



**Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann**
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	Dublin Business School
Programme(s) Reviewed	Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Professor Paul Stynes	Chair	Dean of Computing, National College of Ireland
Nicole O'Neill	Report Writer	Education Innovation Manager, TU Dublin
Dr Joanne Malone	Academic	Lecturer in Humanities, South East Technological University
Dr Anshu Suri	International Academic	Academic Director, MSc in Marketing & Retail Innovation, University College Dublin
Brendan Kildea	Industry Representative-	Head of Digital Growth, Peninsula Ireland
Rumbidzai Gandiwa	Student Representative	PhD Researcher, Advance CRT, Munster Technological University

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

Part 1. Introduction

This process applies to the level 8 Higher Diploma (HDip) in Science in Digital Marketing offered by Dublin Business School, which is due for programme review within the 2024/25 Academic Year in preparation for submission of an updated Programme Document to the QQI to facilitate delivery of the revalidated programme from 1 September 2025. This is consistent with the QQI requirement for periodic monitoring and review and conforms with recent QQI policies.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Programme Review Report	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Programme Review Report
2.	Programme Document	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Programme Document
3.	Module and Assessment Document	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Module and Assessment Document
4.	Programme Handbook	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Programme Handbook
5.	Curriculum Vitae	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Programme Team Curriculum Vitae
6.	Terms of Reference	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Terms of Review for Programme Review
7.	Letter Declaration	Dublin Business Letter of Declaration for the Review of the Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing
8.	Deed of Guarantee	Dublin Business School Deed of Guarantee
9.	Protection of Enrolled Learners Refund	Protection of Enrolled Learners Refund Arrangements Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing
10.	Supporting Documents	Higher Diploma in Science in Marketing Supporting Documents
11.	2020 Validation Documents	Validation Report and Response from 2020 Validation and related programme documents,
12.	Annual Programme Reports	Annual Programme Reports 20-21, 21-22, 22-23
13.	Board of Studies Reports	Board of Study Reports 2020 – 2024
14.	CA Examples	CA Assessment Descriptors for each module 2020 – 2024
15.	External Examiner Reports	Reports from External Examiners 2020 – 2024
16.	Graduate Trends	Graphs demonstrating Classification Trends
17.	Class Rep Meeting Minutes	Minutes of Class Rep Meetings 21-24 and other student feedback reflections
18.	SESU Revalidation Data	Data on Student Attendance, progression and award classifications
19.	QQI Criteria and Handbook	QQI Assessment and Standards

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Academic Dean	Lori Johnston
2.	Acting Academic Director	Tanya Zubrzycki
3.	Assistant Academic Director	Niamh Cullen
4.	Programme Level Manager	Charles Crimmins
5.	Faculty Manager	Nicholas Kelly
6.	Head of Student Experience	Shane Mooney
7.	Chief Operations Officer, Registrar	Darragh Breathnach
8.	Assistant Registrar	Anita Dwyer
9.	Programmes Manager	Amy Hayes
10.	Head of Academic Operations	Francisca Knight
11.	Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre/ Library	Trevor Haugh
12.	Admissions Manager	Tanya Balfe
13.	Student Engagement Officer-	Sarah Sharkey
14.	Programme Level Manager	Charles Crimmins
15.	Programme Lecturer	Amy Cannon
16.	Programme Lecturer	Ieva Mascevic
17.	Programme Lecturer	James Mackin
18.	Programme Lecturer	John Noble
19.	Programme Lecturer	Lorca Kelly
20.	Programme Lecturer	Naomi Kendal
21.	Programme Lecturer	Shaun Hayden

2.3 Description of evaluation process

The panel was provided with Programme Review Document as detailed above in section 2.1 via a shared google drive. Panel members each completed the initial feedback form and returned that in advance of the Review meetings to the Panel Chair. The panel members had a series of meetings on Zoom on Tuesday, 4th March 2025 with representatives of DBS as outlined in the below agenda:

