



**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. Provider details

<b>Provider name</b>	Dublin Business School
<b>Date of site visit</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2020
<b>Date of report</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2020

## Section A. Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management
	<b>Award</b>	Higher Diploma in Business
	<b>Credit</b>	60
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	<b><i>Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions</i></b>

<b>Embedded programme 1</b>	<b>Title</b>	N/A
	<b>Award</b>	
	<b>Credit</b>	0
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	N/A

## Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dermot Finan	Chair	Former Registrar, IT Sligo
Vinette McNamara	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer in Project Management, University College Dublin
Cedric Chau	Subject Matter Expert	PAI, Senior Lecturer, Whitaker School of Government and Management
Austin Hanley	Secretary and Subject Matter Expert	Management Consultant, formerly Dean of Engineering and Informatics, Athlone Institute of Technology
Teena Choudhary	Learner Representative	Project Management Student, University of Limerick
Julie Farren	Industry Representative	Senior Manager, Operations Transformation Investment Management, Consulting Deloitte

## Section C. Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)
Dublin Business School	75	75

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Full-Time</b>		1 year	2	5	75
<b>Part-Time</b>		12-18 month	2	5	75
<b>Intake Schedule</b> e.g. January September		January & September			

### Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The enrolment plans are satisfactory. However as enrolment grows more detailed planning on resources and overall support may be required. There is a recommendation contained herein that addresses a plan to match resources with growing student numbers.

**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 Higher Diploma is a one-year full-time (two semesters) or eighteen months part-time programme (three semesters). It aims to provide learners with fundamental skills relating to project management and create, in the learner, a diversity of project-related skills necessary in today's competitive and evolving market. The programme aims to provide a holistic and dynamic project management education that will enable learners to develop practical knowledge and skills to initiate, plan execute and close projects, whilst also understanding how to deal with project management challenges and manage and build stakeholder relationships. The programme is designed as a conversion course for graduates who wish to add to their previous learning and experience and acquire project management skills to avail of future employment or further education opportunities.

The programme will be delivered in an innovative and flexible manner, consisting of lectures, workshops, group work, presentations, blended learning and guest speakers from industry and academia. The programme is aimed at learners who seek an underpinning in key project management theories and concepts as well as project management processes, tools, techniques and skills. The programme engenders an awareness of the importance of transferable and cross-enterprise skills and graduates will be able to apply these skills to a range of contexts.

**Target learner groups**

The Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management is aimed at learners with a Level 8 honours bachelor's degree with a minimum pass classification in a non-cognate area. Applicants who do not have a Level 8 qualification and who have at least 3 years' work experience may also be considered through the College's normal RPL procedures. Relevant professional experience may be taken into account and individuals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis through DBS RPL procedures. This programme may also be of interest to learners with a Level 7 ordinary bachelor's degree in a cognate area (cognate areas include business, finance, management) who wish to specialise in the field of project management with a view to entering industry. The Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management is primarily a conversion course for non-business graduates, or an up-skilling course for Level 7 graduates, who wish to acquire core project management skills which will enable graduates play an active role in a diverse range of industries. Learners will acquire practical skills to effectively manage projects over their lifecycle and be ready for a career in different industries. Throughout the course learners will acquire the necessary skills and project management acumen to appraise project opportunities and challenges, understand and apply project management skills to a range of contexts. Graduates will also be in a position to manage and coordinate projects, take up a position in industry, or engage in further Level 9 postgraduate studies, for example a Master of Business Administration (MBA) or a Masters in Applied Project Management.

**Approved countries for provision**

Ireland

**Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time**

Full-time/Part-time

**The teaching and learning modalities**

- Classroom lectures
- Case-based learning

- Practical skills sessions
- Workshops
- Tutorials
- Individual and group work
- Blended learning
- Guest speakers

#### Summary of specifications for teaching staff

Role	Profile	WTE
Lecturers	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 qualification in the following areas: ● Project Management ● Human Resource Management ● Accounting and/or Finance ● Business Management ● Innovation and Entrepreneurship ● Leadership ● Information Technology Individuals with Level 8 qualifications in the above disciplines who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience may also be considered.	8

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Lecture classroom-based sessions	1:75
Online class (broadcast live)	1:75
Online tutorial (interactive)	1:25
Practical Lab sessions	1:35
Workshops	1:50

#### Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

The programme outline is conceptually well-balanced and thought through. The programme is divided over two stages, each of 30 credits and delivered over two semesters. The four Stage 1 modules are designed to provide the learner with a basic understanding of PM fundamentals including IT essential skills. The remaining four Stage 2 modules apply and develop the knowledge acquired in semester 1, offering the student the opportunity to work through project management phases (execution, monitoring, control and evaluation). A capstone simulation project is included that allows the student to apply the knowledge acquired from other modules.

