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

Part 1

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	17-12-2018
Date of report	

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Care
	Award	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Level 8
	Credit	240 ECTS
Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions[1] OR Not Satisfactory*		Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Embedded programme	Title	N/A

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[1] Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude "Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions" where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

Further, in exceptional cases the 'special conditions' may be used to identify parts of the application that are considered satisfactory on a stand-alone basis. For example, an application might propose a programme to be provided at two locations but the independent evaluation report may find the application satisfactory on condition that it be provided only at one specified location and not at the other. These conditions will not however be used to recommend that QQI can be satisfied with a programme conditional on a different QQI award (e.g. at a lower NFQ level or having a different CAS award title) being sought than the one identified in the application.

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	**Role**	**Affiliation**
Ann Campbell	Chair	Former President of Dundalk Institute of Technology
Aoife Killeen	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer in Applied Social Studies, Cork Institute of Technology
Daniel Brennan	Secretary	Former Registrar, Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Principal Programme

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners
DBS: Aungier Street/Castle House	50	10

Enrolment interval *(normally 5 years)*	Date of first intake	September 2019
	Date of last intake	September 2023
Maximum number of annual intakes	1	
Maximum total number of learners per intake	50	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	4 years	
Target learner groups	1. Students coming through the CAO process who wish to work in the social care professions, having the standard leaving certificate requirements of 2H5s and 4 O6/H7, including mathematics and a language. 2. Mature learners (over 23 years). 3. DBS has an established Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy and procedure that will also operate for **advanced entry** from interested learners to this programme. Exemptions are only granted on a full stage basis. Other than described above there are no specific qualifications at a NFQ level for entry to the programme.	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures; seminars; interactive group work; specific learning groups as defined by area of practice and academic need; workshops; presentations; reflection;	

	problem based research investigation and research project presentation, case-based learning, materials delivered through DBS's VLE, Moodle.
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 programme is for learners wishing to pursue a career in the caring professions and is intended to provide a firm grounding in relevant theory and practice in the relevant areas. Particular emphasis will be paid to the applied dimension with a number of skills- based aspects, which will train learners in professional best practice. Graduates will therefore be employable in a number of fields in management in the caring professions, including care for the older person and children, in residential, home and community settings, care for those with intellectual physical and sensory disability, as well as in homeless and addiction support services. This Level 8 degree will also allow learners who wish to progress towards a management role or postgraduate study to do so.
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	2.5 WTE are required to deliver this programme.
	Faculty and lecturing staff are required to hold a qualification at least one level above that which they are teaching on.
	At Level 8 teaching staff are required to hold a minimum Level 9 qualification in the subject discipline they are teaching, e.g. in psychology, counselling, social science, social studies, health studies, health care, social care, addiction studies, nursing.
	In some cases where specific industry experience is required, a Level 8 Honours Bachelor degree in the subject area (e.g. psychology, counselling, social science, social studies, health studies, health care, social care, addiction studies, or nursing), plus extensive relevant industry experience will be accepted for lecturing, subject to approval by the Programme Leader and DBS's Academic Approval Sub Committee.
	All staff will be Garda vetted.
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	Lectures Max: 50:1 Group Work Max 50:1

Other noteworthy features of the application

Dublin Business School (DBS) currently has validation for a BA in Applied Social Care (3-year level 7 programme) and an add-on BA (Hons) in Applied Social Care (1-year level 8).

The programme under consideration is an *ab initio* Level 8 programme sharing the same curriculum content as the level 7 and add-on level 8 programmes.

The panel was informed that DBS will continue to offer the level 7 and add-on level 8 programmes in parallel with the programme under consideration, with both cohorts being taught together.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).

Comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme.

N/A

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

QQI's validation criteria and sub-criteria are copied here in grey panels.

Criterion 1

The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme	
a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed. c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[2]	
Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Yes	**Principal programme** The panel noted that: 1. DBS has established QA Procedures, available at www.dbs.ie; 2. access, transfer and progression procedures are detailed in Section 4 of the programme document; 3. arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners are included in the submission documents; 4. the application for validation with the appropriate confirmations, is signed by the chief officer of DBS; 5. DBS has declared that it has mapped the programme against the Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers, published by the Regulatory Body, the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU). **Having considered the evidence presented, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.**

