

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

# Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training v1 2020

## Part 1. Provider details

<b>Provider name</b>	Dublin Business School
<b>Date of site visit</b>	16 – 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
<b>Date of report</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2022

## Section A. Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	MSc in Financial Technology
	<b>Award</b>	Master of Science
	<b>Credit</b>	90
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	

<b>Embedded programme 1</b>	<b>Title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Technology
	<b>Award</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Science
	<b>Credit</b>	60
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	

<b>Embedded programme 2</b>	<b>Title</b>	Certificate in Financial Technology
	<b>Award</b>	Level 9 - Special Purpose Award
	<b>Credit</b>	25
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	

## Section B. Expert Panel

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr Michael Hall	Chair	Munster Technological University
Dr Corrina Sheerin	Subject Matter Expert	National College of Ireland
Dr Daniel Broby	Subject Matter Expert	Ulster University
Ms Nicole O'Neill	Secretary	Technology University Dublin
Ms Gina Fanning	Learner Representative	Dublin Business School
Mr Gerry O'Doherty	Industry Representative	Zai

## 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
	250	5

Proposed Enrolment	
<b>Date of first intake</b>	September 2022
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	3
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake</b>	50
<b>Intake Schedule</b> <i>(e.g. September, January)</i>	September, January, and March/April intake points
<b>Programme duration</b> <i>(months from start to completion)</i>	Full-time: 12 Months Part-time: 24 Months
<b>Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:</b>	
The panel was satisfied with that the proposed enrolment was appropriate.	

Target learner groups	
<p>The typical profile of learners that would be enrolled includes those who wish to upskill or reskill due to changes in employment; those already engaged in the finance or financial technology sector who require upskill or career expansion, and those who have already found themselves in a financial technology role in their company and wish to acquire a formal qualification for future sustainability in their career. Individuals would, upon completion of this programme, be able to enter the sector and hold a general or expanded role in the financial technology function of their organisation. This programme is aimed at a wide range of learners with a Level 8 honours bachelor's degree in a cognate area (detailed above) who wish to specialise in the field of financial technology with a view to enter industry, progress professionally or gain a formal qualification for future sustainability.</p>	
<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full-time and Part-time
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	
Formal lectures, seminars interactive group work, specific learning groups as defined by area of practice and academic need, workshops, presentations, educator/teacher review, case-based learning, problem-based learning	

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

This Master of Science in Financial Technology (90 ECTS) has been designed with the specific intention of responding to an increasingly technology-enabled financial services environment - one that requires efficient and effective end to end deliverables. Given this context, the role and scope of the function of technology in finance has transformed the financial services industry in recent years, leading to the integration of a range of technologies into financial services in a way that has changed how financial services are developed and delivered. This has resulted in a deepening of the knowledge and skills required to effectively operate in finance. This has led to a high demand within finance for graduates that can comfortably understand financial services and the impact of technology, automation, data science and web-based business on the industry.

The demand is not only from learners who want to enter the industry but is also from existing employees of financial service companies. Many of those working in financial services entered the business when the primary knowledge and skills required were of the products themselves, and later the regulatory requirements. Now demand for an understanding of the technology / finance nexus is a key requirement for many posts in financial services.

The DBS Master of Science in Financial Technology programme aims to produce individuals with the specialised skills and attributes necessary to meet the demands of the modern-day financial services and financial technology environment. Learners will understand the core principles of financial technology, as well as the industry, markets, products and regulation within which financial services are delivered; they will be equipped with operations management and analytics expertise; possess an integrated understanding of financial regulation; critically evaluate sustainable financial services business models and inform business decision making in an ethical context.

Moreover, they will develop advanced critical thinking, writing and research skills through the completion of the Research Methods modules along with the completion of a Capstone Module (choice of Dissertation, Applied Research Project, or Placement).

The taught component of this programme comprises core modules in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship in FinTech, Quantitative Financial Modelling, FinTech Regulation, Information and Cybersecurity Management, Distributed Ledger and Asset Tokenisation, Data Analytics and Machine Learning, Applied Financial Analysis and Research Methods one and two.

All modules will facilitate the exploration of new ideas and technologies with learning focused on emerging industry trends as well as best practice. Learners will be able to apply their knowledge to specific issues within a real-world context. The programme will incorporate a multimodal blended approach to delivery across modules including face-to-face classroom, online synchronous and asynchronous deliveries.

