

**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	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	08 July 2019
Date of report	29 August 2019
Is this a re-validation report (Yes/No)	Yes

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Master of Science in Management Practice
	Award	Master of Science
	Credit¹	90
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions² OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

Embedded programme³	Title	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice
	Award	Postgraduate Diploma in Science

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.

³ Copy this panel for each embedded programme.

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

Module⁴	Title	N/a
	Award	N/a
	Credit	N/a
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	N/a

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	Role	Principal occupation
David Denieffe	Chair	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, Institute of Technology, Carlow
Dr Jean Cushen	Academic in Subject area	Lecturer and Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning with the Business School at NUI, Maynooth
Dr Simon Stephens	Academic in Subject area	Senior Lecturer, School of Business, Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Daniel Good	Professional/ Employer Representative	Independent Consultant (assisting companies to find more flexible ways of working and to adapt to change)
Barbara Mangan	Professional/ Employer Representative	Human Resources Consultant
Nina Bianca Sayson	Learner representative on the panel	Current MSc in Marketing (full time) student, National College of Ireland
Mary Doyle	Secretary	Independent Academic QA Consultant

⁴ A module leading to a QQI award is a special case of an embedded programme. Discrete modules are only validated on a stand-alone basis if they are to lead to a QQI award.

Part 1 B

Master of Science in Management Practice

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners(<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
DBS: Dublin Campus	100	10

Enrolment interval (<i>normally 5 years</i>)	Date of first intake	September 2019
	Date of last intake	August 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	Two intakes (September and January)	
Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)	100	
Programme duration (<u>months</u> from start to completion)	Full-time: 1 year/12 months (3 semesters of 12 weeks each) Part-time: 2 years/24 months (5 semesters of 12 weeks each)	
Target learner groups	<p>This programme is aimed at learners with a second class second division (2.2) honours bachelor degree in any subject area who wish to specialise in the field of management with a view to entering industry or moving to a management level. It will also be of interest to learners who have completed their undergraduate degree in business and wish to specialise in this area. An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA will also be considered for entry.</p> <p>On completion of this programme, learners will have the management skills necessary to move into various management roles in industry. They will gain an understanding of key management issues, how to apply innovative management processes and techniques, and how to critically evaluate and deploy a range of management tools and models in strategic decision-making in an organisation.</p> <p>Learners will also gain competencies in general management practices. Through the assignments and projects as part of the assessment criteria, learners will develop independent research and problem-solving skills which will be valuable in a variety of contexts in the workplace.</p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and Part-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case-based learning • Practical skills workshops • Tutorials • Classroom lectures • Guest Lectures delivered by practitioners • Student Presentations 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and Group Work • Online synchronous and asynchronous classes 	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	<p>Management is no longer the purview of the few at the top of an organisation. With organisations increasingly becoming flatter and adopting a more matrix structure, the ability to manage has become a key attribute at all levels of an organisation. This Master of Science in Management Practice has been developed with the aim of providing learners with the knowledge, skills and research capability to critically analyse, implement and evaluate management concepts and techniques in order to generate valuable insights at all levels of the organisation, thereby assisting with strategic business decisions and increasing productivity, profitability and organisational value.</p> <p>This is an interdisciplinary programme that focuses on business management and is, therefore, designed to appeal to graduates seeking to gain exposure to the knowledge, skills and techniques that will allow them to successfully manage in any applied professional business context. The programme is constructed as a one year full-time or two year part-time programme of 90 ECTS which is comprised of ten taught modules of 65 ECTS and a Dissertation or Applied Research Project of 25 ECTS, leading to an award of a Master of Science in Management Practice.</p>	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	<p>Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Human Resource Management • Economics and/or Finance • Management • Marketing • ICT • Project Management • Research Methods (quantitative and qualitative) <p>In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 8 honours degrees in the above disciplines, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience may also be considered.</p>	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	Staff to learner ratio	Learning activity type
	1/50	Classroom sessions
	1/25	Workshops
	1/25	Practical sessions
	1/50	Online Class (live)
	1/25	Online Tutorial (interactive)
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio. ⁵	1.02/50 = 0.02	

⁵ 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.

Programmes being replaced by the Master of Science in Management Practice

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)			Arrangement for enrolled learners	Date when replaced programme is planned to cease completely
Code	Title	Last enrolment date	Indicate whether "Teach out" or "Transfer to replacement programme"	
PG19603	Master of Science in Management Practice	August 2019	Transfer to replacement programme	September 2019

Embedded programme⁶ - Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

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

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	September 2019
	Date of last intake	August 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	Two intakes (September and January)	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	100	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	Full-time: 1 year/9 months (2 semesters of 12 weeks each) Part-time: 2 years/24 months (4 semesters of 12 weeks each)	
Target learner groups	<p>This programme is aimed at learners with a second class second division (2.2) honours bachelor degree in any subject area who wish to specialise in the field of management with a view to entering industry or moving to a management level. It will also be of interest to learners who have completed their undergraduate degree in business and wish to specialise in this area. An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA will also be considered for entry.</p> <p>On completion of this programme, learners will have the management skills necessary to move into various management roles in industry. They will gain an understanding of key management issues, how to apply innovative management processes and techniques, and how to critically evaluate and deploy a range of</p>	

⁶This only needs to be completed where embedded programmes may be offered independently of the principal programme. Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes proposed to lead to QQI awards.

