

Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

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|------------------------------|--|
| Provider | Dublin Business School |
| Programme(s) Reviewed | BA (Hons) in Audio Production and Music Project Management |

Independent Panel Members

| Name | Role | Affiliation |
|------------------|-------------------------|--|
| John Bartlett | Chair | Head of Research, ATU Sligo |
| Prof. Paul Moore | Subject Matter Expert | Ulster University |
| Dr Claire Fitch | Subject Matter Expert | Dundalk I.T. |
| Kieran Lynch | Subject Matter Expert | IADT |
| Ronan Murphy | Industry Representative | Freelance Event Professional |
| Trudi Barnett | Report Writer | Independent Consultant |
| Dhanushi Rodrigo | Learner Representative | PhD Researcher, School of Business, ATU - Galway |

All members of the independent panel declared their independence of Dublin Business School and that they have no conflict of interest

Part 1. Introduction

The Dublin Business School BA Hons in Audio Production and Music Project Management, Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, is a dynamic and interdisciplinary programme designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the music production industry.

The Level 8 BA Hons in Audio Production and Music Project Management underwent its inaugural periodic review in preparation for QQI revalidation approval, which incorporates the following objectives:

- To ensure that the programme continues to meet quality standards and remains relevant to industry needs and educational best practices.
- To ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, such as those set forth by its accrediting body, QQI, including adherence to standards and guidelines.
- To provide an opportunity to identify areas for enhancement and make necessary adjustments to the curriculum, teaching methods, and resources to improve student learning outcomes.
- To validate its 'currency'. The music industry is dynamic and constantly evolving with advancements in technology, trends, and practices. Regular reviews help to ensure that the program content remains current and reflects industry developments.
- To review its procedures for feedback from stakeholders, including students, faculty, alumni, and industry partners, which can inform programme improvements and ensure alignment with stakeholder needs and expectations.
- To undertake a comparative analysis by way of identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement, fostering excellence and competitiveness in the educational landscape.

Overall, conducting a review of the Level 8 BA Hons in Audio Production and Music Project Management is essential to uphold quality, relevance, and effectiveness in preparing students for successful careers in the music industry.

This report presents an overview of the programme review findings, highlighting key areas of strengths and areas for improvement.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

| | Document Type | Document Name |
|----|------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Programme Review Report | Programme Review Report – BAHons Audio Prod & Music Proj Mngmnt 2024 |
| 2. | Programme Document | BA (Hons) in Audio Production & Music Project Management |
| 3. | Module & Assessment Document | BAHons in Audio Production & Music Project Management |

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|----|--------------------|--|
| 4. | Appendix 5 | Programme Team CVs |
| 5. | Appendix 7 | Teaching and Learning Strategy BA Hons Audio Production & Project Management |
| 6. | Appendix 8 | Programme Handbook BA (Hons) in Audio Production & Music Project Management |
| 7. | Terms of Reference | BAH Audio Prod HCert Sound Engineering Terms of Reference |
| 8. | Agenda | Programme Review BAHonsAudioProdHCert Sound Engineering |

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

| | Person | Role / Job Title |
|-----|------------------------|--|
| 1. | Tim Bicknell | President |
| 2. | Lori Johnston | Academic Dean |
| 3. | Michael Kieilty | Head of Department |
| 4. | David Christophers | Principal, Sound Training College |
| 5. | Thom McDonnell | Programme Leader |
| 6. | Shane Mooney | Head of Student Experience |
| 7. | Darragh Breathnach | Registrar & Director of Campus Operations |
| 8. | Emma Balfe | Head of Teaching Delivery & Content Production |
| 9. | Grant Goodwin | Assistant Registrar |
| 10. | Amy Hayes | Programmes Manager (DBS note-taker) |
| 11. | Janine Jackson | Faculty Manager |
| 12. | Sarah Sharkey | Student Engagement Officer |
| 13. | Trevor Haugh | Head of Academic Information & Resource Centre/Library |
| 14. | Francisca Knight | Head of Academic Operations |
| 15. | Tanya Balfe | Admissions Manager |
| 16. | Damien Lennon | Lecturer |
| 17. | Peter Jones | Lecturer |
| 18. | Peter Meighan | Lecturer |
| 19. | Sarah Cleary | Lecturer |
| 20. | Vasileois Gourgourinis | Lecturer |
| 21. | Melinda Huian | Lecturer |
| 22. | Others | Students/Graduates |

2.3 Description of evaluation process

The panel conducted a thorough review of the range of documents, including the Self-Evaluation Report, supporting Programme Documents, and supplementary background documents provided by Dublin Business School ahead of the panel meeting. Prior to the visit, panel members submitted their initial evaluations to the Chair, who compiled and utilized them to guide discussions with Dublin Business School representatives.

On 19th April 2024, a virtual site visit was conducted via Zoom. During this session, the panel convened with Dublin Business School representatives, comprising the senior management

team, the programme team, professional services staff, as well as current students and graduates of the programme.

