Independent Panel Report on a Provider’s Programme Review

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| **Provider** | National College of Ireland |
| **Programme(s) Reviewed** | Major Awards:   * Master of Business Administration * Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (Exit Award only)   Minor Awards (embedded awards)   * Certificate in Business Intelligence * Certificate in The Science of Decision Making * Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership |

**Independent Panel Members**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role on Panel** | **Affiliation** |
| Danny Brennan | Chair | Former Registrar, Letterkenny IT and Principal, DNB Education Consultants |
| Michael Kelly | Recording Secretary | Education & Training Consultant |
| James Collins | Subject Matter Expert | Technical University Shannon |
| Stefan Jooss | Subject Matter Expert | University College Cork |
| Dan Taylor | Subject Matter Expert | University of South Wales |
| Siobhan Kinsella | Industry Representative | Noel Recruitment Group |
| Keeva Carpenter | Learner Representative | Postgraduate Student, Griffith College |

All members of the independent panel declared their independence of National College of Ireland and that they have no conflict of interest.

# Introduction

The National College of Ireland (NCI) or Coláiste Náisiúnta na hÉireann (CNÉ) is a not-for-profit, state aided third-level education institution based in central Dublin. Its mission has been to change lives through access to further education by bringing innovative learning to all areas of Irish society. This social justice heritage carries through to NCI’s business education programmes, placing business in the context of the wider society. Furthermore, NCI places a strong emphasis on the needs of the learner and provides a range of learning options that extend beyond traditional classroom dynamics.

NCI has approximately 5,500 learners enrolled on programmes within two Schools – Business and Computing. NCI offers 120 full-time and part-time QQI accredited programmes, across Business, Computing, Education, ICT and Psychology at Levels 6-9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). NCI also provides programmes in conjunction with a number of professional training organisations.

NCI successfully completed the QQI Re-Engagement process in June 2019, wherein NCI’s Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) and Handbook were formally approved.

# Evaluation Process

## Documents Supplied to the Panel

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Document Type** | **Document Name** |
| Programme Review Report | Master of Business Administration Provider Programme Review Report – 16 Nov 2021 |
| Self-Evaluation Report | Master Business Administration Programme Validation Self-Evaluation against Criteria for Validation – November 2021 |
| Revalidation Descriptor | Master Business Administration Programme Revalidation – November 2021 – Version 2 |
| Terms of Reference | Postgraduate Business Programmes - Terms of Reference, November 2021 |
| Postgraduate Business Modules | Summary Sheet - PG Business Modules |
| Postgraduate Business Programmes - Common Spine | Summary Sheet & Graphic Explanation |
| Current & Historic Module Overview | Postgraduate Business Modules (2015 v. 2021) |
| Staff CVs | Programme Revalidation - Postgraduate Business Programmes - Appendix 3 - Staff CVs, Nov 2021 |
| Postgraduate Business Modules - detailed module descriptors | Programme Revalidation - Postgraduate Business Programmes - Appendix 1 – School of Business Postgraduate Modules, Nov 2021 |
| Postgraduate Business Modules - sample assessments | Programme Revalidation - Postgraduate Business Programmes - Appendix 2 – Sample Assessments, Nov 2021 |
| External Examiner reports | External Examiner reports 2018-2020 |

## Provider’s Representatives Met

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Role / Job Title** |
| Prof Jimmy Hill | Vice President Academic Affairs & Research |
| Dr Colette Darcy | Dean of School of Business and Programme Director |
| Karen Jones | Registrar (designate)/Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services |
| Fabián Armendáriz | Lecturer in Entrepreneurship |
| David McCarthy | Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Specialist |
| John McGarrigle | Registrar & Company Secretary |
| Karen Murray BL | Lecturer in Law |
| Dr Paul Hanly | Lecturer in Economics |
| Victor Del Rosal | Lecturer, School of Computing |
| Dr Gerard Loughnane | Lecturer in Statistics |
| David Hurley | Assoc Lecturer in Entrepreneurship |
| William Hogan | Facilitator, Enterprise Simulation module |
| Dr Michelle Killian | Lecturer in Marketing & Entrepreneurship |
| Dr Philip McGovern | Associate Lecturer in Strategy & Management |
| Dr Louise Maguire | Lecturer in Marketing |
| Frances Keating | Lecturer (Assoc Faculty - School of Business) |
| Rob McDonald | Lecturer (Assoc Faculty - School of Business) |
| Anne Cooper | Lecturer in Accounting |
| Theresa Mulcahy | Lecturer in Accounting |
| Dr David Mothersill | Lecturer in Psychology |
| Karina Septore | Careers Advisor, Careers Office |
| Rachel Smith | Programme Coordinator, School of Business |
| Karen Mooney | Student Support Supervisor |
| Mary Buckley | Librarian |
| Leah Kinsella | Programme Coordinator, School of Business |
| Sheila Mahon | International Officer |

## Description of evaluation process

During November 2021, the NCI QA team, working in conjunction with the School of Business, provided the QQI review panel with a suite of documentation and related materials for the Programme Review and Revalidation process.

The QQI review panel comprised a Chair and three Subject Matter Experts, plus external Industry and Learner Representatives, together with a Report Writer.

The Programme Review process followed NCI’s own internal quality assurance (QA) processes which in turn are aligned with QQI’s *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines*. Reviews normally occur at five-yearly intervals, although the planned review had been extended by a further two years due to external factors. The review was framed against ten objectives with an approach which included a consideration of stakeholder feedback, historic programme performance and other data sources,

The suite of Postgraduate Business Programmes to be reviewed covered revalidation of seven existing programmes related to the four principal awards, plus a further four new proposed awards (exit/micro-credentials). Panel members carried out a desktop review of the Programme Revalidation documentation in late November 2021 prior to a site visit which took place in early December 2021. Due to the restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the panel review was arranged online via MS Teams. The panel followed a structured agenda covering the twelve QQI criteria for validation over the two days of the virtual site visit, with online sessions with representatives of NCI’s academic and QA management, teaching and support staff, plus learner representatives. This report has been prepared using oral evidence arising from these discussions together with information contained in supporting documents. The report has been reviewed by the panel prior to signing by the Chair.

# Panel Findings on Provider Programme Review Report

The following is the panel’s commentary and recommendations on the provider’s Programme Review Report. It follows the section structure of the report in headings and in sequence. References to specific parts of the provider report will use the relevant report reference, e.g. 2.2.4 Programme Management.

1. **Context and Terms of Reference for the Programme Review**

At the outset, the panel would like to commend the School of Business on the quality of the documentation presented. The consistent clear presentation made the task of navigating the documents considerably easier.

**Commentary:**

The panel is satisfied that NCI’s response to the most recent Programme Review Report was appropriate and comprehensive.

