



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cailíochta agus Cailíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1 A

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	27.06.2019
Date of report	03.09.2019
Is this a re-validation report (Yes/No)	Yes

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business
	Award	BA
	Credit¹	180 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions² OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

Embedded programme³	Title	n/a
	Award	n/a
	Exit award (Yes/No)	n/a
	Credit	n/a

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 NQF 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.

	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	n/a
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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
Dr Philip Owende	Chair	Academic Quality Manager, TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus
Dr Deirdre Nuttall	Secretary	Adverbage Ltd
Jacqui Tracy	Academic Panellist	Griffith College Dublin
Paul McGuckin	Academic Panellist	Letterkenny IT
Prof. David Gwynn Morgan	Academic Panellist	Kuwait International Law School and University College Cork
Barbara Mangan	Industry Representative	Independent Management Consultant
Stephen Fitzgerald	Student Rep. (BA)	BA Business Student, IT Carlow
Brian Power	Student Rep. (MBA)	MBA Student, Trinity College Dublin

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

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
Dublin Business School	450	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	3 intakes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September intake • January intake • April intake 	
Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)	150	
Programme duration (<u>months</u> from start to completion)	Full-time: 3 years (6 semesters of 12 weeks each) Part-time: 4 years (8 semesters of 12 weeks each)	
Target learner groups	The BA (Honours) in Business is targeted at school-leavers and mature students preparing for a career in business. Students will acquire a broad knowledge of modern business management operations and be able to demonstrate a range of skills and competencies relevant to the current industry context.	
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"> • Classroom lectures • Case-based learning • Practical skills sessions • Workshops • Tutorials • Individual and group work • Online synchronous and asynchronous learning 	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	The programme is for school-leavers and mature students who wish to acquire a strong base of contemporary business knowledge through theory, concepts and methods constituting an in-depth academic grounding in the core disciplines and skills required for a career in general business. It provides them with expertise in the major aspects of the essential business disciplines and the skills they need to expand their knowledge. It helps them to develop a methodical, rational approach to business problem solving and decision-making and to develop advanced reasoning, evaluative, communication and interpersonal skills. Students learn how to organise and present information, how to critically assess and analyse	

	data, and to specialise in an area of particular interest to them.	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	<p>Faculty will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma, with relevant and significant industry experience and/or PhD. Holders of level 8 honours degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, will also be considered.</p> <p>DBS has provided detailed Curriculum Vitae information for all of the lecturing staff, itemising their qualifications for each module taught by them.</p>	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	Staff to learner ratio	Learning activity type
	1/150	Classroom sessions
	1/40	Workshops
	1/40	Practical sessions
	1/150	Online Class (live)
	1/25	Online tutorial (interactive)
	1.15/150 = 0.008	
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.⁵	<p>573 contact hours in Year 1</p> <p>$576/500 = 1.15$</p> <p>$1.15 \times 1.64 = 1.89$</p>	

Programmes being replaced by the [principal programme] n/a

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)			Arrangement for enrolled learners	Date when replaced programme is planned to cease completely
n/a				
Code	Title	Last enrolment date	Indicate whether "Teach out" or "Transfer to replacement programme"	
PG19551	BA (Hons) Business	January 2019	Teaching out/transfer	2020

⁵ This is the total whole-time 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.

Embedded programme⁶

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
n/a		

Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)	Date of first intake	n/a
	Date of last intake	n/a
Maximum number of annual intakes	n/a	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	n/a	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	n/a	
Target learner groups	n/a	
Approved countries for provision	n/a	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	n/a	
The teaching and learning modalities	n/a	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	n/a	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	n/a	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	n/a	
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.	n/a	

Programmes being replaced by the [embedded programme] n/a

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

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

Module⁷

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
n/a		

Enrolment interval (<i>normally 5 years</i>)	Date of first intake	n/a
	Date of last intake	n/a
Maximum number of annual intakes	n/a	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	n/a	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	n/a	
Target learner groups	n/a	
Approved countries for provision	n/a	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	n/a	
The teaching and learning modalities	n/a	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	n/a	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	n/a	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	n/a	
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.	n/a	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
	n/a	
	n/a	

Programmes being replaced by the [embedded programme]

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

⁷ This only needs to be completed where modules may be offered independently. Add more subsections if there are more than one modules proposed to lead to QQI awards.

Other noteworthy features of the application

1. The DBS Senior Management Team, Academic and Support Staff, and samples of both continuing students and graduates interviewed as part of the review, engaged fully with the process. The Review Panel is most grateful for the comprehensive review programme schedule, cooperation through pre-visit communications and during the on-site sessions, and the overall hospitality accorded throughout the visit on June 26, 2019.
2. In general, the modules in the programme are well thought-out and cover the topics that should feature on a BA in business, preparing students for employment or for further study. The teaching staff are well qualified and dedicated. Graduates are suitably prepared to enter employment or to progress to further study in a business-related field. While there is room for improvement in a areas that are specifically mentioned in the recommendations, the panel viewed the programme as fitness for purpose.
3. DBS informed the panel that the overall average pass rate (total passed enrolled) in 2014/15 was ca. 90%, with the pass rate for full-time students marginally higher than that of part-time students. Overall, ca. 4% of learners failed to complete the programme, and 6% of learners were non-active. In 2015/16, the pass rate was ca. 88%, with the pass rate for full-time learners at par with that of part-time learners. Overall, ca. 5% of learners failed the programme, and 7% of learners were registered to be inactive.
4. Approximately 18% of graduates from the programme progress into further education, either at DBS or in other institutions; students who earn honours grade 2.1 or higher qualifications are may enrol to a Masters programme. Overall, learner performance compares well with that of students enrolled on similar programmes elsewhere.
5. The review application included the DBS's own comprehensive Quality Assurance Handbook (2016/17 Edition). The handbook provides relevant information and guidance on Academic Quality matters to the management team and academic staff and those involved in curriculum design/development, programme delivery, and oversight on academic quality assurance and enhancement across different modules. The handbook contains approved DBS quality assurance policies and procedures intended to be easily accessible to staff, learners, and other stakeholders. Associated regulations or policies relating to the use of services such as the library, facilities or IT are only referenced in the handbook, but are accessible through the DBS web pages. The approach to management of quality matters is through both the DBS governance structures and various academic committee structure as assigned.
6. There was evidence of a high level of interest in the wellbeing of students, with clear support structures provided.