Time	Item	DBS Attendees
09:00-10.00	Panel Private Meeting	N/A
10.00-11.00	<p>1. Evaluation of Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation criteria <i>Introduction to DBS</i> <i>Criterion 1. The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programmes(s)</i></p> <p>2. Evaluation of the Programme Review Process and Report (a) the fitness for purpose of the programme (including its objectives, intended learning outcomes, organisation, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, staffing, resources and management) in light of experience; (b) the actual achievement by the programme of its stated objectives;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Academic Dean • Academic Director • Assistant Academic Director • Programme Level Manager • Faculty Manager • Head of Student Experience • Registrar & Director of Campus Operations • Assistant Registrar • Programmes Manager, DBS note-taker

Time	Item	DBS Attendees
	<p>(c) the profile of learners who were enrolled and its suitability for the programme;</p> <p>(d) the performance of enrolled learners (grades, attrition, completion, benchmarking) and how the provider has responded to this;</p> <p>(e) the quality of the learning environment and the learning opportunities afforded to learners by the programme;</p> <p>(f) the suitability of the learner workload in light of experience (whether it is excessive or inadequate);</p> <p>(g) the effectiveness of procedures for the assessment of learners including summative and formative assessment of learners and external examining procedures;</p> <p>(h) the quality assurance arrangements that are specific to the programme;</p> <p>(i) the proposed modifications to the programme.</p>	
11.00-11.15	Private Panel Meeting / Break	N/A
11.15-11:45	3. Panel Meeting with Student and Graduate Representatives	Students, graduates
11.45-12.00	Private Panel Meeting / Break	N/A
12.00-12.45	<p>4. Evaluation of Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation criteria</p> <p>- Programme Rationale and overall structure <i>Criterion 2: Programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with QQI awards sought.</i> <i>Criterion 3: Programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI award standards are well informed and soundly based</i> <i>Criterion 4: Access Transfer & Progression arrangements are satisfactory</i></p> <p>- Programme Management, Resourcing and Supports for Learners and Facilities Discussion (in place of tour) <i>Criterion 6: There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned</i> <i>Criterion 7: There are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned</i> <i>Criterion 8: The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme learners</i> <i>Criterion 11: Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed and cared for</i> <i>Criterion 12: The programme is well managed</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Dean • Academic Director • Assistant Academic Director • Faculty Manager • Registrar & Director of Campus Operations • Assistant Registrar • Student Engagement Officer • Head of Student Experience • Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre/ Library • Admissions Manager • Head of Academic Operations • Programme Coordinator • Content Production and Relationship Manager • Programmes Manager, DBS note-taker
12.45-13.30	Lunch and Private Panel Meeting / Break	N/A
13.30-15.00	<p>4. Curriculum, Learning Teaching & Assessment <i>Criterion 5: Written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose</i> <i>Criterion 9: There are sound learning and teaching strategies</i> <i>Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Director • Assistant Academic Director • Lecturing Team <p>Present but to defer to programme team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Dean • Registrar & Director of Campus Operations • Assistant Registrar • Programmes Manager, DBS note-taker

Time	Item	DBS Attendees
15:00-15.45	Private Panel Meeting / Break	N/A
15.45-16.00	Feedback to Senior DBS Staff	

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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 Programme Team took a robust approach to the review, which included engagement with students, staff and external stakeholders and which informed the programme re-design.

Recommendations:

N/A

Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

The panel was provided with extensive documentation which is outlined in Section 2.1 above.

Recommendations:

N/A

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 panel was provided with quantitative statistics which included completion rates for each cohort, profile of the entrants on the programme, grade classifications and graduate destinations.

The panel noted the gender imbalance on the programme, noting that there is a very high % percentage of females enrolled on the programme. The panel also noted that there is a high % percentage of the students who complete the programme that obtain 1st Class Honours. The panel notes that the new assessment strategy for the programme, which includes less group work may have an impact on the Grade Classification Profile of the programme.

Recommendations:

- PPR 1 Consider reviewing the programme data to ascertain if there is a different withdrawal rate of students from cognate, level 7 and non-cognate level 8 to ascertain if further supports should be put in place.

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 panel noted that DBS has revised the programme learning and teaching strategy in accordance with DBS's second Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE2). These revisions have included a more structured approach to the blended delivery of the programme and the inclusion of the Graduate Work Ready (GWR) programme as an additional mandatory element of the programme.

The panel commends the provision of the DBS Generative AI Toolkit which provides guidance to students and staff on how to use Generative AI in DBS.