The panel has reviewed the Terms of Reference for the review, agreed with QQI, and in particular the Special Consideration included therein. The panel is satisfied that the Special Considerations are appropriate to a programmatic review process that must take account of developments in the institution. Such considerations include changes to NCI’s academic strategy, its teaching, learning and assessment strategy, the changing needs of international students and new QQI guidelines including Blended Learning and the institution’s capacity to deliver programmes effectively in all proposed modes.

The panel is satisfied that the Terms of Reference are appropriate and comprehensive.

**Recommendations:**

None

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1. **Provider Information and Programme Context**

**Commentary:**

The panel has reviewed NCI’s overall mission and strategy as articulated in the Programme Review Report. It commends NCI on its mission of widening access to education and the modalities employed to achieve this. The panel commends the School of Business for its development of an ambitious School Strategy that has transformed it from a teaching-only focused institution to one which is research active. This strategy is based on the three pillars of Student Engagement, Research Excellence and Global Community. The School also has ambitions to secure International Business School accreditation.

The School describes the MBA as the jewel in the crown of the School of Business offerings. The MBA with its focus on practical skills development, will give managers the required knowledge and expertise to augment their, and their organisations’ future development and growth. It is aimed at candidates with at least three years’ work experience and holding a minimum of a 2:2 classification level 8 award, seeking to start or develop a career in management. The programme is offered in part-time mode over two years.

The panel is supportive of the School’s proposal in the current review of incorporating a number of elective modules that are shared with the MSc suite of programmes. The School believes this will lead to economies without compromising the quality of the programme.

The panel is particularly impressed with the development of a set of School of Business Programme Learning Outcomes that ensures that all programmes and modules within its programmes, speak directly to the mission of the School.

The management of programmes outlined in the Programme Review Report, including the operation of programme committees as sub-committees of the School Committee, should ensure the effective operation of programmes.

The School proposed a number of changes as part of the programmatic review of the MBA. At a very high level the MIPLO’s have been revised and updated to bring them into line with the School Level Learning Outcomes.

The panel supports the programme’s suite of modules as presented. This suite of modules arose from a detailed exercise based on consideration of all the appropriate inputs to a comprehensive programmatic review process, as detailed in this report. Some modules were retired and replaced with more appropriate modules, and existing modules were subject to a detailed refreshment process to bring them up to date and ensure their ongoing relevance.

The credit weighting attaching to the Dissertation module is proposed to revert to 20 credits, to bring it in line with other Level 9 programmes in the School.

The programme team is also seeking to validate a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration as an exit award in order to ensure consistency across the Level 9 suite of programmes within the School of Business and to offer the option to that cohort of learners, who wish to graduate without the requirement to pursue a dissertation, to do so.

While the panel is supportive of the proposed suite of modules, it believes that the programme would benefit from more explicit references to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the circular economy, sustainability and ethics.

**Recommendations:**

1. Having reviewed the programmes as presented, the panel believes that the School might consider having more explicit references in the programme material to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the circular economy and the treatment of sustainability and ethics in the curriculum, which the panel believes is fundamental to the education and training of business graduates at Level 9.

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1. **Baseline qualitative and quantitative information**

### Programme Data Overview

*This section will include the panel’s views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider’s review report: Applications, Enrolment, Attrition Transfer and Progression, Award Classification and Graduate Destinations*

**Commentary:**

The panel understands that there are some limitations to the detail that the current Management Information Systems can provide. Notwithstanding this, the School has provided a comprehensive analysis of data relating to the programme.

Enrolment data detailed in section 3.1.2, shows that the programme continues to attract a high level of applications, with an acceptance rate averaging 50%, which the panel considers very satisfactory. The School has provided a comprehensive review of enrolment data for the programme model of delivery, by academic year and gender, by age and by domestic/international students. The percentage of females registered on the programme is significantly lower than male registrations and the School is actively addressing this issue.

The School has adopted a number of innovative marketing initiatives, including ‘refer a friend’ in return for a reduction in fees payable.

The panel supports the School’s decision to seek validation for the Postgraduate programme as an exit award. It also believes that the offering of three certificates as micro-credentials is an option that may appeal to some potential learners.

The panel reviewed the analysis of completion data provided in section 3.1.3 of the documentation. It would be preferable if the data presented were also expressed in percentage terms rather than solely in absolute terms, but this may be due to shortcomings in the MIS. Having said that, the School’s analysis of completion rate data shows the rates are consistently high.

The panel considered the School’s response to its analysis of award classifications in section 3.1.4. The number of H1 classifications is broadly in line with QQI masters degree award classifications, which may reflect the particular ambitions of the learner cohort. The panel commends the School on this achievement.

Given that the majority of the learners are in employment, the School has analysed the numbers from each graduating class reporting at least one promotion or career advancement. The figures in section 3.1.5 are very satisfactory and are testament to the quality of the programme in achieving its aim.

The panel commends the School on its practice of following up on its MBA graduates through a series of alumni events.

**Recommendations:**

1. The panel supports the speedy implementation of NCI’s new Flexible Curriculum System.

### Programme Delivery and Teaching & Learning Strategies

*This section will include the panel’s views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider’s review report: Physical Facilities and Resources, Timetabling, Learner Workload, Attendance, Teacher Learner Ratios, Community of Practice Learning, Teaching and Learning Strategies, Learning Outcomes achieved, Assessment Strategies.*

**Commentary:**

NCI, like all higher education providers, was forced to react very quickly to the situation it found itself in with the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel commends the School on the pro-active continuing investment in its online delivery methodologies, including its physical facilities and the upskilling of its faculty in this vital development, which will undoubtably help NCI deliver on its mission to widen access to education. The concept of dual delivery spaces is particularly welcomed by the panel.

The programme is delivered in either the physical or online classroom environment as appropriate. The panel support this model of blended delivery as it is suitable for the range of target learners on the programme. The panel also supports the methodology of block delivery of modules.

In section 3.2.2, the School provided detailed timetables for the programme, and the panel notes the positive feedback from the students for the model. The panel notes that the School goes to great lengths to spread the assessment load across the semesters and has reduced the assessment burden in most modules.

The Panel commends the School on its designation as an Autism Friendly Institute and for taking steps to adopt of universal design principles into its assessment strategies, which will help learners with different learning styles.

The panel is impressed with the degree of attendance monitoring and follow-up that is done in the programme.

The panel has reviewed the narrative provided around the assessment strategies for the programme in section 3.2.7. It commends the School for taking the opportunity presented by the Covid-19 contingency arrangements to not only reduce the assessment burden but also to design and deploy a wider range of assessment tools. These changes have received very positive support from the students as evidenced in their student experience surveys.