	<p>management tools and models in strategic decision-making in an organisation.</p> <p>Learners will also gain competencies in general management practices. Through the assignments and projects as part of the assessment criteria, learners will develop independent research and problem-solving skills which will be valuable in a variety of contexts in the workplace.</p>
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and Part-time
The teaching and learning modalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case-based learning • Practical skills workshops • Tutorials • Classroom lectures • Guest Lectures delivered by practitioners • Student Presentations • Individual and Group Work • Online synchronous and asynchronous classes
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	<p>Management is no longer the purview of the few at the top of an organisation. With organisations increasingly becoming flatter and adopting a more matrix structure, the ability to manage has become a key attribute at all levels of an organisation. This Master of Science in Management Practice has been developed with the aim of providing learners with the knowledge, skills and research capability to critically analyse, implement and evaluate management concepts and techniques in order to generate valuable insights at all levels of the organisation, thereby assisting with strategic business decisions and increasing productivity, profitability and organisational value.</p> <p>This is an embedded interdisciplinary programme that focuses on business management and is, therefore, designed to appeal to graduates seeking to gain exposure to the knowledge, skills and techniques that will allow them to successfully manage in any applied professional business context. The programme is constructed as a one year full-time or two year part-time programme of nine taught modules of 60 ECTS. The duration of the Postgraduate Diploma is a two twelve-week semesters in full-time mode and four twelve-week semesters part-time.</p>
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	<p>Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Business • Human Resource Management • Economics and/or Finance • Management • Marketing • ICT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management • Research Methods (quantitative and qualitative) <p>In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 8 honours degrees in the above disciplines, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience may also be considered.</p>	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	Staff to learner ratio	Learning activity type
	1/50	Classroom sessions
	1/25	Workshops
	1/25	Practical sessions
	1/50	Online Class (live)
	1/25	Online Tutorial (interactive)
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.	1.02/50 = 0.02	

Programmes being replaced by the Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)			Arrangement for enrolled learners	Date when replaced programme is planned to cease completely
Code	Title	Last enrolment date	Indicate whether "Teach out" or "Transfer to replacement programme"	
N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a

Other noteworthy features of the application

The panel evaluated the observations, comments and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders and these were duly factored into the review process. Internal stakeholders consisted of students and staff (academic, support and administrative).

In the review and design of the Master of Science in Management Practice for re-validation, the Programme Team, carried out consultations on the programme design and module content with relevant employers and a range of key industry stakeholders and utilised strategic as well as academic sources and comparator analysis. They have engaged with the professional bodies as well as within industry to ensure the programme is appropriate for graduates who wish to pursue a variety of paths. In addition, an extensive consultation with graduates of the programme was also carried out for the review.

The panel found that the consultation process had been comprehensive and it was concluded that the proposed programmes were fit for purpose. In general, the panel found that the documents provided were well structured, clear in the presentation of facts and easy to read.

A summary and quantitative analysis of the recruitment, learner enrolment, application and performance statistics for the existing programme over the past five years was provided for the

existing programme covering the areas specified in the Programme Review Manual 2016/2017 Section 3. At the time of the review, enrolments and applications were at their highest level since 2014.

However, in terms of benchmarking grades and QQI Award Classifications the panel concluded that the analysis provided for the programme for review was not comprehensive. The panel now notes that QQI has recently produced a draft report on award classification distributions across higher education institutions and access to this will allow DBS to better address this piece of analysis going forward.

Commentary was provided on the teaching strategy, the use of guest speakers, the use of Moodle as a virtual learning environment and the current and planned developments for the blended learning elements of the programme.

Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners were also discussed. A tour, including a short presentation of the facilities and services, was provided, and the panel concluded that the learning environment was consistent with the needs of the learners.

The panel explored the staffing of the programme and the various roles held/ performed by staff engaging with learners on the programme, across the College.

Evidentiary documentation of the implementation of the programme quality assurance arrangements were provided for the panel in the documentation pack. The panel concluded that the quality assurance arrangements applied to the programmes are generally effective, however, the College needs to ensure that it is taking all the steps to close the quality assurance loop and address the issues identified through the application of the quality assurance feedback processes.

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

N/a

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

N/a

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. ⁷	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

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 these programmes – up to an including level 9 taught programmes. It was noted that DBS has procedures in place for access, transfer and progression.

DBS has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI.

DBS participated in the Pilot Re-Engagement process for re-approval of QA procedures with QQI in 2017/18, and is currently completing its full Re-Engagement process with QQI. Process, policies and procedures were reviewed as part of the re-engagement application and self-evaluation process.

Within the programme documentation provided, DBS 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).

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.	

⁷This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

<p>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</p> <p>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</p> <p>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p> <p>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought. (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. <p>g) For each programme and embedded programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.⁸ (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards. <p>h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</p> <p>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</p> <p>For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.⁹</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel found that the aims, objectives and rationale for the programmes were expressed clearly in the context of the QQI award(s) being sought.

It was noted that the 60 ECTS credit Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice will be available to learners who have successfully completed the taught modules but are prevented from progressing with their studies, or do not wish to. In fact, 65 credits are to be delivered in the first two semesters. The introduction of this embedded exit award is a positive development.

The MIPOs were aligned to the QQI Science and Business Award Standards (as advised by QQI). The programme document states that science stem and award standards have been chosen as this programme focuses on techniques and applied practices with an analytical focus in the area of management practice. Given the analytical, technical and applied nature of this programme, therefore, it was felt that the Science Awards Standards are the most appropriate.

⁸Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

⁹Not 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 concluded that the MIPLOs and MIMLOs have been clearly outlined and are appropriate to the level of the award. **MIMLOs and/or assessment strategy/mechanism need to be reviewed to ensure that they are constructively aligned.**

An Assessment Strategy for the Programme, which would require the full programme team coming together to schedule their individual assessment requirements, is essential to provide clarity. The output should include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.

The programme title is also considered appropriate.

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.¹⁰
- 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 evidence¹¹ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant¹².
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.¹³
- 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	Master of Science in Management Practice

¹⁰Awards 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.

¹¹ This might be predictive or indirect.

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

¹³There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

Overall, the programme seems to meet a current need in Irish society. The modules seem very relevant to those wishing to commence or enhance their career in management, and the overall award should be of great value to learners. Learners stated that they felt that the programme title and the module mix would give them a competitive edge. They considered the leadership, strategic management and use of technology content to be very important to support future career objectives (based on previous experience), and felt that the programme would facilitate their becoming a manager.

The learner, employment-related, and educational demands are evidenced within the programme documentation. The programme appears to be well informed by research on the needs of relevant stakeholders, seems to address a need within the market for such courses, which should offer graduates good employment opportunities. Within the programme documentation, the graduate destination surveys indicate positive employment outcomes within 6 months of course completion.

A review process appears to be in place to keep the course current and up-to-date. The programme appears to be well-informed by research on the needs of relevant stakeholders and stakeholders' opinions have been sought and commented on, and reflected in the modifications proposed to the programme. Where applicable suggestions are mostly taken on board. The mapping of the programme to the MIPLOs of national and international comparable programmes is comprehensive, as there are a number of similar programmes on offer in Ireland and abroad.