During the visit, discussions were held regarding the review process and the evaluation of the programme against the 12 criteria outlined by QQI. The findings, commendations, and recommendations from the review process are summarized in this document. No conditions were given.

Following the visit, a draft programme review report and draft independent evaluation report were prepared and shared with panel members for review. The final reports, reflecting agreed-upon findings, were subsequently sent to Dublin Business School for factual verification and consideration of the panel's recommendations.

Part 3. 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

Section A. Context and Terms of Reference for the Programme Review

Commentary:

The panel evaluation of the programme review Terms of Reference reflects a comprehensive assessment of the framework guiding the review process. Through meticulous examination, the panel can confirm that Dublin Business School programme Terms of Reference ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with established quality assurance standards and regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Terms of Reference articulates the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the review process, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, the panel evaluates the adequacy of the Terms of Reference in addressing the unique characteristics and challenges of the programme under review. This involves considering factors such as the programme's level, discipline, and delivery mode, as well as any specific contextual factors that may impact the review process.

Another crucial aspect of the evaluation is assessing the inclusivity of the Terms of Reference, ensuring that the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders, including students, faculty, and industry partners, are considered. This involves reviewing the mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and feedback throughout the review process, as well as the procedures for addressing any concerns raised.

Moreover, the panel evaluates the feasibility and practicality of the Terms of Reference in terms of timelines, resource allocation, and logistical considerations. This involves assessing whether the proposed review process is realistic and achievable within the specified timeframe and resource constraints.

Overall, the panel is satisfied that the programme review and its Terms of Reference ensured the effectiveness, integrity, and credibility of the review process.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Dublin Business School (DBS) is a private third level educational institution in Ireland, offering a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional programmes across various disciplines. Established in 1975, it has grown to become one of Ireland's largest independent third-level institutions, with an increasing range of programmes and subject specialisms. Currently, programmes span the disciplines of Arts, Business, Humanities, ICT, Law, Film and Media, Management, Marketing, and the Social Sciences.

The institution prides itself on its strong industry links, providing students with valuable opportunities for internships, work placements, and networking with leading professionals in their respective fields. With over 8,000 active students every year, over half of which are part-time evening students and the remainder full-time, day students, approximately three quarters are enrolled on QQI validated programmes. The remainder receive awards from DBS directly or other professional bodies such as the Institute of Commercial Management or ACCA. Over one third of DBS students are international, coming from over 100 different countries. Most of the international students to DBS come from other EU countries while significant numbers also come from India, China, Malaysia, United States and Brazil.

As an independent higher education college, DBS is a member of the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA). Along with other peer institutions in the sector, DBS believes it is well positioned to contribute to meeting the current and future needs in the Irish market for higher education programmes.

In submitting the BA Hons in Audio Production and Music Project Management, DBS fully considers the potential market for the programme, the size of previous intakes, where applicable, and its specific content, the competitive landscape, its own capacity to deliver such a programme and the fit of this programme with its own strategic intent. The programme being presented will continue to enhance the provider's portfolio of programmes, enabling them to contribute to the increasing demand for higher education along with addressing skills gaps in the audio production and music project management fields.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Section C. 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 analysis of baseline qualitative and quantitative information has served as a detailed foundational framework for assessing the programme's effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

Qualitative data, such as stakeholder feedback and observations, offer valuable insights into the programme's strengths, weaknesses, and areas of opportunity. This qualitative information provides context and nuance, helping to understand the experiences and perspectives of students, faculty, and other stakeholders. As a direct result, a number of areas have been revised including the Learning to Learn module which has been refreshed to reflect a stronger contextualised practical approach to learning and has been replaced with Music Writing.

Quantitative data, including student performance metrics, enrolment numbers, and retention rates, offer objective measures of the programme's outcomes and impact. These quantitative measures provide concrete evidence of the programme's effectiveness in achieving its objectives and can help identify trends and patterns over time; recruitment (including gender), enrolment and attrition rates.

The analysis of student enrolment data reveals an imbalanced representation across genders within the programme. During discussions with the provider, attention was drawn to this, with a split of 85% male to 15% female enrolment. The provider expressed awareness of this disparity and discussed ongoing efforts to address it, including targeted recruitment strategies and initiatives to create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for female students. Additionally, plans were discussed to further analyse the underlying factors contributing to the gender gap and to implement measures aimed at promoting greater gender diversity within and across the programmes.

Collectively, the combination of qualitative and quantitative information gathered informs evidence-based decision-making for programme enhancement and development. By leveraging both types of data, the provider can ensure that the programme is responsive to the needs of students and stakeholders while also aligning with industry standards and best practices.

Recommendations:

The panel has made a recommendation within the programme revalidation report to reflect findings and discussions.