**Recommendations:**

None

1. **Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders**

### Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

**Commentary:**

The panel commends the School on its use of a focus group of current and past students to input into the review process. The focus group was complimentary of faculty and the range of support services offered, particularly the Library Help Centre. The panel notes that the focus groups were happy to continue an alumni engagement with the College after graduation.

**Recommendations:**

None

### Evaluation of the programme by Staff

**Commentary:**

The panel is supportive of the approach where, as previously noted, the School took the opportunity offered by the programmatic review process to develop a set of School of Business Programme Learning Outcomes and to use these to inform the MIPLOs for this programme.

**Recommendations:**

None

### Evaluation of the programme by external stakeholders

**Commentary:**

The panel commends the initiative by the School to engage with employers on a one-to-one basis to ascertain feedback on graduate skills required in the workplace.

The panel is happy to note the endorsement from employers of the growing reputation of the School in the business community.

**Recommendations:**

None

### External Examiner Feedback

**Commentary:**

The current external examiner is generally complimentary of the programme and an analysis of his reports has been a key element of the review process.

The panel notes that the responsibilities of external examiners in the Quality Assurance Manual include reviewing the appropriateness of MIPLOs, and while this does not appear to have been an issue raised by the external examiner to date, the panel is unclear how this is compatible with their overall quality assurance procedures relating to major changes to a programme. The panel believes this apparent anomaly should be addressed by NCI as it could lead to potential difficulties.

**Recommendations:**

The panel recommends that NCI address the apparent conflict where the duties of the external examiner include responsibility to review the appropriateness of the MIPLOs, presumably on an annual basis, the result of which may not be within the scope of NCI to amend other than as part of the quinquennial programmatic review process.

1. **Programme Quality Assurance**

### Complaints, appeals and commendations

**Commentary:**

The panel notes that In relation to the MSc International Business, no formal complaints were noted by the Registrar’s Office for the period under consideration. The panel commends the School on the arrangements that are in place to satisfactorily resolve issues in an informal manner.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Quality Assurance Systems and Processes**

**Commentary:**

The panel notes the concerns of faculty relating to access to reliable timely data to inform decision making and the efforts being made by the quality assurance team to address this issue.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Additional Quality Assurance Systems and Processes required (e.g. online delivery / assessment)**

**Commentary:**

The panel’s previous comments under programme delivery and assessment are appropriate also in this context.

**Recommendations:**

None

1. **Summary Analysis of the programme**

**Commentary:**

The panel believes that the NCI School of Business has carried out a thorough, comprehensive and detailed review of the programme. That review has taken into account the experiences of delivering the programme over the previous five years, NCI’s and the School’s strategic and academic plans and the views of all stakeholders, internal and external. The development of additional synergies, through module sharing with other programmes within the suite, will contribute to the goals of improving student choice and deliver significant economies in operational terms.

The panel is satisfied that the resulting programme will continue to offer a fulfilling learning experience to students and enable them to achieve their goals in life.

**Recommendations:**

1. **Revision of the programme**

*In this section the panel will respond to any proposals made by the provider in respect of changes to the programme arising from the review. The revised programme’s readiness for validation will be reported on in more detail in the Independent Evaluation Report for Validation.*

**Commentary:**

The following Table gives details of the changes to the programme, proposed by the School:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Current Modules** | **Proposed Change** | **Rationale for Change** |
| **Enterprise Management** | Entrepreneurial Dynamics | The module has undergone a refresh and update with new content included as part of this process. The new title now better reflects the content and intention of the module. |
| **Enterprise Simulation Game** | Enterprise Simulation  Game | A reframing of the current enterprise simulation game to focus more on a final capstone challenge at the end of the module to be completed over two intensive weekends. |
| **New Core Module** | The Science of Decision Making | Critical skills for modern managers include the ability to make effective decisions while using good judgement in situations of uncertainty. This module is designed to help learners become effective decision-makers in a dynamic and uncertain business environment where informational and cognitive limitations exits and who are able to adapt their two modes of thought; ‘system 1’ which is fast and allows us to make fast initiative decisions and ‘system 2’ which is slower and more analytical. |
| **New Core Module** | Sustainable Business Leadership | Consumer, shareholder, NGO and regulatory pressure for sustainable performance has grown rapidly over the past number of years. The competencies required to develop and manage a sustainable organisation are not commonly featured in Executive Education and should be. This module seeks to imbue in learners an understanding of the critical concepts and perspectives of sustainability research from an interdisciplinary perspective an in doing so to integrate sustainable business policies into strategy for core functional areas such as accounting, management, marketing and operations. |
| **Economics for Management** | Macroeconomics in a Global Context | The programme team have proposed a change to the Economics module on the MBA programme and in particular the way in which this programme is taught. This is reflected in the new programme title and in the revised and refreshed module content and assessment. The focus of this module is now firmly on applied behavioural economics which is more appropriate to the needs of future business leaders. |
| **Dissertation Credit Weighting** | The Dissertation credit weighting is increased to 20 ECTS in line with other Level 9 programmes | The Dissertation module was weighted at 15 credits on foot of feedback from the previous revalidation panel. This created an inconsistency within the School and a perception of unfairness amongst the MBA learner group. |
| **Movement of module from Core to Elective** | Services Marketing removed as a core module and replaced by Marketing in the Global Environment as an elective 5 credit module. | Move required to accommodate the introduction of the new Science of Decision Making module. This decision was also informed by the fact that Marketing is covered within the Entrepreneurial Dynamics modules and the Sustainable Business Leadership module and touched on again in the Enterprise Simulation Game. |
| **Movement of module from Core to Elective** | CRS and Business Ethics removed as a core module and now listed as a possible elective | The inclusion of the Sustainable Business Leadership module touches on many of the facets of CRS and ethics but does so from a business theory perspective. The CSR and Business Ethics module is still relevant and hence listed as a possible elective as it takes this subject matter more from the legal/governance perspective. |
| **New elective** | Business Intelligence | The module seeks to imbue in the learners an understanding of the language of data analytics and understanding of how data analytics can help inform and therefore guide effective decision making within organisations. |
| **New elective** | Management in Postmodern Markets | The module encourages learners to think about markets from a different perspective – as fragile and temporary socio-technological arrangements and ongoing organizational achievements. |
| **Retirement of Electives** | Services Marketing, International Marketing, Global Value Chain Management, Strategic ICT & eBusiness and Strategic Management and Technology | These modules are being made dormant to allow for three new electives to be introduced into the suite of offerings and ensure that the electives remain current and relevant for learners. |
| **Non-Credit Bearing Option** | Non-Credit Bearing Coaching Option | The Programme Team are keen to introduce the option for learners to have access to a Careers Coach will undertaking their programme of study. |

The panel is generally satisfied that, at a high level, the proposed revisions to the programme are well founded and appropriate. Notwithstanding this, the panel has made a number of comments and recommendations in the Independent Evaluation Report for Validation.