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.

Part 2A Evaluation against the validation criteria

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. ⁸	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment Yes, the provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme.

BA in Business

1. The relevant programme submission documents meet all of the prerequisites to apply for the programme validation.
2. At the initial meeting with the DBS Senior Management Team, the panel inquired and was duly assured that the information provided was truthful, and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed, and all relevant supporting declarations of compliance were satisfied.

⁸This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

Criterion 2

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

- a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
- b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
 - (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
- c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
- d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.
- e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
- f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
 - (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
 - (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
- g) For each programme and embedded programme
 - (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.⁹
 - (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
- h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
- i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.¹⁰

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	Yes. The programme's aims and objectives are clearly expressed.

BA in Business

1. The programme aims to provide learners with a sound basis in business and expertise in skills relevant to business. The modules and learning practice have been designed with this in mind.
2. There is no inconsistency between the stated objectives of the programme and the modules or teaching provided. The range of modules on offer are suitable and fit for purpose, and the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme modules.
3. Courses are designed to meet students' educational needs and to develop their skills in a wide variety of areas.
4. The module learning outcomes are objectively mapped to the QQI Award Standards for Business at Level 8 of the NFQ.

⁹ Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

¹⁰ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

Criterion 3

The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)

- a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.¹¹
- 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 evidence¹² of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant¹³.
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.¹⁴
- 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, the programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI awards standards are well-informed and soundly based.

BA in Business

1. DBs provided robust evidence of engagement with a range of stakeholders, including learner focus groups, class representatives, graduates, staff, and members of industry, including employers of former DBS students. Monthly meetings are held with class representatives, and DBS is actively engaged with graduates of the college. DBS staff regularly attend seminars and events for professional development and are actively engaged with the peers in similar colleges in Ireland and overseas.
2. The BA in Business is a popular choice among Irish and overseas students alike. There is clear demand for this programme also from employers, who as stakeholders, and are periodically consulted during the design and implementation of the programme.
3. Graduates of the programme are well prepared to enter employment or to progress to higher degree in cognate disciplines.
4. DBS is aware of the importance of ensuring that the programme is continuously updated and acts appropriately—for example, in integrating information about GDPR across all modules where relevant.

¹¹ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

¹² This might be predictive or indirect.

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

¹⁴ There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

Criterion 4

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

- a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied¹⁵.
- b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.
- c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)¹⁶ in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
- d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
- e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
- f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
 - (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
 - (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
 - (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
- g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	Yes, the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

BA in Business

1. Should students wish to transfer from another institution to DBS, the relevant academic transcripts are produced. Should students wish to transfer from DBS to another institution, the academic transcripts are similarly provided.
2. The manual provided to students is comprehensive. DBS is aware that students do not always read all of the data relevant to them, so various alternative mechanisms to access the information are also provided. There may be some scope for streamlining and simplifying this material. DBS also uses Moodle. Students benefit from support and feedback from staff.
3. International applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a degree taught in English must provide evidence of proficiency in English language equivalent to B2+ or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as IELTS, Cambridge Certificate, or DBS English Assessment. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.
4. Particularly in the case of mature students, their prior learning and work experience are taken into consideration when they apply to the course and they may be considered through the College's normal RPL procedures. In such instances, an interview of the candidate may be required. DBS recognises its

¹⁵Each 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

¹⁶http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

mature students as a valuable element of the student body, and the insights and support that they can provide to their younger colleagues in learning.

5. The documentation provided by DBS is clear about entry requirements.

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 principles¹⁷. 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.¹⁸ 	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment Yes, the programme's written curriculum is well-structured and fit for purpose

BA in Business

- 1) Generally, the programme's curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose. The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented; i.e., the course and constituent module contents are well described with clear programme learning outcomes and module learning outcomes pitched at appropriate NFQ level. They align well with assessment strategies to meet the designated outcomes.
- 2) A suite of Elective subjects enable students to align their learning opportunities and training needs to their individual interests and preferences.
- 3) DBS has paid attention to the documentation of its curriculum, specifically in respect of credit allocation to each module for academic rigour.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

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 staff¹⁹ (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 development²⁰ opportunities²¹.
- 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, DBS has a full complement of suitably qualified, capable and engaged staff.