The programme will be staffed by 2 Full-Time and 6 Part-Time staff members. The panel notes that there is an imbalance between Full-Time and Part Time staff that may impact the programme as student numbers grow.

While acknowledging that the team has strong experientially acquired knowledge of Project Management the panel also acknowledges that that programme would be greatly enhanced by selected lecturers upskilling themselves in the Project Management specialism to Level 9 at a minimum.

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

#### Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

##### Learner Support

The programme is very learner orientated in the pace at which material is scheduled for delivery and the module linkages. Many of the modules are new while others have been adapted from existing programmes. Significantly, a great deal of effort is invested in monitoring learner online engagement across all programmes and DBS are among the acknowledged leaders in this area. There are a number of statistically based early warning signs in place that highlight student engagement and which trigger specific college supports.

#### Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision

**(where applicable).** Having examined appropriate QA / Governance procedures, comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme. (Especially relevant for move to online delivery / assessment)

N/A

## Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

*The panel should complete this section with commentary against each criterion to support the recommendation given in the 'Satisfactory?' column i.e. Yes, No, or Partially.*

*If 'Yes', there should be a comment citing the evidence for this finding. Likewise, there should be an explanation as to why the panel have concluded that the criterion has either not been met or only partially so.*

### 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. <sup>1</sup>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	Satisfactory

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<sup>1</sup>This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

**Criterion 2. The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</li> <li>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</li> <li>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</li> <li>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</li> <li>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.</li> <li>(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>g) For each programme and embedded programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The <b>minimum intended programme learning outcomes</b> and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are <b>consistent with</b> the relevant QQI awards standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>h) Where applicable, the <b>minimum intended module learning outcomes</b> are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</li> <li>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</li> </ul> <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.<sup>3</sup></p>
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Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regards to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of the programme are clearly stated. The programme learning outcomes are consistent with the award sought.</p> <p>The programme title is 'Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management' is appropriate for the programme proposed. While the Minimum Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) and the Minimum Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) are stated clearly and are specified for each module, there is insufficient evidence that these outcomes can be achieved through selected module content and associated assessments. <i>Accordingly, there is a Special Condition relating to the written curriculum (Criterion 5) and to the assessment strategy (Criterion 10).</i></p>

<sup>2</sup> Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

<sup>3</sup> Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

**Criterion 3. The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)**

- a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.<sup>4</sup>
- b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
  - (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
  - (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
  - (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
  - (iv) There is evidence<sup>5</sup> of learner demand for the programme.
  - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>6</sup>.
  - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>7</sup>
- c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
- d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
- e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Programme	Satisfactory ? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The rationale for the programme is clear. The evidence of market demand is presented from a variety of sources including references to other project management programmes, an employer survey, graduate sentiment and state and private agency reports. Other programmes are referenced that address the market need although they are not directly comparable. Some are offered at different NFQ levels while others address specific industrial sectors and targeted skill-sets.</p> <p>The college has satisfactory processes and procedures to continually update the programme including reference to an Industrial Advisory Board (IAB), However, the panel noted that although the membership of the IAB that will advise this programme include experienced industrialists, there are very few with appropriate project management experience.</p> <p><i>Accordingly, the panel recommends that a dedicated IAB with appropriately qualified and experienced Project Managers is put in place.</i></p>

<sup>4</sup> Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

<sup>5</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

<sup>6</sup> It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

<sup>7</sup> There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.



