds a non-business Level 8 bachelor degree but has three years marketing experience, they may also be considered.	
<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland	
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full-time and part-time	
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classroom lectures</li> <li>2. Case based learning</li> <li>3. Practical skills sessions</li> <li>4. Workshops</li> <li>5. Tutorials</li> <li>6. Individual and group work</li> <li>7. Synchronous and asynchronous learning</li> </ol>	
<b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	The MSc in Marketing has been specifically designed with the needs of current and future marketing professionals and managers in mind. The course is aimed at those seeking to advance their studies and/ or professional career in marketing and its related fields. The course will equip learners with a comprehensive understanding of key foundations of the marketing discipline as well as providing them with a detailed understanding of the contemporary marketplace. In addition, students will learn how to apply the latest marketing theory and practice in an increasingly complex marketing environment. Through the dissertation	

	or applied research project, students will synthesise their learning and author a piece of research focussed work.
<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma/Masters and/or Level 10 PhD in any of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing, management, services marketing, consumer trends / analysis</li> <li>• Big Data, web marketing, International marketing and branding</li> <li>• Strategic marketing, entrepreneurship</li> </ul> In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 8 honours bachelor degrees in the above disciplines, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, may also be considered.
<b>Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b>	1:50 Classroom sessions 1: 25Workshops 1: 25Practical Sessions 1:50 Online Class
<b>Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.<sup>4</sup></b>	WTE: 1.26/100 = 0.025

### Postgraduate Diploma in Science

<b>Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided</b>	<b>Maximum number of learners (per centre)</b>	<b>Minimum number of learners</b>
DBS Dublin Campus	150	15

<b>Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)</b>	<b>Date of first intake</b>	September 2019
	<b>Date of last intake</b>	September 2023
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	Two – September and January	
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake</b>	150	
<b>Programme duration (months from start to completion)</b>	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks across 12 months. Part-time: 4 semesters of 12 weeks each across 24 months.	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	This programme is aimed at learners with a second class second division (2.2) honours bachelor degree in business or marketing who wish to specialise in the field of marketing with a view to entering industry. It will also be of interest to learners who have completed their undergraduate degree in marketing and wish to specialise in this area. An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA will also be considered. If an individual holds a non-business Level 8 bachelor degree but has three years marketing experience, they may also be considered.	

<sup>4</sup> This is the total wholetime equivalent number of staff dedicated exclusively to this programme divided by the maximum number of learners that can be enrolled with that complement of staff.

<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Part-time and full-time
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom lectures</li> <li>• Case based learning</li> <li>• Practical skills sessions</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Tutorials</li> <li>• Individual and group work</li> <li>• Synchronous and asynchronous learning</li> </ul>
<b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	<p>The Postgraduate Diploma is an embedded award in the MSc in Marketing. It will not be offered separately but is an exit award at 60 ECTS for learners who are unable to or wish not to complete the full Masters Programme. It is designed to appeal to graduates seeking to enhance their careers prospects in industries where a marketing function is critical to the business needs. The course will equip learners with a comprehensive understanding of key foundations of the marketing discipline as well as providing them with a detailed understanding of the contemporary marketplace. In addition, students will learn how to apply the latest marketing theory and practice in an increasingly complex marketing environment. Through the dissertation or applied research project, students will synthesise their learning and author a piece of research focussed work.</p>
<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>	<p>Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma/Masters and/or Level 10 PhD in any of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing, management, services marketing, consumer trends / analysis</li> <li>• Big Data, web marketing, International marketing and branding</li> <li>• Strategic marketing, entrepreneurship</li> </ul> <p>In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 8 honours bachelor degrees in the above disciplines, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, may also be considered.</p>
<b>Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b>	<p>1:50 Classroom sessions  1: 25Workshops  1: 25Practical Sessions  1:50 Online Class</p>
<b>Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.</b>	WTE: 1.18/50= 0.024

## Other noteworthy features of the application

The panel evaluated the observations, comments and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders and found that these were duly factored into the review process. The panel found that the consultation process had been comprehensive and it was concluded that the proposed programme was fit for purpose.

The aims, objectives and graduate profile of the programme was outlined. The panel found that the proposed programme learning outcomes have been mapped to the QQI Science Awards Standards and satisfy the QQI Awards Standards for the Science Awards at Level 9.

This programme is aimed at learners with a second class second division (2.2) honours bachelor degree in business or marketing who wish to specialise in the field of marketing with a view to entering industry. It will also be of interest to learners who have completed their undergraduate degree in marketing and wish to specialise in this area. An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA will also be considered. If an individual holds a non-business Level 8 bachelor degree but has three years marketing experience, they may also be considered.

### Learner Performance

The number of applications for the full-time programme has continued to grow steadily since 2013. There are increasingly large numbers of international students who are interested in undertaking a full-time Masters in Ireland, due to career opportunities arising from this. However, applicants may not always be appropriately qualified for entry in terms of prior qualifications or meeting the English language requirements of the programme.

#### Overall pass rate

An overall average pass rate (total passed enrolled) of 94.29%. Overall, 1.59% of Learners failed the programme, and 4.13% of Learners were non-active. Pass rates ranged from a low of 93.88% in 2017/18 to a high of 95.18% in 2014/15.

The average mark in 2014/15 ranges from approximately 40% (B9RS102) to 70% (B9MK114). It can also be seen that there is a large spread of marks for B9RS102 (Dissertation). Note: B9MK112 is an elective which no Learners chose in 2014/15. The average mark in 2015/16 ranges from approximately 50% (B9RS102) to 65% (B9MK120). Note: B9MK112 is an elective which no Learners chose in 2015/16.

#### Award classification

The overall award classifications for the period 2014/15 to 2017/18 shows that 8.7% of Learners graduate from the MSc Marketing programme with First Class Honours, a further 50.31% graduate with Merit, and 40.99% with a Pass Award. The percentage of Distinctions decreased significantly from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and then have steadily increased from 2015/16 to 2017/18. The percentage of Merit awards has increased from 2014/15 to 2017/18 whilst the percentage of Pass awards has decreased from 2014/15 to 2017/18.

It is noted that percentage of Distinctions (8.7%) is lower than both the DBS average of 12% and the Private Provider average of 19% for Level 9 programmes. In contrast, the percentage of Merit awards (50.31%) is higher than both the DBS average of 38% and the Private Provider average of 44% for Level 9 programmes. and the average of Lower Second Class Honours awards for private providers (28%). The percentage of Pass awards (40.99%) is lower than the DBS average of 48% but higher than the Private Provider average of 36% for Level 9 programmes.

