



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	11 th May 2023
Date of report	1st June 2023

Section A. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media
	Award	Master of Arts
	Credit	90 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr Josephine Browne	Chair	IADT
Mary Jennings	Secretary	Independent report writer
Prof. Matthew Causey	Subject Matter Expert	Trinity College Dublin
Dr Don Duncan	Subject Matter Expert	Queen's University, Belfast
Roisin Geraghty	Industry representative	Freelance Film Producer, Programmer, and Project Manager; Docs Ireland
Sinéad Mooney	Learner representative	DCU

Section C. Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)
DBS Campus	150	100

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	September 2023	12 months, 36 weeks	3: September, January, April	5	50
Part-Time	September 2023	18 months, 48 weeks	2: September, January	5	50

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)

The proposed MA in Film and Creative Media (90 ECTS, NFQ Level 9) is an innovative specialised programme designed for practitioners and new entrants to the creative industries. The programme provides an exciting creative space within which to develop creative skills, knowledge and experience and build up a strong portfolio of high-quality creative work in and across selected creative areas. This career-focused programme blends focused creative development, leading-edge critical research, and applied creative industries practice.

Target learner groups	
<p>Designed for media and arts graduates, and graduates from a wider range of disciplines with a demonstrable interest in creative media seeking to establish and practice their creative identities and their careers and also for existing industry professionals seeking to enhance, practice or diversify their skill-sets. Learners gain the necessary critical awareness, creative focus and contemporary production skills to advance their career paths. Thus, the <i>MA in Film and Creative Media</i> will be attractive to learners who have a curiosity for telling stories through producing, creating or participating in multimedia, film or audio projects. The learner may already have practiced and experimented with tools and techniques and will be seeking formal, critical education to develop and hone their craft and skills.</p> <p>The full-time target group are likely to be learners who have recently completed an undergraduate degree and who are interested in exploring and studying the visual medium of film and creating content for industry and its audiences. The part-time target group may be individuals who are currently working within the broad creative industries and who wish to up-skill and gain a postgraduate qualification through practice.</p> <p>It is expected that many learners in the full-time cohort will come from varying cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, who will bring a personal, unique and global perspective to the cohort and reflect different cultural practices, outlooks and approaches to creative work.</p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time/part-time

Teaching and Learning Modalities	
Mode	Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)
Classroom / Face to Face	80% (onsite) approximately
Workplace	N/A
Online	20% (Synchronous) approximately
Other	N/A

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role e.g., Lecturer, Mentor, Librarian	Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)	No. (WTEs ¹) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile
Lecturer	Staff delivering this programme will hold a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or	7.5

¹ WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a full-time person fully dedicated to the programme. 0.5 indicates a part-time person available to this programme half of the time.

	Master degree in a relevant film/media or related discipline with relevant and significant industry experience and/or PhD. Holders of Level 8 honours Film, Media or related degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant industry experience will also be considered.	
Administration and Support Staff	Such as Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to the role.	0.64
Head of Department	The Head of Department for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in addition to programme management/ academic leadership experience.	0.1
Subject Matter Expert	The Subject Matter expert for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in a relevant film or media discipline with relevant and significant industry experience and/or PhD. Holders of level 8 honours degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant industry experience will also be considered.	0.1
Programme Level Manager	The Programme Manager for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in addition to programme management/ academic leadership experience.	0.5

Teaching and learning methods and ratios		
Methodology / Learning Activity	Description	Staff to Learner Ratio e.g. 1:12
Lecture classroom-based sessions	Face to face on site lecture-led classroom-based sessions	1:50
Workshops	Face to face on site workshops	1:25
Practical lab sessions	Practical on-site lab computer lab sessions	1:15
Online class (broadcast live)	Online class (broadcast live - non interactive transmission)	1:50

Online tutorial (interactive)	Online class (broadcast live - interactive such as Zoom)	1:25
Asynchronous	On demand content	N/A

Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed. c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. ²		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

As an established provider of higher education programmes DBS has met the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of this programme. It was noted that DBS has in place procedures for access, transfer and progression. The College has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI.