#### Criterion 4. The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

- a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied<sup>8</sup>.
- b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.
- c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR<sup>9</sup>) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
- d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
- e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
- f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
  - (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
  - (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
  - (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
- g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Programme	Satisfactory ? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regards to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p><u>Access</u></p> <p>Entry criteria to the programme are made clear. Students may access the programme either by having already attained a Level 8 degree or a cognate Level 7 degree. Failing that, they may be considered through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route where learners are required to have at least 3 years relevant experience. Learners for whom English is not a first language must demonstrate proficiency in English with CEFR B2+ (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) or recognised equivalent. Evidence of English proficiency is required through recognised English language tests (IELTS, Cambridge Certificate or DBS English Assessment).</p>

<sup>8</sup> Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf) (accessed 26/09/2015)

		<p><i>While the programme team explained the RPL process satisfactorily, the panel finds that there is a lack of detailed documentation to describe it adequately. The panel recommends that DBS consider providing more detailed documentation on the RPL process used for this programme.</i></p> <p>The programme title reflects the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p><u>Progression</u></p> <p>A list of four DBS Level 9 programmes is provided to which graduates may progress from the Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management. These programmes include MSc in Management Practice, Masters in Business Administration and MSc Digital Marketing.</p>
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## Criterion 5. The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

<p>a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.</p> <p>b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles<sup>10</sup>.</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>j) The programme <b>duration</b> (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its <b>fulltime equivalent contact time</b> (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.<sup>11</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regards to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme partially meets this criterion.</p> <p>The programme is well laid out and structured so that the learner is presented with fundamental project management building blocks in Semester 1 that feed into more applied modules in Semester 2. Documentation is comprehensive and detailed.</p> <p><i>However, the panel finds that the overview approach to project management knowledge including tools and frameworks as detailed in the curriculum does not enable students to fully achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes, e.g. MIPLO 5 ('Select and effectively utilise project management tools and technologies for planning and execution').</i></p> <p><b>It is a special condition of validation that the Learning Outcomes of each module must be restated with more detail on specific project management knowledge and skills and that the assessment marking rubric must reflect specific learning outcomes.</b></p>

<sup>10</sup> This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

<sup>11</sup> If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

		<p>The programme does not have a placement element, opting instead to include a capstone simulation project. <i>The panel finds that the simulation project may be less integrated with the other modules than it could be. Consequently, it recommends that the programme team considers including a blank working case study approach that will move with students throughout the modules and form the basis for simulation.</i></p>
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**Criterion 6. There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**

<p>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).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff<sup>12</sup> (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development<sup>13</sup> opportunities<sup>14</sup>.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>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.</p>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion. The academic staff members have the requisite qualifications and experience to deliver the programme as currently set out. The College requires lecturers to be qualified to at least master’s degree level. Exceptions are made where staff have extensive relevant industry experience. There are currently two Full-Time and six Part-Time academic staff members. However the panel recommends that that the programme would be greatly enhanced if selected lecturers upskilled to level 9 at a minimum in the specialism of Project Management.

<sup>12</sup> Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme’s provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

<sup>13</sup> Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

<sup>14</sup> Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff’s professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

**Criterion 7: There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned**

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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)</li> <li>(ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)</li> <li>(iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment</li> <li>(iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable</li> <li>(v) technical support</li> <li>(vi) administrative support</li> <li>(vii) company placements/internships – if applicable</li> </ul> <p>c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Planned intake (first five years) and</li> <li>(ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.</li> </ul> <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>DBS has suitable learning and teaching facilities and support resources to deliver the programme as presented and are in a position to increase the physical space should student numbers require. Students and staff have full Office 365 available to them and current licences (including MS project) can be extended when required. The programme team envisage growing the student numbers to a maximum of 75 students per intake over the first 5 years of the programme. <i>However, the panel notes that it is not clear that there is a structured plan in place to cater for the additional physical and teaching resources required as student numbers grow. Therefore, the panel recommends that a comprehensive plan to match physical resources (including software licenses) to growing student numbers is completed.</i></p>

**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>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criterion and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>There are arrangements embedded in the programme to encourage group working, including collaborative projects. The learning environment is not complemented by a student placement and so contact with real world projects is limited. As much access to non-DBS generated project management scenarios and learning material might usefully be encouraged. <i>Therefore, the panel recommends that students are encouraged and facilitated to become student members of PMI, APM and involved in online PM events and participation with industry best practice .</i></p>