The lower percentage number of Distinctions may be due to the overall profile of Learners, with a large number of overseas learners for whom English maybe a second language, with the challenges this presents at Masters level, albeit that all learners are required to meet standard English language requirements for entry.

### **Destination of graduates**

The MSc in Science in Marketing has been specifically designed with the needs of current and future marketing professionals and managers in mind. The course is aimed at those seeking to advance their studies and/ or professional career in marketing and its related fields. The type of role for graduates include Head of Sales, Marketing Assistant, Marketing Manager, Digital Marketing Assistant, Visual Artist, Client Associate, Digital Marketing Executive, Multi Media Planning Assistant, Digital Marketing Intern, PA, Advertising Operations Manager, Sales & Marketing Manager.

Examples of recent graduates have obtained employment or progressed in their careers at:

1. Harvey Norman Retail
2. The Law Society
3. The RDS
4. Leinster Rugby
5. St. Vincent's Hospital
6. Google
7. Facebook
8. Airbnb

# Part 2A Evaluation against the validation criteria

## Criterion 1

<p><b>The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Yes	

**MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)**

**Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)**

As an established provider of higher education programmes DBS has met the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of this programme. It was noted that DBS has in place procedures for access, transfer and progression. DBS has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI. The panel was informed that DBS is currently taking part in the re-engagement process with QQI and has completed the Pilot Phase. As part of the re-engagement process, policies and procedures were being reviewed.

DBS has provided a copy of the letter to be submitted to QQI with the application for the revalidation of the programmes. The letter contained the signature and declaration required under sub-criteria 1b) and 1c).

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<sup>5</sup>This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.



## Criterion 2

### The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought

- a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
- b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
  - (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
- c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
- d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.
- e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
- f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
  - (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
  - (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
- g) For each programme and embedded programme
  - (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.<sup>6</sup>
  - (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.<sup>7</sup>

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel found that, in general, the aims, objectives and rationale for the programme were expressed clearly and were comprehensive and consistent with the level of the award. The panel made a number of observations on this point as set out below where it was felt further clarification was needed. Some conditions and recommendations have been set in regard to this criterion.

The panel noted from the documentation and from conversations with staff at the site visit that there are a number of substantial changes proposed for the revised programme under review. A major change, suggested by the external examiner, is the introduction of an exit award, the Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing at 60ECTS. This embedded programme, which is not offered separately, offers acknowledgement of attainment of learning for learners are unable to complete the final dissertation of the MSc.

Another change is the decision not to have taught electives on the programme. In conversation with teaching staff, the panel was informed that this was to provide a more focussed and robust approach to the topics of marketing at a Masters level, which requires the capacity for more critical analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

The panel was of the view that it was not sufficiently clear from the documentation that the programme learning outcomes had been retained for the proposed programme.

**It is a condition that DBS include a section in the Programme Document that describes how the programme learning outcomes have been retained.**

In its response document, DBS described how the learning outcomes have been fully retained in the accompanying document C01 Programme Learning Outcome Retention which was reviewed by the panel. The condition is met.

The panel noted that it was proposed that the Digital Marketing stream in the existing programme be discontinued in the revised programme. At the site visit, the panel and staff discussed this point and the panel learned that, in contemporary marketing practices, digital marketing is embedded in many aspects of marketing as a matter of course – it is not something added on, for instance – and it is proposed to take this approach in the revised programme to reflect this development.

The panel concluded that it was not clear in the documentation that the digital marketing stream had been discontinued and that this should be clear to prospective students making programme choices.

**It is a condition that DBS articulate in the Programme Document that the creation of the MSc in Digital Marketing has resulted in the discontinuation of the digital marketing stream of the original programme.**

In its response to the panel DBS confirmed that the digital marketing stream has not been advertised on the DBS website and an updated brochure is in preparation. It was further confirmed that no application for the digital stream are actively in train. The Programme Document has been updated accordingly. The condition is met.

Other modules have been reviewed and updated, with the addition of new modules such as Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Services Marketing Management that reflect the needs of business, the changing consumer and changes in technology.

In conversation with staff, the panel was informed that the programme content had been re-organised as a result of the review and that plans were in place to deliver the programme in a way that was appropriate to a Level 9. Given the level of change, the panel concluded that there needed to be greater clarity on how the content of the re-organised programme had not changed significantly from the existing programme.

**It is a condition that DBS confirm with evidence that the programme content, at a higher level, has been reorganised with respect to marketing at Level 9 on the NFQ and has not changed significantly from the existing programme.**

In its response document, DBS confirmed that the programme content has been reorganised at a higher level, with respect to marketing at Level 9 on the NFQ and has not changed significantly from the existing current programme. The reconfiguration and updating was detailed in C03 Higher Level updating of programme content and the panel is satisfied that the condition is met.

**It is a condition that all module MIMLOs are NFQ-level appropriate.**

In its response document, DBS advised that panel that the team had reviewed all the module documentation within the programme and where appropriate updated the MIMLOs to ensure that they reflect NFQ Level 9 standards. The changes were outlined in the updated MSc in Marketing Module and Assessment Documentation provided to the panel. The condition is met. Updated and the changes have been highlighted. Page numbers are detailed in the Supporting Documentation column.

The title of the programme was deemed to be appropriate and in line with the QQI standard for the Major Award Type on the NFQ.

It was noted that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes for the proposed programme were informed by the QQI Science Award Standards and have been mapped against these standards.

### 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.<sup>8</sup>
- 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<sup>9</sup> of learner demand for the programme.
  - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>10</sup>.
  - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>11</sup>
- 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	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel was informed of the consultation process undertaken for this review and concluded that feedback had been factored into proposed programmes.

A comparative analysis of the MIPLOs of similar programmes offered by a public provider in Ireland and one programme in the UK was undertaken as part of the review by DBS. It was noted that while there are similarities between all three programmes, the DBS programme focuses on offering an integrated programme with a balance between theoretical, practical and applied skills, bringing in additional concepts such as creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial thinking.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

<sup>10</sup> It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

Feedback from employers indicated that the core competencies required by employers across a broad range of sectors include and understanding of the customer experience, having a grasp of commercial realities in business and being able to respond creatively to the changing nature of consumers who have more power and choice than before.

The panel was also informed that employers had strongly indicated that skills such as team work, capacity to find and build creative solutions to programmes, communication and presentation skills were equally important as more technical marketing skills such as the capacity to undertake strategic analysis of data, being able to apply theoretical knowledge (e.g. around new concepts such as 'bridging' of the online/offline world; or having 'night vision' – the idea of the consumer with no real boundaries, for instance) in commercial ways.