DBS provided the panel with a copy of the letter to be submitted to QQI with the application for the validation of the programme. The letter contained the signature and declaration required under sub-criteria 1b) and 1c).

² This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

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

<p>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</p> <p>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</p> <p>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</p> <p>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</p> <p>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p> <p>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.</p> <p>g) For each programme and embedded programme</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.³</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards.</p> <p>h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</p> <p>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</p> <p>For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.⁴</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

In general, the panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met. The rationale for the choice of awards is clear. In discussion at the review, the panel raised some queries in relation to the appropriateness of the title of the programme, Master of Arts in Film and Creative Media. The panel considered that the term 'creative media' was somewhat amorphous and, in particular, it might not be clear to prospective learners what employment opportunities might be available to them on graduation from such a programme.

In response, DBS indicated that substantial thought had gone into the title, with other options such as 'creative industries' being under consideration at one point. It was further stated having an element of vagueness worked in its favour, in that it indicated that there would not be a limit on creativity and the range of artifacts that prospective learners might create.

³ Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

⁴ 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.

Having considered the rationale and further clarification on the title, the panel is satisfied that it is appropriate for the programme and commends DBS on the thought and consideration put into the topic.

Commendation 1

The panel commends the DBS team for the clear and consistent way they addressed the panel's concerns in relation to the title of the programme.

Nevertheless, the panel noted that there remained some potentially misleading vagueness about what DBS mean by 'practice as research' – an important aspect of the proposed programme and a growing area of interest in the sector more generally. The panel considered that it would be important for DBS to provide a clear definition of the concept and to ensure that this was clearly conveyed to prospective learners. See also Criterion 3 for further discussion on this overall topic.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that DBS provide a clear definition of what is meant by practice as research in the programme document and in the information provided to prospective learners.

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

- a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.⁵
- b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
 - (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
 - (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
 - (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
 - (iv) There is evidence⁶ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁷.
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁸
- c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
- d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
- e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that the proposed programme meets this criterion.

DBS set out a clear rationale for the programme in Section 3.1 of the Programme Document. The rationale is underpinned by the government’s *Creative Ireland Programme (2017)*, which is a significant marker in recognising the creative industries in its own right. By 2022 *Screen Ireland* reported on the increase in the scale of sector, illustrating its sustainability. This included, for instance, the fact that In 2021, across feature film, documentary, animation and TV drama, the total production spend in the Irish economy for 2021 was €500 million – 40% higher than 2019’s previous record spend.

⁵ 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.

⁶ This might be predictive or indirect.

⁷ It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

⁸ 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.

In 2021, local Irish film activity increased by 52% from 2019, reaching the highest year ever for the category.

The DBS campus is located in Dublin's *Creative Quarter*: an area stretching from South William Street to George's Street, and from Lower Stephen's Street to Exchequer Street. This area hosts a unique community of designers, artists and creative minds in the centre of a business world. It was stated that DBS has good links with this community and other practitioners which provides opportunities for learners and practitioners to collaborate in a variety of ways more easily.

In addition, DBS established its own Industry Advisory Board: Creative Media Film & Sound. It advises faculty, staff and students on current and future trends in the industries and on the many opportunities that exist in this growing sector. The Advisory Board, drawn from the industry sector, provides support in networking and communication with practitioners in the sector. It also advises on practical issues of identifying appropriate equipment and facilities to enhance the programme. The Board also provides the DBS programme team with access to guest speakers, seminar providers and mentors from a wide variety of backgrounds in the creative industries sector. The panel commends DBS on the establishment and work of the Advisory Board.

Commendation 2

The panel commends DBS on the depth of its industry engagement in relation to this programme.

It was stated that DBS already have two related undergraduate programmes, BA (Hons) in Film and Creative Media (NFQ Level 8) and BA in Film and Creative Media (NFQ Level 7). The proposed programme has been under consideration and detailed development for some time, in line with DBS's overall strategy to offer more programmes at Level 9 on a full-time and part-time basis. It was stated this programme has the ambition and potential to address some of the needs of a growing and diverse industry sector which is looking to increase the level of expertise and skill it has at its disposal.