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:

The programme review of teaching and learning strategies in the BA Hons Audio Production and Music Project Management programme delivery at Dublin Business School provides a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and impact of instructional methods and approaches used.

The panel discussed with the provider the timetabling of assessments, particularly in the second semester of the final year. While the panel acknowledge that the cluster of assessments often reflects the culmination of students' learning journeys, doing so too closely together risks overloading students with content, potentially sacrificing depth of learning for breadth. This can result in a surface-level understanding of the material rather than a deeper comprehension that promotes critical thinking and application of knowledge. Furthermore, this may compromise the quality of education and assessment outcomes.

Recommendations:

The panel recommends that the provider undertake a review of its assessment scheduling for all Years, but with particular attention to those assessments associated with Year 3, Semester 2 (final year). Assessment planning should be initiated early in each semester, with assessment submission dates clearly communicated to the students to allow for ample preparation time. This will avoid the clustering of deadlines and contribute to a more positive and manageable experience for students during the final semester of their studies, ultimately promoting student success and well-being.

The panel recommends that the provider initiates early dialogue, guidance and preparation activities for Year 2 students to understand the requirements and expectations of Year 3 (final year), particularly with regards to the capstone project. Ensuring transparency and accessibility of information will alleviate anxieties about the transition and contribute to a smooth and successful transition.

Recommendations reflecting the above have been detailed within the new programme validation report.

Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

The panel are satisfied that the findings of the evaluation suggest that the programme has been successful in meeting the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

Firstly, feedback from learners indicates a high level of satisfaction with the programme. Learners expressed appreciation for the relevance of the curriculum to real-world applications, the quality of teaching and learning resources, and the supportive learning environment provided by the provider.

Furthermore, graduates of the programme reported positive outcomes and experiences. Many graduates highlighted the programme's role in equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for their chosen career paths. They also noted the value of practical experiences facilitated by the programme in enhancing their employability and professional development.

Overall, the panel concludes that the providers have successfully evaluated the current programme based on the feedback and experiences of stakeholders, particularly learners and graduates. This validation reinforces the quality and effectiveness of the programme in meeting its intended objectives and preparing learners for their future.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

The evaluation of the programme evidenced a positive view on the success of the programme as perceived by staff.

Staff members involved in teaching and administration expressed confidence in the programme's alignment with educational standards and objectives. They highlighted the effectiveness of the curriculum in addressing the needs of diverse learners and facilitating their academic and personal development.

Overall, the Programme Validations Panel concluded that the providers have successfully evaluated the current programme from the perspective of staff members, indicating a high level of satisfaction and confidence in its effectiveness.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

The professional and experienced feedback provided by External Examiners offered valuable insights into the programme's strengths, with only minor areas for improvement advised. With their wider expertise and perspectives, the External Examiners brought a fresh and objective viewpoint to the programme review process. Their feedback has served as a crucial quality assurance mechanism, helping to ensure that the programme meets established standards and best practices. The provider has leveraged the feedback provided by the External Examiners, making informed decisions to enhance the overall quality, ultimately benefiting both students and stakeholders.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

The panel is satisfied that there are appropriately devised policies and procedures in place to address complaints, appeals and commendations.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The panel notes the robustness of the provider's quality assurance mechanisms, which encompassed a comprehensive range of policies, procedures, and practices aimed at ensuring the delivery of high-quality education. These mechanisms are appropriately aligned with

established standards and best practices, thereby fostering confidence in the overall quality of the programme.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

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

Commentary:

The panel recognizes the provider's commitment to working towards an inclusive, accessible, and authentic teaching, learning, and assessment experience. The provider has in place a range of strategies and supports to accommodate diverse learner needs, promote equitable access to resources, and ensure the authenticity and relevance of assessment tasks to real-world contexts.

Recommendations:

The panel has made a recommendation within the new programme validation approval to reflect findings and discussions.

Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

The provider has demonstrated a commendable commitment to ensuring the quality and relevance of their programme through a rigorous review process in preparation for the validation of the next iteration. This analysis involved a comprehensive examination of various aspects of the existing programme, including curriculum content, teaching and assessment methods, and support structures.

One key aspect of the review process was the evaluation of stakeholder feedback, including input from learners, graduates, staff, and external examiners. This feedback provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the current programme, guiding decision-making for improvements.

The provider engaged in a thorough examination of educational standards and best practices within the field, ensuring that the programme remains aligned with evolving industry trends and expectations. This proactive approach contributes to the programme's ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Section G. 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 panel responds positively to the provider's programme review and proposal of changes made to the Level 8 BA Hons programme. The provider demonstrates a commendable commitment to ensuring the quality and relevance of the programme.

The proposed changes arising from the review process have been incorporated into the programme validation application and well-received by the panel, as they addressed identified areas for improvement and enhancement. These changes aim to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme, ensuring that it remains relevant and responsive to the needs of students and the industry.