In conversation with staff and learners and graduates the panel was informed that these skills were embedded in the curriculum structure and in the learning and assessment strategies in line with DBS objective for the programme to be an integrated one. These include structured group projects and group presentations where students collaborate on applied projects with an industry focus and seminars and visits with guest lecturers from industry. It was evident from conversations with staff and learners and from the documentation provided that DBS has an excellent network with stakeholders and uses this network to the enhancement of the programme.

The panel concluded that the programme meets a need for skilled graduates in its discipline and that there are employment opportunities available to graduates of the programme.

**DBS is commended for team responsiveness to sectoral trends and changes including learner trends.**

## 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<sup>12</sup>.
- 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 (CEFR<sup>13</sup>) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
- d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
- e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
- f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
  - (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
  - (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
  - (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
- g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel was satisfied that the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are clearly articulated and working in practice. Information on access, transfer and progression is available through DBS website, promotional material and the Student. This includes information on EU and non-EU entry requirements and information for students with disabilities.

The panel noted that the entry requirements for the programme included learners with a 2.2 honours degree in business or marketing or an equivalent qualification such as ACCA or CIMA would also be considered. Individuals holding a non-business Level 8 bachelor degree but with three years' marketing experience may also be considered. The panel considered the entry requirements in

<sup>12</sup> 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

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf) (accessed 26/09/2015)

relation to prior learning with experience of marketing was restrictive and excluded, for instance, potential learners with a science background who also worked in business and who would benefit from adding marketing skills to their repertoire. Staff informed the panel that it was an advantage to have marketing experience coming into a Masters programme where learners were expected to be able to critically appraise concepts and apply learning from the beginning and that was the rationale for the prior learning requirement. The panel recommended that DBS consider the entry requirements particularly for RPL for the programme.

**It is recommended that DBS broaden entry requirements beyond business and marketing experience for recognition of prior learning pre-requisites.**

DBS has indicated in its response document that it intends to broaden the entry requirements beyond business and marketing experience for the recognition of prior learning prerequisites. The revised RPL procedures were set out in Section 4 of the revised Programme Document. The panel notes this development.

The panel noted that, in the documentation provided, DBS indicated that there were two programmes that provided inward progression to the proposed programme. These are BA (Hons) in Marketing and BA (Hons) in Business Studies. DBS also offers an MSc in Digital Marketing as well as an MSc in Marketing. The panel was of the view that it would be important to ensure students were aware of the differences between the MSc programmes and also that students were aware of the difference in content and approach between the BA in Marketing and the Masters programmes and were also aware of the proposed changes to the programme under review so that they could make an informed choice as to progression in their studies within DBS.

**It is a condition that DBS advise prospective learners of the proposed changes to the programmes and offer additional, relevant assistance in programme choice.**

In its response document, DBS indicated that it would advise all prospective learners of the proposed changes and offer assistance in making an informed programme choice. DBS will alter any hard copy and web-based collateral to this effect. DBS will also write to all applicants who have expressed interest in the programme and alert them to the possibility of the exit award. The condition is met.

## 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<sup>14</sup>.
- 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.<sup>15</sup>

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

In a review of the documentation and in discussion with staff and learners at the site visit, the panel considered in-depth specific aspects of the curriculum structure and overall content.

The panel reviewed how the important subject of research and research methods was structured in the programme as the capacity to undertake, manage and apply research to address marketing problems is a key area to be developed during a Level 9 programme. Robust research skills are also needed, the panel observed, to conduct the dissertation/applied research topic (capstone) which has 25 ECTS.

The panel noted that it is proposed to reduce the numbers of credits assigned to the Research Method module from 10 ECTS to 5 ECTS. In discussion with staff, the panel was informed that research methodology is embedded in different modules, in the specific teaching strategy adopted by lecturers in class and in assessed assignments and that, therefore, learners had opportunities to develop their research skills along the way, rather than only in a specific module.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified



They further informed the panel that learners are coached along the way by staff to undertake research that would assist with their final research project (for those taking the Principal Programme). The panel also learned that, at an institutional level, DBS was encouraging learners to pursue applied research projects for the dissertation or capstone project (in Semester 3, learners pursuing the MSc award will have a choice of pursuing an academic dissertation or an applied research project) as the emphasis throughout was on critically applied learning, including skills in research.

The panel considered that, in general, the approach to how research and research methods are to be learned, delivered and assessed was not sufficiently clear in the documentation provided.

The panel also considered that the content to be covered in the Research Methods was extensive and were of the view that it may be difficult to deliver and assess all the topics proposed in the documentation.

**It is a condition that DBS either create two discrete modules for research (capstone)/dissertation options or integrate, under common learning outcomes (MIMLOs), within one module.**

In its response document, DBS advised this module has now been clarified to show that the Capstone Module is one module with a double pathway option, with two possibilities for assessment therein. This module will be titled 'Dissertation / Applied Research Project', and the documentation has been updated to reflect this clearly. The condition is satisfied.

**It is a condition that DBS illustrate in the documentation what research methods have been explicitly embedded in other modules now that the original research methods is a 5 credit module.**

In its response document, DBS advised that panel that across the programme, learners engage with the role of research within the marketing discipline. It was further advised that a variety of research methods offered, outside the formal research methods module, provided learners with the opportunity to test, employ, and apply some of the research concepts they formally encounter in both Module 5 and Module 10. The condition is satisfied.

**It is a condition that DBS review content of the Research Methods Module and be assured that the quantity of content to be delivered, learned and assessed is realistic.**

In its response document DBS advised that the module assessment has been refocussed towards a Research Methods Proposal as distinct from a Research Proposal which has a larger scope. The first assessment will remain as 50% data analysis, the second assessment will be a Research Methods Proposal. The condition has been satisfied.

It was noted that it was proposed not to have a separate digital marketing module as, as was discussed at the site meeting with staff, and as is outlined in the documentation provided, digital marketing now permeates the way marketing is undertaken, particularly given the trends in consumer behaviour (marketing is one-to-one, rather than one-to-many), the trends in digital technology and the alignment of the online and offline worlds in an omni-channel world, for instance. The panel was of the view that it was important nonetheless to ensure that sufficient attention was paid to digital marketing in its own right throughout the programme in all modules.

**It is recommended that DBS ensure that digital marketing content is retained in the programme across all modules.**

In its response document, DBS provided documentary evidence that the content has been updated and amended to reflect the evolved sectoral requirements of learners, companies and industry. It was further confirmed that the proposed programme still contains and maintains the equivalent pedagogical goals, retained programme level outcomes and specifically with PILO9. The recommendation is met.

In reviewing the topics covered by the modules in the proposed programme, the panel considered that some topics were under-presented. These include Marketing Analytics, Strategic Marketing and Brand Management.