BA in Business

1. Staff/student ratios compare reasonably well with similar programmes elsewhere at the designated level of the award, both for purposes of course delivery and provisions for student support such as pastoral care.
2. The programme is supported by a good complement of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. However, the panel noted that curriculum vitae for a number of staff were thin on relevant information, primarily focusing on current teaching roles and not how they qualify for the same, therefore are incongruent to the declared staff specification. It is recommended that DBS adopt a standard CV format to clearly reflect the relevant qualifications and experience against staff teaching and supervision assignments.
3. Given the heavy teaching workload, the opportunity for staff to engage in research and professional development is limited, despite the fact that DBS does have systems in place to facilitate staff development. In cases of staff who do not yet hold doctorates, where appropriate for areas of specialisation, staff members are encouraged to pursue PhD studies.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

- a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).
- b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:
 - (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)
 - (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
 - (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
 - (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
 - (v) technical support
 - (vi) administrative support
 - (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable
- c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).
- d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
 - (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
 - (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.
- e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	Yes, the physical resources provided by DBS to implement the programme as planned are adequate. Minimum provisions are prescribed under quality framework.

BA in Business

1. The DBS has suitable accommodation for meeting the learning and human needs of its students. The review panel visited a range of teaching spaces and IT labs and noted that the learning spaces were well-equipped and provided comfortable working environment.
2. The DBS library was noted to be an exceptionally well-run facility supported by qualified, engaged, and helpful staff. Students have access to a wide range of printed and online resources.
3. The DBS uses Moodle Virtual Learning Environment to support course delivery.
4. DBS has a detailed five-year plan, incorporating all necessary elements and criteria.
5. Programme controls includes programme agreement as part of the Quality process and considers a range of operations aspects including intellectual property rights (see DBS Quality Handbook, pp. 73).

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
	<p>Yes.</p> <p>There was evidence of embedded sense of duty of care by staff to DBS students, which was confirmed in the interview with both ongoing students and recent graduates. However, there was evidence to suggest potential flaw in the attendance monitoring system, which requires further investigation and action. The noted deficit has since been comprehensively addressed via DBS response to the draft panel report.</p>

BA in Business

1. DBS provided evidence of the typical opportunities offered by its unique combination of a multi-cultural learning environment composed of local and international students, and the blend of mature and younger students. It takes creative advantage of these, especially in encouraging and managing peer mentoring and peer support that are crucial to the students' well-being and sense of belonging at undergraduate level.
2. DBS has excellent library and other learning resources, and proactive systems in place to ensure that learners are facilitated in making use of them.
3. DBS has adopted Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which complements and supports the onsite face-to-face delivery of programmes.
4. Students interviewed by the panel mentioned that, while a robust electronic student-card based system is in place to record attendance, there seems to be inherent flaw in the management of the system, allowing for potential abuse and therefore inaccuracy in recording of student attendance data (See Point 2 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

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, support²² and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment Yes, there are sound teaching and learning strategies

BA in Business

1. The course documents reviewed showed evidence of comprehensive teaching strategies capable of meeting programme outcomes and learning outcomes of the designated award.
2. There was evidence that learning is closely monitored, and most of the students interviewed spoke in positive terms about the nature of the formative feedback they receive from their lecturers/tutors, and the timeliness with which they receive it.
3. Students express the view that lecturers and support staff have their best interests at heart and that they are diligent and professional in their approach.

²² Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies	
	<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i>²³</p> <p>b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>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.²⁴</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>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.²⁵</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>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.²⁶</p>
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Assessment is undertaken consistently with assessment guidelines, conventions and protocols for programmes leading to QQI awards. Specific areas of concern to the panel were highlighted and discussed with the programme team (see recommended special conditions of validation). The noted deficit has since been comprehensively addressed via DBS response to the draft panel report.</p>

BA in Business

1. The assessment strategies used in the programme were generally consistent with assessment guidelines, conventions and protocols for programmes leading to QQI awards. This was evidenced from individual module descriptors, examination papers and student scripts and direct interactions with academic staff during the panel visit.
2. A substantial portion of assessment strategy is via continuous assessments, encompassing presentations, teamwork and other modes of formative opportunities for learning. The submission and course documents reviewed included sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence to indicate that the assessments were likely to be valid/reliable.
3. External examiners have access to sample assignments for the continuous assessment work for the annual moderation and reports.
4. The programme teams are aware of the necessity of maintaining academic integrity in assessments, vis-à-vis the challenges posed by the internet with respect to plagiarism and/or contract cheating in educational environment. The college employs Urkund plagiarism detection software for counterchecking of academic integrity of assignments submitted by students.
5. Noted similarity in some contents of examination papers for summer and autumn sittings. Not particularly rampant but requiring additional attention to retain objective assessment and rigour.

²³ See the section on transitional arrangements.

²⁴ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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).

Criterion 11

Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 disabilities²⁷. i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i>²⁸ 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, DBS performs very strongly in this area. There is abundant evidence to indicate that enrolled students are well-informed, guided and cared for.

BA in Business

1. Students are provided with all the material they need, and they are also followed up, reminded, and supported if they are experiencing challenges. There are excellent systems in place that ensure that students who may need support are identified and provided with all the help they need. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure that the most at-risk students are quickly identified and supported. DBS formally encourages peer support and peer mentoring.
2. DBS performs admirably in the area of learner supports, both in terms of providing students with information about supports, and in supporting them comprehensively. There are provisions to accommodate students with a variety of particular educational needs, e.g.: provisions for students with a variety of disabilities; provisions for language support etc. (see Learning Support in DBS incorporating promotion of inclusion in DBS Quality Assurance Handbook, section 9.3.1).
3. Many of the students at DBS are international students, and DBS has demonstrated a highly-refined ability to dealing with a diverse student body and performs excellently in this area, including recognising this situation as representing opportunity for the student body as well as challenges.
4. There is a transparent and fair procedure for appeals complaints (see section 6.12 in DBS Quality Assurance Handbook).