The programme enrolment data provided appears to indicate an over-reliance on international learners. The College needs to ensure the future proofing of the programme to bolster against any international or economic forces which could adversely impact the programme's future viability, and to meet its objectives in attracting domestic learners and/or providing a programme in part-time mode.

The QQI award standards for Science have been used in reviewing the programme, and use of this standard is explained and motivated. The MIPLOs for the embedded Postgraduate Diploma programme are also clear.

All modules MIMLOs support the L9-ness of the MSc programme, and its embedded award. This is particularly relevant in the context of the enrolment of learners from cognate and non-cognate programmes.

The embedding of soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module was recognised as an institutional decision, but **the panel recommended that the impact on student workload (with assignments, exams, and workshops) needs to be considered in the context of additional, mandatory, non-credit bearing activities.**

The panel recommended that the programme team revise and develop the Assessment Strategy required for the programme, to clarify (as a group) how the MIMLOs identified in the document

are constructively aligned to their assessment mechanisms, and ensure that what is contained in each of the module descriptors is what's intended for assessment of the individual modules.

Criterion 4

The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

- a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied¹⁴.
- 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 (CEFRL¹⁵) 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	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

¹⁴ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

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

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel were of the opinion that the programme information provided to learners is appropriate, and the MIPLOs and title convey an accurate reflection of the programme, its content and the outcomes for graduates.

The student handbook gives students information regarding the course but, following discussion with the students and graduates, **the panel recommended that more guidance is provided for applicants and enrolled learners in relation to the possible careers which are available to programme graduates and where to pitch themselves within the Irish labour market (based on their qualification)**. This is considered particularly important for the international learners enrolled on the programme who may be unfamiliar with seeking employment in Ireland – and information on the career supports provided within the college.

The access, transfer, progression, RPL, and entry requirements are documented and appropriate. The impact of admitting learners, from both cognate and non-cognate fields, and from different nationalities, is managed by the programme team within the classroom, through the programme/module design, and through additional supports provided for learners through the DBS Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU).

Academic Staff indicated that they are cognisant of the pedagogical aspect of dealing with a class of predominantly international learners, and the in-class experience resulting from this. Teaching and assessment is adjusted to facilitate these learners, and will also be monitored to support larger class-groups if/as required. In addition, to particularly support learners whose first language was not English, the basics for each topic are made available to learners on Moodle in advance of their lectures, to support learners engaging with class material. The college also uses Lecture Capture to record lectures in real-time and place them on Moodle for learners to revisit and reflect on their content.

The panel were advised that when recruiting staff, the Faculty manager identifies new staff to the academic appointments sub-committee. The establishment and role of this committee was particularly commended in terms of assuring that sufficient qualified and capable programme staff are available to implement the programme as planned. The committee identifies the requirements for each newly appointed member of staff to be supported through their orientation at the College, and their CPD requirements. **The planned development of a teaching and learning qualification, and CPD for teaching, learning and assessment enhancement, for staff is also to be welcomed.**

DBS currently do not undertake of analysis of learner performance against entry qualifications. The panel noted that with the planned introduction of a new Student Information System in November 2019 this type of analysis will be possible and should be undertaken for the 2018/19 intake onwards. **The panel recommended that analysis of learner performance versus their entry profile should be conducted particularly, as in this programme's case, where non-cognate, non-standard and RPL admissions are permitted.**

Progression opportunities for programme graduates seem good and employment prospects are positive.

The process for a learner to avail of the (60 ECTS) Postgraduate Diploma exit award is also a positive development. The programme learners and graduates particularly praised the existence of the exit award option which provided an opportunity for learners to recognise their efforts, even/especially if not completing the full award.

Criterion 5

The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <i>programme</i> 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 principles¹⁶. 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.¹⁷ 	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel was generally satisfied that the programmes and their modules were appropriately structured and scheduled. In general, the module descriptors are well written and fit for purpose,

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

however there are some modules for which overall constructive alignment needs to be reconsidered and clarity of assessment is required.

The programme team outlined how the module mix was determined, and how the programme was reviewed and developed. The rationale for the inclusion of new modules, and the stakeholder engagement which informed their content and that of the revised modules, was discussed with the programme team.

The panel commended the lecturer commitment to the programme and its learners, and the technical expertise of the team. The support of learners and accessibility of the programme staff to learners was evident in the documentation, in the engagement with both the staff and the learners at the panel.

The module descriptors provide clear information regarding the syllabus and learning outcomes. **The panel were concerned that the assessment for many of the modules did not reflect what was actually proposed by the programme team for the individual modules, and required that these needed to be aligned across the programme document, and the Programme Schedule updated accordingly.**

The learner's confirmed that the programme has provided them with a strong theoretical base, supported by though real world examples. International examples and case studies are referenced within modules. The programme team utilises e-resources, and mechanism such as lecture capture, to support further reflection by learners post-delivery.

Cultural matters are addressed throughout each of the modules in terms in in-class discussions and through assessment groups, dynamics etc. To support international learner engagement, the programme team enforce group-work as this is something that isn't necessarily experienced in other countries. In their meeting, learners indicated that, in working with teams, the diversity of the group proved to be a (n ultimately positive) challenge in terms of individual's ability and knowledge. Other learners intentionally chose a disparate group to support their learning, and all did extensive work. In some instances, 'competitive' learners had to adapt to be an effective team member.

The panel commended the College's plan for staff training to be developed and provided to support teaching, learning and assessment objectives. This would serve to support staff in module design, delivery and assessment. The panel noted that DBS have recently appointed a Learning Technologist and an Instructional Designer to support lecturers' teaching and learning strategies.

The embedding of soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module was recognised as an institutional decision but **the panel recommended that the impact on student workload needs to be considered, and should be part of the development of the teaching and learning strategy.**

More samples of the continuous assessment material would be welcomed, to better delineate individual vs. group assessments as well as give an impression of individual projects – some sample titles would also be insightful.

Clarity around the strategy for continuous assessment for the programme is required - the assessment schedule for the programme needed to be re-developed to accurately identify the learner assessment burden. In managing learner assessment workload, and supporting programme cohesiveness, there seemed to be a missed opportunity with regard to implementing integrated

assessments within the blocks, and across modules, particularly in the context of the Management Practice Seminars.