**It is recommended that DBS consider how to include topics that are under-represented in the programme such as Marketing Analytics, Strategic Marketing and Brand Management.**

In its response document, DBS informed that panel that it is seeking to develop further content solely on Marketing Analytics and will present proposals to the next Board of Studies in this regard. The panel notes the response.

**It is recommended that DBS consider including marketing (not digital marketing) analytics content (MIMLOs, content, assessment, research) into modules, including research modules or as a discrete module.**

The panel noted that in its response document, DBS is in the process of developing a discrete, optional, non-credit bearing module called: 'Marketing Analytics'. In the interim DBS will trial offering supplementary material on the topic, with the introduction of a discrete module option in the longer term currently the preferred course of action.

The panel was advised by staff and also read in the documentation of the increasing importance of creativity and innovation to be embedded in the way businesses operate if they are to be successful. The need for students to have creative and entrepreneurial skills was stated in a recent Enterprise Ireland report. This is reflected in the new module on the topic in the proposed programme. In conversation with staff at the site visit, it was evident that the discipline of Design Thinking was a key and developing trend in this area and was covered, the panel was informed. This was not clear from the documentation provided. The panel was also of the view that innovation and entrepreneurship, if they are not to remain at the theoretical level, should include aspects of how to ensure that ideas developed were capable of commercialisation. These aspects need to be incorporated more formally into the module, the panel considered.

**It is a condition that DBS change the title of the Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Module to include Design Thinking (or similar) and consider adding Commercialisation to the title also.**

In its response document, DBS confirmed that the title has been changed to 'Design Thinking, Entrepreneurship, and Commercialisation'. This has also resulted in the revision of some small aspects of the text of the module and the indicative syllabus. The condition is met.

The panel considered that while the topic of finance was covered implicitly throughout the programme, as teaching staff also outlined at the site visit, the topic warranted more explicit attention and specific assessment, given its importance in the realm of the effective management of marketing campaigns and initiatives.

**It is recommended that DBS include finance in MIMLOs and assessment rubrics in relevant modules to emphasise the importance of finance in business marketing.**

In its response document, the DBS team outlined its intention to emphasise the importance of finance in business marketing at future programme review meetings. The first step is to consolidate the current content around finance and budgeting and then develop a strategy to expand the topics with additional MIMLOs and assessment rubrics. The panel notes the response.

Overall, the panel concluded that the proposed programme would need to be reviewed by the team at DBS at the end of the first year of delivery, given the extent of the changes.

**It is a condition that DBS, at the end of the first year of the revised programme, review and revise the programme appropriately to an internal approval process.**

In its response document, DBS advised that panel that the Programme Team and Course Leader will maintain a level of review, reflection and oversight of the modified programme. It was further outlined that a variety of mechanisms would be used to achieve this aim and provided documentary setting out considerable detail on how these would function. The condition is met.

From the documentation in the proposed Programme Document, the panel noted the listed graduate attributes and competencies that the programme is intended to facilitate and nurture. The panel was of the view that there was an ambiguity as to what constituted an attribute and what constituted a competency. The panel also concluded that it was not clear how the attributes and competencies were linked to the programme proper and/or student engagement or, from conversations with staff at the site visit, if there was a shared understand among staff about this topic.

**It is a condition that DBS articulate the graduate attributes and competencies and ensure that these are understood by all programme staff and are underpinned in the content of the programme.**

In its response document DBS advised the panel that it has reviewed and articulated the graduate attributes and competencies as outlined in the document supplied, C04 Graduate Attribute and Competencies Articulation. The condition is met.

## 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 staff<sup>16</sup> (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<sup>17</sup> opportunities<sup>18</sup>.
- 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	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel noted that teaching staff on the programme were experienced module leaders, with most qualified to Masters level or holding a professional qualification. Some staff members were upgrading qualifications to Masters or PhD level.

There was evidence that staff were involved in continuous professional development, acting as external examiners, serving on editorial boards for industry publications, as well as writing articles in business journals, including DBS's own business journal, published by DBS library. DBS staff have a considerable network with industry and employers and they bring this to bear on the programme. The panel further noted that many were practitioners in the field and brought this experience in bringing up to date content to the programme.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

At the site visit, the panel found that there was evidence of good team work and cooperation among staff and a sense of collegiality. This was demonstrated in the way that the review had been conducted, in the way that staff cooperated on assessment strategies and workload and from feedback from the students and graduates met.

**DBS is commended for its engagement with the panel as part of the review.**

## 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	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel was generally satisfied that there are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned. It was noted that a five-year plan had been provided for the programme under review.

A tour of the physical facilities in the Aungier St and Castle House Campuses was undertaken by the panel. The on-going development and upgrading of common meeting and study areas throughout the campus to facilitate group work and peer study support was acknowledged.

The panel found that the library uses technology effectively to support learners and staff, including access to an assignment planner, Kindle lending facilities, a Registrar of Scholarly Activity as well as a user-friendly search engine to enable ease of search for books and academic journals. It was noted that specialist library staff are employed to assist students to develop their research capabilities.

The library is engaged in publishing the DBS journals for the School of Arts and the School of Business and Law featuring peer-reviewed research by both staff and students. This initiative is in line with a core pillar of DBS's strategy on achieving academic excellence.

The panel considered that the information technology facilities were of a high standard, with mobile laboratories available to students throughout the campus, providing ease of access to library and MOODLE resources. The panel noted that the information technology support services had been integrated with other student services, making it easier for students to avail of this service on an on-going basis.

**DBS is commended for the publication of the DBS Business Review and graduate initiatives and staff engagement in research and publication.**

## Criterion 8

<b>The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners</b>	
<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>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Yes	

MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel was satisfied that the learning environment is consistent with the needs of learners.

The panel was advised that DBS uses a number of mechanisms to develop and implement supports for students including:

- Learner surveys
- Peer Mentoring Support (with training provided for mentors)
- Student representation on the Academic Board and Board of Studies
- Support for, and engagement with an elected Student Union
- Student services for:
  - Accommodation
  - Counselling and referral services, including specific contact with the provider of mental health for young people, *Jigsaw*
  - Sports and societies, with many student-led events
  - Entertainment
  - Study and meeting spaces within the campus
  - Careers office, providing advice and information on employment opportunities and professional development

The panel concluded that the staff with responsibility for support services were proactive in responding to student feedback for improvements in facilities which was undertaken on a continuous basis. The panel visited the central student hub which had been created and was satisfied that this provided the basis for an integrated approach to providing accessible services.



## Criterion 9

<b>There are sound teaching and learning strategies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</li> <li>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</li> <li>e) Individualised guidance, support<sup>19</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</li> </ul>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Yes	

### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel found that there was a variety of effective teaching strategies on the programme.