**Recommendations:**

1. Having reviewed the programmes as presented, the panel believes that the School might consider having more explicit references in the programme material to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the circular economy and the treatment of sustainability and ethics in the curriculum, which the panel believes is fundamental to the education and training of business graduates at Level 9.

# Overall Findings

In this section the panel will give its overall feedback on the conduct of the review and the findings therein. This feedback will inform future provider review processes and will also contribute to the refinement of any programmes being proposed for revalidation following this review process.

**Commentary on review process:**

The panel is satisfied that a thorough and robust process was put in place to guide the School Team in reviewing the suite of programmes that are the subject of this programmatic review. The process, led by the Dean of School of Business, has resulted in a set of documents that were very detailed and comprehensive.

The panel found the team with which it engaged during the virtual site visit, to be highly professional and committed to their individual modules. The engagement with the members of the team was conducted in a very collegiate manner. During the discussions, each member of the team demonstrated an openness to take on board points made by the panel.

**Recommendations on review process:**

1. The panel supports the speedy implementation of NCI’s new Flexible Curriculum System.
2. The panel recommends that NCI address the apparent conflict where the duties of the external examiner include responsibility to review the appropriateness of the MIPLOs, presumably on an annual basis, the result of which may not be within the scope of NCI to amend other than as part of the quinquennial programmatic review process.

**Commentary on programme revisions:**

The panel supports the programme’s suite of modules as presented. This suite of modules arose from a detailed exercise based on consideration of all the appropriate inputs to a comprehensive programmatic review process, as detailed in this report. Some modules were retired and replaced with more appropriate modules, and existing modules were subject to a detailed refreshment process to bring them up to date and ensure their ongoing relevance. The panel is supportive of the resulting suite of modules. Notwithstanding this, the panel believes that the programme would benefit from more explicit references in modules to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the circular economy, sustainability and ethics.

**Recommendations on programme revisions:**

1. Having reviewed the programmes as presented, the panel believes that the School might consider having more explicit references in the programme material to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the circular economy and the treatment of sustainability and ethics in the curriculum, which the panel believes is fundamental to the education and training of business graduates at Level 9.

Panel chairperson: Danny Brennan Date: 21 January 2022

Signed: Diagram

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

# Provider details

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| --- | --- |
| **Provider name** | National College of Ireland |
| **Date of site visit** | 1st/2nd December 2021 |
| **Date of report** | 10 January 2022 |

1. **Overall recommendations**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Principal programme** | **Title** | Master of Business Administration |
| **Award** | Master of Business Administration (MBA) (NFQ Level 9) |
| **Credit** | 90 |
| **Recommendation**  *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory* | Satisfactory |
| **Embedded programme 1** | **Title** | Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (Exit Award) |
| **Award** | Postgraduate Diploma (NFQ Level 9) |
| **Credit** | 60 |
| **Recommendation**  *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory* | Satisfactory |
| **Embedded programme 2** | **Title** | Certificate in Business Intelligence |
| **Award** | Certificate (NFQ Level 9) |
| **Credit** | 5 |
| **Recommendation**  *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory* | Satisfactory |
| **Embedded programme 3** | **Title** | Certificate in The Science of Decision Making |
| **Award** | Certificate (NFQ Level 9) |
| **Credit** | 5 |
| **Recommendation**  *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory* | Satisfactory |
| **Embedded programme 4** | **Title** | Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership |
| **Award** | Certificate (NFQ Level 9) |
| **Credit** | 5 |
| **Recommendation** *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory* | Satisfactory |

1. **Expert Panel**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** | **Affiliation** |
| Danny Brennan | Chair | Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology |
| James Collins | Subject Matter Expert | Lecturer, Technical University Shannon, Limerick |
| Stefan Jooss | Subject Matter Expert | Lecturer, University College Cork |
| Dan Taylor | Subject Matter Expert | Senior Lecturer, University of South Wales |
| Michael Kelly | Report Writer | Independent Education Consultant |
| Keeva Carpenter | Learner Representative | Postgraduate Student, Griffith College |
| Siobhan Kinsella | Industry Representative | Director, Noel Recruitment Group |