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

Criterion 2

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

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.[3]
   (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.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[4]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	### Principal programme The panel asked if the programme development team had considered other programme titles suggested by CORU such as 'Professional Social Care' or 'Applied Social Studies'. The team stated that following an examination of the options it had decided the title 'Applied Social Care' was the most appropriate. The aims, objectives and Learning Outcomes are aligned with the QQI Award Standards for Social Care Work. The QQI award stem is Bachelor of Arts (Honours). The QQI named award is Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Care. The programme team stated that MIPLOs are consistent with the QQI Award Standards in Social Care Work. The MIMLOs are specified for each module in the module descriptors. Given that the MIPLOs for this programme are different to the existing level 7 programme and add-on level 8 programme, while the MIMLOs are the same, the panel queried the process adopted by the team in mapping the MIMLOs to the MIPLOs. The team stated that the existing level 7 programme is skills focussed with the add-on level 8 having a management focus. The proposed *ab initio* programme

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[3] Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.
[4] Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

	allows for a more integrated approach with a more coherent delivery flow through the programme. Following the discussion, the panel is satisfied that the mapping is appropriate.
	The panel was informed that the team is in regular contact with CORU and their next meetings are scheduled for January and February 2019. DBS intends to seek approval for both the level 7 and this level 8 programme from that body.
	The panel recognises that this engagement may result in some amendments to the module content or sequencing. This is discussed further under Criterion 5.
	Following the discussion, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.

Criterion 3

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

    a)   The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.[5]

    b)   The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
        (i)   There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
        (ii)   The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
        (iii)   There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
        (iv)   There is evidence[6] of learner demand for the programme.
        (v)   There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[7].
        (vi)   The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[8]

    c)   There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

    d)   Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

    e)   The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	**Principal programme** The panel queried the number of proposed annual intakes to the programme, shown as '2' in the programme document. The panel also queried a paragraph (8.4.1) that appears to indicate the programme might be run in centres other than the main DBS campus. In both cases the panel was informed that these were errors in the document. The panel was informed that DBS has determined from its CAO experience with the level 7 programme that there is a demand from learners for an *ab initio* level 8 in this area. It is not clear to the panel that a detailed analysis of the level 8 CAO lists had been carried out to back up this conclusion.

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

[6] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

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

The panel noted that some of the references to job vacancies and other justifications for the programme are somewhat out of date. This may be partly attributed to the fact that the programme document was finalised in early 2018 and submitted to QQI shortly after that.

It appears that the programme development team did not explicitly engage with employers and similar stakeholders on this specific programme proposal, but rather relied on their previous engagement with these stakeholders on the level 7 and add-on level 8 programmes.

A key component of a successful programme in this area is a robust and well managed placement regime, that enables the learners to achieve the learning outcomes in a supportive environment and that conforms with the requirements of CORU in all respects. The panel believes that DBS must, as a matter of urgency, develop a policy and set of procedures in this area.

Notwithstanding some minor lacunae in the responses to the requirements of some of these sub-criteria, the panel is satisfied that the provisions of this criterion are partially met.

Condition:

The panel is proposing as a special condition of validation that DBS develop and put in place a best-practice policy and set of procedures to include the following in respect of practice education elements:

- **a set of criteria to determine the suitability of placement sites to deliver the appropriate learning outcomes;**

- **assurance of conformity with the requirements of the regulator, CORU;**

- **criteria for the appointment of a Placement Coordinator.**

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[9].

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 (CEFRL[10]) 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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	### Principal programme The panel noted the standard leaving certificate requirements for access to the programme as 2H5s and 4 O6/H7, including mathematics and a language. The panel is satisfied that the requirements for applicants whose first language is not English complies with QQI's policy. Applicants aged 23 or more on January 1 of the year of entry are also eligible on grounds of mature years. DBS has an established Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy and procedure that will also operate for advanced entry to this programme. Exemptions are only granted on a full stage basis.

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[9] Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria   are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings
- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

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

| | The programme document describes an access interview that some applicants must undertake. It appears there are no written criteria to cover this and the panel believes this must be addressed.

The panel was informed that all learners must have Garda (Police) Clearance before they undertake their placement. The panel pointed to the potential difficulties and delays that may arise with the implementation of this requirement in the case of non-Irish students.

Condition:

The panel recommends as a special condition of validation that DBS develop a set of criteria to govern the access interview process. |
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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[11].

f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.

g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.

i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.

j) The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.[12]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	**Principal programme** The panel notes that there are no electives offered on the programme. The panel also notes the curriculum presented is the same as that of the existing level 7 and add-on level 8 programmes, that have been validated in the past year. The panel is satisfied that this module content is generally appropriate for the proposed programme, but recommends that the existing processes for updating reading lists, carried out by faculty in conjunction with the library service, should be undertaken. Notwithstanding the fact that the curriculum is the same as the existing programmes, the panel recommends in the case of the module *Disability Studies* that all reference to '*anger and stress management*' and references such as '*behavioural interventions in anger and stress management*', be removed and instead a positive behavioural support model be adopted which looks at perceptions of behaviour and uses functional assessments to develop supportive strategies. This is in line with CORU's Standards of Proficiency that requires practitioners to '*be able to recognise all behaviour, including challenging behaviour, as a form of*

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[11] This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.
In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

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

communication and demonstrate an understanding of the underlying causes in order to apply appropriate strategies'

The panel believes the care of children should also be covered explicitly in the programme.