### Criterion 9. There are sound teaching and learning strategies

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support<sup>15</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>DBS has excellent learning monitoring and support tools. The panel notes (<i>See Special Condition 1</i>) there is an opportunity to facilitate students to reach the programme learning outcomes by restating the module learning outcomes (see Criterion 5) with more emphasis on specific project management skills.</p> <p>The panel recognises that fulfilling Special Condition 1 herein may impact the learning and teaching strategy. <i>Consequently the panel recommends that that the teaching and learning strategy is reviewed in light of fulfilling Condition 1.</i></p> <p>Learning is very efficiently delivered and monitored on-line through a variety of tools including Moodle, Zoom and plug-in tools like Padlet. Students can build rapport and engage in collaborative work by using Zoom break-out facilities. Cross programme interaction is made possible through a virtual common room. There is a good mix of formative and summative assessment enhancing student teacher interaction and building student confidence.</p>

<sup>15</sup> Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.



## Criterion 10. There are sound assessment strategies

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i><sup>16</sup></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.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written <i>programme assessment strategy</i> for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.<sup>18</sup></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.<sup>19</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	partially	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme partially meets this criterion. Formative assessment is particularly evident in the assessment strategy as described.</p> <p>The panel notes that a programme assessment strategy is not currently available.</p> <p><i>The panel notes that in fulfilling the special Condition 1 detailed under Criterion 5, the module assessment strategy will be impacted. Condition 1 notes that the learning outcomes must be restated and 'the assessment marking rubric must reflect specific learning outcomes'.</i></p> <p><i>Consequently, the panel recommends that a programme assessment strategy is completed and that it fully reflects the changes arising from fulfilling Special Condition 1.</i></p>

<sup>16</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>17</sup> This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

<sup>18</sup> The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>19</sup> If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

**Criterion 11. Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for**

<p>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.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities<sup>20</sup>.</p> <p>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><sup>21</sup> and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.</p> <p>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).</p>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regards to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The programme will be offered both face-to-face and on-line. There is a dedicated DBS student experience team and a Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU), where students are offered a wide range of supports including academic, health and well-being, student mentoring and career guidance. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with learner support services.</p>

<sup>20</sup> For more information on making reasonable accommodations see [www.AHEAD.ie](http://www.AHEAD.ie) and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

<sup>21</sup> 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-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 assurance<sup>22</sup> 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>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>There is a comprehensive faculty and academic management structure in place for the programme. The Course Director is responsible for the overall management, development, coordination and delivery of the programme. Module Leaders are the main module lecturers and they ensure that modules are kept up to date. There is a range of administrative and academic support positions which support the operation and <i>management of the programme.</i></p> <p><i>The panel notes that the position of Course Director is shared across numerous and diverse programmes. The panel recommends that DBS should consider appointing a dedicated Course Director/Course Leader for the programme.</i></p>

<sup>22</sup> See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

## Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

### 3.1 Principal programme: Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management

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 ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

#### Reasons for the overall recommendation

1.

#### Commendations

1. The Panel commends DBS on the quality of the submission which showed rigour, thoroughness and evidence of research
2. The panel commends the staff for their enthusiasm, their teamwork and their openness in defence of the programme and for their willingness to take on board recommendations and suggestions made by the Panel

#### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

1. ***The learning outcomes for each module must be restated with more detail on specific project management knowledge and skills, and the assessment marking rubric must reflect specific learning outcomes.***

#### Embedded programme: na

Select one	
N/A	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;
N/A	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
N/A	Not satisfactory.

#### Reasons for the overall recommendation

1.

## Commendations

### Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

#### Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

- 1. The learning outcomes for each module must be restated with more detail on specific project management knowledge and skills, and the assessment marking rubric must reflect specific learning outcomes.***