²⁷ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

²⁸ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

Criterion 12

The programme is well managed	
<p>a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures.</p> <p>b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance²⁹ is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Generally, there was evidence that the programme is well-managed. However, Annual Programme Review (APR) is critical to ensure consistent learning experience. The noted deficit has since been comprehensively addressed via DBS response to the draft panel report.</p>

BA in Business

1. The programme has a comprehensive quality assurance framework defining relevant policies and procedures³⁰, and which was available to the panel. Among other aspects, the QA manual defines intrinsic governance strictures and processes, protocols for course development, monitoring and review, and teaching, learning and compatible assessment frameworks.
2. The programme governance structure includes the following posts (among others): An Executive Dean; Registrar; Discipline-specific Course Directors for covering the thematic subjects on offer at DBS; Head of Academic Programmes; Head of Faculty and School; Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning; Head of Student Experience; Admissions Manager; Student Engagement Officer. These posts ensure that their jurisdictions functionally interface with the general institutional procedures.
3. While the overall assessment of programme management was deemed satisfactory, a systematic Annual Programme Review (APR) is critical to ensuring that any problems /issues identified in the programme are dealt with conclusively, and do not spill into the next academic year. Such a strategy and accompanying reporting can be informed by learner feedback, lecturer performance feedback, and External Examiners feedback, which are all collated by DBS in each academic year.

²⁹ See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

³⁰ DBS Quality Assurance Handbook 2016-17 Edition, 359 pp.

Part 2B Overall recommendation to QQI

Principal programme

Select one	
√	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	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);³¹
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons³² for the overall recommendation

Subject to the response outlined below, the panel was satisfied that the criteria have been met and requires that DBS continue to monitor all of the issues of concern raised by the panel and to take the relevant necessary steps.

³¹Normally 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.

³²Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A “Not Satisfactory” recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. A substantial proportion of modules (ca. 48% or 20/42, including mandatory and electives) are weighted at 100% Continuous Assessment. For 100% CA weighting, it is recommended that:

1.1 DBS to provide rationale or basis for the assignment the weighting;

1.2 The individual module descriptors to include enough detail on the assessment instruments/briefs employed in such modules, to enable review and/or determination of the rigour of related assessment;

DBS RESPONSE (1.1):

The assessment strategy has been reviewed by the programme team to ensure it has been fully researched and appropriately designed. Where possible and appropriate, DBS has endeavoured to provide continuous assessments for learners in the assessment of, and for, learning. The Course Director and programme team have taken this opportunity to create a departmental Teaching and Learning Strategy document specific to the programme and to align the strategy in a multi-tiered model from institutional to model level. This multi-tiered model begins at an institutional level strategy, led by the Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning, and informs the strategic direction and vision for all of DBS programmes. A programme-level TLA, led by the Course Director, informs the core learning strategy for learners and module leaders on programmes, for a holistic view of the learner's development and achievement of programme learning outcomes. Finally, a module TLA devised by the Module Leader with direction from the Course Director will help create informed graduates who can find personal fulfilment and achieve individual module outcomes. This strategy aims to achieve the highest quality learning experience possible for all our learners, producing robust, highly employable graduates. The objective is to develop T-shaped graduates with complementary skills including the ability to work effortlessly with others, the ability to apply knowledge across disciplines, the ability to see from other perspectives, and an understanding of fields outside their area of expertise. Where possible, DBS prefers continuous assessment over proctored exams and believes this is preferential for the learners on this programme.

The departmental Teaching and Learning Strategy document is designed to supplement the information provided in the Programme Document Sections 5.6 Programme teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy and 5.10 Programme summative assessment strategy. The rationale and details of the programme teaching, learning and assessment strategy are attached with this response.

DBS RESPONSE (1.2):

All module descriptors have been reviewed and amended to provide more detail on the assessment instruments employed, while also being cognisant of any future restrictions this may have on innovative practices in this domain. An assessment schedule is mapped out for each module and for each of the programme's components in order to provide an overview of assessments and the submission deadlines which recognises an academic practice that includes a balance of commitments for both academic staff and learners. The assessment schedule and strategy will be provided by the Course Director to all lecturers in advance of commencement of the academic year, and the schedule reviewed accordingly. It will also be incorporated in a revised version of the Learner Handbook which is currently being developed and which will be provided to all enrolled learners on commencement of the programme. This Handbook will provide greater detail to learners on assessments (details, briefs, schedules and reassessment mechanisms). This is currently in development and not just yet ready for review

- 1.3 DBS to provide clear guidelines for External Examiner moderation of such modules. Added evidence indicates that, currently, the external examiners can only see the outcome of the assessment and do not contribute in any way in the peer-review and/or moderation of contents and process to instil best practice for the formative intents.

DBS RESPONSE (1.3):

DBS very much welcomes this condition as a further opportunity to improve the QA function in the College.

A meeting has taken place with the Registrar, Course Director and Exams Office (which is currently responsible for collating and sending out exam papers and sample exam scripts to External Examiners for review).

It has been agreed that the College will make a commitment to ensure that a substantive sample of CAs from the BA (Hons) in Business programme (at least 1/2 of the total CAs for each semester) are collated by the faculty/programme team through the Course Director and submitted to the External Examiner. This will be facilitated either through a face-to-face introductory meeting with the External Examiner at the commencement of the academic year, or by providing the CAs securely through Google Drive.

