Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	Dublin Business School (DBS)
Programme(s) Reviewed	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role	Affiliation
Eva Juhl	Chair	Institutional Review Facilitator at Cork Institute of Technology
Dr Lucy Michael	Subject Matter Expert	Independent lecturer and researcher
Dr Ciaran Acton	Subject Matter Expert	Course Director and lecturer in sociology, University of Ulster
Dr Lisa O'Rourke-Scott	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer in psychology and research methods, Limerick Institute of Technology
Mary Jennings	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Damien Furlong	Learner Representative	Damien has just completed final exams for a BA (Hons) in Social Sciences at Waterford Institute of Technology (Note: attended pre-site meetings of Panel only)

All members of the independent Panel declared their independence of DBS and that they have no conflict of interest.

Part 1.   Introduction

The scope of the review encompassed the BA (Hons) in Social Science programme within DBS. The programme is placed at Level 8 of the National Framework of Qualification.

The programme is due for review in 2020 under the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) requirement for periodic monitoring and review, and also to conform with QQI policies published since the last validation of the programme, including QQI *Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training* (QQI, 2016), *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* (QQI, 2016) and in accordance with the QQI *Programme Review Manual 2018*.

As detailed in QQI's *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* (pp 11–12) and the *Programme Review Manual 2018*, programme monitoring and review is taken as an opportunity to:

- Ensure that the programme remains appropriate, and to create a supportive and effective learning environment.
- Ensure that the programme achieves the objectives set for it and responds to the needs of learners and the changing needs of society.
- Review the learner workload.
- Review learner progression and completion rates.
- Review the effectiveness of procedures for the assessment of learners.
- Inform updates of the programme content, delivery modes, teaching and learning methods, learning supports and resources and information provided to learners.
- Update third party, industry or other stakeholders relevant to the programme(s).
- Review quality assurance arrangements that are specific to that programme.

The QQI *Programme Review Manual 2018* states that the specific objectives of a Programme Review are to evaluate the programme as implemented in light of the provider's experience of providing the programme over the previous five years with a view to determining:

1. What has been learned about the programme, as an evolving process (by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence), from the experience of providing it for the past five or so years?
2. What can be concluded from a quantitative analysis of admission data, attrition rates by stage, completion rates and grades achieved by module, stage and overall?
3. What reputation do the programme and provider have with stakeholders (learners, staff, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, communities of practice, employers and other education and training providers) and, in particular, what views do the stakeholders have about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning the programme's history and its future?
4. What challenges and opportunities are likely to arise in the next five years and what modifications to the programme are required in light of these?
5. Whether the programme in light of its stated objectives and intended learning outcomes demonstrably addresses explicit learning needs of target learners and society?
6. What other modifications need to be made to the programme and its awards to improve or reorient it?

7. Whether the programme (modified or unmodified) meets the current QQI validation criteria (and sub-criteria) or, if not, what modifications need to be made to the programme to meet the current criteria?

8. Whether the provider continues to have the capacity and capability to provide the programme as planned (considering, for example, historical and projected enrolment numbers and profile and availability and adequacy of physical, financial and human resources) without risk of compromising educational standards or quality of provision in light of its other commitments (i.e. competing demands) and strategy?

9. What is the justification (or otherwise) for the provider continuing to offer the programme (modified or unmodified)?

10. What changes need to be made to related policies, criteria and procedures (including QA procedures)?

In order to establish the above, programmes will be reviewed against the validation criteria, which includes appraisal and analysis of:

- Programme aims and objectives;
- The quality systems and processes in place to successfully deliver and monitor the programmes;
- The views of teaching staff, past and current learners, administrative staff servicing the programme and other staff who have any association with the programme or those involved with/on the programme;
- An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes;
- The identification of potential opportunities and threats, together with the possible actions to be taken;
- An analysis of the success of the programme to date, learner registrations, student throughput, project cost savings, assessment results and completion rates;
- The current resources available for the delivery of the programmes;
- Feedback from all stakeholders including graduates, current students, students who have withdrawn from the programme, tutors, external examiners, administration staff and additional external stakeholders;
- Employment/advancement opportunities for learners;
- The teaching, assessment and learning strategy employed for the delivery of this suite of programmes;
- The assessment strategy for each individual programme; Research and relevant consultancy and project work undertaken by the programme team; Links with employers, industry, professions and the business and wider community;
- All programme content included in the programme(s).