This programme will accommodate a wide audience of learners from a broad spectrum of industries whose specific learning requirements lie in the area of financial technology (either business, or technically focused). Admission to the programme will require a Level 8 honours bachelor's degree (minimum 2:2) in a cognate area. Cognate subjects include business, computer science, IT, science, mathematics, statistics, finance, economics, engineering and information systems or related areas.

The Master of Science in Financial Technology is a 1 year full-time/ 2 year part-time programme consisting of eight taught modules, three 10 ECTS modules, six 5 ECTS modules, and a 30 ECTS Dissertation, Applied Research Project, or Placement option. For learners who cannot continue, for personal or professional reasons, to the research component of this programme, there is an embedded exit award titled, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Technology (Level 9, 60

ECTS). For learners who cannot continue for personal or professional reasons beyond the first semester of the programme, there is an embedded exit award titled Certificate in Financial Technology (Level 9, 25 ECTS).

<b>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</b>	<b>WTE</b>
Lecturers: Staff delivering this programme will hold a minimum of a level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree in a relevant financial discipline, or a professional accountancy qualifications with relevant and significant industry experience and/or PhD. Holders of level 8 honours business degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant industry experience will also be considered.	0.16
Administration and Support Staff	0.06
The Academic Director for this programme will have a minimum of an NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in Finance, Business, IT, or a related field or related areas along with programme management/ academic leadership experience.	0.05

<b>Learning Activity</b>	<b>Ratio of learners to teaching staff</b>
Face to face on site lecture-led classroom-based sessions	1: 50
Face to face on site workshops	1: 25
Online class (broadcast live – non interactive transmission)	1: 50
Online Tutorial (interactive)	1: 25
Asynchronous: On demand content	N/A

**Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:**

The panel was satisfied that the programme outline and staffing is appropriate.

**Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Last enrolment date</b>
PG23852 & PG23853	MSc in Financial Technology	August 2023

Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

n/a

**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.<sup>1</sup></p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was informed and provided with documentation to demonstrate that they are eligible to apply for validation for this programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>	Yes	The panel was informed and provided with documentation to demonstrate that they are eligible to apply for validation for this programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>	Yes	The panel was informed and provided with documentation to demonstrate that they are eligible to apply for validation for this programme.

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

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</li> <li>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</li> <li>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</li> <li>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</li> <li>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.</li> <li>(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>g) For each programme and embedded programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The <b>minimum intended programme learning outcomes</b> and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are <b>consistent with</b> the relevant QQI awards standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>h) Where applicable, the <b>minimum intended module learning outcomes</b> are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</li> <li>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</li> </ul> <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.<sup>3</sup></p>
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	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Partially	Panel was provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought. There is a panel recommendation to further refine programme learning outcome No. 9
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>	Partially	The panel has made a recommendation to include a new programme learning outcome to capture the research element of the programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>	Yes	The panel was satisfied that the objectives and learning outcomes for this programme are consistent with the QQI award sought.

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>
- 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<sup>5</sup> of learner demand for the programme.
  - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>6</sup>.
  - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>7</sup>
- 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.

	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was provided with evidence on the stakeholder engagement and notes that the programme is meeting a clearly identified industry need.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>	Yes	
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>	Yes	

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.

**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<sup>8</sup>.
- 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 (CEFR<sup>9</sup>) 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.

	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate alignment with this criterion.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>		
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>		

<sup>8</sup> 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

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](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**

<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 principles<sup>10</sup>.</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 <b>duration</b> (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its <b>fulltime equivalent contact time</b> (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.<sup>11</sup></p>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Partially	The panel was impressed by the high standard documentation provided to the panel, detailing the programme curriculum. The panel has made some conditions to further enhance the curriculum, which include to provide a standalone elements in GDPR and Open Finance and to demonstrate where payments, transfer, custody, ethics and ESG are embedded in the programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>	Partially	The panel was impressed by the high standard documentation provided to the panel, detailing the programme curriculum. The panel has made some conditions to further enhance the curriculum, which include to provide a standalone elements in GDPR and Open Finance and to demonstrate where payments, transfer, custody, ethics and ESG are embedded in the programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>	Partially	The panel was impressed by the high standard documentation provided to the panel, detailing the programme curriculum. The panel has made some conditions to further enhance the curriculum, which include to provide a standalone elements in GDPR and Open Finance and to demonstrate where payments, transfer, custody, ethics and ESG are embedded in the programme.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

**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<sup>12</sup> (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<sup>13</sup> opportunities<sup>14</sup>.</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>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was satisfied that DBS has sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>		
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>		

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

**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.

	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Partially	The panel was provided with details of the facilities available to support the delivery of the programme. The panel has made a condition in relation to provision of access to live feeds to Financial Markets.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>	Partially	The panel was provided with details of the facilities available to support the delivery of the programme. The panel has made a condition in relation to provision of access to live feeds to Financial Markets.
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>	Partially	The panel was provided with details of the facilities available to support the delivery of the programme. The panel has made a condition in relation to provision of access to live feeds to Financial Markets.