The panel is also conscious that during its engagement with CORU, it may become necessary to amend the content, assessment or sequencing of some modules. The panel is aware that DBS has a policy in place for the approval of certain modifications to programmes depending on the total credit value of the affected modules. There is no external involvement in this process normally.

In the case of any proposed amendments to this programme however, the panel believes there is a necessity for an external independent subject matter expert to have an input into the decision-making process.

Recommendation:

The panel recommends that the existing processes for updating reading lists should be initiated for this programme.

Condition:

The panel recommends as a special condition of validation that in the event that proposals for significant amendments to the programme's curriculum arise from DBS's engagement with CORU, DBS should amend its procedures for approval of programme changes. The key element of this to be that a report on the proposed amendments to the programme curriculum be commissioned from an external subject matter expert, independent of DBS. A key finding of this report to be a determination if the proposed amendments fall within the powers of the Academic Board to implement or if a full re-validation is required. Such policy and procedure to be incorporated into the Quality Handbook.

Criterion 6

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

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).

b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[13] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.

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.

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[14] opportunities[15].

e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	### Principal programme The panel considered the CVs of the staff proposed for the programme. The panel is conscious that the proposed maximum enrolment of 50 students into year 1 of this programme, together with the potential maximum enrolment of 50 students on the level 7 programme will present challenges for effective delivery, should the numbers materialise. The panel discussed this with the programme team which believes there will be a gradual build up to these numbers. The panel is satisfied that DBS has policies and procedures in place to deal with the issue. This issue will also impact on the organisation and management of the mandatory placement elements. This is covered in detail under criterion 3 above. The following extract from CORU's 'Criteria for Education and Training Programmes' outlines a number of points that are relevant in the context of this criterion and should form part of the teaching resource deployment strategy of DBS:

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

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

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

	- *The profile and roles of the practice education team must be described. Practice educators must **also be registered with the appropriate registration board**.* - *Students, practice placement providers and practice education teams will be fully prepared and informed of the expectations of the practice placement, including the education/training provider's student **fitness-to-practise requirements**.* - *The named person with direct responsibility for the design and integration of the profession-specific components of the programme must have appropriate qualifications and experience. S/he must **also be registered with the appropriate registration board** unless other arrangements are agreed, for example, during the transitional period.* - *All staff involved in the programme delivery and assessment of students must possess relevant qualifications, expertise and knowledge for the subject matter they teach.* - *Those responsible for delivery and assessment of the core professional elements of the programme **must be registered with the appropriate registration board**.* - *A profession-specific student code of conduct must be in place, including explicit information on processes and outcomes for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct, and **fitness to practise**.* - *The curriculum must embed a culture of professionalism and make sure that students understand the implications of professional regulation including adherence to the relevant Registration Board's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.* - *Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified.* **Recommendation:** **The panel recommends that the CORU requirements are taken on board by DBS in considering the staff allocated to the delivery of the programme.** **Having examined the evidence, the panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.**

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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	### Principal programme The panel has considered the physical resources available for delivery of the programme and in general found these satisfactory. In particular, it viewed a newly established social care room which is equipped with three beds and associated mobility aids and washbasins. The panel noted that there are no shower demonstration facilities. **Recommendation:** **The panel recommends that the facilities in the social care room be augmented with a sliding board and a shower chair.**

Criterion 8

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

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	**Principal programme** Workshops are an important element of the programme delivery methodology. The panel was informed that it is proposed to utilise this vehicle to help deliver certain aspects of the curriculum including play therapy, music therapy, stress management and death therapy. The panel notes that DBS uses Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and has been developing its experience and expertise on the platform. On this programme all lecture notes, assessment tasks, assessment results and feedback, and grade criteria will be communicated via Moodle. Learners submit their assessments through Moodle which allows the Programme Leader to measure each learner's engagement with their assessment and also allows them to identify learners who are falling behind. Module Leaders can also monitor Moodle to ascertain if learners are accessing any additional reading. **The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.**

Criterion 9

There are sound teaching and learning strategies

- a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
- b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
- 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).
- **d)** Learning is monitored/supervised.
- **e)** Individualised guidance, support[16] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
YES	**Principal programme** The teaching strategy for each module is detailed in the individual module descriptors. The panel was informed that the programme team aims to deliver an integrated learning experience to the students. It is proposed to use guest lecturers not only from the practice community but also previous users of the services. **The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.**