1. **Principal Programme – Master of Business Administration**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided** | **Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)* | **Minimum number of learners** |
| National College of Ireland, Mayor Street Lower, IFSC, Dublin 1 | 50 | 15 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposed Enrolment** | | |
| **Date of first intake** | September 2022 | |
| **Maximum number of annual intakes** | 1 | |
| **Maximum total number of learners per intake** | 50 | |
| **Programme duration** *(months from start to completion)* | Full-time: n/a  Part-time: 24 months | |
| **Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:**  The panel has no specific concerns or commentary regarding the proposed enrolment. | | |
| **Target learner groups** | | |
| The programme recognises that the business world requires MBA graduates with a strong foundation in management skills and who have been prepared to hit the ground running. The MBA programme is aimed at candidates with at least three years’ work experience at a management or specialist level, who are seeking to develop their management competencies to progress a career in senior management roles. Prior to registration, all candidates must meet with the MBA Director to discuss their prior experience and motivations to study.  The MBA programme has been designed to provide learners with a critical insight into the operation and culture of management and the key issues facing contemporary managers in a global context. The programme will help learners to develop an advanced understanding of the management function across a broad range of business disciplines including Human Resources, Finance, Marketing and Decision Making, providing learners with the ability to analyse and critically evaluate management theory and practice. Learners will learn how to analyse ambiguous data, identify key issues and devise and implement strategies in order to add value to an organisation. | | |
| **Approved countries for provision** | Ireland | |
| **Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time** | Part-time | |
| **The teaching and learning modalities** | | |
| The programme will be delivered via NCI’s modern business campus based in the IFCS, Dublin, using a mix of physical and online environments as appropriate. The primary mode of delivery will be 100% blended learning using block delivery of modules via classroom/online. Campus facilities have been configured to allow for BYOD and dual delivery so face-to face sessions can be live-streamed for learners unable to attend the campus due to Covid-19 restrictions.  For part-time learners, a typical 30-hour module would take 6 weeks to complete. Students are required to attend two evenings a week for 3-hour sessions, plus some weekend workshops. Block delivery enables different forms of teaching to take place, depending on the module structure, e.g. traditional lectures, self-directed learning, group work, learner presentations, case studies and problem-solving sessions. This supports peer-to-peer learning as well as enhancing lecturer-learner interactions. | | |
| **Brief synopsis of the programme** (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | | |
| Management development is a key goal for Ireland and other established and developing economies in order to sustain economic competitiveness and help in building the knowledge economies of the future. Management development and education can help to enhance business success, promote economic growth, maintain and develop employment, and promote sustainable economic activity into the future.  The MBA is a flagship programme within NCI’s School of Business Master of Science in Management as the MBA is one of the most durable ‘brands’ in management and executive education, particularly for individuals who may not require the academic rigour of an MSc but prefer the more practical nature of an MBA.  Although the MBA concept was traditionally viewed as a conversion programme for those coming from a non-business background who were seeking to gain an overview of business strategy and functional areas, more recently the MBA has become synonymous with a programme specifically targeted towards individuals seeking to achieve top management roles within organisations. The programme is also closely aligned with the aims of the MBA Association of Ireland which has 2,000+ members in middle- and senior-management positions across Ireland. There is also a demand for international MBAs that has remained constant across global markets, especially India and China.  NCI has adapted to this change in learner requirements and the NCI MBA is aimed at candidates who are ambitious for their future careers and are seeking to develop into senior management roles. Applicants for the programme are driven and motivated individuals with a clear focus on their future career ambitions. Stakeholder feedback from employers, graduates and other interested parties indicates that the programme remains relevant to the contemporary business environment as well as NCI being an attractive place to study.  The NCI MBA programme will provide learners with the opportunity to acquire a range of skills which will facilitate them in embarking upon senior management level careers within a global business environment. The MBA programme at NCI is aimed at developing learners’ competencies in decision-making, innovative thinking, effective governance and business sustainability. Furthermore, the MBA is entrepreneurial in character and seeks to graduate innovative learners capable of creative thinking, who exhibit the entrepreneurial mindset and perspective, with a deep understanding of organisation complexity and behaviour and who exhibit leadership qualities and potential. NCI aims to graduate learners who are equipped not only for successful management career trajectories but also for enterprise start-up and development.  NCI’s vision includes being an inclusive institution offering access to lifelong learning. MBA candidates include a range of management backgrounds in Ireland and abroad. The MBA is also relevant to non-standard candidates, such as senior executives who may have missed out on educational opportunities earlier in life but nonetheless have achieved a successful management career.  There is an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (60 Credits) plus three new proposed embedded programmes, comprising 5 credit micro credentials which are designed to enable senior managers to upskill in the areas of business intelligence, effective decision-making and sustainable leadership respectively. | | |
| **Summary of specifications for teaching staff** | | **WTE** |
| Programme Director -Minimum of a Level 9 qualification but ideally a PhD. | | .1 |
| Programme Teaching Team - Minimum of a Level 9 qualification. A PhD and/or significant industry experience. | | 2.32 |
| Programme Co-Ordinator - A Level 8 honours degree and significant administration experience. | | .2 |
| Career Advisor/Coach - A qualified career coach. | | 1 |
|  | |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Activity** | **Ratio of learners to teaching staff** |
| Lectures & Workshops | 1:22 |
| Dissertation supervision | 1:5 |
| **Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing**:  The panel was satisfied with programme staffing and the ratio of learners to teaching staff. | |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)** | | |
| **Code** | **Title** | **Last enrolment date** |
| PG21878 | Master of Business Administration | 01/09/2021 |

**Section C.1 Embedded Programme 1: Certificate in the Science of Decision-Making**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided** | **Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)* | **Minimum number of learners** |
| National College of Ireland, Mayor Street Lower, IFSC, Dublin 1 | 100 | 15 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposed Enrolment** | | |
| **Date of first intake** | September 2022 | |
| **Maximum number of annual intakes** | 2 | |
| **Maximum total number of learners per intake** | 50 | |
| **Programme duration** *(months from start to completion)* | Part-time: 6 weeks | |
| **Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:**  The panel has no specific concerns or commentary regarding the proposed enrolment. | | |
| **Target learner groups** | | |
| The target learner group is senior managers seeking to upskill in the area of decision-making in contemporary business, industry and beyond. | | |
| **Approved countries for provision** | Ireland | |
| **Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time** | Part-time | |
| **The teaching and learning modalities** | | |
| The programme syllabus is delivered by means of a blended learning approach consistent with the College Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The primary mode of delivery will be 100% blended learning using block delivery of the curriculum via in-person classroom/online learning. Campus facilities have been configured to allow for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and dual delivery, so face-to face sessions can be live-streamed for learners unable to attend the campus in-person. | | |
| **Brief synopsis of the programme** (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | | |
| This 5-ECTS micro credential is designed to enable senior managers to upskill. The Certificate in the Science of Decision-Making draws heavily on key findings in the field of decision-making research and demonstrates to students the overlap between multiple disciplinary fields such as psychology, economics, marketing and HR. It examines how individuals (managers, customers, investors and entrepreneurs) and groups of individuals (top management teams) make strategic decisions under uncertainty as well as the factors that affect their decision-making processes. | | |
| **Summary of specifications for teaching staff** | | **WTE** |
| Programme Director -Minimum of a Level 9 qualification but ideally a PhD. | | .1 |
| Programme Teaching Team - Minimum of a Level 9 qualification. A PhD and/or significant industry experience. | | .2 |
| Programme Co-Ordinator - A Level 8 honours degree and significant administration experience. | | .2 |
| Career Advisor/Coach - A qualified career coach. | | 1 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Activity** | **Ratio of learners to teaching staff** |
| Lectures & Workshops | .2:100 |
| **Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing**:  The panel was satisfied with programme staffing and the ratio of learners to teaching staff. | |

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

**Section C.2 Embedded Programme 2: Certificate in Business Intelligence**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided** | **Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)* | **Minimum number of learners** |
| National College of Ireland, Mayor Street Lower, IFSC, Dublin 1 | 100 | 15 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposed Enrolment** | | |
| **Date of first intake** | September 2022 | |
| **Maximum number of annual intakes** | 2 | |
| **Maximum total number of learners per intake** | 50 | |
| **Programme duration** *(months from start to completion)* | Part-time: 6 weeks | |
| **Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:**  The panel has no specific concerns or commentary regarding the proposed enrolment. | | |
| **Target learner groups** | | |
| The target learner group is senior managers seeking to upskill in the area of business intelligence. | | |
| **Approved countries for provision** | Ireland | |
| **Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time** | Part-time | |
| **The teaching and learning modalities** | | |
| The programme syllabus is delivered by means of a blended learning approach consistent with the College Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The primary mode of delivery will be 100% blended learning using block delivery of the curriculum via in-person classroom/online learning. Campus facilities have been configured to allow for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and dual delivery, so face-to face sessions can be live-streamed for learners unable to attend the campus in-person. | | |
| **Brief synopsis of the programme** (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | | |
| This 5-ECTS micro credential is designed to enable senior managers to upskill in the areas of business intelligence. The Certificate in Business Intelligence will teach learners how to take advantage of data with a view towards growth or change of many areas, either directly or indirectly. In this programme, students will learn how to make evidence-based decisions using both primary and secondary data, from a managerial perspective. This learning will encompass the basics of data analytics, how to liaise with data analytics specialists, and most importantly, how to frame business problems in such a way as to arrive at informed decisions efficiently. | | |
| **Summary of specifications for teaching staff** | | **WTE** |
| Programme Director -Minimum of a Level 9 qualification but ideally a PhD. | | .1 |
| Programme Teaching Team - Minimum of a Level 9 qualification. A PhD and/or significant industry experience. | | .2 |
| Programme Co-Ordinator - A Level 8 honours degree and significant administration experience. | | .2 |
| Career Advisor/Coach - A qualified career coach. | | 1 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Activity** | **Ratio of learners to teaching staff** |
| Lectures & Workshops | .2:100 |
| **Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing**:    The panel was satisfied with programme staffing and the ratio of learners to teaching staff. | |