As noted in Criterion 2 above, at the review meeting, there was discussion as to the title of the programme, in particular the use of the term 'creative media' as a very broad term. DBS did acknowledge that there was a challenge in taking a wide-angle lens on what might be included in the overall programme. There might be, the panel considered, some limitations on the inhouse expertise needed to supervise particular learner projects across the broad spectrum of 'creative media'. Or there might be limitations on the facilities available to learners to successfully conduct practice research or create specific artefacts. In response, DBS indicated that, through its own Dissertation Committee, there was a clear process in place to guide learners on what was possible with the resources available and, in addition, given the commitment to the development of the programme, DBS could call on a range of outside resources, or, as the case may be, colleagues from other areas, to supervise or support learners taking on particular kinds of projects. It was stated that DBS wants to ensure that all enrolled learners have as much opportunity to develop their own creative voice and creative autonomy and work to ensure that this was so for each individual.

The panel deemed that, given the wide-lens approach taken, it would be important that DBS is more specific about the target market for the programme. This may include practitioners wishing to upskill in specific areas; others who may wish to undertake academic research, others who wish to create artefacts: prospective learners would need to be clear about the range of expertise that would be available to them in their studies from the start. The panel made the following recommendation in this regard.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that, in the programme document, DBS be more specific about the target market, that is, who the programme is aimed at, including expressly stating the nature of the expertise available within the College and what the learners can expect ab initio from their participation in the programme.

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

<p>a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied⁹.</p> <p>b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL¹⁰) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).</p> <p>e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; (iii) Has long-lasting significance. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

Learners from DBS’s two related undergraduate programmes, BA (Hons) in Film and Creative Media (NFQ Level 8) and BA in Film and Creative Media (NFQ Level 7), may progress to the proposed Level 9 programme.

It was clarified at the review meeting that learners who wished to undertake a pure research, academic capstone project could do so; this may be relevant for those wishing to progress to a Ph.D. at Level 10 in another institution.

⁹ 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

¹⁰ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

Criterion 5. The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

- a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
- b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
- c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
- d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff.
- e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹¹.
- f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
- g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
- h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
- i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
- j) The programme **duration** (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its **fulltime equivalent contact time** (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.¹²

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

In general, the panel is satisfied that the curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose.

The panel was informed that the Module on Creative Events Operations is in part designed to allow practitioners acquire formal practical skills, knowledge and understanding of what is involved in the operation of events such as, for instance, festivals or other creative events. The panel is of the view that the programme team might consider ways to include smaller scale operations within the overall curriculum. These might include how to find the right kind of festival to showcase their work as well as how to organise one; how to be effective at networking, as this is an important way the sector operates in practice and where to get information about current events or potential opportunities: these smaller scale but important skills are actionable by learners/practitioners themselves and are valuable for people starting out on a career in the sector.

¹¹ 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.

¹² If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that, within the overall curriculum, DBS consider having accessible, actionable information that would be useful for graduates to do on their own to further their careers and networking skills as well as skills in event management.

The panel also recommended that DBS consider including elements of game theory and practices research in the Modules on Screen Theory. This might more comprehensively reflect the overall topics covered in the curriculum, including the creation of games and the broad topic of practices research which is a thread throughout the programme.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that DBS consider including elements of game theory and practices research in the Module on Screen Theory.

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

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹³ (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners’ achievements as required.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development¹⁴ opportunities¹⁵.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that there are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned.

