



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

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	27 July 2020
Date of report	06 August 2020

Section A. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing
	Award	Higher Diploma in Science
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory	Satisfactory, subject to proposed special condition identified

Embedded programme 1	Title	N/a
	Award	N/a
	Credit	N/a
	Recommendation Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory	N/a

Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
David Denieffe	Chair	IT Carlow
Matthias Glowatz	Subject Matter Expert	UCD
Pierangelo Rosati	Subject Matter Expert	DCU
Andrew Bradley	Industry Representative	Director of Bradley Brand and Design Ltd.
Mary Doyle	Secretary	Griffith College
Amy Ní Mhurchú	Learner Representative	IADT & University of Limerick

Section B. 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
Full-Time	01 Sep 2020	12 months	2	5	75
Part-Time	01 Sep 2020	18 months	2	5	75
Intake Schedule e.g. January September		2 intakes: ● September intake ● March/April intake			

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The panel explored the identified enrolment with the provider team, particularly in relation to proposed learner numbers (ranging from 5 to 300 per annum). The provider indicated that the numbers identified are realistic, however, DBS will work to government guidelines on class-sizes and group accordingly (with the possibility of learners both on-site and remote).

The Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing Management programme has been developed as a result of an identified skills gap in the Human Capital Initiative fund and Springboard plus calls. It is hoped that this funding will support enrolment to this programme.

The panel recommended that the provider consider engaging with SMEs, social and community organisations, and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to support long-term feasibility of the programme, with regards to possible sponsored enrolments.

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 in Science in Digital Marketing is a conversion programme for graduates who wish to acquire core digital marketing skills. Participants will receive practical training in key digital skills such as digital marketing management, digital content and storytelling, digital marketing communications, marketing technologies and tools, e-Commerce and marketing financials, digital marketing analytics and campaign metrics and the capstone module. Participants will work towards the completion of a digital portfolio as their capstone project. The programme emphasis is on the development of the knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the role of the digital marketing professional. Communication and teamwork skills are fostered and real issues from the rapidly changing world of digital marketing are discussed and analysed.

The programme will be delivered in a flexible manner, consisting of lectures, workshops, group work, blended learning and guest speakers from industry. Throughout the programme, learners will acquire the necessary skills and acumen to appraise and operationalise digital marketing opportunities and challenges and effectively integrate these into decision-making roles with an organisation. The programme will enable graduates to play an active role in a diverse range of digital marketing roles and/or be in a position to take up further Level 9 postgraduate studies, such as the Master of Science in Digital Marketing.

Target learner groups	
<p>As this is a conversion programme, the Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing is aimed at learners with a Level 8 honours bachelor's degree with a minimum pass classification in a non-cognate area from a recognised third level institution. 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 marketing) who wish to specialise in the field of digital marketing.</p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time / Part-time

The teaching and learning modalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lectures ● Case-based learning ● Guest speakers ● Workshops/computer lab work ● Individual and group work ● Digital toolbox skills development ● Online synchronous and asynchronous sessions

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role	Profile	WTE
Lecturing staff	<p>Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Master's qualification in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marketing ● Digital Marketing ● Marketing Analytics ● Social Media Marketing ● Marketing Technology ● Business Analytics ● Digital Portfolios <p>Individuals with Level 8 qualifications in the above disciplines who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience may also be considered.</p>	<p>6 part-time lecturers and 2 full-time lecturers.</p> <p>This programme can be delivered through current faculty.</p>

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	1:25

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

The panel are satisfied that the programme outline provides sufficient detail to facilitate it to deliberate on the proposed programme.
The information provided and the staffing levels indicates are appropriate to meet programme delivery requirements.
Programme staff have been identified and named in the programme document (section 7), and CVs were provided with the application. All current programme staff are appropriately qualified/experienced in the industry and procedures are in place to recruit additional staff if/as required.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)

Code	Title	Last enrolment date
N/A	N/A	N/A

Section C. Other noteworthy features of the application

The Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing Management (Level 8, 60 ECTS) programme proposal has been developed as a result of the identified skills gap in the Human Capital Initiative fund and the Springboard plus call. The provider hope to enrol learner through these funded opportunities.

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

The provider has established procedures for Quality Assurance (QA) under section 29 of the 2012 Act.