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

**Section C.3Embedded Programme 3: Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided** | **Maximum number of learners** *(per centre)* | **Minimum number of learners** |
| National College of Ireland, Mayor Street Lower, IFSC, Dublin 1 | 100 | 15 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposed Enrolment** | | |
| **Date of first intake** | September 2022 | |
| **Maximum number of annual intakes** | 2 | |
| **Maximum total number of learners per intake** | 50 | |
| **Programme duration** *(months from start to completion)* | Part-time: 6 weeks | |
| **Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:**  The panel has no specific concerns or commentary regarding the proposed enrolment. | | |
| **Target learner groups** | | |
| The target learner group is senior managers seeking to upskill in sustainable leadership strategies and practices. | | |
| **Approved countries for provision** | Ireland | |
| **Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time** | Part-time | |
| **The teaching and learning modalities** | | |
| The programme syllabus is delivered by means of a blended learning approach consistent with the College Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The primary mode of delivery will be 100% blended learning using block delivery of the curriculum via in-person classroom/online learning. Campus facilities have been configured to allow for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and dual delivery, so face-to face sessions can be live-streamed for learners unable to attend the campus in-person. | | |
| **Brief synopsis of the programme** (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | | |
| This 5-ECTS micro credential is designed to enable senior managers to upskill. The Certificate in the Sustainable Business Leadership will provide an understanding of modern sustainability practices to link business strategy to the natural environment. It addresses the process by which firms integrate environmental concerns into their decision making. There are many reasons to care about how businesses interact with the environment – from basic reasons such as cost reduction and regulatory compliance to more innovative, entrepreneurial opportunities. | | |
| **Summary of specifications for teaching staff** | | **WTE** |
| Programme Director -Minimum of a Level 9 qualification but ideally a PhD. | | .1 |
| Programme Teaching  Team - Minimum of a Level 9 qualification. A PhD and/or significant industry experience. | | 0.2 |
| Programme Co-Ordinator - A Level 8 honours degree and significant administration experience. | | .2 |
| Career Advisor/Coach - A qualified career coach. | | 1 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Activity** | **Ratio of learners to teaching staff** |
| Lectures & Workshops | .2:100 |
| **Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing**:    The panel was satisfied with programme staffing and the ratio of learners to teaching staff. | |

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

1. **Other noteworthy features of the application**

The panel noted the introduction of three new awards, each with a ECTS value of 5 credits, acting as micro credentials under the MBA programme. These are relevant to the contemporary business context, covering Business Intelligence, the Science of Decision Making, and Sustainable Business Leadership.

**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)

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| N/A |

# 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.*

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. 2. 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. 3. The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[[1]](#footnote-2) | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the National College of Ireland (NCI) as the provider has met the requirements of Section 44(7) of the 2012 Act to apply for validation of the programme. NCI successfully reengaged with QQI for approval of its QA procedures in 2019.  NCI has established procedures for access, transfer and progression. These are reviewed further in relation to the programme documents submitted to validation under Criterion 4. NCI has complied with Section 65 in respect of arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) and provided evidence of this in the application for validation.  A declaration accompanying the application for validation has been signed by the NCI President, Ms Gina Quin. This declaration confirms that the information provided is correct and truthful and that NCI has addressed the applicable criteria. The declaration also states that the programme complies with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per principal programme |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per principal programme. |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per principal programme. |