The panel was informed about the processes used to monitor student attendance and performance and the role of the Student Engagement unit and the interventions that are in place to support students who are identified at risk of withdrawal / poor performance. The panel commends the role of Academic Support Community and how the student support services have been integrated to support students.

Recommendations:

N/A

Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

It was clear to the panel that the issues raised by external stakeholders and students have informed the review of the programme. One of the key issues raised by external stakeholders was the impact of Gen AI on the industry. As part of the review a new module has been incorporated into the programme “Next Gen: AI for Digital Marketers”.

Addressing both student and stakeholder feedback the programme content was reviewed to provide a stronger focus on the practical, hands-on competencies that enhance employability and ensure graduates are well-prepared to manage real-world marketing campaigns.

The panel noted the positive feedback provided by students for the programme and noted that to address student feedback in relation to the provision of additional Career Guidance, as noted in Section 3 the Graduate Work Read Programme has been incorporated into the programme as an additional mandatory element. Student Feedback in relation to over-assessment has been addressed by the introduction of a new assessment strategy on the programme which has the principle that each 5 ECTS module will include a single assessment, while 10 ECTS modules will feature two assessments and the reduction of Group work across the programme. Student Feedback requesting clearer assessment guidance and provision of feedback has been addressed by the introduction of a standardised assessment template which will be adopted across the programme to ensure consistency in rubrics, assessment criteria, and guidelines surrounding the use of generative AI.

Recommendations:

- PPR 2 Roll out the implementation of the standardised grading rubric. Rubrics should consist of three elements Criteria, Standard and Descriptors.
- PPR 3 Review the constructive alignment of the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes with the assessment and indicative module content.

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

The panel noted the comprehensive approach taken by all staff to review and update both the module content on the programme and the supports provided to students. The panel recognises the enormous undertaking by the programme development team and the panel would like to commend their knowledge skills and competence in putting together a professional set of documents.

Recommendations:

N/A

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

The panel noted the positive feedback received from external examiners for the programmes and that DBS has tried to ensure that the positive elements noted by external examiners have continued to be incorporated into the new programme design.

Recommendations:

N/A

Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

The documentation provided on the procedures in place was comprehensive.

Recommendations:

N/A

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The documentation provided on the Quality Assurance processes in place was comprehensive.

Recommendations:

N/A

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

Commentary:

N/A

Recommendations:

N/A

Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

The Panel is satisfied that DBS took a robust approach to the review, which included engagement with students, staff and external stakeholders and which informed the programme re-design. The programme has been re-designed with a focus on enhancing the employability of Graduates and to address the fast-moving changes that are occurring in the industry.

The panel found that the staff were enthusiastic about the programme and provided a robust defence of the programme.

Recommendations:

N/A

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 supports the proposed changes to the programme and in particular the inclusion of the new module Next Gen: AI for Digital Marketing and the proposed changes to the delivery and assessment strategies on the programme which should have a positive impact on student engagement.

Recommendations:

- PPR 4 Review the wording for the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes.

- PPR 5 Review the language used to describe the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes to ensure they are at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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:

The panel was impressed with the comprehensive approach taken to the review process, the high level of documentation provided to the panel, the holistic approach to supporting students between academic and professional services staff and with the staff enthusiasm for the programme.

Section B. Recommendations on review process:

N/A

Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The panel is supportive of the proposed programme revisions which have been informed by staff, student, and external feedback. The proposed programme revisions met the rapidly changing needs of the industry that the programme is preparing graduates for. The panel noted that due to the fast pace in which technological developments are affecting the industry, the programme team may need to make regular revisions to the module content to ensure alignment with the latest developments in industry.

Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:

N/A

Signed: _____



Panel Chairperson:

Date: 13th March 2025



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

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	4 th March 2025
Date of report	

Section E. Overall recommendations

Principal programme¹	Title	Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing
	Award	Higher Diploma in Science (major award)
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

¹ Replace throughout with actual programme title.

Section F. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Professor Paul Stynes	Chair	Dean of Computing, National College of Ireland
Dr Joanne Malone	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer in Humanities, South East Technological University
Dr Anshu Suri	Subject Matter Expert	Academic Director, MSc in Marketing & Retail Innovation, University College Dublin
Nicole O'Neill	Secretary	Education Innovation Manager, TU Dublin
Rumbidzai Gandiwa	Learner Representative	PhD Researcher, Advance CRT, Munster Technological University
Brendan Kildea	Industry Representative	Head of Digital Growth, Peninsula Ireland

Section G. Principal Programme

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

*per intake

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	Sept 25	1	2	5	75
Part-Time	Sept 25	2	2	5	75
Intake Schedule e.g. January September		September and March			

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

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.)

The Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing is a conversion programme for graduates who wish to acquire core digital marketing skills. Participants will receive practical training in key digital skills such as Digital Marketing Management and Communications, Digital Storytelling, Digital Marketing Tools, Digital Ecosystems: E-Business and Technology Integration, Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics, Next Gen: AI for Digital Marketing, and the capstone module (Digital

Portfolio). Participants will work towards the completion of a digital portfolio as their capstone project. The programme emphasis is on the development of the knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the role of the digital marketing professional. Communication and teamwork skills are fostered and real issues from the rapidly changing world of digital marketing are discussed and analysed. The programme will be delivered in a flexible manner, consisting of lectures, workshops, group work, blended learning and guest speakers from industry. Throughout the programme, learners will acquire the necessary skills and acumen to appraise and operationalise digital marketing opportunities and challenges and effectively integrate these into decision-making roles with an organisation. The programme will enable graduates to play an active role in a diverse range of digital marketing roles and/or be in a position to take up further Level 9 postgraduate studies, such as the Master of Science in Digital Marketing, the MSc in Marketing or the MBA.

Target learner groups

As this is a conversion programme, the Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing is aimed at learners with a Level 8 honours bachelor's degree with a minimum pass classification in a non-cognate area from a recognised third level institution. Applicants who do not have a Level 8 qualification and who have at least 3 years' work experience may also be considered through the College's normal RPL procedures. Relevant professional experience may be taken into account and individuals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis through DBS RPL procedures. This programme may also be of interest to learners with a Level 7 ordinary bachelor's degree in a cognate area (cognate areas include marketing) who wish to specialise in the field of digital marketing.

Approved countries for provision

Ireland

Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time

Full-Time and Part-time

The teaching and learning modalities

The Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing was approved to be delivered using the following modes of delivery:

1. Classroom lectures
2. Case-based learning
3. Practical skills sessions
4. Workshops
5. Tutorials
6. Individual and group work
7. Online synchronous and asynchronous

Summary of specifications for teaching staff

Role	Profile	WTE _[GG1]
Academic Director	The Academic Director will be responsible for the overall management and development of the programme, the coordination of the organisation and delivery of the programme, and the management and support of learners on the programme through Assistant Academic Directors and Programme Level	1

	<p>Managers. The Academic Director is responsible for the suite of programmes in their discipline area and ensures programme offerings are current, employment-focused and academically robust and coherent in construct. The Academic Director provides academic leadership to Faculty and to Programme Teams in the development and delivery of high-quality, progressive, learner-centred education. The Academic Director role is focused around 3 distinct areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance of discipline area programmes. • Programme development, review, and retention for discipline areas. <p>Programme innovation, employer engagement and foster business opportunity in the discipline area.</p>	
Assistant Academic Director	<p>The Assistant Academic Director works alongside the Academic Director across many of their duties, including the management and development of the programme, the coordination of the organisation and delivery of the programme, and the management and support of learners on the programme. The Assistant Academic Director also works in a student-facing capacity, through teaching and supporting students more generally throughout their time as DBS. The Assistant Academic Director role is focused around 3 distinct areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective programme management and teaching, learning and assessment initiatives in DBS programmes. • Implementation of programme development, review, and retention initiatives in the discipline area. <p>Supporting the discipline Academic Director in discipline development, enhancement and innovation including opportunities for business development, employer-facing initiatives and improved graduate outcomes.</p>	1
Programme Level Manager	<p>The Programme Level Manager (PLM) provides professional leadership and management for an allocated subject area in order to facilitate teaching and learning and to secure effective use of resources. This includes undertaking teaching duties as appropriate to the requirements of a programme and consistent with the area(s) of expertise, keeping up to date with teaching and learning developments and being alert to best practice, providing guidance to colleagues on content, methodology and resources regarding the subject area and answering subject specific queries and requests for accommodations from learners.</p>	1
Faculty Managers	<p>The Faculty Managers (FM) are key members of the academic management team in DBS who assist the Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production in the management of the academic full-time and part-time staff. Each Faculty Manager has direct line-management responsibility for a large number of staff, ensuring that programmes are staffed correctly, staff performance is measured and reviewed, annual budgets are prepared, costs are controlled, and reporting on academic performance to internal governance and quality boards. While FMs have overall responsibility for academic staff management, operational responsibility for academic management and support of students at programme level is the responsibility of Academic Directors.</p>	1
Programme Co-ordinator	<p>Programme Coordinators provide administrative support to learners and ensure all students are provided with full details of their programme of study. They are the first point of contact for learners on a range of issues such as programme queries, deferrals, personal mitigating circumstances</p>	1