These procedures were approved by QQI following the provider's participation in the reengagement for QA in December 2019. The provider's use of technology enhanced learning was approved as part of this reengagement process - therefore, this programme falls within the provider's Approved Scope of Provision.

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

Criterion 1. The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme

<p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.¹</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>As an established provider of higher education programmes, DBS has met the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. DBS has established procedures for Quality Assurance (QA) under section 29 of the 2012 Act – including those for access, transfer and progression and Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL). These procedures were approved by QQI following the provider’s participation in the reengagement for QA in December 2019.</p> <p>DBS’s provision of technology-enhanced learning was approved as part of this reengagement process, and therefore this proposed programme falls within the DBS’s permitted scope of provision.</p> <p>DBS has provided a copy of the letter to be submitted to QQI with the application for the revalidation of the programme. The letter contains the signature and declaration required under sub-criteria 1b) and 1c).</p>

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

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

- a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
 - b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
 - (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
 - c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
 - d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.
 - e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
 - f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
 - (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
 - (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
 - g) For each programme and embedded programme
 - (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.²
 - (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.³

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the consistency of programme objectives and outcomes with QQI awards sought.</p> <p>The programme aims, learning outcomes and module content has been mapped against both the NFQ Level 8 Science and Business Award Standards. The mapping is articulated within the programme documents provided. While the programme team had considered using the business stem, as the programme developed, it became clear that the programme was more appropriately aligned to the science stem, due to the technological and applied nature of this programme.</p> <p>The panel recommend that the programme team review the MIPLOs to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and award standards chosen.</p>

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

³ 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.

		In addition, the panel recommends that the explicitly specified MIMLOs are reviewed to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and their assessment strategy.
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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)

<p>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.⁴</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).</p> <p>(iv) There is evidence⁵ of learner demand for the programme.</p> <p>(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁶.</p> <p>(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁷</p> <p>c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The provider notes within the application documentation that the programme has been designed and developed following industry consultation. Feedback has been sought through DBS's marketing industrial advisory board, which comprises representatives from the HE-sector as well as the industry.</p> <p>In developing the programme, DBS has also drawn upon sector reports, and addressed skills gaps highlighted in national reports (supporting HCI and Springboard initiatives).</p>

⁴ 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.

⁵ This might be predictive or indirect.

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

⁷ 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.

		<p>The panel recommends that the provider engage with industry groups such as ISME, social/community organisations and NGOs to support the long-term sustainability of the programme, to facilitate graduate employment and to provide interesting options for learner projects (such as, for example, Google’s online challenge https://get.google.com/onlinechallenge/).</p> <p>A stated outcome of industry consultation has been an emphasis within the curriculum on the development of relevant skills. The panel recommend that the programme team review the programme’s modules to ensure the aspiration for the development of responsible, culturally intelligent, GDPR focused, and ethical practitioners is reflected throughout the programme/modules and their assessment, to facilitate learners to develop their own ethical sensibilities.</p>
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Criterion 4. The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

<p>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 satisfied⁸.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 (CEFR⁹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The provider has established clear entry requirements for both full-time and part-time cohorts. The programme information clearly specifies the learning that applicants are expected to have achieved prior to being accepted for enrolment. Specifically, learners are expected to hold an NFQ Level-8 award in a non-cognate discipline or otherwise establish equivalence of this through RPL or RPEL.</p> <p>DBS has procedures in place to consider applications for RPL and RPEL. The provider will</p>

⁸ 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

⁹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

	<p>assess any submission of experiential learning to see that they have achieved NFQ Level 8 outcomes.</p> <p>The programme team confirmed that it opens each programme module assuming the learner has no background in the subject area (based on their non-cognate qualification for entry) and commences teaching on that basis.</p> <p>Learners whose first language is not English must also present evidence of a B2+ CEFR.</p> <p>The provider's application documentation sets out the channels for communication with learners, and the nature of the information that will be provided to them. DBS has experience of this in relation to the provider's established programmes, and examples of the provider's current practices in this area demonstrate compliance with QQI regulation on information to learners, including arrangements for Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL).</p> <p>The title of the programme appropriately reflects the programme learning outcomes, is unambiguous and clearly conveys the award class to which it leads.</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 programme 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 principles¹⁰.</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 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.¹¹</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The programme team confirmed that it opens each programme module assuming the learner has no background in the subject area (based on their non-cognate qualification for entry) and commences teaching on that basis. In addition, the programme team indicated that they facilitate hand-over between modules to ensure no gaps and/or duplications occur between modules.</p> <p>The panel recommends that the team review individual modules’ content to ensure that any duplication of content is removed, rather than relying on the programme team communication to minimise.</p> <p>The panel explored the sequencing of modules within the programme with the team and were happy that</p>

¹⁰ 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.