The panel noted that an important teaching strategy is the use of group projects. The teaching staff informed the panel that this method was an effective way to learn formal marketing skills, such as critically analysing marketing strategies, and presenting a case studies as appropriate for a Level 9 programme. They had the additional benefits of teaching skills prized by employers such as team work, communications, creative thinking and problem solving. Overall, group projects provided an experience of applying learning to real life situations.

The panel concluded that the use of group projects was carefully considered, with processes in place to ensure that any problems arising were dealt with speedily at local level, generally by teaching staff. The panel further concluded that there was a shared understanding among staff of the use and management of group projects as a teaching and learning resource.

At the site visit, students informed the panel that teaching methods on entrepreneurship were very practical and support was given to students to research all aspects of business /enterprise ideas effectively, including providing links to support agencies such as Enterprise Ireland.

The panel noted that there was a balance between the use of interactive classroom techniques, use of case studies, use of client briefs for project work, use of guest lecturers or visits to businesses or other organisations and on-line resources, including MOODLE to encourage effective learning. At the site visit, the teaching staff reiterated to the panel the emphasis placed on guest lecturers and use of client brief from businesses, as well as field visits to companies so that students were encountering the issues facing companies in effective marketing. The panel observed that, as the programme does not have a work placement element, this was an important aspect of the programme which was well managed through DBS's network in many sectors of industry.

<sup>19</sup> 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*<sup>20</sup>
- 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.<sup>21</sup>
- 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.<sup>22</sup>
- 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.<sup>23</sup>

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel was advised that all assessment for the programme conforms to the DBS Assessment Regulations which are informed by QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013.

It was not sufficiently clear to the panel how research methods were embedded over the whole programme, including in methods of assessment. It was not clear what support for research was provided outside of the Research Module.

**It is a condition that DBS formally articulate research supports available outside of the Research Module, including formal supervisory arrangements.**

In its response document, DBS advised that it offers a number of research supports that are available to learners outside the formal parameters of the Research Methods module. These include a range of supports available through the Library Services. Other supports outlined include Writing for Graduate Studies Learner Support Classes and the Postgraduate Business Dissertation Guide Book. The condition is met.

<sup>20</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>21</sup> This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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).

**It is recommended that DBS create a list of assessments that support the development of Level 9 research skills.**

In its response document, stated that it was committed to structuring the Level 9 research skills route across a progressive and accumulative learning pathway that formalizes those existing embedded varieties of research methods while mindfully developing a full list of assessments that focus on those research skills under development. The panel notes the response.

In discussion at the site visit, it was evident that individual lecturers/module leaders may assess different aspects of research methods, using different rubrics and therefore there was over-assessment in some particular areas – literature reviews were a case in point.

**It is recommended that Research Methods lecturers look at where the content of research methods is assessed in other modules and to advise students accordingly.**

In its response document, DBS advised the panel of its intention to appoint a fulltime Research Methods module lead who would guide and advise on this module and actively contribute to a research-focused culture and coordinated approach to research for faculty and learners. The response is noted.

**It is recommended that DBS use a common rubric-based method to assess particular types of student work (e.g. case studies) and make these rubrics available to all academic staff on the programme. Review these periodically as a team.**

In its response document, DBS reports that it has adopted and adapted the R010 Level 9 Grading Rubric. The document is to provide baseline guidance in the further development of the programme-specific rubrics to cover both case studies and other specific elements of assessment. The panel noted the response.

Given the importance of the capstone research project for MSc students, the panel was of the view that the emphasis in the assessment of Research Methods would focus on the extent to which methods of research that students were proposing were robust enough and appropriate to enable them to research their chosen topic well.

**It is recommended that DBS focus Research Methods assessment on ‘proposal as to methodology’ for research projects.**

In its response document, DBS informed the panel that the focus of this module, and the associated assessment, is on a Research Methods Proposal, as distinct from the larger and more onerous Research Proposal, with larger scope and word count. The response is noted.

At the site meeting, the panel learned, in conversation with teaching staff, that DBS had investigated the possibility of having cross-discipline assessment as part of the overall integrated approach to this applied programme and to ensure that there was not over-assessment or duplication of effort on the part of both students and teaching staff. The panel learned, that, to date, this had not been widespread but that the teaching team intended to explore how this assessment technique might be introduced. The panel acknowledged that this was not always easy to achieve.

The panel was informed that the teaching staff had, in fact, developed a common method of assessing the group and individual components of the project, including overall assessment of the

project by including personal reflection by each student so that there was a fair assessment of each learner's effort.

**It is recommended that DBS consider the introduction of joint (cross-module) assessment across relevant modules.**

In its response document, it was advised that DBS has commenced a pilot cross-disciplinary assessment at undergraduate level on the BA (Hons) in Marketing programme. All lessons from that pilot will be combined with further research on best practise in this area to develop a more robust and lower risk cross-assessment strategy and implemented at MSc level when approved by the Board of Studies. The panel notes the response.

The panel also learned about the variety of assessment methods which were for the proposed programme, including group projects, the creation of finished artefacts and other methods that were appropriate for a Level 9 programme. An innovative method cited involved students being asked to write a case study/article (related to the module being assessed) which had the potential to be published in a peer review journal, including DBS's own business journal. While publication was not guaranteed, the process facilitated assessment in research skill development, academic writing, understanding of the theory and how it was applied in real life situations, while the prospect of being published provided motivation to students.

**DBS is commended for the variety of assessment techniques used in the programme.**

## 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 disabilities<sup>24</sup>.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*<sup>25</sup> 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	

#### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

An overview of the support services available to students was provided. The panel noted that the Student Handbooks and website contained relevant information in relation to the supports and services available to students. It was further noted that there were individual handbooks for Dublin with appropriate information included for students.

Students reported that lecturers and staff were generally responsive to requests for support and information. In conversation with staff, they indicated that this process of support for students was routine and part of the overall culture within the college, including many informal and non-scheduled meetings in support of the development of the students.

<sup>24</sup> For more information on making reasonable accommodations see [www.AHEAD.ie](http://www.AHEAD.ie) and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

<sup>25</sup> See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

**DBS is commended for the non-scheduled commitment to student development on the part of staff.**

## Criterion 12

<b>The programme is well managed</b>	
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-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.
c)	There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.
d)	There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.
e)	Quality assurance <sup>26</sup> 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.
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Yes	

### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

The panel was satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review. The QAH contains the governance structures for the College and procedures for access, transfer and progression, learner assessments and supports, and teaching and learning. It was noted that the QAH and associated policies and procedures have been developed in line with QQI statutory guidelines. There are not programme-specific quality assurance arrangements required for this programme, it was noted.