#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

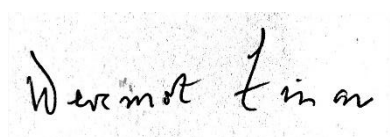
- 1. The panel recommends that DBS consider appointing a dedicated Course Director/Course Leader for the programme.***
- 2. The panel recommends that the programme would be greatly enhanced by selected lecturers upskilling themselves to Level 9 at a minimum in the specialism of Project management.***
- 3. The panel recommends that a dedicated Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) with appropriately qualified and experienced Project Managers is put in place.***
- 4. The panel recommends that DBS considers providing more detailed documentation on the RPL process.***
- 5. The panel recommends that the programme team considers including a blank working case study approach that will move students throughout the modules and form the basis for the project simulation.***
- 6. The panel recommends that a comprehensive plan to match physical resources (including software licenses) to growing student numbers is completed.***
- 7. The panel recommends that students are encouraged and facilitated to become student members of PMI and/or APM.***
- 8. The panel recommends that a programme assessment strategy is completed and that it fully reflects the changes arising from fulfilling the proposed Special Condition 1.***
- 9. The panel recommends that that the teaching and learning strategy is reviewed in light of fulfilling proposed Special Condition 1 changes.***

## Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: **Mr Dermot Finan**

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dermot Finan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the "Disclaimer" section header.

### 3.2 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. Proposed programme schedules *(post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)*

### 1.1 Proposed programme and stage schedules

#### Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management – Full-time

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		Dublin Business School						
<b>Programme Title</b>		Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management						
<b>Award Title</b>		Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management						
<b>Stage Exit Award Title<sup>3</sup></b>		N/A						
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		Full-Time						
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		As per module descriptors						
<b>Award Class<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>	<b>Stage NFQ Level<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Stage EQF Level<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>ISCED Subject code</b>
Major	8	6	Award	8	6	60	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2021	0413
<b>Module Title</b> (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		<b>Semester no where applicable</b> (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	<b>Module</b>	<b>Credit Number<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>		<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>	

		Status <sup>23</sup>	NFQ Level <sup>1</sup> where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directe d e- learnin g	Hours of Indep endent Learn ing	Work - base d learn ing effort <sup>24</sup>	C.A. %	Supervise d Project %	Proctore d practical demonstr ation %	Proctored written exam %
Creating an Environment for Successful Projects	1	M	8	5	125	16	58	51		100			
Project Feasibility and Planning	1	M	8	10	250	36	62	152		100			
Communication in Project Leadership and Team Development	1	M	8	10	250	36	62	152		100			
Project Management IT Essentials	1	M	8	5	125	16	58	51		50		50	
Project Execution	2	M	8	5	125	16	58	51		50		50	
Project Monitoring, Control and Evaluation	2	M	8	10	250	36	62	152		100			
Delivering Change and Innovation	2	M	8	5	125	16	58	51		100			
Project Management Simulation	2	M	8	10	250	16	88	146			100		

<sup>23</sup> Mandatory (M) or elective (E)

<sup>24</sup> Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.



## Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management –Part-time

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		Dublin Business School												
<b>Programme Title</b>		Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management												
<b>Award Title</b>		Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management												
<b>Stage Exit Award Title<sup>3</sup></b>		N/A												
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		Part-Time												
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		As per module descriptors												
<b>Award Class<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>		<b>Stage NFQ Level<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>Stage EQF Level<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>ISCED Subject code</b>			
Major	8	6	Award		8		6		60	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2021	0413			
<b>Module Title</b> (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		<b>Semester no where applicable</b> (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	<b>Module</b>		<b>Credit Number<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>					<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>			
			<b>Status<sup>25</sup></b>	<b>NFQ Level<sup>1</sup> where specified</b>	<b>Credit Units</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Class (or equiv) Contact Hours</b>	<b>Directed e-learning</b>	<b>Hours of Independent Learning</b>	<b>Work-based learning effort<sup>26</sup></b>	<b>C.A. %</b>	<b>Supervised Project %</b>	<b>Proctored practical demonstration %</b>	<b>Proctored written exam %</b>
Creating an Environment for Successful Projects		1	M	8	5	125	12	56	57		100			

<sup>25</sup> Mandatory (M) or elective (E)

<sup>26</sup> Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Communication in Project Leadership and Team Development	1	M	8	10	250	18	62	170		100			
Project Management IT Essentials	1	M	8	5	125	12	56	57		50		50	
Project Feasibility and Planning	2	M	8	10	250	18	62	170		100			
Project Execution	2	M	8	5	125	12	56	57		50		50	
Delivering Change and Innovation	2	M	8	5	125	12	56	57		100			
Project Monitoring, Control and Evaluation	3	M	8	10	250	18	62	170		100			
Project Management Simulation	3	M	8	10	250	12	86	152			100		