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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. 2. A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.    1. Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme. 3. There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s). 4. The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI’s *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.* 5. The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. 6. The programme title and any embedded programme titles are    1. Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.    2. Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. 7. For each programme and embedded programme    1. The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.[[2]](#footnote-3)    2. The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards. 8. Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme’s modules. 9. 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]](#footnote-4) | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the provider’s application meets this criterion.  This is a revalidation of an existing validated programme, and its aims and objectives are clearly explained in terms of Business Management as a cognate discipline, developing skilled graduates who can act effectively as business leaders, with a focus on innovation, ethical and reflective practices, together with creative decision-making. A QQI award is specified for those learners who complete the programme, and the award title is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI’s *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*. Successful completion of the programme will lead to a Level 9 award.  The programme structure provides learners with a common core of modules plus a wide choice of electives, with a number of changes being proposed as part of the programmatic review of the MBA. At a very high level the MIPLO’s have been revised and updated to bring them into line with the School Level Learning Outcomes. The Programme Team have proposed a number of new modules, alongside the refinement of some existing modules, plus a number of modules are being made dormant as a result of the programmatic review. The credit weighting attaching to the Dissertation module is proposed to revert to 20 credits. The programme team are also seeking to validate a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration as an exit award in order to ensure consistency across the Level 9 suite of programmes within NCI’s School of Business  During the site visit, the panel discussed NCI’s ethos of business responsibility and sustainability and how this influences module design and content, particularly in relation to the developing concept of the circular economy. The panel is satisfied that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) for the principal and embedded programmes are explicitly specified and aligned appropriately to the relevant QQI awards standards. The panel discussed further simplifying the minimum module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) in future, with a view to focusing on skills development in addition to cognate knowledge and the panel would encourage NCI to pursue this approach in future.  It is proposed that an additional non-credit bearing element is added to the programme to allow learners to access a personal coach. The view is that learners coming on to an MBA programme are very focused on advancing their careers and this tends to be the primary motive they have for undertaking the MBA. The ability to undertake a coaching element in conjunction with the programme to discuss personal objectives and progress against these would be highly beneficial to learners, gaining personal and group insights as they progress through the MBA over a two-year period. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **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)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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]](#footnote-5) 2. 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.    1. There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.    2. 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.    3. There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).    4. There is evidence[[5]](#footnote-6) of learner demand for the programme.    5. There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[[6]](#footnote-7).    6. The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[[7]](#footnote-8) 3. There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. 4. 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. 5. The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications. | | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the provider's application meets this criterion.  The panel is of the view that the principal and embedded programmes proposed by NCI for revalidation meet professional, business and societal needs. Given the importance of MBA programmes within business education there is evidence of learner demand for the MBA programme and the proposed new programmes, both at a local and international levels, as evidenced by current enrolment figures and trends.  The provider seeks both learner and industry feedback, through one-to-one meetings, focus groups and research strategy events. These activities are designed to ensure the continuing relevance of the programme in meeting stakeholder needs, particularly in relation to graduates being able to “hit the ground running” as effective and creative managers. Although the Covid-19 pandemic had temporarily reduced the scope for these feedback interactions, there was evidence of continuing innovation in new module design, such as linking business and psychology through the science of decision-making. In addition, a range of authoritative guest speakers from business, sport and civil society are made available to MBA learners to help develop their wider perspectives as future business leaders. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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[[8]](#footnote-9). 2. 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. 3. If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL[[9]](#footnote-10)) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award. 4. 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). 5. 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. 6. The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-    1. 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).    2. Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;    3. Has long-lasting significance. 7. The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | Following a discussion with NCI representatives, the panel is satisfied that the access, transfer and progression arrangements currently in place are satisfactory.  The programme team are keen to recruit good quality candidates to the MBA programme who have demonstrated high potential. Applicants are required to hold a minimum of a NFQ Level 8 qualification (minimum 2:2 Honours) or equivalent, with a minimum of three years’ work experience, ideally at management level or specialist grade. Non-graduates with very extensive professional experience and/or other prior qualifications may also be considered, with examples being provided to the panel of how such applicants were processed and supported through their MBA. Applications are assessed based on their commitment towards the academic requirements for the programme. This may include a written application from the candidate and/or an interview, with non-English-speakers requiring an Academic IELTS score of at least 6.5.  There is a recognition that learners on the MBA programme are part-time and are at points in their career and personal lives where they have extensive outside commitments so may require informal support from lecturers in the form of coaching to complete coursework, a point appreciated by learners in their feedback to the panel. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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. 2. 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. 3. Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes. 4. The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff. 5. The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[[10]](#footnote-11). 6. The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented. 7. The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes. 8. The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes. 9. Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements. 10. 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]](#footnote-12) | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the programme’s written curriculum is coherent in that it reflects modern business experience and practice, with a balance of theory and practical applications. Individual modules are well structured and generally fit for purpose. There is a broad range of core and elective modules, with 10 core and 17 elective modules delivered by the School of Business and available to MBA learners.  As the MBA is the School of Business’ flagship programme, NCI has developed strong corporate relationships with a view to informing curriculum development and to providing access to authentic real world experience through live cases and industry speakers. The panel noted the value of such contacts in programme enhancement and development and welcomed the proposed Sustainable Business Leadership module, encouraging NCI to further develop concepts of sustainability and the circular economy, in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, across all module content.  The inclusion of the Enterprise Simulation Game as a core module is supported by the panel and the panel notes in this regard the commitment of the School to offer additional supports to learners taking this module, as required.  During the site visit, the panel met with members of the lecturing team, with discussions covering curriculum structures, assessment tasks and methods. There was also a discussion on the challenges and opportunities arising from the use of blended learning delivery arising from the Covid-19 temporary provisions and it was evident that NCI’s teaching team had successfully adapted to this online context. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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). 2. The programme has an identified complement of staff[[12]](#footnote-13) (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments. 3. 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. 4. 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[[13]](#footnote-14) opportunities[[14]](#footnote-15). 5. There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance. 6. Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post. | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the provider’s revalidation application meets this criterion.  The panel met with the teaching faculty and support teams and it was evident from these discussions that there was a strong learner-centred ethos across all NCI staff. A review of CVs provided to the panel, together with discussions with staff, confirmed that NCI’s School of Business has a well-qualified and committed team of lecturing staff, comprising both permanent and associate faculty members, with a strong component of programme support staff.  Required educational qualifications are at NFQ Level 9 in a relevant subject area and/or equivalent professional awards. NCI provided evidence of having appropriate procedures in place for staff recruitment, professional development and performance monitoring. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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). 2. 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: 3. 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) 4. suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) 5. printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment 6. suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable 7. technical support 8. administrative support 9. company placements/internships – if applicable 10. 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). 11. There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address 12. Planned intake (first five years) and 13. The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. 14. The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required. | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that there are appropriate physical resources in place to implement the programme as planned, supported by NCI’s modern campus environment and extensive online resources.  Physical and digital resources are in place to support the teaching, learning & assessment strategy of the programme. These include traditional classrooms, collaborative learning spaces, library (both physical and electronic), plus IT resources as required by individual aspects of the module curriculum (e.g., Moodle VLE, MS Teams, MS Office suite, Turnitin). MBA learners also have access to business thought leadership through a series of industry guest speakers.  There is a full range of learner support resources, comprising the library (books, online databases, e-books, chatbox support), careers service (including labour market data), academic supports, dedicated programme coordinators, and an international student team. NCI’s approach is to treat learner support as a continuing process, forming part of the overall education experience where learners are safe to seek help and ask questions of the support team. The panel noted the commitment to supporting non-standard learners to ensure full participation.  Resources were extended and enhanced during the Covid-19 pandemic to provide support for blended learning and the view was that online delivery would form part of NCI’s future plans, subject to separate validation. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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. 2. 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. 3. The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace. | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners.  During the virtual site visit, the panel engaged in discussions with MBA graduates and other learners on Level 9 programmes within NCI’s School of Business. Learner experiences were influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on teaching as this had moved online and presented new challenges such as extensive “screentime” compared to the conventional teaching environment. Overall, the transition to online learning was handled effectively and learners favoured the idea of hybrid learning for the future.  Generally, modules were regarded as being well-constructed and relevant to the current workplace. As learners are also engaged in full-time work, lecturers were sympathetic to maintaining an appropriate balance between work-study-home commitments, taking a coaching approach in helping individuals maintain progress through their modules.  Learners’ experiences of the MBA programme were very positive, with recent MBA graduates describing it as a “phenomenal experience”, involving learning and growing at all levels. Comments included positive changes in how learners approached problem-solving at work, as their new MBA knowledge and experiences enabled them to analyse issues and make connections between different discipline areas. This was summarised by one graduate who described the MBA experience as a “massive transfer of knowledge” which could be applied within their own workplace on a practical level.  International students regarded NCI as being supportive, being described as “welcoming and warm” on a support level. Representatives of international students described their experience with lecturers who were motivated and enthusiastic, helping to create a positive learning environment whilst also pushing learners to achieve more. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **There are sound teaching and learning strategies**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes. 2. The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. 3. 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). 4. Learning is monitored/supervised. 5. Individualised guidance, support[[15]](#footnote-16) and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme. | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that sound teaching and learning strategies have been implemented to continue to support the achievement of the intended programme and module learning outcomes.  Teaching and learning includes NCI’s core themes of a learner focus and the goal of teaching excellence, all intended to confirm the MBA programme’s importance in representing NCI’s School of Business as a whole. Panel discussions with faculty and learner representatives confirmed that these themes were being carried out in practice. There are a wide variety of teaching activities and assessment methods which are designed to create authentic learning opportunities geared towards attainment of each module’s intended learning outcomes. Programme content and teaching methodologies are designed to be appropriate to a modern business context and practices. This is reinforced through real-life case studies and discussions with industry and business leaders.  Learner assessment workloads take into account the particular needs of MBA learners as part-time students at a point in their lives where academic study needs to be balanced with work and home responsibilities.  Teaching strategy has been successfully adapted for blended delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic, using these emergency measures as an opportunity to reconsider future teaching and learning methods and approaches. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