This immediate undertaking for the BA (Hons) in Business programme will then inform the practicalities of further formalising this practice for all programmes across the College. Due to the volumes of programmes and modules, this may require additional resourcing to allow this to happen in an efficient and timely manner, and further the Exams Office may not have easy and timely access to continuous assessments in advance in the same way that exam papers are submitted in advance.

The College further notes that while best practice entails advance provision of CAs to External Examiners, feedback from annual reporting is acted upon in the following academic year. Additionally all CAs are moderated by an internal moderator assigned by the Course Director.

2. (Arising from Criterion 8) Student feedback indicated that, while there are robust measures in place to monitor attendance, some students register themselves as present, or ask their colleagues to register them as present, without actually attending all classes. This situation gives rise to tension for other students, who deem the situation unfair. The management will need to investigate this further so as to guarantee system integrity.

DBS operates an automated attendance monitoring system in most classrooms and labs, whereby learners register their own attendance by tagging their student card against a card reader at the start of each class. Learners are expected to act honestly and in accordance with the DBS Code of Conduct.

The following is the attendance system we use; however, we have enhanced this system by adding RFID reader functionality. This refinement allows instantaneous recording of attendance and eliminates the time wasted by manual roll call, particularly in the case of larger classes where roll call can eat into teaching time: <https://www.celcat.com/solutions/attendance-monitoring/attendance/>

In addition to this, Academic Operations staff will carry out random classroom audits with the following procedures. These are captured in the **Classroom Attendance Auditing Policy**.

3. The DBS should adopt a systematic Annual Programme Review (APR) process that will ensure that any problems /issues identified in the programme are dealt with conclusively by the end of each academic year, and that such do not spill into the next academic year (see extended comment under Criterion 12).

DBS RESPONSE (3):

DBS agrees with this Condition and has been engaged in a process of drafting annual programme/departmental review templates for use by Course Directors and faculty. Indeed, the programme that has been taken as a sample programme on which to base our draft workings on this is the BA.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. Whereas the application includes DBS own comprehensive Quality Assurance Handbook (2016/17 Edition), it is the considered view of the panel that an objective QA framework must be communicative to all DBS staff who are required to use or implement different aspect of quality assurance and quality enhancement; 356 pages is a tome does not easily lend to such requirement.
2. Therefore, the panel recommends that DBS consider electronic publication of the independent sections to provide for more focused access. While the handbook is still useful in the consolidated form, a smaller, pithy and more targeted user-friendly Course Design & Delivery Handbook would be a more pragmatic approach to ensuring that the manual is communicative.

DBS RESPONSE (1 and 2):

Through the Pilot Re-Engagement (voluntary) and full Re-Engagement process with QQI, DBS has substantially reviewed and updated its Quality Assurance Handbook. This has included restructuring the Handbook into sections for increased ease of use and access as follows:

Part A: Governance and Policy

Part B: The Learner Journey

Part C: Programme Quality

A key focus of the restructuring was to better sign-post the main areas of the QAH to stakeholders.

The panel site visit for Re-Engagement took place on Friday 5 July 2019 and only 3 updates (not relating to structure or presentation) were required upon fulfilment of which the updated QAH and associated policies and procedures should be approved by QQI.

In developing the updated QAH and the application to QQI for Re-Engagement, stakeholders across the College, including over 50 Faculty members, were involved in consultation focus groups and familiarisations sessions.

In addition to the sectioning of the QAH DBS is working on developing a dynamic interactive menu for the QAH to also facilitate access.

3. Overall, the panel recommends that DBS continue to ensure that there is sufficient oversight by external examiners, especially in the area of continuous assessment.

DBS RESPONSE (3):

DBS recognises this condition as an opportunity to improve the QA function in the College. A meeting has taken place with the Registrar, Course Director and Exams Office (which is currently responsible for collating and sending out exam papers and sample exam scripts to External Examiners for review).

As above, it has been agreed that the College will make a commitment to ensure that a substantive sample of CAs from the programme, to comprise a sample of CAs from at least half of the modules in each semester, are collated by the faculty/programme team through the Course Director and submitted to the External Examiner. This will be facilitated either through a face-to-face introductory meeting with the External Examiner at the commencement of the academic year, or by providing the CAs securely through Google Drive.

4. DBS must ensure that the content of each examination paper for the summer and autumn sittings are substantially different.

DBS RESPONSE (4):

Since June 2018, when a new Assessment and Regulations Manager was appointed, there have been changes to systems within the Exams Office whereby faculty submitting exam papers are required to confirm that papers have been moderated, otherwise papers are not accepted by the Exams Office and are returned to the author. In addition, new systems for provision of exam papers to External Examiners electronically have been put in place. This allows for more timely and efficient checks of papers to mitigate against such issues and allow appropriate action to be taken if an issue is identified, well ahead of the time of the exams. The Exams Office has presented such process improvements to the Academic Board, and the Board has made note officially of significant improvements in this administration thus feeding into and supporting academic best practice. While the Exams Office is committed to continuous improvement, there is also a recognised onus of responsibility on faculty in setting papers, and this will continue to be monitored. From September 2019 External Examiners will be invited to an introductory meeting at the commencement of the academic year to meet the programme teams and support staff, and to follow up on any issues from previous years. It is also envisaged that the appointment of a new Course Director for Business AND Law will facilitate the monitoring of this within the department.