The panel required that the full programme team come together to develop an Assessment Strategy for the Programme, which would incorporate all modules, their CA deadlines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. to facilitate management of the learner workload. The output of this activity should also include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.

The current workload for the programme is challenging. The programme is currently structured to incorporate 30 ECTS in semester 1. In addition, learners are also required to undertake the Writing for Graduate Studies workshop in Semester 1. This is a 2 hour per week class (over 12 weeks,) which is mandatory for International students but available to all learners, which covers ethics, referencing, academic impropriety and plagiarism. (No information is available for participation of learners of this programme.) Semester 2 attracts 35 ECTS, plus any repeats the learner might have to complete. The timing of the Research Methods modules was discussed with respect to scheduling and learner workload.

As a programme which is open to non-cognate undergraduates, the ability of non-cognate learners engaging with some of the modules was discussed with the programme team, particularly in relation to the use of Jargon and professional terms that learners may be unfamiliar with. The programme team stated that they adjust learning material and provide tutorial support for learners in relation to this issue.

The panel queried where topics such as ethics are covered –this is covered from different aspects in many of the modules, on the basis that consideration of ethics in business is important, as is development of the competence to become an ethical professional in future employment/roles.

All modules were included as 100% CA in the original Assignment Schedule (proposed) – Appendix n of the programme document. **This needed to be amended as appropriate, and compared to the Module Descriptors and Programme Schedules to ensure that the assessment breakdown details in all documents are consistent, and correct.**

Some module-related specific recommendations from the panel included the following:

- ***Information Systems and Project Management:*** The panel recommended that the programme team review this module to ensure its cohesiveness as a combined module.
- ***Management Practice Seminars module:*** The content of the assessment should include a reflection of the guest lecture content in relation to the academic content (skills and competencies) that students are exposed to in the other modules of the programme, to support the authenticity of the module and the cohesiveness of the programme overall.
- The specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project*, while provided, should be more detailed in the document and, in the absence of the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project Handbook* being provided, the individual responsibilities outlined.

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 staff¹⁸ (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 development¹⁹ opportunities²⁰.
- 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	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The necessary qualification profile for academic staff is identified within the modules, and is appropriate.

Specifications for programme staffing requirements seem appropriate and realistic, and the school stated that they currently have 108 members of staff (comprised of full-time and part-time staff).

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

The staff CVs provided show excellent qualifications, up-to-date skills, and experience to provide such a programme, with staff also showing plenty of experience in lecturing. The panel queried the level of teaching and learning, and professional development of the team.

While the staff scholarship scheme was outlined in the documentation, and the panel was advised that there are two holders of doctoral level qualifications delivering the programme, and the course director is currently undertaking her PhD, there is little evidence of staff engagement with research. The panel were advised that the publication of the next issue of the in-house DBS Journal is due shortly and both college staff and learners contribute papers to this publication.

The opportunity to focus on CPD and the development of teaching and learning-related qualifications for the programme team, within the College, was discussed. This proposal would support staff in the engagement with programme management, the teaching and learning strategy, the assessment strategy and the organisation of both learner and staff workload.

A learning and teaching strategy review has taken place using the professional development framework (for both personal and professional development of staff). There is a significant uptake of Teaching and Learning Certification, and participants have even included some marketing staff for professional development purposes, and to give them an insight into the academic programmes when promoting the programme. The College has also recently appointed a Learning Technologist and Instructional designer to facilitate staff in the delivery of college programme.

The specific contract arrangement (hours and teaching requirements) of academic staff were outlined for the panel. Specific contractual arrangements are in place to facilitate academic staff supervising learners' projects. [Reference Special Consideration of Programme Review]. The specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project* were outlined to the panel, and additional supports provided within the college, but **the Dissertation/Applied Research Project Handbook was not with the programme documentation provided for the programme.**

The establishment and role of the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC) was commended in terms of assuring that sufficient qualified and capable programme staff are available to implement the programme as planned. The committee also identifies the requirements for each newly appointed member of staff to be supported through their orientation and professional development at the College. The change to allow for recruitment of staff holding a Level 8 qualification, with relevant experience, had been proposed by this committee and the ongoing success of this initiative will be monitored by the AASC.

In terms of the guest lecturers who form an integral part of programme delivery – the course director/module leader for the Management Practice Seminar Series indicated that guest lecturers are given a specific topic to speak to. The Management Practice Seminar Series module leader attends each lecture to support its delivery and assessment. In relation to this module, **the panel recommended that the content of the assessment should include a reflection of the guest lecture content in relation to the academic content (skills and competencies) that students are exposed to in the other modules of the programme, to support the authenticity of the module and the cohesiveness of the programme overall.**

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	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel noted that a five year plan had been provided for the programme under review.

From the documentation provided, there appears to be sufficient and appropriate physical resources available within DBS to support delivery of the programme. An overview of the library facilities in the Aungier Street Campus, and a tour of some of the open meeting and study areas in Castle House, which facilitate group work and peer study-support space, was undertaken.

The panel were advised of the library policy that allocates resourcing per learner ratios. This means that where modules are delivered cross-programme, they are adequately resourced– additional library material is available to support learning and assessment.

To support their course work, each learner is provided with their own cloud space, and specific software availability is provided here.

In the meeting with learners and graduates there were no resource issues identified, and learners indicated their satisfaction with library, IT, online learning and support facilities.

Criterion 8

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners	
<p>a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.</p> <p>c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

From the documentation provided, support systems for learners sound exemplary, and generally appear to be sufficient to support delivery of the programme and meet learner needs. The programme team is strong and supportive. DBS is a member of Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), and avails of ICOS training for all student experience team members, peer mentors and student representatives.

DBS complies with QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. Learner Induction is provided over a full week, with several events and presentations scheduled about the course and useful contacts, and the services and supports available. Example of available learner supports, particularly for learners from an international point of view, identified by the college include:

- Learner supports pre arrival, including accommodation sourcing
- Acculturation supports for international learners once in DBS are also provided.
- Peer mentors (learners recruited across years, programme, and domiciliary origins)
- Theme weeks – e.g. welfare week; international week
- There are prayer rooms; no exams scheduled during Ramadan, where possible; what to do for those who do not go home for Christmas; loneliness; early alert/support system

- Safe Talk/Assist programme – has been completed by all from facing staff, SU officers and Peer Mentors.
- There is no counsellor on-site (to minimise waiting time). Counselling is provided, with learners guaranteed an appointment within 72 hours – the first 3 sessions are free, with the cost of subsequent sessions supplemented by DBS.
- Academic supports are also provided by SESU Unit – writing for graduate studies; information and digital literacy.

The panel noted that a five-year plan had been provided for the programme under review. The panel also noted the recent update of the DBS strategic plan, and were advised that the development of eLearning/blended learning programmes is a strategic objective of the College.

A description of the learning environment in place to support students was provided to the panel. A tour of the physical facilities in the Aungier Street and Castle House Campuses was undertaken.

Academic writing supports are provided through Library orientation sessions (including an introduction to the college's anti-plagiarism software), Library classes – which cover reference styles and practice; plagiarism awareness; and research methods. Library staff support the delivery of the *Research Methods* module, and provide further supports as one to one sessions in the library. Learners confirmed that the library facilities meet their needs, and they had completed several library courses to support the completion of their dissertation.

The workload created by the implementation of the assessment strategy, for both lecturers and students, was highlighted within the sessions with the panel. An Assessment Strategy for the Programme, which would require the full programme team coming together to schedule their individual assessment requirements, to incorporate all modules, CA deadlines, group project guidelines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. is essential to facilitate management of the learner workload. This Strategy should also provide clarity regarding word counts (versus ECTS), and reference/citation system used in the programme. The output should include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.

The embedding of soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module was recognised by the panel as an institutional decision, but the impact on student workload – with assignments, exams, and workshops needs to be considered.

In addition, **the panel recommended that the programme team consider clarifying the re-assessment strategy for the modules in the programme document into clearly articulated and standard format to ensure consistency.**

The specifics for supervision for the *Applied Research Project* were outlined to the panel and provided in the programme document, however, the Learner Dissertation/Applied Project Handbook indicating the individual responsibilities outlined was not provided in the programme documentation pack.

The panel noted that additional classes (Workshops and tutorials) are held to support learners' engagement with learning material during the academic year, in particular the Writing for Graduate Studies – a 2 hour per week mandatory class (over 12 weeks), which is mandatory for international learners but available to all, which covers ethics, referencing, academic impropriety and plagiarism. In addition, learners are required to undertake a series of workshops for career and employment

support. **The impact of such non-credit bearing requirements on the learners' workload needs to be considered. A workshop list/schedule of available resources would be beneficial for the learners to support their academic schedule planning, and should be considered as part of the developing teaching and learning and assessment strategies.**

The development of the (60 ECTS) exit award – the Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice – to provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of learners, even/especially if not completing the full award is a positive development for learners and graduates.

Criterion 9

There are sound teaching and learning strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, support²¹ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme. 	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The College has developed a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy which was provided in the documentation pack for the panel, and appropriate extracts and references were included in the programme documentation. The purpose of this strategy was identified as to support the enhancement of learning and teaching at DBS by establishing a framework, aligned with the overall College Strategy and the Professional Development Framework.

The panel identified the need for the programme specific Assessment Strategy, which would require the full programme team coming together to schedule their individual assessment requirements, to incorporate all modules, CA deadlines, group project guidelines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. is essential to facilitate management of the learner workload. This Strategy should also provide clarity regarding word counts (versus ECTS) in the programme. Its output

²¹ 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.

should include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.

The module descriptors provide clear information regarding the syllabus and learning outcomes, and the teaching and learning strategies. The programme team indicated that they are cognisant of the pedagogical aspect of dealing with a class of predominantly international learners, and the in-class experience resulting from this, and teaching is adjusted to facilitate these learners. It was stated that the programme team is well-practiced in supporting a diverse collection of learners within the programme through the use of tutorial and practice time within lectures and practically-focused videos (e.g. YouTube). The fact that the basics for each topic are prepared and made available to learners on Moodle in advance of their lectures, to support their engaging with class material, was welcomed by the panel. There is a strong culture of collaborative learning and supportive practice within the programme team. The panel recommended that the module descriptors are reviewed to ensure that the complexities of engaging an international cohort are explicitly stated rather than be implicit in individual lecturer practice and expertise.

In addition, the individual module descriptors should be updated to appropriately reflect the eLearning content, and use of online learning components – this should not be a generic text, but specifically tailored to each module.

The panel commended the plan to develop certified and CPD training to support teaching and learning objectives for staff. This development will be supported by the new Learning Technologist and Instructional Designer, and will also support guest/expert lecturers' engagement with and provision of relevant/necessary programme material.

The panel recommended that the impact on learner workload of embedding academic and soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module – with assignments, exams, and workshops - needs to be considered.

The specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project*, while provided, should be more detailed in the programme document, and the Dissertation/Applied Research Project Handbook provided (to identify individual responsibilities outlined). This would help to confirm the Special Consideration of the programme review in relation to the availability of staff to support supervision in the instance of a growing intake.

The strategy for the Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU) is also aligned with the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The establishment of the SESU, as a multidisciplinary intervention to support non-engaging students, was considered a very positive move by DBS to support learner engagement, retention and progression.

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*²²
- b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.

²² See the section on transitional arrangements.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.²⁵ 	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel was advised that all assessment for the programmes conforms to the DBS Assessment Regulations which are informed by QQI's Assessment and Standards, revised 2013, and QQI's Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining, revised February 2015.

While the programme teaching and learning strategy is briefly articulated in 5.6 of the programme document. Assessment seems appropriate at individual module level, although there is clarity required in relation to some of the assessment mechanisms and their value. Sample assessment materials are available for some modules, however, the **panel stated that it would have liked to see samples of each type of assessment for the modules, and some sample assessments need more detail. There is little detail on the mention of the overall programme assessment strategy.**

An Assessment Strategy for the programme, which would require the full programme team coming together to schedule their individual assessment requirements, to incorporate all modules, CA deadlines, regulations for individual vs group assessment, group project guidelines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. is essential to facilitate management of the learner workload. This Strategy should also provide clarity regarding word counts (versus ECTS) in the programme. In re-considering the assessment, the constructive alignment of MIMLOS versus assessment mechanisms is also required. Its output should include an assessment schedule to be provided to

²³ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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).

learners at commencement of the semester/year, to ensure that learner workload is appropriately managed.