	(PMCs) that may affect their learning. Programme Coordinators are responsible for day-to-day management of student information and data.	
Lecturing Staff	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or master's in marketing and/or Business. Individuals with Level 8 honours bachelor's degrees in the above disciplines, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience may also be considered.	7

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff ^[GG2]
Lecture	1:75

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

N/A

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
PG24323	Higher Diploma in Digital Marketing	August 2025

Section H. Other noteworthy features of the application

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

This includes QQI's 12 validation core criteria. When making a judgement on achievement of a core criterion, the panel should use the sub-criteria as guidance. Non-achievement of relevant and significant sub-criteria will mean non-achievement of the core criterion. The panel will apply its expertise and experience in determining 'relevance' and 'significance' of sub-criteria to a particular programme.

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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The panel was provided with a letter confirming DBS's compliance with this criterion

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

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

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>The panel was satisfied that the programme documentation submitted clearly demonstrated the achievement of this criterion.</p> <p>In the Programme Review Report, the panel has made some recommendations to improve the achievement of this criteria:</p> <p>PPR 4: Review the wording for Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes.</p> <p>PPR 5: Review the language used to describe the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes to ensure they are at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.</p> <p>To make explicit sustainability in the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes and indicative module content.</p>

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

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The documentation presented to the panel provided clear rationale for the programme and showed that there had been stakeholder consultation to inform the changes to the programme and to enhance the employability of future graduates of the programme.

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

- a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied.
- b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.
- c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR²) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
- d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
- e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
- f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
 - (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
 - (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
 - (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
- g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The panel was satisfied that the Programme Access, Transfer and Progression are satisfactory. The panel noted that there is a high % of females recruited to the programme and has recommends that: VR1: DBS to define strategies to address gender imbalance of students enrolled on the course.

² 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 principles.
- 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.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the programme curriculum is well considered and that programme documentation is of a high standard. In the Programme Review Report the panel has recommended that DBS</p> <p>PPR 3: Review the constructive alignment of the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes with the assessment and indicative module content.</p> <p>The panel also recommends that DBS</p> <p>VR2: Make explicit sustainability in the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes and indicative module content.</p> <p>VR3: Focus more on social responsibility as digital marketers in the module documentation and indicative module content.</p> <p>VR4: Address verbal module feedback discussed during the meetings.</p> <p>VR5: Incorporate more top marketing journals into all research marketing activities and update reading lists where appropriate.</p>

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

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

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

- 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).
- 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:
 - (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
- 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).
- d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
 - (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
 - (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.
- e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The panel was provided with documentation that showed that DBS has sufficient physical resources in place to support the delivery of the programme.

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

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

Criterion 9. There are sound teaching and learning strategies

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The panel was satisfied with the proposed teaching and learning strategies for the programme that had been informed by DBS Strategy.

Criterion 10. There are sound assessment strategies

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently</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.</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.</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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied with the proposed assessment strategy is appropriate. The panel commends that there is a varied mixture of group and individual assessments that are authentic and practical in nature.</p> <p>The panel recommends that DBS</p> <p>PPR2: To roll out the implementation of the standardised grading rubric. Rubric should consist of three elements Criteria, Standard and Descriptors.</p> <p>VR6: Consider an element of peer to lecture feedback for each individual member of the group work.</p> <p>VR7: Consider cross module assessment in the programme.</p>

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

<p>a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</p> <p>f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities.</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> and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.</p> <p>j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The panel was impressed by the comprehensive support structure that is place in DBS to support the needs of 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-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI’s statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing	Yes	The panel was satisfied that the programme is well managed.