It was noteworthy that many of the faculty on the programme that the panel met at the review were active practitioners and researchers themselves in the sector. The panel was struck by the many instances of collaborative projects that DBS learners in the film and creative media at undergraduate level had had the opportunity to be part of, working on live projects with experienced practitioners. Examples include working on a project with MOLI, the Museum of Literature Ireland, or collaborating with the creative community in the Dublin 2 area on small or larger scale projects. It was stated that this collaborative approach would be brought into the MA programme as well.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff’s professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

The level of engagement by faculty with the industry also meant that they are able to identify relevant guest speakers/mentors with specific expertise or knowledge of particular topics to enrich the learning environment for learners. They also well as bring their own live experience of the sector into the classroom. See also Criterion 8 and Criterion 10 on this collaborative ethos.

Commendation 3

The panel commended DBS staff for their continuous engagement in the profession and for the manner in which they bring this experience into the classroom.

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

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme’s learning environments including the workplace learning environment) (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable (v) technical support (vi) administrative support (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable <p>c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planned intake (first five years) and (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that there was sufficient physical resources in place to run the programme as planned as outlined in Section 5.8.1 of the Programme Document. DBS reported that considerable investment had been made by the college in recent years in the physical infrastructure, including flexible classrooms, study spaces, in IT infrastructure, laboratory space and equipment.

It was stated at the review meeting that DBS had made a commitment to allocate capital investment to support this proposed programme. Items to be acquired include additional camera equipment that will be used by learners on the programme.

The panel was informed that one of the software programmes used in video production was Final Cut Pro. The panel was of the view that while this software programme is still used in the industry sector, Avid software was now one of the main current industry standards. It is not currently available in DBS. The panel made the following recommendation in relation to the deployment of Avid for use by prospective learners so that they were working with equipment what is now standard practice in the sector.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that DBS consider having Avid technology available for learners as part of the tools available in order to be consistent with industry current practices.

Criterion 8. The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners

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

The panel is satisfied that the learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners.

As stated in Criterion 2 and Criterion 3 above, the panel recommended that DBS provide clear definitions for prospective learners on what is meant by practices research and to be clear on the target market so that prospective learners have all the information they need about the programme in advance of enrolment.

As noted in Criterion 6 above, there was evidence of a strong collaborative culture within DBS, both between colleagues and between lecturers and learners, with a consequent strengthening of the overall creative and learning environment.

There was further evidence of a collaborative learning environment in the proposed development of the Play-Zone concept which was outlined in the Programme Document and further elaborated at the review session.

The panel was informed that ‘Play-Zone’ is collaborative space that offers learners a distinct, mostly self-directed collaborative development opportunity. It is underpinned by a sound theoretical basis that creativity is enhanced when there is an opportunity to play, in the broadest sense of that term. The aim not only to help students explore media for creativity, but also to achieve expertise in or mastery of certain media . In operation, a scenario is devised and a faculty member is assigned as a Play-Zone leader. Examples of scenarios include:

- Filming a news segment
- Creating a Pod-Cast
- Making a Commercial or Advert
- Recording & filming a musical performance
- Filming a time-lapse piece
- Making a YouTube infotainment video

Over two or three Play-Zone sessions, participants are assigned roles in planning, pre-production, set-up, artist/client communication, shooting and post-production. The session concludes with a

viewing and debrief. This is all in addition to the formal curriculum as described. It does however provide learners with possible additions to their portfolio when seeking employment.

The panel commends DBS for this innovative addition to the learning environment.

Commendation 4

The panel commends DBS for the development of the innovative Play-Zone concept as part of the overall learning environment.

The panel, while commending the Play-Zone initiative, advised DBS that these informal, non-credit bearing initiatives can be difficult to sustain. This is the case when learners, particularly those studying part-time and working, may have difficulty in availing of the opportunity. Increasingly, it was noted that learners in many institutions may have to travel longer distances, due to lack of sustainable accommodation or have other pressures, making it difficult for many to avail of this type of opportunity. The panel considered that, to succeed, Play-Zone would need constant nurturing and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that DBS provide constant nurturing to the Play-Zone concept so that it succeeds and survives.

Criterion 9. There are sound teaching and learning strategies

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁶ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that there are sound teaching and learning strategies.

As noted in Criterion 6 and Criterion 8, there is evidence of a collaborative approach to teaching and learning strategies.