In addition, **the panel recommended that the programme team considers clarifying the re-assessment strategy for each of the modules in the programme document into clearly articulated and standard format to ensure consistency.** They need not be the same for each module. The re-assessment strategy should be reflected in the programme assessment strategy.

In relation to groupwork, the panel was advised that group size is normally 3/4 members, dependant on class size. There is an individual contribution report which must be agreed by all of the group participants (they are advised to schedule meetings, and minute these as per business practice). These are meeting records mandatory and must be included as appendix of report.

During their meeting, the learners and graduate met stated that they appreciated that for some it was a challenge to engage in group work, and to work effectively with other nationalities and personalities. However, in practice, this process really developed their skills in how to work with a team and how to use leadership skills to motivate a team and achieve objectives.

The programme team stated that there is little overlap between assessment components – integrated assessment is not a feature of the programme. The panel considered that there may be opportunities in the programme to have integrated and serial assessments between modules, e.g. progressing projects from one block to another for additional augmentation and further, deepen learning. **Particularly in the context of the *Management Lecture Practice Seminars* module, the content of the assessment should include a reflection of the guest lecture content in relation to the academic content (skills and competencies) that students are exposed to in the other modules of the programme, to support the authenticity of the module and the cohesiveness of the programme overall.**

The panel recommended that the impact on learner workload of embedding academic and soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module – with assignments, exams, and workshops - needs to be considered.

The specifics for supervision for the *Applied Research Project*, while provided, should be more detailed in the document and, in the absence of the Dissertation/Applied Research Project Handbook, the individual responsibilities outlined.

With extensive CA/project work involved in the programme, the panel explored how the programme team ensured that the work is the learners own. DBS utilises plagiarism detection software, and also employs a number of initiatives to support learners such as the new library website with resources to assist students with the essay writing process; referencing, avoiding plagiarism etc. Suspicions of academic impropriety are investigated, and a *viva voce* may be held if felt necessary.

The establishment and role of the academic appointments sub-committee was particularly commended in terms of team planning and assuring that sufficient qualified and capable programme staff are available to implement the programme as planned (including assessment). The committee also identifies the requirements for each staff to be supported through their orientation, professional development and teaching and learning support at the College.

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 disabilities²⁶.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*²⁷ 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	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The panel noted that the Student Handbooks and website contain information on the supports and services available to students. The student handbook gives students information regarding the course, but following discussion with the students and graduates the panel recommended that more guidance is provided for applicants and enrolled learners in relation to the possible careers which are available to programme graduates and where to pitch themselves within the Irish labour market (based on their qualification) – this is particularly important for the international learners enrolled

²⁶For 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).

²⁷See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

on the programme who may be unfamiliar with seeking employment in Ireland – and information on the career supports provided within the college.

In the meeting with learners and graduates they indicated that, while they love the international culture and diversity within the programme and the College, some learners may also find it a challenge to get a handle on the overall Irish educational structure. **Some orientation about the Irish education system, expectations for assessment, etc. would support their engagement with the programme.**

The access, transfer, progression, RPL, and entry requirements are documented and appropriate. The impact of admitting learners, from both cognate and non-cognate fields, and from different nationalities, is managed by the programme team within the classroom, through the programme/module design, and through additional supports provided for learners through the DBS Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU).

The panel considered the establishment of the Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU) a very positive move by DBS to support learner engagement, retention and progression.

The panel recommended that the impact on learner workload of embedding academic and soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module – with assignments, exams, and workshops - needs to be considered.

During the feedback from the learners and graduates, they indicated that it was really useful when programme material was prepared and made available on Moodle to learners in advance of their lectures, rather than having to research programme content themselves, and this is generally the case on this programme. This is particularly supportive of learners whose first language was not English in engaging with class material.

However, it also noted that where learners are required to complete continuous assessment assignments, **the programme team should develop an Assessment Strategy for the programme, which would require the full programme team coming together to schedule their individual assessment requirements, to incorporate all modules, CA deadlines, group project guidelines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. is essential to facilitate management of the learner workload. The output should include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.**

In the year 2017/18 the overall fail rate for the programme is high at 28.13% (with 6.25% of learners non-active), and, overall, over its lifetime, there is a very high attrition rate for this programme. The panel queried how has this been addressed during the programmes lifetime, and what facilitation has been made in the newly developed programme to overcome whatever challenges to learner success may be presenting.

The panel noted that additional classes (Workshops and tutorials) are held to support learners' engagement with learning material during the academic year, in particular the Writing for Graduate Studies – a 2 hour per week mandatory class (over 12 weeks) for learners, which covers ethics, referencing, academic impropriety and plagiarism. The impact of such non-credit bearing requirements on the learners' workload needs to be considered. **A workshop list/schedule of available resources would be beneficial for the learners to support their academic schedule planning, and should be considered as part of the developing teaching and learning and assessment strategies.**

The specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project*, while provided, should be more detailed in the document and, in the absence of the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project Handbook* being provided, the individual responsibilities outlined.

The learners and graduates that met with the panel spoke extremely positively and impressively about the programme. It appeared they were well informed of what was required of them in class and for assessments. The positive employment prospects of the programme’s graduates were a significant driver of learners’ satisfaction with the programme, but they felt they needed more support to engage with Irish employers. The college stated that learners are provided with Career Search Support through workshops, which cover development of CVs, relevant job sites, etc. These workshops run twice per week over the academic year. In addition the College hosts two careers weeks per year – these consist of subject-specific recruitment events to optimise learners, graduates and employers time and efforts.

It appeared that the lecturers were very dedicated to lecturing on the programme, and to the learning and support of their students.

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-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 assurance²⁸ 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	Master of Science in Management Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

²⁸See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommended that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.

The documentation suggests a well-conceived programme management strategy and structure.

The programme development team have completed an extensive review of the programme in accordance with the programmatic review terms of reference and QQI programme validation criteria.

The panel were satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programmes 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.