<sup>26</sup> See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

## Part 2B Overall recommendation to QQI

### Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (Embedded Programme)

Select one	
Satisfactory	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); <sup>27</sup>
	Not satisfactory.

#### Reasons<sup>28</sup> for the overall recommendation

The criteria have been met.

### MSc in Marketing (Principal Programme)

Select one	
Satisfactory	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); <sup>29</sup>
	Not satisfactory.

#### Reasons<sup>30</sup> for the overall recommendation

The criteria have been met.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> 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.



The panel carried out a comprehensive review of the Masters of Science in Digital Marketing between April and August 2019.

The programme is due for review under the QQI requirement for periodic monitoring and review, and also requires review to conform with recent policies, including QQI *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training* (QQI, 2016), *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* (QQI, 2016), and in accordance with the QQI *Programme Review Manual 2016/2017*. As advised by QQI, the proposed programme has been mapped to the QQI Science Standard.

The review comprised four stages:

- A desk review by the panel of the self-evaluation report on the internal programme review prepared by the Programme Leaders and Programme Team and a review of the initial proposed revised programme to be submitted for revalidation of the programme.
- A site visit on April 30<sup>th</sup>, involving a series of meeting with academic staff and administrative staff engaged in programme delivery and support, a meeting with recent graduates and current learners on the programmes and a tour of the DBS campus to review facilities
- The preparation of a panel report, outlining the process and evidence pursued and proposing a number of conditions and recommendations.
- A follow-up desk review of revised documentation provided by DBS addressing the panel's recommendations and conditions.

The revised documentation consisted of:

- DBS's updated Programme Document
- DBS's revised Module Descriptors and Appendices
- The Programme Team's response to the Independent Programme Review Based on the site visit and the accompanying documentation.

The panel concluded that the MSc in Digital Marketing and the Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Marketing as presented to QQI for revalidation, satisfies the core policies and criteria for revalidation by QQI of programmes of education and training.

Detailed commentary relating to the Core Validation Criteria is included in Part 2A of this report.

Specifically, in relation to the panel is satisfied that:

**Under Criterion 1:** As an established provider of higher education programmes DBS has met the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of this programme. It was noted that DBS has in place procedures for access, transfer and progression. DBS has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI. The panel was informed that DBS is currently taking part in the re-engagement process with QQI and has completed the Pilot Phase. As part of the re-engagement process, policies and procedures were being reviewed.

DBS has provided a copy of the letter to be submitted to QQI with the application for the revalidation of the programmes. The letter contained the signature and declaration required under sub-criteria 1b) and 1c).

**Under Criterion 2:** The panel found that, in general, the aims, objectives and rationale for the programme were expressed clearly and were comprehensive and consistent with the level of the award.

The panel concluded that it was not clear in the documentation that the digital marketing stream had been discontinued and that this should be clear to prospective students making programme choices.

A major change is the introduction of an exit award, the Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing at 60ECTS. This embedded programme, which is not offered separately, offers acknowledgement of attainment of learning for learners are unable to complete the final dissertation of the MSc.

Another change is the decision not to have taught electives on the programme.

The panel was of the view that it was not sufficiently clear from the documentation that the programme learning outcomes had been retained for the proposed programme.

**It is a condition that DBS include a section in the Programme Document that describes how the programme learning outcomes have been retained.**

In its response document, DBS described how the learning outcomes have been fully retained in the accompanying document C01 Programme Learning Outcome Retention which was reviewed by the panel. The condition is met.

The panel concluded that it was not clear in the documentation that the digital marketing stream had been discontinued and that this should be clear to prospective students making programme choices.

**It is a condition that DBS articulate in the Programme Document that the creation of the MSc in Digital Marketing has resulted in the discontinuation of the digital marketing stream of the original programme.**

In its response to the panel DBS confirmed that the digital marketing stream has not been advertised on the DBS website and an updated brochure is in preparation. It was further confirmed that no application for the digital stream are actively in train. The Programme Document has been updated accordingly. The condition is met.

Given the level of change, the panel concluded that there needed to be greater clarity on how the content of the re-organised programme had not changed significantly from the existing programme.

**It is a condition that DBS confirm with evidence that the programme content, at a higher level, has been reorganised with respect to marketing at Level 9 on the NFQ and has not changed significantly from the existing programme.**

In its response document, DBS confirmed that the programme content has been reorganised at a higher level, with respect to marketing at Level 9 on the NFQ and has not changed significantly from the existing current programme. The reconfiguration and updating was detailed in C03 Higher Level updating of programme content and the panel is satisfied that the condition is met.

**It is a condition that all module MIMLOs are NFQ-level appropriate.**

In its response document, DBS advised that panel that the team had reviewed all the module documentation within the programme and where appropriate updated the MIMLOs to ensure that they reflect NFQ Level 9 standards. The changes were outlined in the updated MSc in Marketing Module and Assessment Documentation provided to the panel. The condition is met. Updated and the changes have been highlighted.

The title of the programme was deemed to be appropriate and in line with the QQI standard for the Major Award Type on the NFQ.

It was noted that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes for the proposed programme were informed by the QQI Science Award Standards and have been mapped against these standards.

**Under Criterion 3:** The panel was informed of the consultation process undertaken for this review and concluded that feedback had been factored into the proposed programmes

**DBS is commended for team responsiveness to sectoral trends and changes including learner trends.**

The panel concluded that the programme meets a need for skilled graduates in its discipline and that there are employment opportunities available to graduates of the programme.

**Under Criterion 4:** The panel was satisfied that the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are clearly articulated and working in practice.

The panel recommended that DBS consider the entry requirements particularly for RPL for the programme.

**It is recommended that DBS broaden entry requirements beyond business and marketing experience for recognition of prior learning pre-requisites.**

DBS has indicated in its response document that it intends to broaden the entry requirements beyond business and marketing experience for the recognition of prior learning prerequisites. The panel notes this development.

The panel was of the view that it would be important to ensure students were aware of the differences between the MSc and BA in Marketing programmes offered by DBS and that they were also aware of the proposed changes to the programme under review.

**It is a condition that DBS advise prospective learners of the proposed changes to the programmes and offer additional, relevant assistance in programme choice.**

In its response document, DBS indicated that it would advise all prospective learners of the proposed changes and offer assistance in making an informed programme choice. DBS will alter any hard copy and web-based collateral to this effect. DBS will also write to all applicants who have expressed interest in the programme and alert them to the possibility of the exit award. The condition is met.

**Under Criterion 5:** The panel considered in-depth specific aspects of the curriculum structure and overall content. It reviewed how the important subject of research and research methods was structured in the programme

The panel considered that, in general, the approach to how research and research methods are to be learned, delivered and assessed was not sufficiently clear in the documentation provided.

