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

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	29th April 2019
Date of report	29th August 2019
Is this a re-validation report (Yes/No)	yes

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	BA (Hons) in Marketing
	Award	Bachelor of Arts
	Credit[1]	180
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions[2] OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory

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[1] Specify the credit units because more than one system of units is in use. E.g. 20 (ECTS).

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

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

Evaluators

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

All members of the panel have declared that they are independent of DBS and have no conflict of interest.

Part 1 B

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
DBS Dublin Campus	450	15

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	September 2019
	Date of last intake	September 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	3 per year, September, January, April	
Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)	450	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	Full-time 3 years (6 semesters of 12 weeks) 18 months Part-time 4 years (8 semesters of 12 weeks each) 24 months	
Target learner groups	The programme is aimed at full and part-time learners who meet the minimum entry requirements of 2H5's and 4 O6/H7, to include Mathematics and English or another language (under the new Common Points Scale for Leaving Certificate 2017). Using the old pre-2017 grading scheme, applicants must have obtained a minimum of grade C3 in 2 higher level subjects and a minimum of grade D3 in 4 Ordinary Level subjects (to include Maths, English and a language. Mature Learners who do not meet the minimum entry requirements will be assessed on the basis of age, work experience, general education standard, motivation and commitment to the programme for which they are applying. Mature learners are those who are 23 years of age by January 1st of the year of admission. On completion of this programme, learners will have the marketing expertise to take a strategic view and effectively integrate marketing into decision-making in their company. Learners will have the skills to develop strategic marketing programmes and to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation's marketing.	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full- time and part-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	1. Classroom lectures 2. Case based learning 3. Practical skills sessions 4. Workshops 5. Tutorials 6. Individual and group work 7. Synchronous and asynchronous learning	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for,	Understanding the interplay between the marketing function, and a business's components, and how these are aligned with	

what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	the marketing strategy, is crucial to understanding the fundamentals of marketing a business's brand. In addition, the massive growth of new marketing channels in recent years, has meant that marketers need a strong skill set and knowledge base that is founded in traditional marketing theory but takes account of the digital and omnichannel world consumers experience. As such, learners will gain a foundational understanding of marketing as a discipline within the context of business management. Through this programme they will gain skills in general and specialised marketing practices, teamwork and business practices. This will position learners as dynamic team players in any business environment. The overarching intent of the programme is to create learners with foundational marketing and industry aligned knowledge to support them in their future career ambitions through a broad range of business and marketing modules. The programme is based on three years full-time or four years part-time. In year one, learners will complete seven foundation modules at Level 6 which will introduce them to the world of business and marketing. Key modules include: *Marketing Essentials; IT Essentials; Economic Perspectives; Business Context & Organisation; Maths & Stats for Business.* The learner will also be introduced to the digital world with the module *Digital Content Creation.* The concept of understanding how to learn at third level is captured in year one with the module entitled *Learning.* In year two, the learner will take five mandatory modules at Level 7. These modules will have a definitive marketing focus with modules such as *Marketing Communications* and *Digital Marketing Concepts* amongst others. In year two, learners will choose two modules from six elective modules. In year three (Level 8), learners will study five mandatory modules and again have the choice of two of six electives.
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of an NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in the following areas: Marketing; Digital Marketing; Strategic Marketing; Services Marketing; Other relevant marketing disciplines. In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 8 Honours Degree in Marketing who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant business experience at senior level may also be considered.

Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	1/150 (max)	Classroom sessions	
	1/25	Workshops	
	1/25	Practical Sessions	

	1/50	Online Class	
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.[3]	2.31/150=0.0154:1		

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[3] 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.

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 were outlined. The panel found that the proposed programme learning outcomes have been mapped to the QQI Business Award Standards and satisfy the QQI Awards Standards for the Business Award at Level 8 The BA (Hons) in Marketing is aimed at learners wishing to undertake an undergraduate programme in marketing and also at those wishing to study for a marketing degree on a part-time basis.