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| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certifiacte in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **There are sound assessment strategies**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. All assessment is undertaken consistently with ***Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards****[[16]](#footnote-17)* 2. The programme’s assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. 3. 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]](#footnote-18) 4. The programme includes formative assessment to support learning. 5. 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]](#footnote-19) 6. 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. 7. There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results. 8. 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]](#footnote-20) | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that the proposed assessment strategies are generally sound.  Assessment follows the provider’s overall assessment strategy and QA procedures. There is a mix of continuous assessment, examinations and project work. These have been designed with real life situations in mind, combining core management principles with entrepreneurial concepts, enabling learners to effectively address senior management tasks in the workplace. Assessment is geared towards developing these skills of enquiry using both analytical and theoretical tools. This approach is enhanced in the Research Methods module which acts as a capstone module where the learner identifies a knowledge gap in their own field of study, undertaking a research project in the form of a Dissertation. Completion of the Research Methods module is a requirement to progress to the Dissertation and full award.  Feedback on assessment performance is available on a one-to-one basis or via the Moodle VLE. In particular, international students commented favourably on the quality of lecturer feedback and how it assisted them with their studies and personal development. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certifcate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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. 2. Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme. 3. Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures. 4. If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways. 5. The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities. 6. 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. 7. The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs. 8. The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[[20]](#footnote-21). 9. If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[[21]](#footnote-22)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. 10. The programme’s learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider’s premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme’s locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations). | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied that learners on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for.  Programme information is made available on the NCI website and related marketing materials. Prospective learners also receive guidance regarding the suitability of the programme for their own needs through pre-course discussions and the admissions process.  Programme information is made available within a Programme Handbook and assessment schedule, together with the Moodle VLE. Guidance is provided in relation to elective modules with learners receiving guidance on elective choices from lecturers and support staff.  The panel met with representatives of NCI’s support services teams and individual learners who described their experiences of information and guidance provided by the provider. These discussions reflected the experience of learners who felt well-supported and how the provider was responsive to learner feedback. Learner supports are made available to learners with disclosed disabilities and reasonable accommodations are made in line with NCI’s QA policies and procedures. In addition, there is a dedicated International Office which follows best practice in this area with extensive support for international students. This support channel recognises and continually seeks to respond to the particular challenges facing learners who move to Ireland to study, both in terms of academic life and cultural life, together with practical aspects of day-to-day student living in Ireland. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

1. **The programme is well managed**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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. 2. 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. 3. 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. 4. 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. 5. Quality assurance[[22]](#footnote-23) is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. 6. 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. 7. The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. 8. There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification. | | |
|  | **Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)** | **Comment** |
| **Principal Programme**  Master of Business Administration (MBA) | Yes | The panel is satisfied but NCI’s programme revalidation application meets this criterion. There is a Programme Committee which operates under the governance of the School of Business in terms of annual planning and resourcing. The programme management procedures are also aligned with the NCI’s institutional QA procedures.  NCI’s QA Handbook sets out policies and procedures which have been approved by QQI as being fit-for-purpose. This QA framework governs the management and operation of the programme within the School of Business with annual compliance reviews.  During the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme has adopted online teaching techniques on an interim basis and discussions between programme management and the panel indicate that this blended learning approach will be further developed in future, subject to internal QA and external validation approvals. |
| **Principal Programme – Exit Award only**  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 1**  Certificate in The Science of Decision Making | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Embedded Programme 2**  Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership | Yes | As per the principal programme. |
| **Embedded Programme 3**  Certificate in Business Intelligence | Yes | As per the principal programme. |

# Overall recommendation to QQI

## Principal programme: Master of Business Administration (MBA)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Select one |  |
| **X** | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |
|  | Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); |
|  | Not satisfactory. |

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The panel is satisfied that the National College of Ireland (NCI) has presented a strong case for revalidation, and that the proposed special recommendation relates to discrete issues that can be addressed by the provider.

### Commendations

1. The panel commends the team within NCI’s School of Business for its clear ethos which is embedded across all its staff and its international focus evidenced by its aim to secure international business school accreditation.
2. The panel commends NCI’s School of Business for its teamwork and enthusiasm across its faculty and support team which was evident throughout the panel’s review and discussions with individuals.
3. The panel commends NCI’s School of Business for the positive manner in which it pivoted towards online delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic and the manner in which it engaged with its staff and learners during this time.

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

None.

**Recommendations**

1. The School should consider having more explicit references in the programme material to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the circular economy and the treatment of sustainability and ethics in the curriculum, which the panel believes is fundamental to the education and training of business graduates at Level 9.

## Embedded programme 1: Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (Exit Award)

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| --- | --- |
| Select one |  |
| **X** | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |
|  | Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); |
|  | Not satisfactory. |

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

As per the principal programme.

### Commendations

As per the principal programme.

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

None.

## Embedded programme 2: Certificate in The Science of Decision Making

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Select one |  |
| **X** | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |
|  | Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); |
|  | Not satisfactory. |

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

As per the principal programme.

### Commendations

As per the principal programme.

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

None.

## Embedded programme 3: Certificate in Sustainable Business Leadership

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Select one |  |
| **X** | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |
|  | Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); |
|  | Not satisfactory. |

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

As per the principal programme.

### Commendations

As per the principal programme.

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

None.

## Embedded programme 4: Certificate in Business Intelligence

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Select one |  |
| **X** | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |
|  | Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); |
|  | Not satisfactory. |

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

As per the principal programme.

### Commendations

As per the principal programme.

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

None.

## Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

None.

## Summary of recommendations to the provider

No additional comments.

## Declarations of Evaluators’ Interests

No interests have been declared.

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

Panel chairperson: Danny Brennan Date: 27 May 2022

Signed: Diagram

Description automatically generated

## Disclaimer

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

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# Proposed programme schedules *(post panel feedback and consequent amendments, ifany)*

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. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. This might be predictive or indirect. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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

   [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (accessed 26/09/2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. See the section on transitional arrangements. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. 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). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. See also [QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)](http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Policy-on-Monitoring.aspx) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)