5. To consider changing the title of the capstone project to “mini-dissertation” to more accurately reflect what the work involves.

DBS RESPONSE (5):

As this module descriptor is cross-listed with other undergraduate honours programmes, it is DBS policy to detail this module descriptor, as the others are detailed on these recently validated honours undergraduate programmes. However, DBS appreciate the recommendation by the panel and will endeavour to achieve greater clarity in any student-facing materials on this module.

6. Given that, a lot of student learning takes place outside the programme, initiatives to formally recognise the contribution of such extracurricular events is recommended.

DBS RESPONSE (6):

The programme team appreciate the panels observation of the great learning that takes place outside of the programme in DBS. By means of recognising and rewarding learners for their participation and engagement in such activities, the Student Experience team have developed Digital Badge programmes. All learners can now receive validation in the form of a Digital Badge for their continuous accomplishments during the academic year. Each badge will have its own unique criteria for attainment and students can gather multiple badges as they contribute positively to their course of study and to their student experience also.

7. While learners indicated that most staff provide feedback in a timely manner, there may be some exceptions. Expectations and requirements around the provision of learner feedback should be formalised.

DBS RESPONSE (7):

DBS endeavours at all times to give timely feedback in a learner centred way across all its programmes. We do however recognise that at times this may not happen due to exigencies such as learner absence or faculty delay.

As part of the review of Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy, DBS is examining the timing and nature of feedback. What has come clearly through from our learner feedback mechanisms is that learners do seek timely, comprehensive and consistent feedback. With that in mind, the strategy review is looking at updating the DBS standardised rubrics based on a combination of discipline, assessment type and level, whereby learners can expect there to be a consistent rubric for, for example, a group presentation at Level 7 in ICT or research proposals at Level 9 in psychology. This work builds on DBS's existing *Guide to Generic Grading Descriptors Level 6-9* from 2014 and takes into consideration the issues raised by QQI's recent Green Paper on Assessment. DBS faculty commit to providing feedback within two weeks of submission, and we are increasing efforts to ensure that that metric is met for all learners. Tools on the VLE are being utilised to streamline and automate notifications for timely feedback that meets our commitment to students. Bringing this work together to ensure timely, comprehensive and consistent feedback is a major objective for DBS's Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategic planning.

Lastly, as an overarching comment on the panel's experience with the review process as a whole: A Criterion-Specific Summary Report, incorporating pointers to *How, Who* and *Where*, an institution under review deems to satisfy all the prescribed QQI Criteria 1 through 12 should accompany the documents provided to the QQI Review Panels. In this case, the core programme handbook as presented did not interface well with the criteria for review of programme. As such (and to effectively review and engage with the programme team), the review team members had to root through a lot of information, much of which was secondary to the criteria and/or repetitious. This was more challenging and obstructive to the review process, as the panel had to consider both the BA and MBA programmes of DBS in a day's sitting. This is not to say that the core programme handbook should never have been provided, but a concise criteria-oriented synopsis, and appropriately formulated to guide to the relevant parts of the core programme document(s) should have considerably enhances the panel's efficacy towards completion of review tasks.

DBS RESPONSE:

DBS would like to note that the documents provided to the panel were as follows:

1. Programme Review Report
2. Programme Document
3. Modules Document
4. Supporting documents (such as exam papers, External Examiner reports, etc.)

In the case of items 1-3 the documents provided in the format of the current QQI templates.

DBS notes that it would have been helpful to the panel to clearly signpost the Terms of Reference for Programme Review, which lay out the proposed modifications and changes to the programmes, and provide a helpful summary for the panel.

A mapping as per the 12 Criteria is provided in Section 12 of the main programme documents, as per the QQI HET Programme Validation Manual 2018 (see link).

The volume of documentation is recognised and DBS is very thankful to the panel for its undertaking and thorough engagement with the programmes under review. DBS has been part of a Working Group with QQI and other private providers to further rationalise and streamline documentation required for Programme Review and Re-Validation, and it is hoped that a revised template will be approved in due course through QQI and which can be utilised going forward.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

No interests have been declared.

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

Panel chairperson: Dr Philip Owende

Date: September 03, 2019



Signed:

Addendum

Here address any amendments to the application forwarded to the panel by QQI to address any proposed special conditions of validation.

Disclaimer

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

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QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

In its original independent evaluation report dated 30th August 2019, the independent panel specified 3 conditions and 7 recommendations regarding the above programme. Dublin Business School formally responded to the report on 1st September 2019 and has addressed each of the conditions and recommendations to the satisfaction of the independent panel members.

The panel confirmed that it recommended the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business programme to QQI for revalidation.