The panel also considered that the content to be covered in the Research Methods was extensive and were of the view that it may be difficult to deliver and assess all the topics proposed in the documentation.

**It is a condition that DBS either create two discrete modules for research (capstone)/dissertation options or integrate, under common learning outcomes (MIMLOs), within one module.**

In its response document, DBS advised this module has now been clarified to show that the Capstone Module is one module with a double pathway option, with two possibilities for assessment

therein. This module will be titled 'Dissertation / Applied Research Project', and the documentation has been updated to reflect this clearly. The condition is satisfied.

**It is a condition that DBS illustrate in the documentation what research methods have been explicitly embedded in other modules now that the original research methods is a 5 credit module.**

In its response document, DBS advised that panel that across the programme, learners engage with the role of research within the marketing discipline. It was further advised that a variety of research methods offered, outside the formal research methods module, offered learners the opportunity to test, employ, and apply some of the research concepts they formally encounter in both Module 5 and Module 10. The condition is satisfied.

**It is a condition that DBS review content of the Research Methods Module and be assured that the quantity of content to be delivered, learned and assessed is realistic.**

In its response document DBS advised that the module assessment has been refocussed towards a Research Methods Proposal as distinct from a Research Proposal which has a larger scope. The first assessment will remain as 50% data analysis, the second assessment will be a Research Methods Proposal. The condition has been satisfied.

The panel was of the view that it was important to ensure that sufficient attention was paid to digital marketing in its own right throughout the programme in all modules.

**It is recommended that DBS ensure that digital marketing content is retained in the programme across all modules.**

In its response document, DBS provided documentary evidence that the content has been updated and amended to reflect the evolved sectoral requirements of learners, companies and industry. The recommendation is met.

In reviewing the topics covered by the modules in the proposed programme, the panel considered that some topics were under-presented. These include Marketing Analytics, Strategic Marketing and Brand Management.

**It is recommended that DBS consider how to include topics that are under-represented in the programme such as Marketing Analytics, Strategic Marketing and Brand Management.**

In its response document, DBS informed that panel that it is seeking to develop further content solely on Marketing Analytics and will present proposals to the next Board of Studies in this regard. The panel notes the response.

**It is recommended that DBS consider including marketing (not digital marketing) analytics content (MIMLOs, content, assessment, research) into modules, including research modules or as a discrete module.**

The panel noted that in its response document, DBS is in the process of developing a discrete, optional, non-credit bearing module called: 'Marketing Analytics'. In the interim DBS will trial offering supplementary material on the topic, with the introduction of a discrete module option in the longer term currently the preferred course of action.

In conversation with staff at the site visit, it was evident that the discipline of Design Thinking was a key and developing trend in this area and was covered. This was not clear from the documentation provided. The panel was also of the view that innovation and entrepreneurship, if they are not to remain at the theoretical level, should include aspects of how to ensure that ideas developed were

capable of commercialisation. These aspects need to be incorporated more formally into the module, the panel considered.

**It is a condition that DBS change the title of the Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Module to include Design Thinking (or similar) and consider adding Commercialisation to the title also.**

In its response document, DBS confirmed that the title has been changed to 'Design Thinking, Entrepreneurship, and Commercialisation'. This has also resulted in the revision of some small aspects of the text of the module and the indicative syllabus. The condition is met.

The panel considered that while the topic of finance was covered implicitly throughout the programme, the topic warranted more explicit attention and specific assessment.

**It is recommended that DBS include finance in MIMLOs and assessment rubrics in relevant modules to emphasise the importance of finance in business marketing.**

In its response document, the DBS team outlined its intention to emphasise the importance of finance in business marketing at future programme review meetings. The first step is to consolidate the current content around finance and budgeting and then develop a strategy to expand the topics with additional MIMLOs and assessment rubrics. The panel notes the response.

Overall, the panel concluded that the proposed programme would need to be reviewed by the team at DBS at the end of the first year of delivery, given the extent of the changes.

**It is a condition that DBS, at the end of the first year of the revised programme, review and revise the programme appropriately to an internal approval process.**

In its response document, DBS advised that panel that the Programme Team and Course Leader will maintain a level of review, reflection and oversight of the modified programme. It was further outlined that a variety of mechanisms would be used to achieve this aim and provided documentary setting out considerable detail on how these would function. The condition is met.

From the documentation in the proposed Programme Document, the panel noted the listed graduate attributes and competencies that the programme is intended to facilitate and nurture. The panel was of the view that there was an ambiguity as to what constituted an attribute and what constituted a competency.

**It is a condition that DBS articulate the graduate attributes and competencies and ensure that these are understood by all programme staff and are underpinned in the content of the programme.**

In its response document DBS advised the panel that it has reviewed and articulated the graduate attributes and competencies as outlined in the document supplied, C04 Graduate Attribute and Competencies Articulation. The condition is met.

**Under Criterion 6:** The panel noted that teaching staff on the programme were experienced module leaders, with most qualified to Masters level or holding a professional qualification.

At the site visit, the panel found that there was evidence of good team work and cooperation among staff and a sense of collegiality.

**DBS is commended for its engagement with the panel as part of the review.**

**Under Criterion 7:** The panel was generally satisfied that there are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned.

The panel found that the library uses technology effectively to support learners and staff. The panel considered that the information technology facilities were of a high standard and that IT support services had been integrated with other student services.

**DBS is commended for the publication of the DBS Business Review and graduate initiatives and staff engagement in research and publication.**

**Under Criterion 8:** The panel concluded that the staff with responsibility for support services were proactive in responding to student feedback for improvements in facilities.

**Under Criterion 9:** The panel found that there was a variety of effective teaching strategies on the programme.

The panel found that an important teaching strategy is the use of group projects and concluded that their use was carefully considered. It was noted that there was a balance between the use of interactive classroom techniques, use of case studies, use of client briefs for project work, use of guest lecturers or visits to businesses or other organisations and on-line resources, including MOODLE to encourage effective learning.

**Under Criterion 10:** The panel was advised that all assessment for the programme conforms to the DBS Assessment Regulations which are informed by QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013.

It was not sufficiently clear to the panel how research methods were embedded over the whole programme, including in methods of assessment.

**It is a condition that DBS formally articulate research supports available outside of the Research Module, including formal supervisory arrangements.**

In its response document, DBS advised that it offers a number of research supports that are available to learners outside the formal parameters of the Research Methods module. These include a range of supports available through the Library Services. Other supports outlined include Writing for Graduate Studies Learner Support Classes and the Postgraduate Business Dissertation Guide Book. The condition is met.