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

		<p>the programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented.</p> <p>Some specific comments/recommendations were made in relation to the programme content. The panel recommends that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ the MIMLOs for all modules are reviewed to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and their assessment strategy. □ the content of the proposed programme be reviewed and amended to reflect a more strategic focus within the individual modules. □ the content of the proposed programme be reviewed and updated as appropriate to ensure that the programme team's aspiration to develop responsible, culturally intelligent, GDPR-savvy, and ethically focused graduates is reflected throughout the modules, to facilitate their exploring and developing their own ethical sense. □ the programme team consider an alternative title for the module: E-Commerce and Marketing Financials, to indicate a more current and future-friendly focus.
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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 staff¹² (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 development¹³ opportunities¹⁴.</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>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>Within the provider’s application document, an outline of programme staff is provided in section 8. This includes a list of staff members, and staff CVs were also provided in Appendix 2.</p> <p>During the validation event, the panel met with a number of staff involved in the proposed programme’s development and identified as likely to deliver various modules. During the interviews these staff consistently demonstrated appropriate disciplinary expertise, pedagogic understanding and professionalism.</p> <p>The programme document also contains clear information pertaining to performance management as</p>

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

		<p>well as the composition and responsibilities of the programme board.</p> <p>DBS currently has sufficient staff to deliver the proposed programme, and establishes recruitment procedures established should gaps in staffing arise in the future.</p>
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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"> □ 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) □ suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) □ printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment □ suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable □ technical support □ administrative support □ company placements/internships – if applicable <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"> (i) Planned intake (first five years) and (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. <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 Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The physical resources required by the programme are specified in section 9 of the application document. These are precise, and consistent with the defined purpose of the programme, and its planned blended delivery.</p> <p>DBS is an established provider, with systems and resources in place to provide for administrative, technical, IT and human comfort needs. The provider’s premises have sufficient learning and teaching spaces to deliver the proposed programme, which are appropriately equipped. Appropriate blended delivery requirements are also in place to support the programme’s delivery.</p> <p>Throughout the premises, access and facilities for staff and students with disabilities are available.</p> <p>The provider is continuing to develop its contingency plans for programme delivery in line with government guidelines in relation to Covid-19.</p>

		<p>The five-year plan for the programme for the programme was presented in the documentation. The panel recommends that the provider liaise with SMEs and their representative organisations, social and community organisations, and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to support long-term (post-HCI) feasibility of the programme, with regards to possible sponsored enrolments.</p>
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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>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion. DBS is an established provider, with a track record of facilitating an appropriate and supportive learning environment.</p> <p>Services to support learners are comprehensive and include support for learners with learning differences and disabilities, international learners, pastoral support, counselling and career guidance.</p> <p>DBS representatives outlined appropriate strategies for monitoring and supporting student progress, in particular the work of the student engagement and success unity (SESU). The learning environment at DBS has also been enhanced through extension of the induction and orientation processes, which includes workshops/classes facilitated by the library staff to support use of library resources for study and research, promote academic integrity and develop academic writing skills.</p> <p>The proposed programme does not include any modules or components that occur in the workplace.</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, support¹⁵ 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 Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The programme team confirmed that it opens each programme module assuming the learner has no background in the subject area (based on their non-cognate qualification for entry) and commences teaching on that basis. In addition, the programme team indicated that they facilitate hand-over between modules to ensure no gaps and/or duplications occur between modules.</p> <p>The panel recommends that the team review individual modules' content to ensure that any duplication of content is removed, rather than relying on the programme team communication to minimise.</p> <p>The physical resources required by the programme are precise, and consistent with the defined purpose of the programme, and its planned blended delivery.</p> <p>DBS representatives outlined appropriate strategies for monitoring and supporting student progress, in particular the work of the student engagement and success unity (SESU). The team outlined the induction and orientation processes, which include workshops/classes facilitated by the library staff to support use of library resources for study and research, promote academic integrity and develop academic writing skills.</p>