Access, Transfer, Progression and Retention and Completion and Progression by Stage
Information provided in the quantitative analysis in the Programme Review Document reviewed by the panel showed an overall average pass rate (total passed enrolled) in 2014/15 of 93.10%, with the pass rate for full-time learners slightly higher (93.29%) than that of part-time learners (92.86%). Overall, 3.83% of learners failed the programme, and 3.07% of learners were non-active.

The overall average pass rate (total passed enrolled) in 2016/17 was 89.84%, with the pass rate for full-time learners higher (94.57%) than that of part-time Learners (84.62%). Overall, 4.07% of learners failed the programme, and 6.10% of learners were non-active.

For the period 2014/15 to 2017/18 data provided showed a global pass rate of 90.90%, with 4.06% of learners failing the programme and 5.04% of learners non-active, and reflective of the data for each year given above, the pass rate for full-time learners (92.57%) is higher than that of part-time learners (88.89%). The academic year pass rate in 2014/15 was slightly higher at 93% compared to subsequent years where the pass rate remained fairly consistent at around 90%.

Withdrawal from the programme

There were 32 (3.17%) withdrawals in total from 2014/15 to 2017/18. There were more part-time Learner withdrawals (20; 2%) than full-time Learner withdrawals (12; 1.2%). The number of withdrawals, whilst small, has increased for part-time Learners from 2014/15 to 2017/18 and decreased for full-time Learners from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

Whilst a reason for withdrawal would be sought from learners by Programme Coordinators it is not always provided, where it was provided reasons for full-time learners were most commonly the programme not suiting and for part-time learners the programme not suiting, a change in employment or moving home (so studying in Dublin in the evening after work was no longer practical).

Analysis of Grades and QQI Award Classifications

The analysis focussed on 2014/15 to 2017/18.

The average mark in 2014/15 for Level 6 modules range from approximately 50% (B6AF102) to 75% (B6LL100). The average mark for Level 7 modules ranged from approximately 45% (B7IS108 and B7MK106) to 65% (B7MK104 and B7MN100). The average mark for Level 8 modules ranged from approximately 55% (B8MK102) to 75% (B8LL102).

Across each level, marks are reasonably well spread. The panel noted that across different years, students tended to perform poorly in the economics modules. This trend was not just in the marketing courses at DBS but in other business courses at the college.

Award classifications by academic year from 2014/15 to 2017/18. The percentage of First-Class Honours awards has steadily increased from 2014/15 to 2016/17 and then decreased back to the 2015/16 level. The percentage of Upper Second-Class Honours awards has varied over the years with no clear trend. The percentage of Lower Second Class Honours awards decreased from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and then subsequently increased. The percentage of pass awards was relatively consistent between 2014/15 and 2017/18 although there was a slight increase in 2016/17 and then a decrease.

Grades comparison with other private providers

The percentage of First-Class Honours awards (31%) is higher than the DBS average of 25% for Level 8 programmes, and that both are higher than the average of First-Class Honours awards for private providers (19%). Similarly, the percentage of Upper Second-Class Honours awards (47%) is higher than the DBS average of 44% for Level 8 programmes and the average of Lower Second Class Honours awards for private providers (42%).

The panel observed that the percentage of First Class Honours awards was considerably higher than the sectoral / higher education average. The percentage of Lower Second Class Honours awards (19%) is correspondingly lower than the average for both the DBS Level 8 programmes (23%) and private provider Level 8 programmes (28%). Similarly, the percentage of Pass awards (3%) is lower than the average for both the DBS Level 8 programmes (8%) and private provider Level 8 programmes (11%).

Attendance by module

The panel noted that the average attendance by module for the programme for the period 2014/15 to 2017/18 is 54.96%. Average attendance for the programme by academic year ranges from a low of 50.40% in 2014/15 to a high of 59.32% in 2016/17. The panel contrasted the attendance figures with the high proportions of First Class Honours. See 7.10 for further commentary on this point.