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

Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies
a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[17]
b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.
c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.[18]
d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.
e) There is a satisfactory written **programme assessment strategy** for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.[19]
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.
g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.
h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.[20]

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Yes	### Principal programme
	The panel was informed that the assessment of the placement that takes place from May to July of stage 2 and stage 3 are considered at the August Examination Board Meeting. Given that 'pass by compensation' may not be availed of in the case of this module, the panel's view is that this is appropriate. It is not permissible to progress to a subsequent stage until the placement module is passed. Should a student be required to repeat the placement this may only be done during the following year.
	In general, repeat assessments are considered at the August Examination Board Meeting and arrangements may be made to allow students to repeat failed coursework elements over the summer.
	DBS has appointed an external examiner for the level 7 programme and it is planned to extend the remit of this person to the *ab initio* programme. External examiner appointments are for a 3-year term which may be extended by one further year.
	The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.

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[17] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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

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

Criterion 11

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

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.

b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.

c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.

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.

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.

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.

g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.

h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[21].

i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[22] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.

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).

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	**Principal programme** The programme document contains a detailed description of the supports available to learners and how these are communicated to the students. The panel is satisfied that the range of supports is appropriate and comprehensive. The panel had sight of a draft Learner Handbook for the level 7 programme. The programme document makes reference to an appeals procedure and discipline procedure that are included in DBS's Quality Assurance Handbook, but this is not referenced in the Learner Handbook. This should be addressed. A key element of CORU's requirements is that the provider should have a 'fitness to practice' policy. It is likely that the elements of such a policy will form part of the upcoming discussions with CORU, following which the detailed policy will be articulated. Notwithstanding this, it is important that reference be made in the Learner Handbook to the requirement for learners to satisfy a fitness to practice

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

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

| | criterion. Similarly, DBS should consider developing a 'fitness to study' policy and this should be referenced in the Learner Handbook. |
| | |

Conditions:

1. **The panel proposes as a special condition of validation that DBS updates its Learner Handbook to inform learners of a 'fitness to practice' requirement for registration and potentially a 'fitness to study' requirement for their continued registration on the programme.**
2. **The updated handbook should also contain links to the Appeals Procedures, Complaints Procedures, Discipline Procedures and other appropriate policies and procedures.**

Criterion 12

The programme is well managed

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.

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.

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.

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.

e) Quality assurance[23] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.

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.

g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.

h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Partially	**Principal programme** The panel was informed that DBS was about to submit its application under the re-engagement process. It had been part of a pilot exercise on re-engagement earlier in 2018. The panel's concerns relating to the management and operation of the student placements have been articulated under Criterion 3. It is understood that enrolment may ramp up over the next few years, but it is important that a sound policy and set of procedures for the management and operation of placements, that is scalable, is developed as a matter of urgency. **The panel is satisfied that the requirements of this criterion are met.**

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[23] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Overall recommendation to QQI

1.1 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;
X	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.

1.1.1 Reasons[24] for the overall recommendation

The reasons for the conditions and recommendations are articulated under the commentary for the various Criteria of Validation in this report.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

The panel is proposing the following as special conditions of validation:

1. **That DBS develop and put in place a best practice policy and set of procedures to include the following in respect of practice education elements:**

   a. **a set of criteria to determine the suitability of placement sites to deliver the appropriate learning outcomes;**
   b. **assure conformity with the requirements of the regulator, CORU;**
   c. **criteria for the appointment of a Placement Coordinator.**

2. **That DBS develop a set of criteria to govern the access interview process.**

3. **In the event that proposals for significant amendments to the programme's curriculum arise from DBS's engagement with CORU, DBS should amend its procedures for approval of programme changes. A key element of this to be that a report on the proposed amendments to the programme curriculum be commissioned from an external subject matter expert, independent of DBS. The key findings of this report to be a determination if the proposed amendments fall within the powers of the Academic Board to implement or if a full re-validation is required. Such policy and procedure to be incorporated into the Quality Handbook.**

4. **That DBS updates its Learner Handbook to inform learners of a 'fitness to practice' requirement for registration and potentially a 'fitness to study' requirement for their continued registration on the programme.**

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[24] Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A "Not Satisfactory" recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

5. **The updated handbook should also contain links to the Appeals Procedures, Complaints Procedure, Discipline Procedures and other appropriate policies.**

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. **The existing processes for updating reading lists should be initiated for this programme.**
2. **That the CORU requirements are taken on board by DBS in considering the staff allocated to the delivery of the programme.**
3. **That the facilities in the social care room be augmented with a sliding board and a shower chair.**

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Date:

Signed:

1.2   Disclaimer

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