The following will also be included in the Self Evaluation Report:

- Draft programme schedules, incorporating the proposed changes.
- Detail of programme changes proposed and the rationale for same.
- Programme improvement plan.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Review document	Programme Review Report, BA (Hons) Social Science
2.	Programme document	Programme Document BA (Hons) Social Science
3.	Programme document	Module Document BA (Hons) Social Science
4.	Supporting document	Appendix 2 CV of Staff of Programme
5.	Agenda for meeting	Agenda
6.	Information for Panel	DBS Role of Panel Members
7.	Information for Panel	QQI Role and Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators
8.	Reference for Panel	QQI Templates
9.	Legal document	DBS Cover Letter, Declaration
10.	Legal document	DBS Deed of Guarantee
11.	Legal document	DBS PEL Refund Arrangement
12.	Supporting documentation	Attendance Data Board of Studies minutes (most recent set) Enrolment Progression and Graduation Data and Analysis Exam Papers External Examiners Reports Learner Feedback Documents Information on DBS Library Programme Review 2015 Programme Team Meetings Minutes (most recent set) QQI Criteria and Handbook Sample Assessments Programme Handbook Programme Teaching and Learning Strategy
13.	Reference for Panel	Terms of Reference
14.	Reference for Panel	Names and role of DBS attendees
15.	Amendment to programme document	Amended proposed schedule for P-T delivery

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

Senior Leadership Team

Name	Title
Andrew Conlan-Trant	Executive Dean
Andrew Quinn	Course Director
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Darragh Breathnach	Head of Academic Operations

Evaluation of the Programme Review Process and Report

Name	Title
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Rosie Reid	Course Director
Dr Bernadette Quinn	Subject Leader for Social Science and Social Studies
Dr Annette Jorgensen	Lecturer Social Science, Qualitative Research
Paul Halligan	Subject Leader for Social Care
Anna Wolniak	Lecturer Social Science
Tom Prenderville	Lecturer Criminology
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Grant Goodwin	Quality Assurance Officer
Laura Mulqueen	Programme Coordinator
Dr Aneta Hamzaorlinsk	DBS Note-taker
Rita Day	Observer

Evaluation of Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation criteria

Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Rosie Reid	Course Director
Dr Bernadette Quinn	Subject Leader for Social Science and Social Studies
Dr Annette Jorgensen	Lecturer Social Science, Qualitative Research
Paul Halligan	Subject Leader for Social Care
Anna Wolniak	Lecturer Social Science
Tom Prenderville	Lecturer Criminology
Maryrose Malloy	Lecturer Law
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Tanya Balfe	Admissions Manager

Facilities Discussion (in place of tour)

Name	Title
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Rosie Reid	Course Director
Dr Bernadette Quinn	Subject Leader for Social Science and Social Studies
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Isabel Ashburner	VLE Administrator
Lori Johnston	Registrar

Curriculum, Learning Teaching & Assessment

Name	Title
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Dr Rosie Reid	Course Director
Dr Bernadette Quinn	Subject Leader for Social Science and Social Studies
Dr Annette Jorgensen	Lecturer Social Science, Qualitative Research
Paul Halligan	Subject Leader for Social Care
Anna Wolniak	Lecturer Social Science
Maryrose Malloy	Lecturer Law
Stephen Henderson	Lecturer Social Policy, Politics
Tom Prenderville	Lecturer Criminology
Vanessa Hogarty	Lecturer Social Policy
Dr Heikki Laiho	Lecturer Sociology
Niall Hanlon	Lecturer Sociology
Dr Ronda Barron	Lecturer Social Psychology
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Dr Aneta Hamzaorlinsk	DBS note-taker

Panel Meeting with Student and Graduate Representatives

Name	Title
Mary Sonnenstuhl	1st year, full-time student
Stephanie Bartley	2nd year, part-time student
Ann Vines	2nd year, part-time student
Ronan Canning	Final year, part-time student
Ryan Quinn	Graduate
Justyna Grabiec	Graduate

Resourcing and Supports for Learners

Name	Title
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Dr Rosie Reid	Course Director
Dr Bernadette Quinn	Subject Leader for Social Science and Social Studies
Dr Annette Jorgensen	Lecturer Social Science, Qualitative Research
Paul Halligan	Subject Leader for Social Care
Anna Wolniak	Lecturer Social Science
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Grant Good win	Quality Assurance Officer
Tom Prenderville	Lecturer Criminology
Laura Mulqueen	Programme Coordinators
Sarah Sharkey	Student Engagement Officer
Matt Kelleher	Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre.
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Dr Aneta Hamzaorlinsk	DBS note-taker

2.3   Description of evaluation process

Commentary:

The Panel learned that DBS began the process of review over 12 months ago. The review process included consultation with staff, feedback from learners, both formal and informal, with DBS Partner Colleges in Europe. It included a review of External Examiners and consultation with employers including:

- Aware
- Concern Worldwide
- Department of Health
- Dublin Simon Community
- Fatima Groups United
- Friends of the Earth Ireland
- Inner City Helping Homeless
- Peter McVerry Trust
- Smyly Trust Services
- Youth Advocate Programme (YAP) Ireland

The review team consulted relevant QQI publications and reviewed a range of government and industry policy documents including The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and National Survey of Employers' Views of Irish Higher Education Outcomes, HEA 2017 and HEA data on graduate outcomes.