In line with DBS's overall strategy of producing 'work-ready' graduates, with appropriate graduate-attributes to succeed in employment, a key part of the teaching and learning strategy is to enable learners to build up a strong portfolio of high-quality creative work in and across selected creative areas during the course of their study.

¹⁶ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Criterion 10. There are sound assessment strategies

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i>¹⁷</p> <p>b) The programme’s assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.¹⁸</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.¹⁹</p> <p>f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.²⁰</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

In general, DBS is satisfied that there are sound assessment strategies in place for the proposed programme. The panel found that there was a range of assessment methods in use and that these were appropriate for a Level 9 programme.

In discussion at the review, the panel did raise some queries in relation to aspects of the assessment strategy for consideration by DBS.

The panel noted that, for some modules, there was only 1 assessment with 100% mark assigned to it. The panel considered that this might be unduly restrictive, providing narrow options to learners and strongly suggested that this practice be reviewed.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that DBS give strong consideration to reviewing the practice of having 1 assessment with 100% marks in all modules.

¹⁷ See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁸ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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).

The panel considered that it would be appropriate for this type of programme to include a visual/sound-based assessment such as a videographic essay as well as text-based formats and recommended that DBS consider this as an option for learners.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that DBS consider including videographic essays as part of the assessment process as well as more text-based formats.

The panel noted that there is a ratio of 1/50 ratio in face-to-face, classroom-based sessions. The panel considered that, in a situation where DBS has indicated that formative assessment is an important component of the overall assessment strategy that this ratio be reviewed, particularly for practice sessions as it seems to be high. A lower ratio might ensure that learners get appropriate, timely feedback in class in a timely manner.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that DBS review the staff/learner ratio in practice settings where there is a need for more formative assessment to ensure learners get appropriate feedback in class.

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

<p>a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</p> <p>f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²¹.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i>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.</p> <p>j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for.

The panel was informed of the many services available to support learners from pre-enrolment to induction to ongoing support and information on career opportunities. The DBS support team tracks learner engagement from an early stage and plans appropriate interventions to support learners who may be experiencing difficulties. Any learner with special educational needs can register with the Disability Officer who is tasked with providing as much supports as possible.

It was stated that DBS had recently undertaken a review of its special educational needs services and, for instance, is working to ensure that a learner with dyslexia is no longer classified as having a disability; rather, by employment Universal Design (UD) standards, neuro-diverse learners can be afforded the same opportunities as their peers. The panel was informed that training in UD is being provided to staff so that they can deploy these standards in their work as far as practicable.

²¹ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

²² See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

Commendation 5

The panel commends DBS for their learner supports , particularly in the area of learners with additional learning needs.

DBS also supports learners to actively participate in various clubs and societies, from sporting clubs to musical societies, to enable learners to mix and socialise during their time in the college.

DBS organises a system of Class Reps so that learners have the opportunity to provide feedback to the college on any aspect of their experience as learners.

Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

<p>a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider’s general or institutional procedures.</p> <p>b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance²³ is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI’s statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review. These are clearly outlined in DBS’s Quality Assurance Manual which has QA approval from QQI.

²³ See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

Principal Programme: Master of Arts in Film & Creative Media

Select one	
Satisfactory	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 programmes meets the criteria set.

Commendations

1. The panel commends the DBS team for the clear and consistent way they addressed the panel's concerns in relation to the title of the programme.
2. The panel commends DBS on the depth of its industry engagement in relation to this programme.
3. The panel commended DBS staff for their continuous engagement in the profession and for the manner in which they bring this experience into the classroom.
4. The panel commends DBS for the development of the innovative Play-Zone concept as part of the overall learning environment.
5. The panel commends DBS for their learner supports , particularly in the area of learners with additional learning needs.