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

Signed:

Carmel Kelly - Validation Manager, Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Date: 18 November 2019

Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

1.1. Proposed Programme Schedule Template for a Stage

3.1 Full-time Programme Schedule for Year 1 of Study

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School						
Programme Title		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business						
Award Title		Bachelor of Arts (Honours)						
Stage Exit Award Title ³		N/A						
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Full-time						
Teaching and learning modalities		As per module descriptors						
Award Class ⁴	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level ²	Stage EQF Level ²	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8		1	6	5	60	September 2019	0410
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		Semester no where applicable	Module	Credits	Total Student Effort Module (hours)		Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)	

	(Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Status	NFQ Level: where specified	Credit Units		Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
				HET Credits										
Maths and Stats for Business	1 and 2	M	6	10 ECTS	250	72	50	128			40			60
Business Context and Organisation	1 and 2	M	6	10 ECTS	250	72	50	128			50			50
Marketing Essentials	1 and 2	M	6	10 ECTS	250	72	50	128			100			-
IT Essentials	1 and 2	M	6	10 ECTS	250	72	50	128			100			-
Economic Perspectives	1 and 2	M	6	10 ECTS	250	72	50	128			40	20		40
Learning to Learn	1	M	6	5 ECTS	125	32	25	68			100			-
Introduction to Business Finance	2	M	6	5 ECTS	125	32	25	68			100			-
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)														

3.2 Full-time Programme Schedule for Year 2 of Study

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School										
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business										
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)										
Stage Exit Award Title ³	N/A										
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full-time										
Teaching and learning modalities	As per module descriptors										
Award Class ⁴	Award NQF level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NQF Level ²	Stage EQF Level ²	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code			
Major 8			2	7	6	60	Sept 2019	0410			
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or 2)	Module	Credit Numbers	Total Student Effort Module (hours)			Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
		Statu s	NQF Level ¹	Credit Units	Class (or	Directe d e-	Work-based	C.A. %	Proctored practical		

	Semester 2)		where specific d	HET Credits	Total Hours	equiv) Contact Hours	learnin g	Hours of Independent Learning	learnin g effort	Supervise d Project %	demonstratio n %	Proctore d written exam %
Management	1 and 2	M	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	100			-
Financial Management	1 and 2	M	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	30			70
Business Information Systems	1 and 2	M	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	50			50
Business Ethics and Research Practice	1	M	7	5 ECTS	125	32	25	68	100			-
Advanced Economic Perspectives	2	M	7	5 ECTS	125	32	25	68	50			50
Psychology	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	100			-
Social Psychology	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	100			-
Principles of Business Law	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	100			-
Employee Relations and the Law	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136	50			50

Organisational Behaviour for Managers	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			40		60
Selling and Sales Management	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			50		50
Project Planning and Control	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			100		-
Project Feasibility	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			100		-
Database Design and Cloud Technologies	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			70	30	-
Cloud Marketing and Sales	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			50		50
Business Programming	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	64	50	136			50		50
<p>Learners on the general pathway must choose two electives at Level 7 but cannot choose more than one elective from the same specialised pathway. Learners on a specialised pathway must take both Level 7 elective modules from that pathway. The electives on the specialised pathways at Level 7 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA (Hons) Business: management pathway: Selling and Sales Management / Project Feasibility BA (Hons) Business: project management pathway: Project Planning and Control / Project Feasibility BA (Hons) Business: human resource management pathway: Employee Relations and the Law / Organisational Behaviour for Managers BA (Hons) Business: psychology pathway: Psychology / Social Psychology BA (Hons) Business: law pathway: Principles of Business Law / Employee Relations and the Law BA (Hons) Business: information systems pathway: Database Design and Cloud Technologies / Business Programming BA (Hons) Business: cloud computing pathway: Database Design and Cloud Technologies / Cloud Marketing and Sales 													

3.3 Full-time Programme Schedule for Year 3 of Study

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School										
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business										
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)										
Stage Exit Award Title ^a	N/A										
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full-time										
Teaching and learning modalities	As per module descriptors										
Award Class ^a	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level ²	Stage EQF Level ²	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code			
Major	8	6	Award	8	6	60	Sept 2019	0410			
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or	Module	Credit Number	Total Student Effort Module (hours)			Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			Proctored practical	Proctored
	2 or 3)	Status	Units	Class (or	directed	Work-based	C.A. %				
		NFQ Level ¹									

	Semester 2)		where specified	HET Credits	Total Hours	(equiv) Contact Hours	learning	Hours of Independent Learning	learning effort	Supervised Project %	demonstration %	written exam %
Strategic Management	1 and 2	M	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	100			-
Global Business	1 and 2	M	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	50			50
Human Resource Management	1 and 2	M	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	100			-
Organisational Psychology	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	100			-
Personality and Individual Differences	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	100			-
Human Resource Development	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	35		15	50
Contemporary Performance Management	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	50			50
Corporate Law and Governance	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	40			60
Advanced Business and	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140	40			60

Business Systems Analysis	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	60	50	140		100			-
Capstone Project	1 and 2	M	8	10 ECTS	250	18	50	182		100			-
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)	<p>Learners on the general pathway must choose two electives at Level 8 but cannot choose more than one elective from the same specialised pathway.</p> <p>Learners on a specialised pathway must take both Level 8 elective modules from that pathway.</p> <p>The electives on the specialised pathways at Level 7 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA (Hons) Business: management pathway: Data Management and Analytics / Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship BA (Hons) Business: project management pathway: Project Planning Techniques / Project Management and Evaluation BA (Hons) Business: human resource management pathway: Human Resource Development / Contemporary Performance Management BA (Hons) Business: psychology pathway: Organisational Psychology / Personality and Individual Differences BA (Hons) Business: law pathway: Corporate Law and Governance / Advanced Business and Commercial Law BA (Hons) Business: information systems pathway: Business Intelligence and Visualisation / Business Systems Analysis BA (Hons) Business: cloud computing pathway: Cloud Networking and Security / Cloud Platform Development 												