¹⁵ 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 Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards¹⁶</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.¹⁷</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.¹⁸</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.¹⁹</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Partially	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>The panel was advised that all assessment for the programmes conforms to the DBS Assessment Regulations which are informed by QQI’s Assessment and Standards, revised 2013, and QQI’s Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining, revised February 2015.</p> <p>While assessment seems appropriate at individual module-level, the panel felt that it was imperative that the programme’s (formative and summative) assessment strategies, which are articulated in sections 5.6 and 5.10, respectively, of the programme document, should be reviewed. The panel agreed that a condition of validation is that the programme team should consider the assessment strategies and mechanisms particularly in the context of the extent of group assessment utilised within the programme. The current programme assessment strategy does not</p>

¹⁶ See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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).

		<p>support an overall process which is valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic.</p> <p>DBS indicated that it has procedures in place to ensure that it only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for an award for which a programme has been validated, if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.</p>
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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 disabilities²⁰.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students²¹ 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>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>Within the provider's submission for validation of the proposed programme, a student handbook is provided in Appendix 5, which contains information specific to the programme.</p> <p>Within that handbook, learners are referred to the location of the provider's complaints and appeals policy, and the DBS QA manual which is available on the provider's website.</p> <p>It should be noted that the programme does not require learners to make choices regarding selection of appropriate learning pathways (there are no elective modules).</p> <p>There is no work placement element within the programme.</p>

²⁰ 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).

²¹ 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 assurance²² 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 Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>Following review of the provider’s application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel finds that the provider has satisfied this criterion.</p> <p>DBS’s QA system was recently approved by QQI (in Dec 2019) through the current reengagement process. That process encompassed a review of the provider’s governance structure, assessment practices and access, transfer and progression procedures. The proposed programme interfaces with that QA Framework.</p> <p>The submission for validation of the proposed programme contains information regarding programme-specific criteria for the selection of suitable staff to teach into individual modules.</p> <p>The documentation also outlines the physical resources necessary to meet the programme’s requirements.</p> <p>Management and operations arrangements for the proposed programme are provided in the submission documents, are clear and coherent, and are considered appropriate.</p>

²² See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 Principal programme: Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing

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;
X	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (<u>minor</u>) 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

The panel are making the overall recommendation on the basis of its review of the provider's application documentation and evidence and testimony provided during the panel (virtual) event.

Commendations

The panel commended DBS and the programme team on the following

1. The documentation provided for review of the programme for validation, both in terms of its clarity and presentation.
2. The enthusiasm of the programme team in its engagement with the panel (particularly within the virtual setting)
3. The student supports available and provided to learners within DBS.
4. The panel also notes that the provider was receptive to the one condition and the recommendations proposed by the panel. All associated discussions were constructive.

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

Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel proposes as a special condition is that

1. While assessment seems appropriate at individual module-level, the panel felt that it was imperative that the programme's (formative and summative) assessment strategies, which are articulated in sections 5.6 and 5.10, respectively, of the programme document, should be reviewed. The panel agreed that the programme team should consider the assessment strategies and mechanisms particularly in the context of the extent of group assessment utilised within the programme. The current programme assessment strategy does not support an overall process which is valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic. This matter needs to be resolved, and the programme schedule and module descriptors updated, before the final programme document is submitted to QQI for validation request purposes.

Recommendations

In addition, following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel recommends that

1. the provider considers engaging with SMEs and their representative organisations, social and community organisations, and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to support long-term feasibility of the programme, with regards to possible sponsored enrolments. In addition, this engagement would serve to facilitate possible graduate employment opportunities and to provide interesting options for learner projects within the programme.
2. the programme team review the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPOs) to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and award standards chosen.
3. the explicitly specified minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) are reviewed to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and their assessment strategy.
4. the programme team review the programme's modules to ensure the aspiration for the development of responsible, culturally intelligent, GDPR focused, and ethical practitioners is reflected throughout the programme/modules and their assessment, to facilitate learners to develop their own ethical sensibilities.
5. the programme team review individual modules' content to ensure that any duplication of content is removed, rather than relying on the programme team communication to minimise.
6. the programme team review and amend content of the proposed programme to ensure they reflect a more strategic focus within the individual modules.
7. the programme team consider an alternative title for the module: E-Commerce and Marketing Financials, to indicate a more current and future-friendly focus.