With that in mind, the panel indicated that it got little sense of the programme team cohesiveness, and recommended that programme team meetings would reinforce the coherence/cohesiveness of the modules within the programme, and support integrated modules and assessment.

The specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project* module, while provided, should be more detailed in the document and, in the absence of the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project* Handbook, the individual responsibilities outlined.

Notwithstanding, the panel commended the lecturer commitment to the programme and its learners, and the technical expertise of the team. The support of learners and accessibility of the programme staff to learners was evident in the documentation, in the engagement with both the staff and the learners at the panel.

It was noted that the QAH and associated policies and procedures have been developed in line with QQI statutory guidelines, and that DBS have submitted an application to QQI for reengagement. The process for interim programme change was outlined to the panel by the programme team. The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are outlined in Section 3.8 of this report. There is an extensive cohort of staff in place to manage the quality assurance and enhancement aspects of the programme which appears to be well managed in terms of staffing and quality assurance.

In relation to areas for improvement, the conditions and recommendations identified in this report capture the feedback from the panel.

The identified commendations provide areas of enhancement that serve to continuously enhance the College's activities.

Part 2B Overall recommendation to QQI

Master of Science in Management Practice

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice

Select one	
X	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommended 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); ²⁹
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons³⁰ for the overall recommendation

The panel carried out a comprehensive review of the Master of Science in Management Practice, with its embedded Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice EXIT award, between April and August 2019.

The MSc programme was due for review under the QQI requirement for periodic monitoring and review, and also require 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. The Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice is a newly developed award.

The review comprised six 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/ revised proposed Master of Science in Management Practice programme documentation to be submitted for revalidation.
- A site visit on 08 July 2019 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 programme, and a tour of the DBS campus (and College Library) to review facilities.

²⁹Normally 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.

³⁰Give 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 preparation of a panel report, outlining the process and evidence pursued, and a series of conditions and recommendations.
- A follow-up desk review of revised documentation provided by DBS addressing the panel's conditions and recommendations.
- Further feedback from the panel to DBS in relation to necessary action required to close-out on the identified conditions.
- A follow-up desk review of further revised and developed documentation provided by DBS which address the panel's conditions.

The revised documentation provided consisted of:

- DBS Programme Review Document for the Master of Science in Management Practice (and embedded Postgraduate Diploma programme) – referred to as Programme Document hereafter
- DBS Appendix 5 Module Descriptors for the Master of Science in Management Practice (and embedded Postgraduate Diploma programme) – referred to as Module Descriptors hereafter
- Programme Team's response to the Independent Programme Review Report – referred to as Team Response hereafter
- Proposed Assessment Schedule for the programme
- Supporting documentation which included details of the Terms of Reference for the Programme Board and Programme Team meetings.

Based on the site visit and the revised documentation received, the panel concluded that the Master of Science in Management Practice, as presented to QQI for revalidation, satisfies the core policies and criteria for revalidation by QQI of programmes of education and training, specifically as follows:

Criterion1: DBS meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of these programmes. The panel was informed DBS is currently taking part in the re-engagement process with QQI. QA policies and procedures are therefore under review. Access, transfer and progression procedures are detailed in Section 4 of Programme Document and Chapter 6 of the current DBS Quality Assurance Handbook.

The panel noted that DBS has arrangements in place for Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL), documentation for which is provided to QQI with every submission for revalidation of a programme.

Criterion2: the programme objectives and programme outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI award sought. They are set out in Sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the Programme Document. The Interpretation of the awards standards and research supporting the programme's aims, objectives and the MIPLOS is provided in section 3.6. MIPLOS are mapped against the QQI Science Awards Standards as set out in Section 13 of the Programme Document, and are compared with those of comparable programmes in section 2.7. Given the analytical, technical and applied nature of this programme, the team felt that the Science Awards Standards are the most appropriate. The constructive alignment of MIMLOS versus assessment mechanisms within the programme was required. This was completed in the programme documentation as the programme team's response to the panel.

Programme-specific assessment strategies have been prepared for the programme, and embedded in the revised programme documentation and module descriptors presented to the panel.

Criterion3: the panel found that the programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI awards are well informed, taking into consideration social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives. Extensive consultation with stakeholders, as

well as students and graduates, was evidenced in Section 3.4 and 3.7 of the Programme Document and had informed the evolution of the programme.

Relevant soft skills have been embedded in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module and the impact on student workload has been considered.

Programme-specific assessment strategies have been prepared for the programme, to clarify (as a group) how the MIMLOs identified in the document are constructively aligned to their assessment mechanisms, and these have been embedded in the revised programme documentation and module descriptors presented to the panel.

Criterion4: the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory. Entry criteria and progression options, including the concept of how a non-cognate primary discipline in the context of the minimum of a L8 requirement, versus how RPL consideration works, are clearly documented, as per section 3.2 and chapter 4 of the Programme Document, in relation to the specification of learning that target learners are expected to possess before enrolment.

The planned development of a teaching and learning qualification, and CPD for teaching, learning and assessment enhancement, for staff is welcomed.

DBS's planned introduction of a new Student Information System in November 2019 which will facilitate analysis of learner performance against entry qualifications is commended particularly, for a programme such as this, where non-cognate, non-standard and RPL admissions are permitted. The extension of the last permitted intake date, to include the full academic year, has been implemented in the programme documentation under guidance from QQI.

Criterion5: the programme's written curriculum and modules are well structured and fit-for-purpose. The panel recommended that the programme team meet to conduct the overall annual oversight, evaluation and review of the programme, to enhance overall programme cohesiveness. In its response the programme team took the recommendation on board and provided evidence of greater clarity and cohesion in the structure and the terms of reference for the course boards and programme team meetings. The panel is satisfied with these responses have addressed the recommendations.

The panel required that the full programme team come together to develop an Assessment Strategy for the Programme, which would incorporate all modules, their CA deadlines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. to facilitate management of the learner workload. The output of this activity should also include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.

The original assignment schedule for all modules needed to be amended as appropriate, and compared to the Module Descriptors and Programme Schedules to ensure that the assessment breakdown details in all documents are consistent, and correct. This has been closed out as identified in the programme team response to the panel.

Specific comments were identified in relation to a number of Modules on the programme, including *Information Systems and Project Management, the Management Practice Seminars and the Dissertation/Applied Research Project*. The issues identified have been closed out as identified in the programme team response to the panel.