In summary, the panel commends the provider for their proactive approach to the programme review and their commitment to continuous improvement. The proposed changes are seen as positive steps towards maintaining relevance in preparing students for success in the field of sound engineering and music production.

Recommendations:

There are no recommendations.

Part 4. 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.

Section A. Commentary on review process:

Overall, the provider's review of the existing programme demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement in education. By engaging stakeholders, analysing data, and prioritising ongoing enhancement, the provider ensures that their programme remains responsive to the needs of students and the demands of the ever-changing educational and music production landscape.

Section B. Recommendations on review process:

There are no recommendations to make to the review process.

Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The panel is satisfied that the provider has applied the findings of the review process appropriately and is, as a result, well-positioned to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the programme in preparation for its next iteration.

Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:

The panel recommends that the revised programme be revalidated, without conditions. In summary the panel has made 6 recommendations for revalidation. The detail of these are contained within the Independent Report for Revalidation.

Signed: John Bartlett
Panel Chairperson:

Date: _17/05/2024



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1. Provider details

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Provider name | Dublin Business School |
| Date of site visit | Friday 19 th April 2024 |
| Date of report | Friday 17 th May 2024 |

Section A. Overall recommendations

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Principal programme | Title | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production and Music Project Management |
| | Award | Level 8 |
| | Credit | 180 |
| | Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i> | Satisfactory |

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

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|
| Embedded programme 2 | Title | N/A |
| | Award | N/A |
| | Credit | N/A |
| | Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i> | N/A |

Section B. Expert Panel

| Name | Role | Affiliation |
|------------------|-------------------------|--|
| John Bartlett | Chair | Head of Research, ATU Sligo |
| Prof. Paul Moore | Subject Matter Expert | Ulster University |
| Dr Claire Fitch | Subject Matter Expert | Dundalk I.T. |
| Kieran Lynch | Subject Matter Expert | IADT |
| Ronan Murphy | Industry Representative | Freelance Event Professional |
| Trudi Barnett | Report Writer | Independent Consultant |
| Dhanushi Rodrigo | Learner Representative | PhD Researcher, School of Business, ATU - Galway |

Section C. Principal Programme

| Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided | Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>) | Minimum number of learners |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| Dublin Business School/Sound Training College (STC) | 100 | 10 |

| Proposed Enrolment | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Date of first intake | September 2024 |
| Maximum number of annual intakes | 2 |
| Maximum total number of learners per intake | 50 |
| Programme duration (<i>months from start to completion</i>) | 6 semesters – full-time |
| Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment: | |
| <p>The panel acknowledges the presence of market demand for the proposed programme and finds that the curriculum aligns well with the needs of the audio and music sector. The planned number of intakes seems suitable to meet the anticipated market demand. The panel obtained clarity on the projected numbers an associated marketing and enrolment strategies from the attendees.</p> | |
| Target learner groups | |
| <p>Applicants should have a minimum of 2H5s and 4O6/H7 grades at Leaving Certificate, including Maths and English or Irish. Candidates over 23 years of age on 1st January in the year of admission and who do not meet the minimum entry requirements may apply as a mature student. The programme is aimed at school leavers, mature learners and international learners. It is therefore intended for learners from a variety of backgrounds who have a keen interest in music and audio and related technologies.</p> | |
| Approved countries for provision | Ireland |
| Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time | Full-time |
| The teaching and learning modalities | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom/Face to Face – 95% (onsite) approximately 2. Workplace – N/A 3. Online – 5% (synchronous) approximately 4. Other – N/A | |
| Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.) | |
| <p>This programme is designed both for school leavers and those who wish to re-skill or upskill in the audio production and music project management domain. It provides learners with a practical learning environment where theory and knowledge are used in context, and to provide an opportunity for learners to work with equipment and situations commonly found in an audio</p> | |

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|--|------------|
| production setting. This three-year programme will lead to a BA (Hons) in Audio Production and Music Project Management. | |
| Summary of specifications for teaching staff | WTE |
| Lecturer Lecturers will be qualified to a minimum of Level 8 Honours Degree in the areas of music, music technology, audio engineering, audio production, business, innovation, project and event management. In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 8 honours degrees in the above disciplines, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry or technical experience may also be considered. | 3 |
| 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 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 |

| Learning Activity | Ratio of learners to teaching staff |
|---|--|
| Lecture classroom-based sessions | 1:50 |
| Workshops | 1:25 |
| Studio | 1:25 |
| Practical lab sessions | 1:25 |
| Online class (broadcast live) | 1:50 |
| Online tutorial (interactive) | 1:25 |
| Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing: Overall, the panel is satisfied with the programme outline and staffing arrangements for the BA Hons in Audio Production and Music Project Management, highlighting an alignment with industry standards, educational best practices, and student-centred principles. | |

| Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation) | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| Code | Title | Last enrolment date |
| PG23892 | BA (Hons) in Audio Production and Music Project Management | August 2024 |

Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

The panel is satisfied that the overall programme concept is sound and has been appropriately researched and presented. The SER for revalidation has been professionally coordinated and executed. The curriculum is extensive with the diversity of subject matter directed towards ensuring learners are provided with necessary opportunities to achieve the relevant knowledge, know-how and competence. The panel is satisfied that the proposed programme meets the requirements of the NFQ at Level 8.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable). Having examined appropriate QA / Governance procedures, comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme. (Especially relevant for move to online delivery / assessment)

N/A

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

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

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

| <p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.¹</p> | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>The panel has thoroughly assessed the programme based on the criteria and confirms that QQI can confidently affirm that the programme meets Criterion 1 and its sub-criteria (a-c).</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School, as the provider, is eligible to seek revalidation for the mentioned programme.</p> <p>All documentation presented indicates that the criteria have been fulfilled and appropriately signed, ensuring the programme's compliance with statutory and regulatory standards. The panel is satisfied with the provider's quality assurance procedures, deeming them suitable for the revalidation of the programme under consideration.</p> |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

¹This 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

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly. b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme. c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s). d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>. e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements. f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought. (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders. g) For each programme and embedded programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.² (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards. h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules. i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable. <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.³</p> |
|---|

| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>The panel's evaluation of the programme has resulted in a positive outcome, recognizing that the programme meets Criterion 2, sub-criterion (a-i).</p> <p>Furthermore, the panel is content with the clarity and accuracy of the award title, finding it appropriately informative for both potential learners and employers. This title adheres to QQI's policy and criteria for awarding qualifications.</p> <p>Dublin Business School's documentation for programme revalidation, including the mapping of Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) to Award Standards at NFQ level 8, is comprehensive.</p> <p>The specified programme learning outcomes and module learning outcomes are clearly defined and appropriately linked to the overall curriculum structure.</p> |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

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

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.⁴
- 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 evidence⁵ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁶.
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁷
- c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
- d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
- e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>The panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm that the programme meets Criterion 3 along with its sub-criteria (a-e).</p> <p>It's noted that the programme development process has been thorough, incorporating stakeholder engagement to inform both the process and the programme itself. The programme (development) team comprises experienced practitioners and educators from the music production industry, ensuring a wealth of expertise.</p> <p>The panel acknowledges that the programme is well-informed and caters to a genuine educational and industry need within the music production sector, while also positioning Dublin Business School's award provision for future relevance and sustainability.</p> |

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

⁵ This might be predictive or indirect.

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

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

| | | |
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| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied⁸.</p> <p>b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR⁹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).</p> <p>e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Reflects the core <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> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After thorough evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the program's compliance with Criterion 4 and its sub-criteria (a-g).</p> <p>The panel extensively reviewed and discussed the procedures outlined in the programme descriptor and additional supporting documentation, focusing on access, transfer, and progression. This document details entry and selection procedures, highlighting the existence of formal strategies for access, transfer, and progression. These strategies enable candidates without formal prerequisite qualifications but with relevant industry experience to enter the programme. Appropriately developed RPL procedures also exist.</p> <p>However, the panel has identified a gender imbalance. Therefore, as a proactive measure the panel makes the following recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation 1:</p> |

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

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

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

| | | |
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| | | The panel suggests that the provider develops a comprehensive policy to address gender balance in programme recruitment. This should involve collaboration with internal stakeholders, external partners, and community organizations to promote gender equality initiatives and share best practices. Such proactive measures will contribute to fostering a diverse and talented graduate workforce. |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.</p> <p>b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹⁰.</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>j) The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.¹¹</p> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After thorough evaluation, the panel confirms that QQI can confidently confirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 5, sub-criteria (a-j). The panel engaged in discussions with Dublin Business School and Sound Training College staff regarding the overall depth and breadth of the programme, as well as its individual modules. Representatives from the provider, including management, teaching staff, and Quality Assurance personnel involved in programme development and implementation, participated in these discussions. The panel delved into key curriculum-related areas, such as teaching and learning strategies, module content and learner pathways.</p> <p>The programme curriculum has undergone comprehensive development, leveraging the foundation of the original programme. It has forged robust connections with local and regional industries, facilitating ample opportunities for students to acquire industry-related experience. The curriculum strikes a professional balance between knowledge-based and competency-based learning, with careful articulation.</p> <p>The panel recognizes the ambition of the programme team in incorporating a substantial and pertinent body of content, affirming their dedication to enriching the learning experience.</p> |

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

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

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

| | | |
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| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>a) The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹² (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners’ achievements as required.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development¹³ opportunities¹⁴.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.</p> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After careful evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 6 and its sub-criteria (a-f).</p> <p>The qualifications and expertise of the staff are deemed appropriate for delivering the programme. The panel acknowledges the extensive experience of the programme team in the music production industry.</p> <p>Dublin Business School is commended for the substantial professional expertise and vocational competence of its teaching staff, which significantly enhances the academic rigor and consistency of the teaching and learning process. Consequently, the panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School has adequately qualified and capable staff members to effectively implement the proposed programme.</p> |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |

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

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

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

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| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |
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Criterion 7. There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

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| <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> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After thorough evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 7 and its sub-criteria (a-e).</p> <p>The programme will be conducted at both Dublin Business School and Sound Training College premises. The programme team outlined the facilities, which include a dedicated and well-equipped audio, music, and recording studio, featuring a variety of up-to-date equipment and infrastructure.</p> <p>The panel engaged in discussions with the provider regarding the range of physical and technical resources available. It is assured that mechanisms are in place to manage any additional resource requirements due to increased enrolments.</p> <p>However, the panel considers improved Moodle accessibility may be warranted. Therefore, as a proactive measure the panel makes the following recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The panel recommends that the provider implements measures to enhance the accessibility and operability of Moodle, as the learning management system (LMS), to ensure an inclusive and user-friendly experience for all students. Addressing accessibility challenges and optimizing Moodle's functionality will promote equitable access to</p> |

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| | | educational resources and facilitate effective teaching and learning and assessment submission. |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.</p> <p>c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.</p> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After careful evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the program's compliance with Criterion 8 and its sub-criteria (a-c)</p> <p>Dublin Business School is a reputable institution with a well-established presence in the field of music production. The proposed programme adopts a classroom and laboratory-based approach, fostering continuous interaction among learners, staff members, and peers within an enriching educational environment. This assertion was reinforced through discussions with both current and former learners from the current BA programme.</p> <p>The programme ensures adequate learner support systems, including guidance counselling and pastoral care. Additionally, robust feedback mechanisms are in place, enabling learners, including mature learners, to voice concerns to teachers and staff as needed. The panel is assured that staff members are readily available to provide support to learners when required.</p> <p>However, the panel considers an increased sense of student belonging would be beneficial. Therefore, as a proactive measure the panel makes the following recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The panel recommends that the provider adopts proactive measures to inform and enhance the sense of identity and belonging among students participating on the programme, particularly where a second provider is involved. Facilitating transparent communication will strengthen the student connection with Dublin Business School directly, and contribute to a positive learning experience, fostering a supportive academic community and cohesion across student bodies, particularly student union memberships.</p> |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

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| <p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁵ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p> | | |
| | <p>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</p> | <p>Comment</p> |
| <p>Principal Programme</p> | <p>YES</p> | <p>After thorough evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 9 and its sub-criteria (a-e).</p> <p>The module content is meticulously crafted to encompass realistic and contemporary learning opportunities, informed by insights gleaned from industry-stakeholder consultations. During discussions, Dublin Business School staff outlined a variety of teaching approaches tailored to deliver the extensive curriculum content. These strategies are communicated to learners during the programme's induction stage, ensuring clarity and alignment of expectations.</p> <p>Formative feedback is integrated throughout the programme to support learner progression. Leveraging the high-quality learning environment, including the physical infrastructure, the programme's teaching and learning strategies aim to optimize the learning experience. The combination of a conducive physical environment and a low teacher-to-learner ratio further enhances personalized learning opportunities for students.</p> <p>Dublin Business School staff members facilitate both structured and autonomous learning processes, fostering a balance between theoretical understanding and industry related proficiency. The panel noted comprehensive examples of teaching and learning strategies, showcasing innovative and progressive approaches to monitoring learner progress.</p> <p>However, the panel observed an opportunity to strengthen the transition between Year 2 and Year 3 . Therefore, as a proactive measure the panel makes the following recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation 4 The panel recommends that the provider initiates early dialogue, guidance and preparation activities for Year 2 students to understand the requirements and expectations of Year 3 (final year), particularly with regards to the capstone project. Ensuring transparency and accessibility</p> |

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

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| | | of information will alleviate anxieties about the transition and contribute to a smooth and successful transition. |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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>¹⁶</p> <p>b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.¹⁷</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.¹⁸</p> <p>f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.¹⁹</p> | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After thorough evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 10 and its sub-criteria (a-h).</p> <p>The panel is content that the provider has implemented robust assessment practices, overseen by Dublin Business School's quality assurance structures, and that assessments are conducted in accordance with QQI policies. Learners are adequately informed about assessment procedures, and appropriate measures are in place to ensure the integrity and security of the assessment process.</p> <p>However, the panel acknowledges the programme's ambition but raises concerns about the excessive scheduling, particularly in the final year. This heavy scheduling adversely affects the volume of assessments, potentially compromising the overall assessment process. Therefore, as a proactive measure the panel makes the following recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The panel recommends that the provider undertake a review of its assessment scheduling for all Years, but with particular attention to those assessments associated with Year 3, Semester 2 (final year). Assessment planning should be initiated early in each semester, with assessment submission dates clearly communicated to the students to allow for ample preparation time. This will avoid the clustering of deadlines and contribute to a more positive and manageable experience</p> |