3.4 Part-time Programme Schedule for Year 1 of Study

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School									
Programme Title		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business									
Award Title		Bachelor of Arts (Honours)									
Stage Exit Award Title ^a		N/A									
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Part-Time									
Teaching and learning modalities		As per module descriptors									
Award Class ^a	Award NQF level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level ^b	Stage EQF Level ^b	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code			
Major	8		1	6	5	60	September 2019	0410			
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module	Credit Numbers	Total Student Effort Module (hours)			Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
				Stattus	NFQ Level ^b	Credit Units	Class (or)	Directed	Work-based	C.A. %	Proctored practical

				where specified	HET Credits	Total Hours	(equiv) Contact Hours	learning	Hours of Independent Learning	learning effort	Supervised Project %	demonstration %	written exam %
Maths and Stats for Business	1 and 2	M			10 ECTS	250	36	50	164	40			60
Business Context and Organisation	1 and 2	M			10 ECTS	250	36	50	164	50			50
Marketing Essentials	1 and 2	M			10 ECTS	250	36	50	164	100			
IT Essentials	1 and 2	M			10 ECTS	250	36	50	164	100			-
Economic Perspectives	1 and 2	M			10 ECTS	250	36	50	164	40	20		40
Learning to Learn	1	M			5 ECTS	125	18	50	57	100			-
Introduction to Business Finance	2	M			5 ECTS	125	18	50	57	100			-
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													

3.5 Part-time Programme Schedule for Year 2 of Study

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School									
Programme Title		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business									
Award Title		Bachelor of Arts (Honours)									
Stage Exit Award Title ³											
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Part-Time									
Teaching and learning modalities		As per module descriptors									
Award Class ⁴	Award NQF level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level ²	Stage EQF Level ²	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code			
Major 8			2	6	7	60	Sept 2019	0410			
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or 2)	Module	Status	NQF Level ¹	Credit Units	Class (or)	Directed	Work-based	C.A. %	Proctored practical	Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)

	Semester 2)		where specific d	HET Credits	Total Hours	(equiv) Contact Hours	learnin g	Hours of Independent Learning	learnin g effort	Supervise d Project %	demonstratio n %	Proctore d written exam %
Management	1 and 2	M	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	100			-
Financial Management	1 and 2	M	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	30		10	60
Business Information Systems	1 and 2	M	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	50			50
Business Ethics and Research Practices	1	M	7	5 ECTS	125	16	25	84	100			-
Advanced Economic Perspectives	2	M	7	5 ECTS	125	16	25	84	50			50
Psychology	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	100			-
Social Psychology	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	100			-
Principles of Business Law	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	100			-
Employee Relations and the Law	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168	50			50

Organisational Behaviour for Managers	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			40		60
Selling and Sales Management	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			50		50
Project Planning and Control	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			100		-
Project Feasibility	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			100		-
Database Design and Cloud Technologies	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			70	30	-
Cloud Marketing and Sales	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			50		50
Business Programming	1 and 2	E	7	10 ECTS	250	32	50	168			50		50
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)	<p>Learners on the general pathway must choose two electives at Level 7 but cannot choose more than one elective from the same specialised pathway. Learners on a specialised pathway must take both Level 7 elective modules from that pathway. The electives on the specialised pathways at Level 7 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA (Hons) Business: management pathway: Selling and Sales Management / Project Feasibility BA (Hons) Business: project management pathway: Project Planning and Control / Project Feasibility BA (Hons) Business: human resource management pathway: Employee Relations and the Law / Organisational Behaviour for Managers BA (Hons) Business: psychology pathway: Psychology / Social Psychology BA (Hons) Business: law pathway: Principles of Business Law / Employee Relations and the Law BA (Hons) Business: information systems pathway: Database Design and Cloud Technologies / Business Programming BA (Hons) Business: cloud computing pathway: Database Design and Cloud Technologies / Cloud Marketing and Sales 												

	Semester 2)	where specified	HET Credits	Total Hours	(equiv) Contact Hours	learning	Hours of Independent Learning	learning effort	Supervised Project %	demonstration %	written exam %
Strategic Management	1 and 2	M	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	100			-
Global Business	1 and 2	M	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	50			50
Human Resource Management	1 and 2	M	10 ECTS	250	60	50	170	100			-
Organisational Psychology	1 and 2	E	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	100			-
Personality and Individual Differences	1 and 2	E	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	100			-
Human Resource Development	1 and 2	E	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	35		15	50
Contemporary Performance Management	1 and 2	E	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	50			50
Corporate Law and Governance	1 and 2	E	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	40			60
Advanced Business and	1 and 2	E	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170	40			60

Business Systems Analysis	1 and 2	E	8	10 ECTS	250	30	50	170		100			-
Capstone Project	1 and 2	M	8	10 ECTS	250	12	50	188		100			-
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)	<p>Learners on the general pathway must choose two electives at Level 8 but cannot choose more than one elective from the same specialised pathway.</p> <p>Learners on a specialised pathway must take both Level 8 elective modules from that pathway.</p> <p>The electives on the specialised pathways at Level 8 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA (Hons) Business: management pathway: Data Management and Analytics / Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship BA (Hons) Business: project management pathway: Project Planning Techniques / Project Management and Evaluation BA (Hons) Business: human resource management pathway: Human Resource Development / Contemporary Performance Management BA (Hons) Business: psychology pathway: Organisational Psychology / Personality and Individual Differences BA (Hons) Business: law pathway: Corporate Law and Governance / Advanced Business and Commercial Law BA (Hons) Business: information systems pathway: Business Intelligence and Visualisation / Business Systems Analysis BA (Hons) Business: cloud computing pathway: Cloud Networking and Security / Cloud Platform Development 												