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

There are no special conditions of validation.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

N/A

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. It is recommended that DBS provide a clear definition of what is meant by practice as research in the programme document and in the information provided to prospective learners.
2. It is recommended that, in the programme document, DBS be more specific about the target market, that is, who the programme is aimed at, including expressly stating the nature of the expertise available within the College and what the learners can expect ab initio from their participation in the programme.
3. It is recommended that, within the overall curriculum, DBS consider having accessible, actionable information that would be useful for graduates to do on their own to further their careers and networking skills as well as skills in event management.
4. It is recommended that DBS consider including elements of game theory and practices research in the Module on Screen Theory.
5. It is recommended that DBS consider having Avid technology available for learners as part of the tools available in order to be consistent with industry current practices.
6. It is recommended that DBS provide constant nurturing to the Play-Zone concept so that it succeeds and survives.
7. It is recommended that DBS give strong consideration to reviewing the practice of having 1 assessment with 100% marks in all modules.
8. It is recommended that DBS consider including videographic essays as part of the assessment process as well as more text-based formats.
9. It is recommended that DBS review the staff/learner ratio in practice settings where there is a need for more formative assessment to ensure learners get appropriate feedback in class.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson:

Date: 12th June, 2023.

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Fayle Bone'.

3.1 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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Part 4. Proposed Programme Schedules *(post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)*

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School (DBS)														
Programme Title		MA in Film and Creative Media														
Award Title		Masters of Arts														
Stage Exit Award Title³		N/A														
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		FT														
Teaching and learning modalities		As per module descriptors														
Award Class⁴	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):			Stage NFQ Level²	Stage EQF Level²	Stage Credit (ECTS)			Date Effective	ISCED Subject code				
Major	9	7	Award			9	7	90			September 2023	0211				
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)			Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number⁵	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
				Status	NFQ Level¹ where specified		Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Independent Learning	Hours of Independent Learning effort	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	% practical demonstration
HET Credits																
Visual Content Creation			1 & 2	M	9	10	250	48	100	102		100%				
Audio Content Creation			1 & 2	M	9	10	250	48	100	102		100%				
Writing for Screen Industries 1: Film and TV			1	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%				
Screen Theories 1			1	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%				
Film & Creative Media: Contemporary Industry Practices			1 & 2	M	9	10	250	48	100	102		100%				
Writing for Screen Industries 2: Video Games and Animation			2	M	9	5	125	24	31	70		100%				
Screen Theories 2			2	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%				
Creative Events Operations			1	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%				
Research Methodology			2	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%				
Creative Project: Digital Story Worlds			3	E	9	30	750	12	113	625		40%	60%			
Dissertation			3	E	9	30	750	12	113	625		10%	90%			
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)			Students are permitted two attempts at the Capstone elective modules													

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School (DBS)													
Programme Title		MA in Film and Creative Media													
Award Title		Masters of Arts													
Stage Exit Award Title³		N/A													
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		PT													
Teaching and learning modalities		As per module descriptors													
Award Class⁴	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):			Stage NFQ Level²	Stage EQF Level²	Stage Credit (ECTS)		Date Effective	ISCED Subject code				
Major	9	7	Award			9	7	90		September 2023	0211				
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)			Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number⁵	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
				Status	NFQ Level¹ where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Independent Learning	Hours of learning effort	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %
HET Credits															
Visual Content Creation			1 & 2	M	9	10	250	48	100	102		100%			
Audio Content Creation			1 & 2	M	9	10	250	48	100	102		100%			
Writing for Screen Industries 1: Film and TV			2	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%			
Screen Theories 1			1	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%			
Film & Creative Media: Contemporary Industry Practices			1 & 2	M	9	10	250	48	100	102		100%			
Writing for Screen Industries 2: Video Games and Animation			3	M	9	5	125	24	31	70		100%			
Screen Theories 2			3	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%			
Creative Events Operations			3	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%			
Research Methodology			3	M	9	5	125	24	50	51		100%			
Creative Project: Digital Story Worlds			4	E	9	30	750	12	113	625		40%	60%		
Dissertation			4	E	9	30	750	12	113	625		10%	90%		
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)			Students are permitted two attempts at the Capstone elective modules												