¹⁶ See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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

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

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| | | <p>for students during the final semester of their studies, ultimately promoting student success and well-being.</p> <p>The panel discussion with Dublin Business School staff regarding the use and promotion of A.I. highlighted an opportunity to strengthen their ability to leverage A.I. powered tools as an educational resource. Therefore, as a proactive measure the panel makes the following recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation 6 The panel recommends that the provider updates the (programme) plagiarism policy to ensure integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to strengthen academic integrity and streamline plagiarism detection processes. By leveraging AI technology the provider can proactively address plagiarism while promoting a culture of originality and scholarship based on Academic Integrity among students.</p> |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</p> <p>f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²⁰.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i>²¹ 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> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>Upon evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 11 and its sub-criteria (a-j).</p> <p>Adequate and explicit information is consistently provided to learners, both during induction and throughout the programme. The programme documentation for learners is presented clearly, ensuring accessibility and understanding.</p> <p>Procedures for Reasonable Accommodation are clearly outlined and documented, showcasing appropriate provisions for learners with learning challenges. The establishment of coherent procedures demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.</p> <p>The provider has established policies and procedures to ensure comprehensive support, guidance, and care for enrolled learners. Discussions with provider staff further validated the robustness of the programme documentation, providing solid evidence of Dublin Business School's commitment to learner support. Overall, attention to the support mechanisms for all learners was particularly insightful and appreciated by the panel.</p> |

²⁰ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

²¹ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

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| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

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|--|---|---|
| <p>a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider’s general or institutional procedures.</p> <p>b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance²² is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI’s statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p> | | |
| | Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially) | Comment |
| Principal Programme | YES | <p>After thorough evaluation, the panel recommends that QQI can confidently affirm the programme's compliance with Criterion 12 and its sub-criteria (a-h).</p> <p>The programme falls within the provider's scope of provision, aligning with their quality assurance (QA) and governance procedures. The institution's QA and governance mechanisms effectively support programme development and implementation, as evidenced by documented management roles, responsibilities, and structures. These findings were further validated through productive discussions between the panel and the provider.</p> <p>Additionally, the Dublin Business School and Sound Training College Campus provides purpose-built physical infrastructure conducive to the programme's requirements. The programme's teaching staff members demonstrate the relevant level of industry expertise, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education.</p> |
| Embedded Programme 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Embedded Programme 2 | N/A | N/A |

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

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 Principal programme:

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The providers programme aligns closely with established educational standards and guidelines. The curriculum demonstrates a clear focus on learning outcomes, academic rigor, and relevance to industry needs.
2. The programme exhibits a well-structured design that integrates effective practices in pedagogy and assessment. The delivery methods are varied and engaging, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences.
3. The provider actively engages with stakeholders, including employers and industry professionals, to ensure programme relevance and currency.

Commendations

1. The panel commends Dublin Business School on the level of planning and preparation that has been coherently applied to the presentation of all programme validation application documentation.
2. The panel commends Dublin Business School on their professionalism and collegiality during the meeting. Active participation from all attendees was encouraged, ensuring that diverse perspectives were heard and valued.

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

N/A

Embedded programme 1:

| Select one | |
|------------|---|
| N/A | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |

| | |
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| | 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

N/A

Commendations

N/A

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

N/A

Embedded programme 2:

| | |
|------------|--|
| Select one | |
| N/A | Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training; |
| | 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

N/A

Commendations

N/A

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

N/A

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

N/A

Summary of recommendations to the provider

Recommendation 1

The panel recommends that the provider develops a comprehensive and proactive policy to address gender balance in programme recruitment. Collaborate with internal stakeholders, external partners, and community organisations to promote gender equality initiatives and share best practices. This proactive approach will contribute to building a diverse and talented graduate workforce.

Recommendation 2

The panel recommends that the provider implements measures to enhance the accessibility and operability of Moodle, as the learning management system (LMS), to ensure an inclusive and user-friendly experience for all students. Addressing accessibility challenges and optimizing Moodle's functionality will promote equitable access to educational resources and facilitate effective teaching and learning and assessment submission.

Recommendation 3

The panel recommends that the provider adopts proactive measures to inform and enhance the sense of identity and belonging among students participating on the programme, particularly where a second provider is involved. Facilitating transparent communication will strengthen the student connection with Dublin Business School directly, and contribute to a positive learning experience, fostering a supportive academic community and cohesion across student bodies, particularly student union memberships.

Recommendation 4

The panel recommends that the provider initiates early dialogue, guidance and preparation activities for Year 2 students to understand the requirements and expectations of Year 3 (final year), particularly with regards to the capstone project. Ensuring transparency and accessibility of information will alleviate anxieties about the transition and contribute to a smooth and successful transition.