**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>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was provided with information on the physical and on-line learning environments provided by DBS.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>		
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>		

**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<sup>15</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
	<p><b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b></p>	<p><b>Comment</b></p>
<p><b>Principal Programme</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The panel had a robust discussion with the staff teaching on the programme on the teaching and learning strategies utilised on the programme. The panel recommends for future reviews that links are provided to the panel to sample pages on the VLE.</p>
<p><b>Embedded Programme 1</b></p>		
<p><b>Embedded Programme 2</b></p>		

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

**Criterion 10. There are sound assessment strategies**

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i><sup>16</sup></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.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written <b>programme assessment strategy</b> for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.<sup>18</sup></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.<sup>19</sup></p>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was provided with sample assessment briefs and discussed the rationale for the assessment strategy for the programme with the teaching staff and are satisfied that the assessment strategy is appropriate for this programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>		
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>		

<sup>16</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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).



**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<sup>20</sup>.</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><sup>21</sup> 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>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was provided with detailed information on the supports provided to students. The panel was particularly impressed with the training provided through NStEP to Class Representatives and the range of feedback opportunities provided to students on the programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>		
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>		

<sup>20</sup> For more information on making reasonable accommodations see [www.AHEAD.ie](http://www.AHEAD.ie) and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

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

**Criterion 12. The programme is well managed**

<p>a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider’s general or institutional procedures.</p> <p>b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance<sup>22</sup> 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>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	The panel was satisfied with the structures in place in DBS to manage the programme.
<b>Embedded Programme 1</b>		
<b>Embedded Programme 2</b>		

<sup>22</sup> 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;
Yes	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

### Embedded programme 1:

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;
Yes	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

### Embedded programme 2:

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;
Yes	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The panel is satisfied in general with the capacity of DBS to run the programme.

### Commendations

1. Forward thinking to on the future of the curriculum
2. High Standard of documentation provided to the panel
3. Actions taken to date to apply for the Athena Swan Award
4. Implementation of the National Learning Network: Getting Started On-line training programme

5. Participation in the NStEP Training programme that provides training for class representatives so that they can better support students
6. No of mechanisms in place to obtain and act on student feedback
7. Emphasis in quality oversight on quantitative data and evidence.

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

1. Students registered on the programme should be provided with access to a live feed to the financial markets
2. Provide a standalone element in GDPR in one or more modules.
3. Demonstrate where payments, transfer and custody are embedded across the programme and consider including a module either mandatory or elective on payments, transfer and custody.
4. Demonstrate where Ethics and ESG are embedded across the programme.
5. Provide a standalone piece on open finance in the financial markets' module.
6. Revisit the titles Innovation and Entrepreneurship in FinTech module and change the FinTech Operations to better align with the content.
7. Update Programme Learning Outcome 9 to better reflect the new capstone options on the MSc programme and include a Programme Learning Outcome for the PgDip that captures the learning from the Research Methods modules covered in the curriculum.

Conditions should be met prior to registration of new students.

### Reasons for the overall recommendation

The panel were satisfied with the DBS capacity to provide the academic programme and support its learners as intended.

### Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. Embed software to look at financial modelling.
2. Revise the reading list for Quantitative Financial Modelling (Journal of Finance and Journal of Quantitative Finance) and review all reading lists for currency and appropriateness.
3. In Research Methods module articulate more strongly within the module descriptor the training provided for statistical analysis and review the reading list.
4. Consider including some demonstration of coding in the assessment in the Data Analytics and Machine Learning Module.
5. Consider re-wording module learning outcome 8.1
6. Add in more detail on financial data analysis in the module: Data Analysis and Machine Learning
7. Review the module learning outcomes and include appropriate NFQ level 9 terminology as appropriate.

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

Panel chairperson: Michael Hall

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Hall", is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark.

### 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.

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Part 4. Proposed programme schedules *(post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)*