**It is recommended that DBS create a list of assessments that support the development of Level 9 research skills.**

In its response document, stated that it was committed to structuring the Level 9 research skills route across a pathway that formalizes embedded varieties of research methods while developing a full list of assessments that focus on those research skills. The panel notes the response.

In discussion at the site visit, it was evident that individual lecturers/module leaders may assess different aspects of research methods, using different rubrics.

**It is recommended that Research Methods lecturers look at where the content of research methods is assessed in other modules and to advise students accordingly.**

In its response document, DBS advised the panel of its intention to appoint a fulltime Research Methods module lead who would guide and advise on this module but actively contribute to a

research-focused culture and coordinated approach to research for faculty and learners. The response is noted.

**It is recommended that DBS use a common rubric-based method to assess particular types of student work and make these rubrics available to all academic staff on the programme. Review these periodically as a team.**

In its response document, DBS reports that it has adopted and adapted the R010 Level 9 Grading Rubric. The panel noted the response.

Given the importance of the capstone research project the panel was of the view that the emphasis in the assessment of Research Methods would focus on the extent to which methods of research that students were proposing were robust enough and appropriate to enable them to research their chosen topic well.

**It is recommended that DBS focus Research Methods assessment on 'proposal as to methodology' for research projects.**

In its response document, DBS informed the panel that the focus of this module, and the associated assessment, is on a Research Methods Proposal, as distinct from the larger and more onerous Research Proposal, with larger scope and word count. The response is noted.

At the site meeting, the panel learned, in conversation with teaching staff, that DBS had investigated the possibility of having cross-discipline assessment as part of the overall integrated approach to this applied programme and to ensure that there was not over-assessment or duplication of effort on the part of both students and teaching staff.

**It is recommended that DBS consider the introduction of joint (cross-module) assessment across relevant modules.**

In its response document, it was advised that DBS has commenced a pilot cross-disciplinary assessment at undergraduate level on the BA (Hons) in Marketing programme. All lessons from that pilot will be combined with further research on best practise in this area to develop a more robust and lower risk cross-assessment strategy and implemented at MSc level when approved by the Board of Studies. The panel notes the response.

The panel also learned about the variety of assessment methods which were for the proposed programme, including group projects, the creation of finished artefacts and other methods that were appropriate for a Level 9 programme.

**DBS is commended for the variety of assessment techniques used in the programme.**

**Under Criterion 11:** An overview of the support services available to students was provided. Students reported that lecturers and staff were generally responsive to requests for support and information.

**DBS is commended for the non-scheduled commitment to student development on the part of staff.**

**Under Criterion 12:** The panel was satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review. The QAH contains the governance structures for the College and procedures for access, transfer and progression, learner assessments

and supports, and teaching and learning. It was noted that the QAH and associated policies and procedures have been developed in line with QQI statutory guidelines



## Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. It is a condition that DBS include a section in the Programme Document that describes how the programme learning outcomes have been retained.
2. It is a condition that DBS articulate in the Programme Document that the creation of the MSc in Digital Marketing has resulted in the discontinuation of the digital marketing stream of the original programme.
3. It is a condition that DBS confirm with evidence that the programme content, at a higher level, has been reorganised with respect to marketing at Level 9 on the NFQ and has not changed significantly from the existing programme.
4. It is a condition that DBS articulate the graduate attributes and competencies Ensure that these are understood by all programme staff and is underpinned in the content of the programme.
5. It is a condition that DBS either create two discrete modules for research (Capstone)/dissertation options or integrate, under common learning outcomes (MIMLOs) within one module.
6. It is a condition that DBS illustrate in the documentation what research methods have been explicitly embedded in other modules now that the original research methods is a 5 credit module.
7. It is a condition that DBS change the title of the Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Module to include Design Thinking (or similar) and consider adding Commercialisation to the title also.
8. It is a condition that DBS, at the end of the first year of the revised programme, review and revise the programme appropriately to an internal approval process.
9. It is a condition that all module MIMLOs are NFQ-level appropriate.
10. It is a condition that DBS review content of the Research Methods Module and be assured that the quantity of content to be delivered, learned and assessed is realistic.
11. It is a condition that DBS formally articulate research supports available outside of the Research Module, including formal supervisory arrangements.
12. It is a condition that DBS advise prospective learners of the proposed changed and offer additional, relevant assistance in programme choice.

## Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. It is recommended that DBS broaden entry requirements beyond business and marketing experience for recognition of prior learning pre-requisites.
2. It is recommended that DBS ensure that digital marketing content is retained in the programme across all modules.
3. It is recommended that DBS include finance in MIMLOs and assessment rubrics in relevant modules to emphasise the importance of finance in business marketing.
4. It is recommended that DBS consider including marketing (not digital marketing) analytics content (MIMLOs, content, assessment, research) into modules, including research modules or as a discrete module.
5. It is recommended that DBS consider how to include topics that are under-represented in the programme such as Marketing Analytics, Strategic Marketing and Brand Management.
6. It is recommended that DBS create a list of assessments that support the development of Level 9 research skills
7. It is recommended that DBS consider the introduction of joint (cross-module) assessment across relevant modules.

8. It is recommended that DBS focus Research Methods assessment on 'proposal as to methodology' for research projects.
9. It is recommended that Research Methods lecturers look at where the content of research methods is amended in other modules and to advise students accordingly.
10. It is recommended that DBS use a common rubric-based method to assess particular types of student work (e.g. core studies) and make these rubrics available to all academic staff on the programme. Review these periodically as a team.

## Summary of commendations to the provider

1. DBS is commended for team responsiveness to sectoral trends and changes including learner trends.
2. DBS is commended for the publication of the DBS Business Review and graduate initiatives and staff engagement in research and publication
3. DBS is commended for its engagement with the panel as part of the review.
4. DBS is commended for the variety of assessment techniques used in the programme.
5. DBS is commended for the non-scheduled commitment to student development on the part of staff.

## Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

No interests have been declared.

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

Panel chairperson: Michael Hall

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

Signed: 

## 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.

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Part 4: Appendices



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

**Revalidation of the Master of Science in Marketing with the embedded exit award Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing provided by Dublin Business School - 2019**

In its original independent evaluation report dated 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019, the independent panel specified 12 conditions and 10 recommendations regarding the above programmes. Dublin Business School formally responded to the report on 19 August 2019 and has addressed each of the conditions and recommendations to the satisfaction of the independent panel members.

The panel confirmed that it recommended the Master of Science in Marketing programme with the embedded exit award Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing to QQI for revalidation.

QQI is satisfied that each condition made by the independent panel has been met and each recommendation has been taken on board and the recommended action has been taken or is scheduled to be taken.

Signed:

Carmel Kelly - Validation Manager, Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Date: 18 November 2019