Criterion 6: there are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned.

The panel noted that teaching staff are qualified to a minimum of NFQ Level 9 with a number qualified to doctoral level, and that a cohort of experienced practitioners is involved in the delivery

of the programme. This is evidenced in the suite of staff CVs [Appendix 2 Programme Staff CVs] which set out the qualifications of staff. Other staffing matters are set out in section 1.2 and chapter 7 of the Programme Document.

The panel recommended that the content of the Management Practice Seminar module assessment should include a reflection of the guest lecture content in relation to the academic content (skills and competencies) that students are exposed to in the other modules of the programme, to support the authenticity of the module and the cohesiveness of the programme overall. This has been addressed in the programme team response to the panel, and reflected in the revised programme documentation.

Specific contractual arrangements are in place to facilitate academic staff supervising learners' projects. [Reference Special Consideration of Programme Review], and the specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project*, were outlined to the panel.

Criterion7: there are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned, as set out in chapter 8 of the Programme Document. The wide range of resources utilised to support learners, and support their progression and retention, was noted.

The panel noted that a five-year plan had been provided for the programme under review as evidenced in Section 3.13 of the Programme Document, however, the variation in projected learner numbers makes it very difficult to interpret the proposed programme's viability. The extension of the last intake to include the full academic year has been implemented in programme documentation under guidance from QQI.

Criterion8: the learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners. The panel was advised that DBS uses a number of mechanisms to develop and implement supports for students as set out in sections 5.8 and 5.9 of the Programme Document.

The embedding of soft skills in individual modules, and their impact on student workload, was reflected in the revised programme documentation.

In addition, the re-assessment strategy for the modules in the programme have been clearly articulated to ensure consistency.

A workshop list/schedule of available resources has been developed for learners to support their academic schedule planning, and should be considered as part of the developing teaching and learning and assessment strategies.

Criterion9: there are sound teaching and learning strategies. These are outlined in chapter 5 of the Programme Document. In meetings with students and graduates at the site visit, the panel noted that they were very positive about the support they received from staff.

The panel recommended that the e-learning element of each module is defined within the module descriptor for clarity. This is being implemented in conjunction with the College's developing Teaching and Learning Strategy.

The panel commended the plan to develop certified and CPD training to support teaching and learning objectives for staff.

The panel recommended that the impact on learner workload of embedding academic and soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module be considered. This was evidenced in the revised programme documents.

The panel found that the lists of texts within the programme documentation required a review to reflect on essential vs recommended. The reading lists have been updated in the Module Descriptor document provided.

Criterion 10: there are sound assessment strategies. The panel was advised that all assessment for the programmes conform to the DBS Assessment Regulations which are informed by QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013 as set out in section 5.10 of the Programme Document, and within the individual modules.

The panel recommended that an assessment schedule be prepared for the programme, and are satisfied that appropriate measures have been put in place to provide this. The programme team has also clarified the re-assessment strategy for each of the modules within the programme.

Criterion 11: learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for. The panel noted that the Student Handbooks and website reviewed contained relevant information in relation to the supports and services available to students.

Students and graduates with whom the panel met confirmed that support services are well publicised. Supports for learners are detailed in sections 5.9 and 8.2 of the programme document. The panel recommended that an assessment schedule be prepared for the programme, and are satisfied that appropriate measures have been put in place to provide this. The programme team has also clarified the re-assessment strategy for each of the modules within the programme.

A workshop list/schedule of available resources has been developed for learners to support their academic schedule planning, and should be considered as part of the developing teaching and learning and assessment strategies.

Criterion 12: the programme is well managed. The panel were satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programmes under review. The College is enhancing its processes to ensure that the lecturers on the programme are more closely involved in the overall annual oversight, evaluation and review of the programme, to ensure overall programme cohesiveness.

The Quality Assurance Handbook (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, and have been redrafted as part of DBS's reengagement process with QQI.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. An Assessment Strategy for the Programme, which would require the full programme team coming together to schedule their individual assessment requirements, to incorporate all modules, CA deadlines, group project guidelines, reassessment mechanisms, etc. is essential to facilitate management of the learner workload. This Strategy should also provide clarity regarding word counts versus ECTS. The output should include an assessment schedule to be provided to learners at commencement of the semester/year.
2. In re-considering the assessment, the constructive alignment of MIMLOS versus assessment mechanisms is also required.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. The embedding of soft skills in individual modules rather than having a specific stand-alone module was recognised as an institutional decision but the impact on student workload – with

assignments, exams, and workshops needs to be considered, particularly in the context of additional, mandatory, non-credit bearing activities.

2. DBS currently do not undertake of analysis of learner performance against entry qualifications. The panel recommended that analysis of learner performance versus their entry profile should be conducted particularly, as in this programme's case, where non-cognate, non-standard and RPL admissions are permitted.
3. Information Systems and Project Management. The panel recommended that the programme team review this module to ensure its cohesiveness as a combined module.
4. Management Practice Seminars module. The content of the assessment should include a reflection of the guest lecture content in relation to the academic content (skills and competencies) that students are exposed to in the other modules of the programme, to support the authenticity of the module and the cohesiveness of the programme overall.
5. The specifics for supervision for the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project*, while provided, should be more detailed in the document and, in the absence of the *Dissertation/Applied Research Project Handbook* being provided, the individual responsibilities outlined.
6. The panel recommended that the impact of undertaking non-credit bearing additional classes (workshops, tutorials and academic supports) on the learners' workload, during the academic year, needs to be considered. A workshop list/schedule of available resources would be beneficial for the learners to support their academic schedule planning, and should be considered as part of the developing teaching and learning and assessment strategies.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

Panel secretary, Mary Doyle has previously held the role of position of Registrar at Dublin Business School. Since leaving this role, in 2009, she has not engaged in any professional relationship with the College and/or its staff. In addition, there have been extensive changes at senior/middle management within DBS in the interim and Ms Doyle has not had any professional relationship with the incumbents, during or prior to their taking up their roles at DBS.

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

Panel chairperson: David Denieffe

Date: 29th August 2019

Signed: 

Addendum

N/a

Disclaimer

The Report of the External Review Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

Part 4: Appendices