The team also reviewed in detail similar programmes offered by:

- DCU – Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences and Cultural Innovation
- Trinity College Dublin – Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sociology and Social Policy
- Cork Institute of Technology – Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care Work
- University of the West of England – Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science

In general, the Panel considered that the feedback and consultation had been factored into the review and that the proposed revised programme, with the modifications proposed, reflected the extensive consultation process, resulting in a well-balanced, broad, academic programme with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinarity within the area of social science.

Recommendations

Section A.   Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Dublin Business School (DBS) is a private third-level institution and provider of higher education. It provides a broad range of full-time and part-time programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level as well as professional and executive education.

DBS was established in 1975 and over the following 40-plus years has increased its range of programmes and subject specialisms. Currently, programmes span the disciplines of Business, Humanities, ICT, Law, Management, Marketing, Arts and the Social Sciences. In 2003, DBS was acquired by Kaplan Inc., a global education company.

DBS has over 8,000 active students every year, over half of which are part-time evening students and the remainder full-time day students. Over one third of DBS students are international students, coming from over 100 different countries.

The Panel heard that DBS is well positioned to contribute to meeting the current and future needs for higher education programmes. In the Department of Education and Skills' report, *Projections of Demand for Full Time Third Level Education 2015-2029,* suggests continued growth in this area and an increased number of International students.

DBS continues to develop its range of programmes, its quality assurance systems, its teaching and learning capacity and its learning environment with the aim of delivering high quality learning and education to an increasing number of students. It intends to seek Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI within the life of its current 3-year strategic plan.

The Panel was also informed that, prior to submitting a programme for validation or revalidation, DBS fully considers the potential market for the programme, the size of previous intakes, where applicable, the specific programme content, the competitive landscape, institutional capacity to deliver such a programme, and the fit of this programme with its strategic intent. The programme being presented, the BA (Honours) in Social Science, will enable DBS to address skills gaps in the area of social sciences.

The Panel was informed that the proposed programme of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science provides learners with a broad degree which familiarises them with a range of areas grouped under five main 'pillars', Sociology, Psychology, Criminology, Social Policy, and Research. The intention is to prepare learners for careers in a variety of fields, including within government and non-governmental organisations, policy units, youth and community work, addiction support, as well as in private sector roles in human resource and management. The programme also provides a pathway to more specialised areas of study in areas such as psychology, social work, social policy and criminology.

It was stated that the proposed programme is aligned with key aspects the National Skills Strategy 2025 and the Horizon 2020 EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014 – 2020. There is an emphasis on ensuring learners gain skills such as logical and analytical reasoning, problem solving, effective communication skills, and teamwork skills for on-going social and economic development.

Recommendations

Section B.   Baseline qualitative and quantitative information

Programme Data Overview

This section will include the Panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Applications, Enrolment, Attrition Transfer and Progression, Award Classification and Graduate Destinations

Commentary:

The Panel found that the baseline quantitative information provided was thoroughly captured and well-presented overall, and commends this.

The data on nationality profile (Programme Review Report, p. 47ff) show that the Social Science programme differs somewhat from the overall DBS learner profile, with a distinctly higher proportion of domestic learners in both F-T and P-T modes (81% on average, as against a DBS average of ca. 66%).

It was noted that, in some instances, the narrative on the review and revision of the programme in the Programme Review Report might have included a more exhaustive discussion of quantitative data, e.g. on enrolments, and their potential links with qualitative feedback obtained through different mechanisms such as environment scans, focus groups or External Examiner reports.

For instance, in discussions with staff on the decreasing numbers actually enrolling on the programme despite a high level of applications, the Panel was informed that this was due to competitive pressure from public colleges, which tended to be selected first by potential learners.

The Panel also noted the data on the gender profile of enrolled students on the programme, the majority of whom (consistently close on three quarters of enrolments throughout the period reviewed) are female. However, the employment destinations listed are traditionally less 'gender-biased' in terms of workforce composition. (For further commentary and a related recommendation regarding the graduate profile see Criterion 3.)

Not least based on the discussions, during which the programme team was able to provide further insights on several relevant points, the Panel observes that a broader discussion of the ramifications of some data in the Programme Review Report might have helped its members more fully establish the depth of the DBS self-evaluation prior to the Panel meetings.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the review team ensure that future programme review reports present a sufficiently exhaustive discussion of the implications of quantitative and qualitative programme performance data and feedback, including from any connections drawn between different data sets. This is useful even where the team concludes that no changes to the programme design or operation are required, or that programme-level changes would not address the root causes of certain noted issues.