Recommendation 5

The panel recommends that the provider undertake a review of its assessment scheduling for all Years, but with particular attention to those assessments associated with Year 3, Semester 2 (final year). Assessment planning should be initiated early in each semester, with assessment submission dates clearly communicated to the students to allow for ample preparation time. This will avoid the

clustering of deadlines and contribute to a more positive and manageable experience for students during the final semester of their studies, ultimately promoting student success and well-being.

Recommendation 6

The panel recommends that the provider updates the (programme) plagiarism policy to ensure integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to strengthen academic integrity and streamline plagiarism detection processes. By leveraging AI technology the provider can proactively address plagiarism while promoting a culture of originality and scholarship based on Academic Integrity among students.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: John Bartlett

Date: 17/05/2024

Signed: 

3.2 Disclaimer

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

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

Part 4. Proposed programme schedules

| Name of Provider: | | STC & DBS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---|--------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Programme Title | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production & Music Project Management | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Title | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stage Exit Award Title | | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Modes of Delivery (FT/PT): | | F/T | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching and learning modalities | | In-Class, Blended (Synchronous Live Online) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Class | Award NFQ level | Award EQF Level | Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage): | | Stage NFQ Level | Stage EQF Level | | Stage Credit (ECTS) | Date Effective | ISCED Subject code | | | | |
| Major | 8 | 6 | 1 | | 6 | 6 | | 60 | September 2024 | 0215 | | | | |
| Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces) | | Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2) | Module | | Credit Number | Total Student Effort Module (hours) | | | | Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) | | | | |
| | | | Status | NFQ Level where specified | Credit Units HET Credits | Total Hours | Class (or equiv) Contact Hours | Directed e-learning | Hours of Independent | Work-based learning effort | C.A. % | % Supervised Project | Proctored practical demonstration % | Proctored written exam % |
| Studio Production | | 2 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | 100 | | | |
| Studio Recording | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Acoustics and Psychoacoustics for Production | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Critical Listening and DAW Skills | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Electronic Music Composition | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Music Writings | | 1 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | 100 | | | |
| Marketing Essentials and Business Planning | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Name of Provider: | | STC & DBS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme Title | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production & Music Project Management | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Title | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stage Exit Award Title | | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Modes of Delivery (FT/PT): | | F/T | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching and learning modalities | | In-Class | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Class | Award NFQ level | Award EQF Level | Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage): | Stage NFQ Level | Stage EQF Level | Stage Credit (ECTS) | Date Effective | ISCED Subject code | | | | | | |
| Major | 8 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 60 | September 2024 | 0215 | | | | | | |
| Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces) | Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2) | Module | | Credit Number | Total Student Effort Module (hours) | | | | | Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) | | | | |
| | | Status | NFQ Level where specified | Credit Units | Total Hours | Contact Hours | Class (or equiv) | Directed e-learning | Learning | Hours of independent effort | Work-based learning | C.A. % | Supervised Project % | Proctored practical demonstration % |
| Commercial Studio Production | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | | 100 | | | |
| Creative Recording and Mixing | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | | 100 | | | |
| Practical Composition | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | | 100 | | | |
| Software Post-Production and Mixing | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | | 100 | | | |
| Sound Reinforcement | 1 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | | 100 | | | |
| Performance Technologies | 2 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | | 100 | | | |
| Digital Marketing for Music | 1 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | | 100 | | | |
| Creativity in the Music Business | 2 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | | 100 | | | |
| Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Name of Provider: | | STC & DBS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Programme Title | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production & Music Project Management | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Title | | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stage Exit Award Title | | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Modes of Delivery (FT/PT): | | F/T | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching and learning modalities | | In-Class, Blended (Synchronous Live Online) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Class | Award NFQ level | Award EQF Level | Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage): | Stage NFQ Level | Stage EQF Level | Stage Credit (ECTS) | Date Effective | ISCED Subject code | | | | | | |
| Major | 8 | 6 | AWARD | 8 | 6 | 60 | September 2024 | 0215 | | | | | | |
| Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces) | | Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2) | Module | | Credit Number | Total Student Effort Module (hours) | | | | | Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) | | | |
| | | | Status | NFQ Level where specified | Credit Units | Total Hours | Hours | Class (or equiv) Contact | Directed e-learning | Learning | Hours of Independent effort | Work-based learning | C.A. % | Supervised Project % |
| Capstone Project | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 20 | 500 | 80 | 120 | 300 | | 100 | | | |
| Event Operations | | 1&2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Entrepreneurial Pursuits in Music | | 2 | M | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Professional Studio Production | | 1&2 | E | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Professional Live Production | | 1&2 | E | N/A | 10 | 250 | 72 | 58 | 120 | | 100 | | | |
| Audio Programming | | 1 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | 100 | | | |
| Game Audio | | 2 | M | N/A | 5 | 125 | 36 | 29 | 60 | | 100 | | | |
| Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Learners choose between two electives: <i>Professional Studio Production</i> and <i>Professional Live Production</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |