

QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

2019 Edition – Part B

Section 2: Learner Supports

As of Annual Quality Report 2021

Document Version as of AQR Reporting January 2021

Refer to www.dbs.ie for live versions of policies.

2019

Contents

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Learner Support	3
2.1 Information and Support for Learners	4
2.1.1 <i>Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU)</i>	4
2.1.2 <i>Induction and First 100 Days</i>	4
2.1.3 <i>Communications</i>	5
2.1.4 <i>DBS Student Website</i>	5
2.1.5 <i>Administrative Supports</i>	9
2.1.6 <i>Learners with Additional Needs (Need Extra Provision)</i>	10
2.2 Premises and Facilities	10
2.3 IT Facilities	11
2.4 Online Learning Supports	12
2.4.1 <i>DBS Online Programmes</i>	13
2.4.2 <i>Blended Learning</i>	13
2.5 Student Experience	14
2.6 DBS Library	16
2.6.1 <i>Library Opening Hours</i>	16
2.6.2 <i>Library Staffing and Staff Development</i>	16
2.6.3 <i>Library Collection</i>	16
2.6.4 <i>Relevancy and Currency of the Library Collection</i>	17
2.6.5 <i>Equitable Access to Library Resources</i>	17
2.6.6 <i>Remote and Mobile Access to Collections</i>	17
2.6.7 <i>Staff Inductions and Staff Research</i>	18
2.6.8 <i>Learner Library Induction</i>	18
2.6.9 <i>Information Skills Classes</i>	18
2.6.10 <i>Alumni and External Reader Services</i>	18
2.6.11 <i>Quality Assurance and the Library Service</i>	18
2.6.12 <i>Library Resources (physical)</i>	20
2.6.13 <i>Library Service Personnel and Professional Affiliations</i>	21
2.7 Digital Wellbeing Policy	22
2.7.1 <i>Policy Overview</i>	22
2.7.2 <i>Policy Statement</i>	23
2.7.3 <i>Additional Documents</i>	26

Learner Support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and learner support are provided.

ENQA (2015)¹

This section of the *Quality Assurance Handbook* lays out the elements available to DBS learners to support their studies and ensure a high-quality learning experience.

This includes:

- Information provided to learners
- Facilities and premises for classrooms, labs and communal areas
- Information technology facilities
- Online learning support
- Student Experience: Student Services and Careers
- Library and study facilities

¹ ENQA (2015) *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, Part 1, Standard 1.6, 'Learning Resources and Learning Support', https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf.

2.1 Information and Support for Learners

2.1.1 Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU)

Dublin Business School (DBS) welcomes and supports all new entrants in their transition to third level education. As part of this commitment, DBS has established a Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU), which aims to help all new students at DBS transition successfully into their programme of study.

The members of SESU are:

- SESU Team Lead: Lee Richardson
- Student Engagement Officer: Sarah Sharkey
- Student Affairs Officer: Stefany Firera
- 1st Year Librarian: Debora Zorzi

SESU has produced a Student Toolkit to support new learners, and runs a series of support drop in sessions and workshops throughout the academic year, on academic writing, numerical skills, study skills and research, as well as 'Tea & Talk' sessions for those who would like to avail of some support.

The SESU webpages can be found on the DBS website: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-sesu>

2.1.2 Induction and First 100 Days

As part of the Registration process a series of Induction seminars and events is held for all learners. These sessions are designed to give learners an introduction to DBS and to College life. Seminars include an overview of the programme of study given by academic teaching staff, a welcome from the Executive Dean, and sessions on IT resources, the library and study skills. In addition, the Students' Union hosts welcome events, and parents of new undergraduates are welcomed in order to assist learners in settling in to College life and getting to know the layout of the campus and facilities.

DBS carries out a 'First 100 Days' programme to support learners with adapting to college life. This is a cross-College collaboration involving the Student Experience Team, SESU, lecturers, the Library, Students' Union and Student Peer Mentors.

2.1.3 Communications

Information is provided to learners through the DBS website, the VLE (Moodle) and/or the Student Handbook. This *Quality Assurance Handbook* and related documentation is published in the 'Policies and Procedures' section of the DBS website via the Registry homepage.

DBS will also contact learners via their DBS e-mail address and via their personal mobile phone. It is a learner's responsibility to check e-mail regularly and advise the College if their contact details change.

The change of details form can be found on the DBS website at:

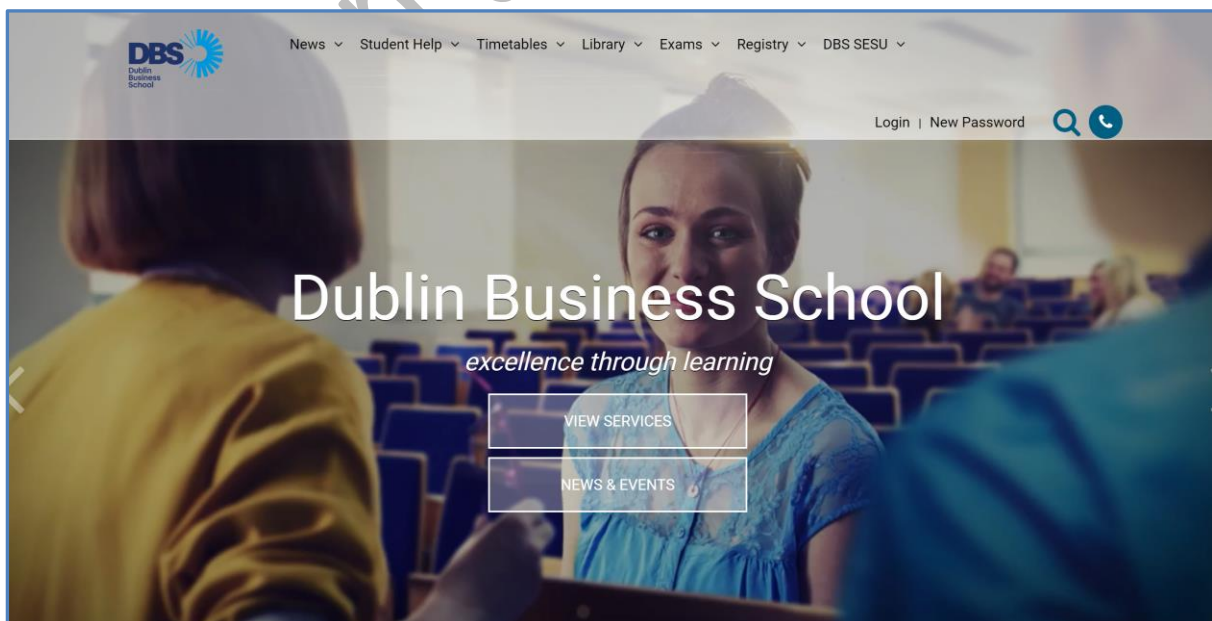
<https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services/online-student-forms>

DBS strives to keep changes to rooms to a minimum, but as a busy College with a high volume of classes, some changes are inevitable. It is a learner's responsibility to check the timetable in advance of classes, i.e. every day for full-time students. Where a room is changed less than 12 hours before a scheduled class notification will be sent by text message to the mobile number provided at registration.

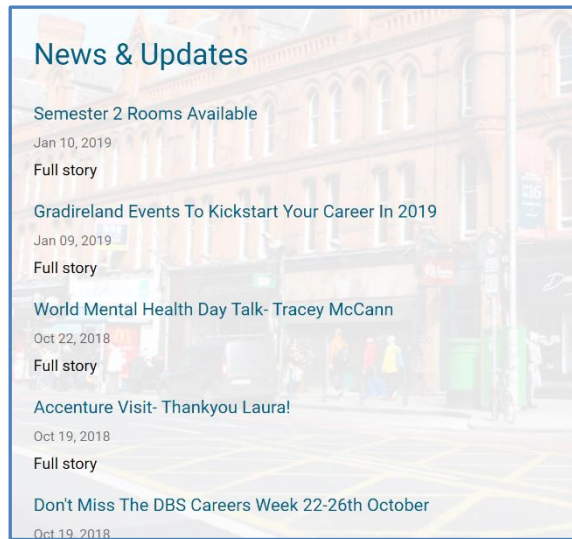
Communication with learners is also facilitated through the use of screens in the reception areas of Aungier Street and Castle House.

2.1.4 DBS Student Website

The learner section of the DBS website can be found at <https://students.dbs.ie/>. An overview of content is given below, but the site is updated on an on-going basis.

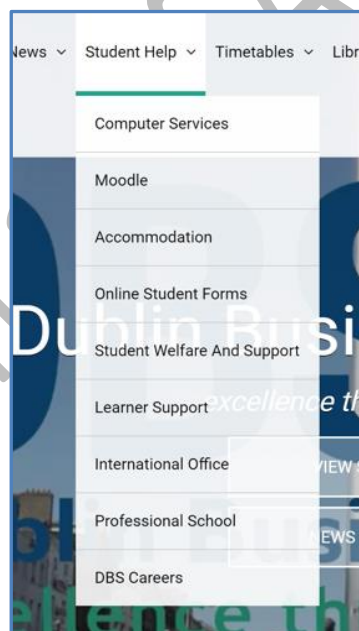


News



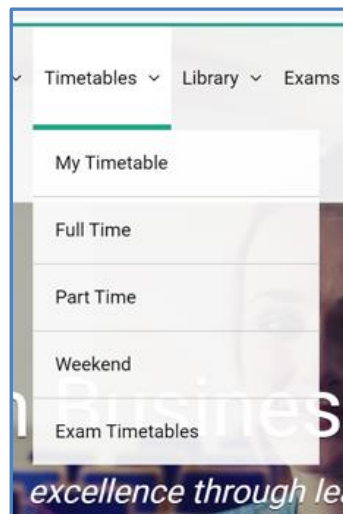
This section holds announcements for on-campus events, such as employer visits, careers fairs, support workshops, and learner welfare events (e.g. International Students Week, Mental Health Awareness Week).

Student Help



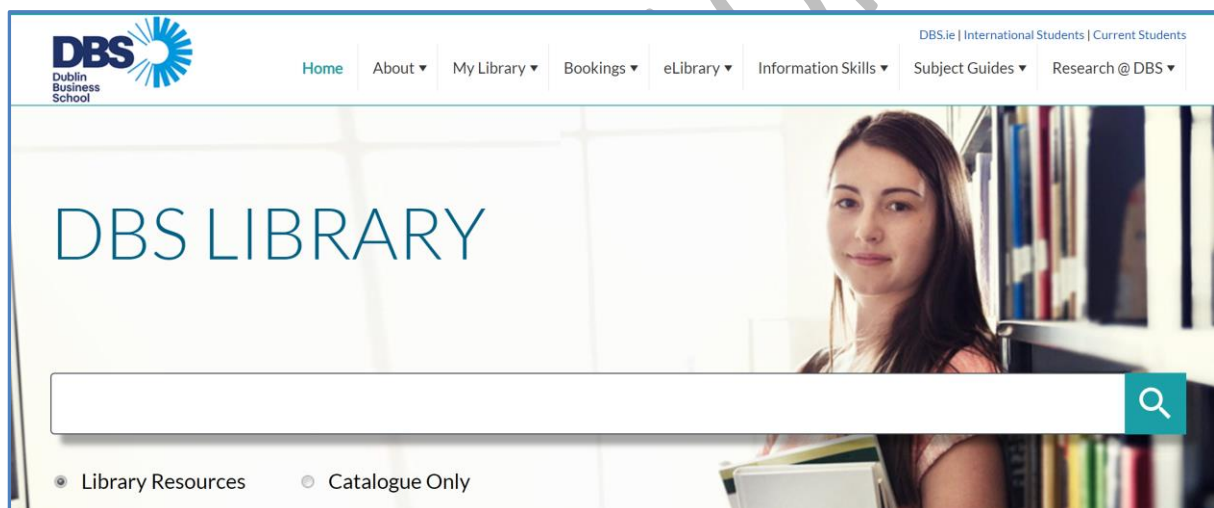
The Student Help section of the website provides a host of information and support relating to learner experience, including Student Services, Student Welfare, Accommodation, International Supports and Careers.

Timetables



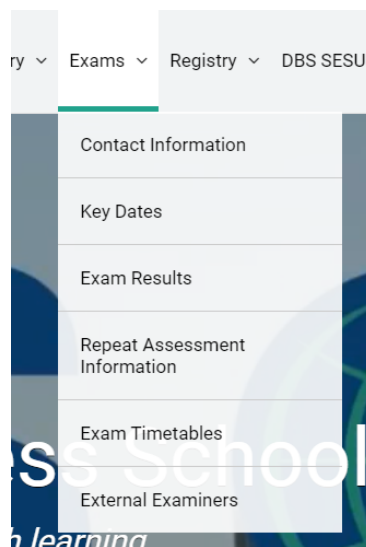
Class and exam timetables for all programmes, full-time and part-time, are published here. A mobile app allows learners to access their personal timetable from their phone.

Library



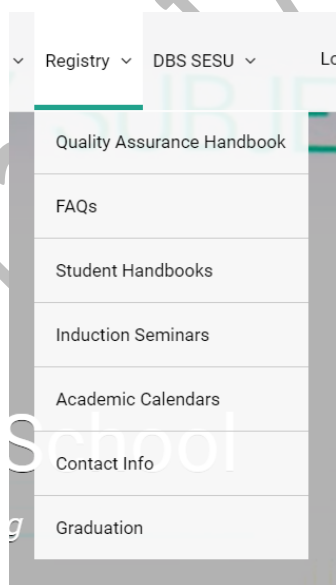
This links to the main DBS Library website and all resources therein. Further details about the library and resources available are given in Section 2.6 below.

Exams



The Exams section of the site lists direct contact details for the Exams Team. These named Officers can be contacted via their DBS e-mail address or direct line should learners have questions or concerns regarding exams. There is also a link to access exam results (published in Moodle, where a login is required), and a link to access exam timetables.

Registrar's Office



This area of the DBS site includes links to FAQs, Student Handbooks and the *Quality Assurance Handbook* (QAH), in addition to associated forms such as verification of results and appeals forms.

Moodle (VLE)

All course notes and slides are provided to learners through the Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, including a copy of the Student Handbook.

2.1.5 Administrative Supports

Role of Programme Coordinators

The Programme Coordinator is the first line of contact with learners in terms of day-to-day communications and administration of the programme of study. Each Programme Coordinator has responsibility for a designated set of programmes (e.g. postgraduate business, undergraduate business, School of Arts, professional programmes, etc.). The contact details of Programme Coordinators (e-mail and direct line) are set out in the Student Handbook for each programme.

Programme Coordinators are available on a rotating basis on the Service Desk, alongside IT Support and Reception, in Castle House during term time. The Service Desk provides direct access to support services and an opportunity to resolve queries promptly.

Service Desk

The Service Desk, located on the 2nd floor in Castle House, comprises a member of the team from Reception, Academic Operations, and IT Support Staff. Its aim is to be a student-facing point of contact for all students to assist in addressing concerns they may have during their studies.

Programme Coordinators staff the desk from 9:30 am–1:30 pm and 2:30 pm– 6:30 pm Monday to Thursday, and until 5 pm on Fridays.

Each Programme Coordinator take turns at the desk and therefore may not be able to answer all queries that come to them, but will be able to swiftly direct queries to the most appropriate person to help.

The Service Desk is very useful as a general information point of contact to resolve day-to-day queries quickly.

Where issues cannot be solved at the desk, the programme coordinator will either:

- Log a ticket on behalf of the student which will direct their query to the appropriate person, or
- Will provide guidance to the student on how best to deal with the query via other avenues.

Note that academic queries should continue to be addressed to the relevant lecturer or Course Director.

2.1.6 Learners with Additional Needs (Need Extra Provision)

Information regarding the support available for learners with additional needs can be found on the website at: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services/disabilities-support>

DBS is committed to promoting inclusion in all aspects of College life. The College supports all learners and specifically enables the participation of learners with additional or specific learning needs that can have an impact on day-to-day activities (NEP learners). Supports are provided to enable engagement in and successful completion of programmes of study, as far as is reasonably practicable and within any constraints laid down by QQI or relevant professional bodies.

The full policy for support of learners with additional needs can be found in the QAH Part B Section 4.4.

2.2 Premises and Facilities

The Facilities Department is responsible for managing all building and maintenance work in the College, along with providing and maintaining all furniture and equipment, including but not limited to teaching aids, desks, seating, electricity and heating.

The Facilities Department liaises closely with the Academic Systems Manager for programme and module timetabling and classroom scheduling across the entire school. The primary objective of the Facilities Department is to provide and maintain a safe, well-resourced physical environment, with appropriate availability and accessibility to all the College's staff and learners. The department attempts to cater, and provide adequate resources, for the many different learning and teaching requirements of the College. The department is also responsible for ensuring that all current Irish health and safety legislation is strictly adhered to.

To maintain quality in the physical environment, all materials and equipment are sourced from reputable suppliers based on satisfactory references or prior experience. Supplier contracts are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the College obtains quality products and services that represent good value for money. Equipment audits are periodically carried out on all teaching-related equipment to ensure optimum performance. Defective or poorly performing equipment is

In common with other service areas in DBS, the Facilities Department gathers feedback from learners as part of the process of quality monitoring and enhancement. This is particularly important to ensure that quality is maintained in the provision of physical teaching and learning facilities.

Feedback from learners is gathered via learner surveys which are carried out toward the end of the first term. The survey results are tabulated and forwarded to the Facilities Manager for review and action as required.

An ongoing refurbishment and redecoration programme is in place to ensure that the physical environment remains conducive to the learning and studying process. DBS remains committed to its policy of continuous improvement of the physical College environment and all associated teaching and learning facilities.

2.3 IT Facilities

Information regarding the IT support services available for learners can be found on the website at: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services/computer-services>

DBS policy in relation to learner computing facilities and services is one of continuous improvement. The IT Department aims to consistently meet changing academic needs and to keep up to date with the latest developments in technology and software. IT facilities for learners comprise of 16 teaching suites, located as follows:

- Castle House: 11 suites each with 8–30 workstations (including one Mac lab)
- Balfe Street: 1 suite of 12 Mac workstations
- Aungier Street: 2 suites each with 30 workstations

In addition to the computer lab teaching suites, there are additional workstations available as follows:

- Castle House: 2 mobile labs each with 60 Chromebooks
- Aungier Street: 2 mobile labs each with 60 Chromebooks
- Library: 19 workstations for learner use (which must be booked through the Library)

All DBS learners are assigned a DBS e-mail address and have an Office 365 account through which they can use Word, Excel and other Microsoft packages. All lecture rooms are equipped with a projector, PC, multimedia and audio facilities.

The Computer Services team provides IT support to both learners and lecturers. Should an IT issue arise, whether in a lecture room or lab, lecturers can telephone the Computer Services team for immediate assistance.

The Computer Services Support Office is open for learners to call in 7 days a week:

Monday to Thursday 8 am–8.30 pm

Friday 8 am– 6pm

Saturday and Sunday 9 am–4p m

The Computer Services webpage provides information to learners on general support questions and answers, for example, how to connect to the wireless network and how to access DBS e-mail. During induction, learners are directed to this webpage and are also given the Computer Services helpdesk number and details of how to log a request for assistance using the online ticketing system.

The Head of IT currently sits on two Committees, part of whose brief is to monitor and review the quality of computing services provided to learners. The IT Steering Committee, which meets quarterly, is responsible for the strategic management of IT affairs in DBS and considers, in particular, the adequacy and quality of learner computing services and how those services might be further improved. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee meets monthly to consider academic support issues and to respond to feedback from learners. Any significant IT issues or matters involving additional resources or investment are referred to the IT Steering Committee.

Any computing/IT related issues raised at Programme Boards or Board of Studies meetings are reported back to IT management for attention. A representative from the Computer Services Department may be invited to attend Programme Boards/Board of Studies, if there is a particular IT issue or requirement.

2.4 Online Learning Supports

For all programmes, QQI-accredited and non-accredited programmes, DBS provides online learning support to learners via the virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle. The Moodle platform is designed to help educators create quality online courses and manage learner outcomes. Lecturers assigned to deliver and assess modules are required to make certain course materials available to their learners via Moodle.

For each module delivered, the lecturer is required to place the following materials on Moodle for the benefit of learners:

- Module guide
- Lecture notes
- Schedule of continuous assessment
- Assessment specification that forms part of the continuous assessment
- Reference to the DBS Academic Impropriety policy

- Past examination papers
- Current reading list
- Grade criteria

It is recommended that lecturers also supply:

- Tutorial support
- Links to useful information on the web, support reading/journals

Moodle provides learners with an additional channel through which learning materials can be accessed and used. The materials can be accessed locally or remotely, thus facilitating learners who prefer to study at home and part-time learners. Learners who have missed lectures for whatever reason can use the facility to catch up on missed material. The online facility is seen as a valuable addition to the more traditional learning resources.

Staff development sessions are provided for staff to support their engagement with Moodle. Training is provided for all new academic staff members, those who feel they need a refresher course and those who wish to explore other academic resources (formative quizzes, blogs, etc.) in Moodle.

2.4.1 DBS Online Programmes

DBS Online Programmes are non-accredited programmes which are delivered exclusively online. Classes are delivered live online using virtual classroom software. Learners can log in from their homes or work, wherever they are, and participate in a live class with the lecturer and other students. This is supplemented by resources in Moodle as above, and access to the online library resources.

2.4.2 Blended Learning

DBS is increasingly availing of technologies to support and deliver innovative teaching and learning. A Blended Learning Policy has been developed in line with the *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes* (QQI, 2018)². Refer to the QAH Part C Section 1 on Learning and Teaching for full the policy.

² <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Statutory%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20Blended%20Learning%20Programmes.pdf>

2.5 Student Experience

Information regarding the Student Experience services available for learners can be found on the website at: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services>

The Student Experience Department encompasses Careers and Student Services, which together work to enhance the experience of learners at all stages in their journey through DBS by providing a range of support services in a learner-friendly, accessible way. Our objective is to ensure DBS learners have the best possible College-life experience and to promote a DBS community and culture that is focused on learner wellbeing and success. In supporting international learners, DBS is informed by the QQI *Code of Practice and Guidelines for the Provision of Education to International Learners* (QQI, 2015)³.

The Team:

- Provides advice and support to learners on sourcing accommodation.
- Assists learners on their health and wellbeing.
- Provides free or low-cost access to health and mental health professional services.
- Organises a full and varied diary of learner events throughout the year.
- Oversees and assist learners in the running of clubs and societies.
- Manages the Student Mentor Programme.
- Manages the Student Digital Badge Programme.
- Oversees and assist the Student Council.
- Forms relationships for learners with cultural and other support organisations.
- Provides support and assistance to international learners throughout their stay in Ireland, including information regarding acquiring and renewing student visas.
- Leads the development and maintenance of a DBS community amongst both learners and alumni.
- Works with employers as a means of sourcing placements and jobs for learners.
- Sources and provide up-to-date information about fields of work, job vacancies, postgraduate courses and research opportunities.
- Provides relevant advice, guidance and opportunities for learners and graduates to understand their competencies, aspirations and options that will enable them to develop the necessary skills to successfully seek employment.
- Organises weekly Careers and Personal Development Workshops and Events.

³ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>

- We provide services impartially, confidentially, efficiently and free from discrimination, adhering to national codes of good practice and professional standards.

Locations - Student Experience Department:

Student Services Hub: Castle House (4th Floor)

- Welfare & Learning Support
- International Student Affairs
- Accommodation
- Sports & Societies
- Study Abroad

Careers Hub: Aungier Street (Ground Floor)

- Careers Workshops
- CV Clinics
- One-to-one careers advice
- Placements

Opening hours: (both offices)

8:45 am–17:15 pm

Key Contacts:

Careers Team careerdevelopment@dbs.ie
Student Services student.services@dbs.ie
International Student Services intlservices@dbs.ie

2.6 DBS Library

The library website is available at: <http://library.dbs.ie>

Library-specific policies (including Library Fines) are available on their website:

<https://libguides.dbs.ie/about/policies>

The mission of the Library in DBS is to provide efficient, appropriate and effective information services to facilitate the learning, teaching and research objectives of the College. The Library is located in the Aungier Street building.

2.6.1 Library Opening Hours

Library opening hours are extensive, with late opening five evenings per week during the academic year, and four evenings per week during the summer. The Library is open every Saturday throughout the year and in the run up to exams is open seven days per week including bank holidays.

2.6.2 Library Staffing and Staff Development

The majority of library staff members have a postgraduate library qualification and are members of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI). To ensure that staff members remain up-to-date, the College finances their attendance at professional development events such as those organised by the LAI, the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) and the Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANLTC). The Library subscribes to the Library and Information Science Source database.

The Library hosts the DBS Annual Library Seminar each June to which library professionals and learners from Ireland and beyond are invited. DBS Library staff present on a wide range of library topics at the seminar alongside a number of external speakers from the professional library community.

The Library is a member of the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) Library Committee which fosters discussion and training around professional library issues as well as the advancement of private higher education college libraries. The Library also holds institutional membership of the LAI and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK (CILIP).

2.6.3 Library Collection

The Library has extensive print and audio-visual resources, with 50,000 items listed on the Library catalogue, (<http://koha.dbs.ie>), across the subjects of Arts, Business and Law. The Library also subscribes to a number of print journal titles.

In addition to its print holdings, the Library has a highly developed e-library which can be accessed via the Library website (<http://library.dbs.ie>). The e-library comprises e-books, e-journals and an extensive portfolio of academic databases. The Library website also provides information on Library services as well as access to a range of Library guides. The Library has an Institutional Repository, eSource (<http://esource.dbs.ie/>), which provides full-text access to learner dissertations with a grade of 2.1 or a 1st class honours (subject to the learner's authorisation), as well as to the scholarly publications of academic staff.

The Library has been equipped with RFID technology and has three self-issue stations which enable learners to independently issue books to their own accounts. Ninety-five percent of borrowing is performed independently by learners. This has freed up Library staff time to assist learners with their more complex queries.

2.6.4 Relevancy and Currency of the Library Collection

The Library's Collection Development Policy is published on the Library website at <https://library.dbs.ie/>. Reading lists are updated on an annual basis by the Acquisitions Librarian. Prior to the commencement of academic programmes, faculty supply reading lists and details of class sizes to the Acquisitions Librarian, who then ensures that the latest editions of titles are sourced. Out of print material considered seminal to a subject is also acquired.

The Library has introduced the Loughborough Online Reading List Software (LORLS), www.lorls.dbs.ie, which provides learners with online access to their reading lists with real time availability. Staff can also upload and edit their reading lists via LORLS.

2.6.5 Equitable Access to Library Resources

The Library acquires one core text to every ten learners to ensure that learners can fully access the materials that they require. Texts are made available on a 3-day, one-week and two-week lending period. An e-copy of core textbooks is also routinely purchased when available. Up to 100 learners can concurrently access an electronic copy of a text book via Dawsonera, for example. A copy of a core text is also available for reference use only in the Library. Learners with additional needs are entitled to an extended loan period and borrowing allowance.

2.6.6 Remote and Mobile Access to Collections

The Library's electronic holdings can be accessed off campus 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world via Shibboleth authentication. The Library Catalogue and the online databases can also be accessed on handheld devices.

2.6.7 Staff Inductions and Staff Research

The Information Skills Librarian also delivers one-to-one training with new and existing staff members on Library resources. Additionally, the Research Librarian provides one-to-one support to academics wishing to publish in the academic literature. S/he also delivers a programme of classes to faculty on getting published, measuring citation impact, etc.

2.6.8 Learner Library Induction

The Library delivers a Library induction to all new and returning learners in the classroom setting. Tours of the Library can also be organised at the request of faculty or groups of learners.

2.6.9 Information Skills Classes

The Library delivers a programme of information skills classes on a standalone and integrated (at the invitation of the lecturer) basis. The Library's information skills classes are also formally accredited, embedded and accessed in a wide variety of academic programmes via the Learning to Learn and Personal and Professional Development modules. Classes are delivered by the dedicated Information Skills Librarian.

Information skills classes cover planning, writing and referencing assignments (including APA, Harvard and OSCOLA systems), avoiding academic impropriety/ plagiarism and the effective use of electronic resources and referencing software. More recently, the Library has introduced classes on information skills for job seeking and success in the workplace.

For more details on the Library's programme of information skills classes, please refer to the library website.

2.6.10 Alumni and External Reader Services

The Library offers a variety of Alumni Membership packages which enable DBS alumni to access the Library and to borrow Library materials. Similar services are also offered to external readers. Both services offer access to Business Source Complete, Alumni Edition and Academic Search Complete, Alumni Edition, both on campus and remotely.

2.6.11 Quality Assurance and the Library Service

Library users at DBS are not a homogenous group but rather have very different needs and preferences. They range from undergraduates and postgraduates to academic staff. The needs and circumstances of both full-time and part-time learners are catered for. Resource usage levels are constantly monitored and tracked through the Library Management System Koha and the statistical modules of library databases. These reports provide vital statistics on user requirements of each group.

Feedback from learners is seen as a vital input to quality assurance of Library services. This is primarily gathered through two channels.

The Library Committee

The Library Committee meets twice yearly to consider the general performance of the Library service. This committee includes learner and staff representatives from a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Learner representatives are encouraged to comment on service quality and any issues raised are discussed and recorded. Matters emerging from this meeting are addressed, where possible, by Library Management. Members of this committee provide feedback to the Boards of Studies meetings in the Schools. The Head Librarian sits on the Academic Board.

Annual Library Survey

The Library conducts an annual online survey via Survey Monkey. The survey is also posted to the Library Website and Moodle. Feedback is addressed firstly at Library management level and actions documented. Issues requiring higher-level decisions are referred to the Board of Studies.

Information gathered by these means is used to effect quality improvements and is an important input to strategic and operational plans for the development of learning resources.

As part of the Kaplan management procedures, the Library reports on a number of key performance indicators each year. These are informed by institutional imperatives, professional body standards, and recent developments in the academic library literature. Performance indicators are updated annually to reflect the introduction of new services and resources.

2.6.12 Library Resources (physical)

Number of staff	Nine full-time staff (all professionally qualified librarians with a master's qualification in librarianship). Three staff members lecture on the MSc in Information and Library Management at DBS. Three part-time staff.
<i>Institutional and Personal Membership</i>	Library Association of Ireland; The Acquisitions Group of Ireland; The Academic and Special Libraries Group; HECA Library Committee; The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians; The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK; Edugate Federation (HEAnet); Business Librarians Association; The Irish Film Institute Library; The Irish Institute of Taxation.
<i>Study Rooms</i>	There are three collaborative study rooms at Aungier Street Library. Learners can book rooms online via the Library Website.
<i>Computers</i>	19 learner PCs. PCs are equipped with Microsoft Office software; research software: SPSS and QSRNvivo7, virtual laboratory software, the Virtual Rat and accounting software: Sage and TASbook2. The Library is Wi-Fi enabled.
<i>Books</i>	40,000 print titles, +2000 eBooks via Dawsonera/Amazon/EBSCO e-books. Kindle lending scheme.
<i>Journals</i>	34 print titles and 53,774 e-journals available via A-Z software
<i>Newspapers (Print and Electronic)</i>	Online access to 350 newspapers from around the world via the ProQuest database.
<i>Electronic Resources</i>	ABI Inform Complete, Academic Search Complete, Bloomsbury Professional: Company Law, Business Source Complete, Computer and Applied Sciences Complete, Dawsonera, Emerald Insight, Greenfile, Firstlaw, Film and Television Literature Index with Full Text, Hospitality and Tourism Complete, JSTOR, Justcite, JustisOne, Kanopy, Library and Information Science Source, Mintel, Passport, Pep Archive, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Proquest Central, Regional Business News; SOCIndex, WARC, Westlaw IE, Westlaw UK
<i>Inter-Library Loans Services</i>	British Library and the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland Library.
<i>Photocopiers</i>	4 photocopiers. Photocopiers are also networked for printing. They also offer high quality colour photocopying and printing
<i>Printing software</i>	Papercut (including wireless printing)


<i>Library Catalogue</i>	http://koha.dbs.ie/
<i>Library Website</i>	http://library.dbs.ie/
<i>Institutional Repository</i>	http://esource.dbs.ie/
Reading List Software (600 DBS reading lists)	Lorls.dbs.ie

2.6.13 Library Service Personnel and Professional Affiliations

The Library service has nine full-time and three part-time dedicated members of staff. Eight full-time staff have a professional library qualifications. Institutional and Personal Memberships include:

- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
- Library Association of Ireland (LAI)
- UK (CILIP)
- The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL)
- The Irish Film Institute (IFI)
- Acquisitions Group of Ireland (AGI)
- Business Librarians Association
- Irish Institute of Taxation

2.7 Digital Wellbeing Policy

Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) Part B Section 2		
Document Name	Digital Wellbeing Policy	
Policy Document Number	036	
Version Reference	v1.0	
Document Owner	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning, Registrar, Head of Student Experience	
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	Learning Technologist, Academic Online Lead	
Applicability	All programmes: NFQ L6 to L9, Professional Programmes, Study Abroad, DBS Online	
Approved By	Academic Board	
Approval Date	05/12/2019	
Date Policy Becomes Active	09/12/2019	
Revision Cycle	A minimum of 18 months from initial approval date	
Revision History/Amalgamation History	N/A	
Additional Information	N/A	
References/ Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENQA (2015) <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</i>, Standard 1.3. 'Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment'.⁴ • QQI (2016) <i>Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines</i>, Section 2.5.1, 'Teaching and Learning' and Section 2.5.2 'A Provider Ethos that Promotes Learning'.⁵ 	

2.7.1 Policy Overview

This document details DBS policy relating to online behaviours, including e-mail activity, use of social media and academic propriety in the online context. As technology is constantly evolving, this policy is not deemed to be exhaustive in terms of specific technologies or apps to which students and staff might be exposed. However, central to the policy is the tenet that as per the DBS Code of Conduct, all communications should be conducted in a professional and courteous manner. All members of the College, both students and staff, should be treated with respect and dignity at all times. Further, high standards of academic and personal integrity must be maintained.

⁴ https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

⁵ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

2.7.2 Policy Statement

DBS encourages learners to engage in groups and societies and establish networks, including through the use of social media and technology, to promote the development and enhancement of the learner community. Participation, whilst often social in nature, must be appropriate, inoffensive and respectful at all times. All parties are required to be mindful of their language and the material they choose to share.

Students may set up social media groups for study and socialising but the College is in no way aligned with or responsible for these. Notwithstanding this, if inappropriate behaviour such as cyberbullying involving DBS students is brought to the College's attention, the College will take action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

Communications by learners relating to their programme of study, assessment or any official College supports must be directed through formal channels, i.e. via the Helpdesk or via DBS e-mail to the appropriate department. Messages via social media about programmes of study are not considered formal communications channels and will not be actioned.

Before sending an e-mail or posting on social media, users should consider if it is the best medium of communication. It is also important to consider the tone and approach. Be aware that, without visual cues, there is more scope for misunderstanding than in a face-to-face setting. Be as clear and concise as possible.

- Students must either log a ticket via the Helpdesk or use their DBS e-mail for all correspondence with staff, including lecturers.
- Lecturers and other staff members are not expected to respond to e-mails from students outside of working hours.
- Complaints or other issues should be raised via the proper channels, as per the Appeals, Complaints or Disciplinary policies.
- Defamatory posts via social media will not be tolerated and will be removed and disciplinary action will be taken.
 - Learners are entitled to make complaints about a College service or individual where they feel it necessary to do so. Complaints must be dealt with through the proper channels, with all parties given the opportunity to state their position.
- Students may not contact DBS staff via social media apps such as Facebook messenger or WhatsApp.
- Formal **professional** communications may be sent via LinkedIn, but correspondence relating to programmes of study must be conducted via the Helpdesk or College e-mail.

- Lecturers and other staff are **not** obliged to accept connection requests in LinkedIn or to respond to messages via LinkedIn.
- Staff and lecturers are not permitted to share their personal contact details with learners. Where a member of staff has a DBS mobile phone they may choose to share this number if it is required for the programme of study (for example, in the case where external site visits are part of the programme of study it may be necessary for students and lecturers to be able to make contact).

Online Behaviours

E-mail Etiquette

- E-mails should always be sent from College e-mail accounts to College e-mail accounts.
- E-mails should be appropriate and professional.
- E-mails should commence with an appropriate salutation and be signed off by name. It is very helpful if learners also include their programme and student number.
 - It is not necessary to be overly formal, but mails must always be courteous. An address such as 'Hi X' is usually acceptable between learners and staff. If in doubt, or if sending a more formal request, a more formal address such as 'Dear X' should be used – no one will be offended by this so it can be best to err on the side of caution.
 - Acceptable sign-offs include 'Best regards', 'Best wishes', 'Regards', 'Many thanks'.
- E-mails should be properly written, punctuated and spell-checked. It is discourteous to the recipient to send poorly written e-mails and creates a bad impression.

Social Media Etiquette

- Online study groups, even amongst friends, should be treated as a professional and constructive environment.
- Posts and discussions should be properly written, punctuated and spell-checked.
- The tone of a communication should be considered, and whether it could be misinterpreted or seen as an attack on someone.
- Posts should be relevant to the discussion at hand.
- Social media groups used to study should not be used to air personal political or religious views or to discuss sensitive topics that are not germane to the area of study.
 - It is recognised that students in specific disciplines may have more need to discuss sensitive topics. Such discussions should nonetheless not become overly personal.
- Consideration should be given to whether a topic may be perceived as sensitive, and if so, whether it is appropriate to post at all, and possible motivations for doing so.

- If a post raises concerns, before reacting, consideration should be given to whether there is a possibility of a misunderstanding.
 - It can be better to send an individual message politely asking for clarification, rather than risk inflaming the situation with a group post.
 - Most platforms are moderated or have mechanisms for reporting controversial posts – it can be better to have matters dealt with formally than to try to intervene in something directly.
- Other people’s content, such as text, photos or videos should never be posted or re-posted without their permission.
 - Learners are reminded that, as per the Code of Conduct, it is not permitted to record sound or video in a teaching situation (such as, but not limited to, lectures, seminars, tutorials or labs) without the prior written consent of the lecturer and the other participating learners.

Users should remember:

- *Digital content is effectively indelible – once content has been posted it is impossible to remove its footprint completely.*
- *You are unlikely to regret **not** posting something at a later date. If in doubt, do not post.*
- *You are free to block individuals or to leave a group if you become uncomfortable.*
- *Even if you only post in your personal accounts, with secure settings, posts can be screenshotted and redistributed.*
- *It is possible to disagree with something and still remain polite.*

Academic Propriety

The full DBS policy on Academic Impropriety (i.e. including all forms of cheating and plagiarism) is given in the Academic Impropriety Policy in the QAH Part B Section 3.3. However, learners and staff alike should be aware of proper academic conduct in the digital and online contexts.

- Websites or other electronic resources consulted and cited as part of any academic piece of work should be verified as legitimate sources of information, and fully referenced.
- The use of purchased material from online ‘essay mills’, whether purchased by the learner or otherwise, is an intentional attempt by the learner to submit work that is not their own and will be dealt with severely.

- It should be noted that Ireland has introduced a law to make the advertising and provision of cheating services illegal⁶.
- There have been reported cases of students who have used essay mills or ghost-writing services subsequently being blackmailed by such sites.

2.7.3 Additional Documents

- DBS Online Code of Conduct – see Part B, Section 3.2.7

Version as of AQR 2021

[END OF PART B SECTION 2]

⁶ Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019:
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/section/15/enacted/en/html#sec15>