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 Principal programme: Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The panel was provided with comprehensive documentation that showed that the programme has been well designed to meet the proposed programme learning outcomes and has sufficient resources in place to deliver the programme as stated in the programme documentation.

Commendations

1. The development of a DBS Generative GenAI toolkit to support both students and staff.
2. The introduction of the Next GenAI for Digital Marketers module in the curriculum.
3. The proactive and comprehensive student supports, including the Academic Support Community, that are in place.
4. That there is a varied mixture of group and individual assessments that are authentic and practical in nature.
5. The positive student experience that is evident in the feedback from the students.
6. The Graduate Work Ready Programme for developing soft skills among graduates that has been included in the programme.

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

1. N/A

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

N/A

Summary of recommendations to the provider

From the Programme Review Report

- PPR 1 Consider reviewing the programme data to ascertain if there is a different withdrawal rate of students from cognate, level 7 and non-cognate level 8 to ascertain if further supports should be put in place.
- PPR 2 Roll out the implementation of the standardised grading rubric. Rubrics should consist of three elements Criteria, Standard and Descriptors.
- PPR 3 Review the constructive alignment of the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes with the assessment and indicative module content.
- PPR 4 Review the wording for the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes.
- PPR 5 Review the language used to describe the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes to ensure they are at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

From the Programme Validation Report

- VR1 DBS define strategies to address gender imbalance of students enrolled on the course.
- VR2 Make explicit sustainability in the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes and indicative module content.
- VR3 Focus more on social responsibility as digital marketers in the module documentation and indicative module content.
- VR4 Address verbal module feedback discussed during the meetings.
- VR5 Incorporate more top marketing journals into all research marketing activities and update reading lists where appropriate.
- VR6 Consider an element of peer to lecture feedback for each individual member of the group work.

VR7 Consider cross module assessment in the programme.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Prof. Paul Styne

Date: 13th March 2025

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 (post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)

4.1 1B.3a Proposed Programme Schedule- Full Time															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing				QQI Award Title		Higher Diploma in Science				ECTS		60	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		Award		Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A				Stage ECTS		N/A		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended			Online				Workplace Learning			
					✓										
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based		
		✓			✓		✓								
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person			Proctored Exam – online		Project			Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based	
		✓							✓						
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)								Assessment – Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)							
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Work Based	Independent Learning	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %	
Digital Marketing Management and	1	M	10	250	24	24		202	50%				50%		

Communications														
Digital Storytelling	1	M	5	125	24			101					100%	
Next Gen: AI for Digital Marketers	1	M	5	125	24			101	100%					
Digital Marketing Tools	1	M	10	250	24	24		202	100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness-Bronze Award</i>	1	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness-Silver Award</i>	2	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A					
Digital Ecosystems: E-Business and Technology Integration	2	M	10	250	24	24		202	100%					
Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics	2	M	10	250	24	24		202	100%					
Digital Portfolio	2	M	10	250	24	24		202				100%		
<i>Graduate Work</i>		M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A					

Readiness-Gold Award	2																		
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Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School																	
Programme Title (Principal)	Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing						QQI Award Title	Higher Diploma in Science						ECTS	60			
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)	Award		Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A						Stage ECTS	N/A					
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.	On-site Face-to-Face			Blended			Online						Workplace Learning					
				✓														
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.	On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid			Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based					
	✓			✓			✓											
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.	Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person			Proctored Exam – online		Project			Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based					
	✓							✓										

Modules in this stage (add rows as required)

Total Student Effort Module (hours)									Assessment – Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Work Based	Independent Learning	Continuou s Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Digital Marketing Management and	1	M	10	250	18	18		214	50%				50%	

Communications														
Digital Storytelling	1	M	5	125	18			107					100%	
Next Gen AI for Digital Marketers	1	M	5	125	18			107	100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness-Bronze Award</i>	1	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A					
Digital Marketing Tools	2	M	10	250	18	18		214	100%					
Digital Ecosystems: E-Business and Technology Integration	2	M	10	250	18	18		214	100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness-Silver Award</i>	2	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A					
Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics	3	M	10	250	18	18		214	100%					
Digital Portfolio	3	M	10	250	18	18		214				100%		

<i>Graduate Work Readiness- Gold Award</i>	3	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A					
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