Destination of graduates

The BA (Hons) 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

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

Criterion 1

The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme		
a)	The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.	
b)	The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.	
c)	The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[4]	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**	
Yes		
Yes		a) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[5]

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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[4] 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.[6]
(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.[7]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

The panel found that, overall, the aims, objectives and rationale for the programme were expressed clearly and were comprehensive and consistent with a Level 8 award. In reviewing the documentation provided, the panel concluded that there was a mismatch between the way the aims and learning outcomes were expressed in the MIMLOS and the level of award. For example, an objective to 'know and understand' a concept or theory is an appropriate description for a Level 6 stage, whereas the panel deemed that more Level-appropriate language should be used to reflect the content and learning outcomes of the modules at Level 7 and 8 (second and third year).

It is a condition that the module aims and MIMLOs are re-visited to ensure that the language used to describe these is NFQ-level appropriate.

In its response document, DBS advised the panel that all module aims and MIMLOs have been revisited, edited, and revised accordingly, to adhere to NFQ level-appropriate language. The changes were outlined in the Updated Appendix 7 Module Documentation reviewed by the panel. The condition has been met.

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.

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

[7] 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.

It was noted that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes for the proposed programme were informed by the QQI Business 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.[8]

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[9] of learner demand for the programme.

    (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[10].

    (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[11]

c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

A comparative analysis of similar programmes by a private provider in Ireland and one programme in the UK was undertaken as part of the review by DBS. The panel noted that while there are similarities in the reviews between all three programmes, the DBS programme focuses on those central marketing principles which assists in the development in the learner's ability to apply the knowledge learned during their degree programme.

Information was received in relation to the stakeholder consultation and the panel was satisfied that a comprehensive consultation was carried out with industry representatives, including employers and industry representative bodies. The panel noted that Faculty staff were actively involved in the process of developing the proposed changes to the programme which includes reviewing course content to reflect current trends such as behavioural economics for instance. Digital marketing is to be embedded in the programme, with services marketing now a mandatory module to reflect

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[8] 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.

[9] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

[11] 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.

current trends, while there is a new module on digital content creation, and one on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, the panel learned. The capstone project, a new addition, is to offer the learner choice of taking an applied project/industry specific project.

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 skills such as web development and creating and monitoring effective marketing plans. 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. These include structured group projects and group presentations where students collaborated on applied projects with an industry focus. The panel concluded that it was not sufficiently clearly set out in the documentation supplied how these work-related skills were developed and assessed.

It is recommended that in support of DBS policy for work-ready graduates, include in the documentation where work-related skills are developed and assessed.

In its response document, DBS advised the panel that a list of work ready skills had been mapped against the modules in the programme and the key work ready skill(s) identified and detailed. The mapping was outlined in document R02 BA Hons in Marketing Work Ready Skills supplied. The recommendation has been met.

The panel concluded that the programme met genuine education and training needs in a sector that continued to provide employment opportunities for graduates.

DBS is commended for the range and breath of its industry links and engagement with large and smaller companies from different sectors.

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[12].

b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.

c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL[13]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.

d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).

e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.

f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
   (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
   (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
   (iii) Has long-lasting significance.

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

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

The 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 Handbooks. This includes information on EU and non-EU entry requirements and information for students with disabilities.

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[12] 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

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

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[14].
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.[15]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

The panel noted that the proposed programme will now be mapped to the QQI Business Award Standard and was further advised that all MIMLOs and MIPLOs have been mapped against the Business Award Standard.

The panel was generally satisfied that the programme curriculum was appropriately structured and fit for purpose. The significant proposed changes to the programme were considered to be appropriate for a programme where it was proposed to have a broad range of topics covered and available to students, rather than have a streamed approach in particular areas such as event management for instance. The proposed addition of the capstone research project had the objective of demonstrating how many different strands of marketing might be brought together, the panel was informed by staff at the site visit.

In conversation with staff, the panel was informed that the modifications to the programme content is to facilitate a broadening of the programme so that learners have the opportunity to have a thorough immersion in marketing, in particular. The panel was informed that this was in response to industry feedback which requires graduates to have a more all-round approach to marketing.

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[14] 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.

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

The panel was informed that staff held informal information sessions with students to appraise them of the pros and cons of taking particular electives. The panel was not entirely satisfied that informal sessions with students were sufficient when advising students who then make choices about particular electives.

It is recommended that more formal structures/procedures be put in place for the electives' information sessions.

In its response document, DBS outlined a comprehensive process for providing information sessions on electives, with several initiatives planned. The recommendation has been met.

The panel concluded that some aspects of the curriculum were not sufficiently or not explicitly covered in the documentation on the proposed programme. These are outlined below.

The panel was of the view that there was not adequate time allocated to cover quantitative research in the programme, whereas qualitative methods were more adequately represented. The panel consider that this was an area that needed consideration, particularly in preparation for the capstone project which, by its nature, required knowledge and understanding of a wide range of research techniques. They further considered that the module 'capstone project' would be renamed as a 'research project' or similar to more clearly reflect its purpose and intention.

It is a condition that DBS amend module content in marketing/research module (including MIMLOs) to more adequately reflect actual qualitative and quantitative content.

In its response document DBS informed that panel that the module had been revised to reflect the qualitative and quantitative content. The information was outlined in the revised Module Content Documentation supplied. The condition has been met.

It is recommended that the title of 'capstone project' module be amended to reflect the core research element that it represents.

In its response document DBS advised that ass this module descriptor is cross-listed with other programmes, it is DBS policy to detail this module descriptor as outlined. The response is noted by the panel.

The panel considered that while the topic of finance was covered implicitly throughout the programme, as teaching staff 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 explicit mention of budgeting, finance and business plans in module content and ensure transparent coordination of this across module and assessments.

In its response document, it was outlined that explicit mention of Budgeting, Finance, and Business plans are now included in modules across the programme as outlined in the module documentation supplied. The recommendation has been 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 (characteristics) and competencies (skills) were described in programme documentation.

It is a condition that DBS re-visit the competencies and attributes and show how each is amended and linked with programme and/or student engagement.

In its response document, DBS advised that a full review of the expected graduate competencies and attributes was conducted and where appropriate these were amended and linked with the programme and with specific modules and/or student engagement. These are in the revised Programme Document. The condition has been 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[16] (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[17] opportunities[18].

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	

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 has a considerable network with industry and employers and they bring this to bear on the programme. Many were practitioners in the field and brought this experience to the programme.

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, grading and student workload and from feedback from the students and graduates met.

DBS is commended for the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of staff.

DBS is commended for the team work and collegiality evident among staff.

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[16] 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.

[17] 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.

[18] 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.

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	

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 Register 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.

DBS is commended on the quality of the services provided by the library, particularly the supports provided to students.

The panel considered that the information technology facilities were of a high standard, with 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.

Criterion 8

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners
a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.
b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.
c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

The 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

There are sound teaching and learning strategies
a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).
d) Learning is monitored/supervised.
e) Individualised guidance, support[19] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

The panel was satisfied that there are sound teaching and learning strategies in place for the programme overall.

The panel noted that in the proposed programme 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 authentic marketing skills, such as the creation of web sites and populating these with relevant content, and that 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 experienced 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.

The panel commends DBS on its use and management of group projects as a teaching and learning strategy.

The panel noted that there was a balance between the use of interactive classroom techniques, 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 from industry 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. The panel considered, however, that it was not sufficiently clear how this work/industry/sectoral-related visits and seminars was formalised in the programme documentation and how this aspect of the learning and teaching strategy was linked to the various programme modules.

It is recommended that DBS embed work/industry/sectoral-related visits, seminars etc into course work to ensure that they link with modules.

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[19] 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.

In its response document, DBS advised that where sectoral, work, and industry related visits and seminars occur they have been linked to the appropriate modules. The documentation on the modules reflect this change. The recommendation has been met.

The panel found that students and graduates appreciated the small class sizes and the support and access to lecturers on the programme, including smaller tutorial groups and additional support via the library on academic writing and in conducting research for the capstone projects or other assignments.

The panel noted from conversations with students and graduates that there was good coordination between lecturers resulting in an assignment work load that was manageable for part-time and full-time students alike.

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*[20]

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.[21]

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.[22]

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.[23]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

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. The panel noted that assessment methods included students researching and presenting group projects, creating artefacts such as web site and web site content as part of continuous assessment on the programme, enabling students to develop research and skills in marketing. The panel was informed that the teaching staff had developed a common method of assessing the group and individual components of the project, including overall assessment of the project but including personal reflection by each student so that there was a fair assessment of each learner's effort. This was shown for example, in the assessment strategy for the module on Digital Marketing Content which was 100% continuous assessment, based on both group work and personal reflection.

At the site visit, the teaching staff informed the panel that the assessment strategy proposed for the programme was moving less towards examinations and more towards continuous assessment of practical, applied knowledge in keeping with the overall aim of the programme.

The panel noted that overall attendance at the formal teaching sessions of modules of the programme is just over 50% on average. They further observed that low attendance needed to be taken together with other measures in assessing learning and student engagement.

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[20] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

[22] 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.

[23] 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 consider correlation of student engagement (e.g. MOODLE in class) in general with modules results, rather than attendance alone.

In its response document, DBS advised that its Student Engagement & Success Unit (SESU) use a variety of mechanisms to track student engagement. It further advised that the SESU team is developing both a student and staff dashboard that will provide an indication to students of patterns of non-engagement and any resulting consequences that may arise. The recommendation has been met.

The panel concluded that it was not clear if students were aware of any consequences that may ensue for non-engagement, or understand which activities were optional and which were not. They panel considered that this was area that needed clarification and dissemination of relevant information so that students were well informed.

It is recommended that DBS have a process of providing information to students to ensure that they are fully aware of supervisory arrangements, optional activities and consequence of non-engagement.

In its response document, DBS advised that students are advised, through a wide variety of channels, prior to arrival, at induction, through the Learner Handbook and at various points throughout the academic year on the optional activities and supports provided by the Student Experience Team as well as the supports available through the Student Engagement & Success Unit. The consequences of non-engagement are clearly communicated through these mechanisms. The panel is satisfied with this response.

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[24].

i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[25] 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	

An overview of the support services available to students was outlined. 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. The panel noted that students indicated that undertaking group assignments provided a basis for good peer support and that lecturers provided support for these projects. Group projects form an integral part of the course structure and facilitates the development of work-related skills.

It is recommended that DBS formalise the process behind 'routine' student supports from academic staff or capture the extent to which staff support students and the value of this to in student retention.

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[24] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).
[25] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

In its response document, DBS advised that it welcomed this recommendation and will endeavour to formalise supports that have become 'routine' but that are not currently credit bearing for students nor part of faculty's 'normal' workload. The response is noted.

The panel also learned, in conversation with students and staff, that students were encouraged, through DBS supported clubs and societies, to organise industry-related events such as seminars, outside of formal class time. Students indicated to the panel that these kinds of activities were helpful in creating links with potential employers, and, at the same time in developing skills in event management, team work, leadership and entrepreneurship, topics which form part of the formal programme.

DBS is commended for the quality of the student experience provided.

Criterion 12

The programme is well managed

a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures.

b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.

c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.

d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.

e) Quality assurance[26] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.

f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.

g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.

h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	

The 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 were no programme-specific quality assurance arrangements required for this programme, the panel noted.

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

Part 2B Overall recommendation to QQI

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 (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[27]
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons[28] for the overall recommendation

The criteria have been met.

The panel carried out a comprehensive review of the Certificate 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 Business Award 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 29th, 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

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

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

- DBS's revised Module Descriptors and Appendices
- The Programme Team's response to the Independent Programme Review Based on the site visit and the revised documentation received, the panel concluded that the BA (Hons) in 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.

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, overall, the aims, objectives and rationale for the programme were expressed clearly and consistent with a Level 8 award. In reviewing the documentation provided, the panel concluded that there was a mismatch between the way the aims and learning outcomes were expressed in the MIMLOS and the level of award.

It is a condition that the module aims and MIMLOs are re-visited to ensure that the language used to describe these is NFQ-level appropriate.

In its response document, DBS advised the panel that all module aims and MIMLOs have been revisited, edited, and revised accordingly, to adhere to NFQ level-appropriate language. The changes were outlined in the Updated Appendix 7 Module Documentation reviewed by the panel. The condition has been met.

Under Criterion 3:
Information was received in relation to the stakeholder consultation and the panel was satisfied that this was comprehensive.

The panel concluded that it was not sufficiently clearly set out in the documentation supplied how work-related skills were developed and assessed.

It is recommended that in support of DBS policy for work-ready graduates, include in the documentation where work-related skills are developed and assessed.

In its response document, DBS advised the panel that a list of work ready skills had been mapped against the modules and the work ready skill(s) identified and detailed. The recommendation has been met.

The panel concluded that the programme met genuine education and training needs in a sector that continued to provide employment opportunities for graduates.

DBS is commended for the range and breath of its industry links and engagement with large and smaller companies from different sectors.

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

Under Criterion 5: The panel noted that the proposed programme will now be mapped to the QQI Business Award Standard and was further advised that all MIMLOs and MIPLOs have been mapped against the Business Award Standard.

The panel was generally satisfied that the programme curriculum was appropriately structured and fit for purpose. The significant proposed changes to the programme were considered to be appropriate. The panel was not entirely satisfied that informal sessions with students were sufficient when advising students who then make choices about particular electives.

It is recommended that more formal structures/procedures be put in place for the electives' information sessions.

In its response document, DBS outlined a comprehensive process for providing information sessions on electives, with several initiatives planned. The recommendation has been met.

The panel concluded that some aspects of the curriculum were not sufficiently or not explicitly covered in the documentation on the proposed programme. There was not adequate time allocated to cover quantitative research in the programme, whereas qualitative methods were more adequately represented. They further considered that the module 'capstone project' would be renamed as a 'research project' or similar to more clearly reflect its purpose and intention.

It is a condition that DBS amend module content in marketing/research module (including MIMLOs) to more adequately reflect actual qualitative and quantitative content.

In its response document DBS informed that panel that the module had been revised to reflect the qualitative and quantitative content. The information was outlined in the revised Module Content Documentation supplied. The condition has been met.

It is recommended that the title of 'capstone project' module be amended to reflect the core research element that it represents.

In its response document DBS advised that ass this module descriptor is cross-listed with other programmes, it is DBS policy to detail this module descriptor as outlined. The response is noted.

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 explicit mention of budgeting, finance and business plans in module content and ensure transparent coordination of this across module and assessments.

In its response document, it was outlined that explicit mention of Budgeting, Finance, and Business plans are now included in modules across the programme as outlined in the module documentation supplied. The recommendation has been met.

From the documentation, 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 (characteristics) and competencies (skills) were described in programme documentation.

It is a condition that DBS re-visit the competencies and attributes and show how each is amended and linked with programme and/or student engagement.

In its response document, DBS advised that a full review of the expected graduate competencies and attributes was conducted and where appropriate these were amended and linked with the

programme and with specific modules and/or student engagement. These are in the revised Programme Document. The condition has been met.

Under Criterion 6: There was evidence that staff were involved in continuous professional development, acting as external examiners and writing articles in business journals. DBS staff have a considerable network with industry and employers and they bring this to bear on the programme.

The panel found that there was evidence of good team work and cooperation among staff and a sense of collegiality.

DBS is commended for the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of staff.

DBS is commended for the team work and collegiality evident among staff.

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,

DBS is commended on the quality of the services provided by the library, particularly the supports provided to students.

The panel noted that the information technology support services had been integrated with other student services.

Under Criterion 8: The panel was satisfied that the learning environment is consistent with the needs of learners.

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 was satisfied that there are sound teaching and learning strategies in place for the programme overall.

The panel concluded that the use of group projects was carefully considered.

The panel commends DBS on its use and management of group projects as a teaching and learning strategy.

The panel considered that it was not sufficiently clear how this work/industry/sectoral-related visits and seminars was formalised in the programme documentation and how this aspect of the learning and teaching strategy was linked to the various programme modules.

It is recommended that DBS embed work/industry/sectoral-related visits, seminars etc into course work to ensure that they link with modules.

In its response document, DBS advised that where sectoral, work, and industry related visits and seminars occur they have been linked to the appropriate modules. The recommendation has been met.

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.

The panel noted that overall attendance at the formal teaching sessions of modules of the programme is just over 50% on average. They further observed that low attendance needed to be taken together with other measures in assessing learning and student engagement.

It is recommended that DBS consider correlation of student engagement (e.g. MOODLE in class) in general with modules results, rather than attendance alone.

In its response document, DBS advised that its Student Engagement & Success Unit (SESU) use a variety of mechanisms to track student engagement. The recommendation has been met.

The panel concluded that it was not clear if students were aware of any consequences that may ensue for non-engagement, or understand which activities were optional and which were not.

It is recommended that DBS have a process of providing information to students to ensure that they are fully aware of supervisory arrangements, optional activities and consequence of non-engagement.

In its response document, DBS advised that students are advised, through a wide variety of channels, on the optional activities and supports provided. The consequences of non-engagement are clearly communicated through these mechanisms. The panel is satisfied with this response.

Under Criterion 11: An overview of the support services available to students was outlined. 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.

It is recommended that DBS formalise the process behind 'routine' student supports from academic staff or capture the extent to which staff support students and the value of this to in student retention.

In its response document, DBS advised that it welcomed this recommendation and will endeavour to formalise supports that have become 'routine' but that are not currently credit bearing for students nor part of faculty's 'normal' workload. The response is noted.

DBS is commended for the quality of the student experience provided.

Under Criterion 12: The panel was satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. It is a condition that the module aims and MIMLOs are re-visited to ensure that the language used to describe these is NFQ-level appropriate.
2. It is a condition that DBS amend module content in marketing/research module (including MIMLOs) to reflect actual qualitative and quantitative content.
3. It is a condition that DBS re-visit the competencies and attributes and show how each is amended and linked with programme and/or student engagement.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. It is recommended that more formal structures/procedures be put in place for the electives' information sessions.
2. It is recommended that in support of DBS policy for work-ready graduates, include in the documentation where work-related skills are developed and assessed.
3. It is recommended that DBS embed work/industry/sectoral-related visits, seminars etc into course work to ensure that they link with modules.
4. It is recommended that the title of 'capstone project' be amended to reflect the core research element.
5. It is recommended that DBS Include explicit mention of budgeting, finance and business plans in module content and ensure transparent coordination of this across module and assessments.
6. It is recommended that DBS consider correlation of student engagement (e.g. MOODLE in class) in general with modules results, rather than attendance alone.
7. It is recommended that DBS have a process of providing information to students to ensure that they are fully aware of supervisory arrangements, optional activities and consequence of non-engagement.
8. It is recommended that DBS formalise the process behind 'routine' student supports from academic staff or capture the extent to which staff support students and the value of this to in student retention.

Summary of commendations to the provider

1. DBS is commended for the range and breath of its Industry links and engagement with large and smaller companies from different sectors.
2. DBS is commended for the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of staff.
3. DBS is commended for the team work and collegiality evident among staff.
4. DBS is commended on the quality of the services provided by the library, particularly support provided to students.
5. DBS is commended on its use and management of group projects as a teaching and learning strategy.
6. DBS is commended for the quality of the student experience provided.

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: 29th August 2019

Signed: Michael Hall

Disclaimer

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QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Revalidation of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing provided by Dublin Business School - 2019

In its original independent evaluation report dated 11th June 2019, the independent panel specified 3 conditions and 8 recommendations regarding the above programme. 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 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing programme 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