Embedded programme: N/A

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

Following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel proposes the following special condition of validation

1. While programme assessment seems appropriate at individual module-level, the panel felt that it was imperative that the programme's (formative and summative) assessment strategies, which are articulated in sections 5.6 and 5.10, respectively, of the programme document, should be reviewed. The panel agreed that the programme team should reconsider the assessment strategies and mechanisms particularly in the context of the extent of group assessment utilised within the programme. The current programme assessment strategy does not support an overall process which is valid, reliable, fair, transparent and authentic. This matter needs to be resolved, and the programme schedule and module descriptors updated, before the final programme document is submitted to QQI for validation request purposes.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

In addition, following review of the provider's application documentation and the panel (virtual) event, the panel recommends that

1. the provider considers engaging with SMEs and their representative organisations, social and community organisations, and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to support long-term (post-HCI) feasibility of the programme, with regards to possible sponsored enrolments. In addition, this engagement would serve to facilitate possible graduate employment opportunities and to provide interesting options for learner projects within the programme.
2. the programme team review the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPOs) to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and award standards chosen.
3. the explicitly specified minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) are reviewed to ensure their appropriateness to the programme level and their assessment strategy.
4. the programme team review the programme's modules to ensure the aspiration for the development of responsible, culturally intelligent, GDPR focused, and ethical practitioners is reflected throughout the programme/modules and their assessment, to facilitate learners to develop their own ethical sensibilities.
5. the programme team review individual modules' content to ensure that any duplication of content is removed, rather than relying on the programme team communication to minimise.
6. the programme team review and amend content of the proposed programme to ensure they reflect a more strategic focus within the individual modules.
7. the programme team consider an alternative title for the module: E-Commerce and Marketing Financials, to indicate a more current and future-friendly focus.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

Panel secretary, Mary Doyle has previously held the role of Registrar at Dublin Business School. Since leaving this role, in 2009, she has not engaged in any professional relationship with the College and/or its staff. In addition, there have been significant changes in senior/middle management within DBS in the interim.

'No interests have been declared' by the rest of the evaluation panel.

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

Panel chairperson: Mr David Denieffe

Date: 12th August 2020



Signed:

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 1. Proposed programme schedules (post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School												
Programme Title		Higher Diploma in Science Digital Marketing												
Award Title		Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing												
Stage Exit Award Title		N/A												
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Full-time												
Teaching and learning modalities														
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):		Stage NFQ Level		Stage EQF Level		Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code			
Major	8	7	Award		8		7		60	Sept 2020	0414			
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
			Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Number	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Digital Marketing Management		1	M	8	5	125	16	58	51		100			
Digital Content and Storytelling		1	M	8	5	125	16	58	51		100			
Digital Marketing Communications		1	M	8	10	250	24	74	152		100			
Digital Marketing Technologies and Tools		1	M	8	10	250	32	66	152		100			
E-Commerce and Marketing Financials		2	M	8	10	250	32	66	152		100			
Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics		2	M	8	10	250	32	66	152		100			
Digital Portfolio		2	M	8	10	250	16	88	146		100			
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)														

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School											
Programme Title		Higher Diploma in Science Digital Marketing											
Award Title		Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing											
Stage Exit Award Title		N/A											
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Part-time											
Teaching and learning modalities													
Award Class	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level	Stage EQF Level	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code					
Major	8	7	Award	8	7	60	Sept 2020	0414					
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module		Credit Number	Total Student Effort Module (hours)				Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
			Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Number	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %
Digital Marketing Management		1	M	8	5	125	12	37	76		100		
Digital Content and Storytelling		1	M	8	5	125	12	37	76		100		
Digital Marketing Communications		1	M	8	10	250	18	70	162		100		
Digital Marketing Technologies and Tools		2	M	8	10	250	24	64	162		100		
E-Commerce and Marketing Financials		2	M	8	10	250	24	64	162		100		
Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics		3	M	8	10	250	24	64	162		100		
Digital Portfolio		3	M	8	10	250	12	86	152		100		
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													