Outlining the team's conclusions on the data will not only support the next external Panel in confirming the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the self-evaluation, it will also provide valuable reference points for the programme team in its own future development work.

Section C.   Programme Delivery and Teaching & Learning Strategies

This section will include the Panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Physical Facilities and Resources, Timetabling, Learner Workload, Attendance, Teacher Learner Ratios, Community of Practice Learning, Teaching and Learning Strategies, Learning Outcomes achieved, Assessment Strategies.

Commentary:

The Panel was informed that when reviewing the teaching, learning and assessment strategies and the learning outcomes achieved, the Programme Team, from their own observations and reflecting on the feedback from External Examiners, had formed the view that the programme was over-assessed. As a consequence, the proposed programme changes include a reduction in the number of assessments and a better spread across the three years of the programme.

Learners are encouraged to give feedback on the workload and, in particular, to work with supervisors to manage the workload for the capstone project.

The Panel found that the information provided on attendance levels indicated a sometimes-large fall-off in attendance, particularly in the third year and for some of the core modules. In the Panel's opinion, the implications of this for teaching and learning had not been as fully explored in the report as it might have wished. The programme team was however able to provide further insights in discussion. (See Criterion 11 for further commentary on overall learner engagement monitoring and measures.)

The Panel was also informed that, since the introduction of classes on Zoom during the Corona virus pandemic, attendance had increased overall.

The Panel was informed that the DBS Computer Services department provides IT support for all technology-based services throughout the college, and supports learners both on and off-campus. As technology is likely to play an increasing role in facilitating learning in future, it is understood that DBS keeps this service under regular review.

Recommendations:

Section D.   Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

The Panel is satisfied that feedback from learners and graduates was taken into account in the review of the programme, both in formal ways, through learner surveys, and through more informal, on-going discussions with learners. The Panel was informed, for instance, that learners had identified a strong interest in continuing the study of criminology beyond the first year of the course and this had led to the strengthening of this aspect of the programme. In addition, the programme team informed the Panel that many learners had found social theory to be a 'difficult' subject. In the revised programme, this core aspect of the proposed programme is to be covered in a more staged way, building on learners' capacity over the course of the programme as well as enabling learners to consider social theory in relation to contemporary social issues. See Criterion 5 for further commentary on this topic.

Recommendations:

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

There was evidence of a strong, collaborative engagement by staff and the Programme Team in conducting the review over an extended time period. The Panel was informed that, using accumulated feedback from learners, External Examiners, industry sources and relevant publications, including reports and policy documents, the team set about devising a programme that put an emphasis on an interdisciplinary, staged approach with sound theoretical foundations, allied to applied learning on contemporary issues. With the dropping of the Employability modules, core areas were refined and strengthened.

Recommendations:

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

The Panel was informed that the feedback from the External Examiners had been an important factor in shaping the revised programme. In particular, the Panel learned that the feedback influenced the decision in move away from the Employability modules. The External Examiners' view on the potential overassessment of learners was also taken into account, with a reduced number of assessments proposed for the revised programme, along with the use of different modes of assessment. For further comment see Criterion 9. It was further deemed that the feedback from the External Examiners had been combined with quantitative data from module performance, for instance, to inform the changes proposed.

Recommendations:

Feedback from Employers/Industry and Other External Stakeholders

Commentary:

The Panel found that the actual extent of DBS' and the programme team's engagement with employers and professional organisations had actually been under-narrated in the Programme Review Document. During the review meetings, the Panel was informed about a number of existing or recently introduced formal employer/ 'industry' engagement and advisory mechanisms which will also be relevant to the proposed programme.

The Panel is satisfied that due consideration was given to feedback from employers and other stakeholders in the review and that this is reflected in the design of the programme. It was noted that some potential employers were interested in graduates with strong practical skills, while others valued a thorough academic grounding. There was, however, a consensus that skills such as interpersonal communication, teamwork, critical thinking and an ability to solve problems were vital in today's working environment, the Panel was informed. It was noted that opportunities to acquire these skills were part of the objectives of the proposed programme.

Recommendations:

Section E.   Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

The Panel is satisfied that there are clear mechanisms in place to address complaints and appeals. It was noted that any complaints and appeals are dealt with in a timely manner, with staff working to resolve issues brought to their attention by learners.

Recommendations:

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The Panel was informed that a number of mechanisms for ongoing evaluation of the programme under review, such as Programme Board meetings and professional/ 'industry' stakeholder feedback opportunities, have recently been put on a more formal footing, as per information provided by relevant DBS staff members during the review meetings.

The Panel commends this as good practice from a quality assurance point of view, and encourages DBS and the Programme Team to continue with this. In the Panel's view, more formal meeting and recording structures will render DBS' evaluative mechanisms more fruitful, since they allow for the outputs and recommendations to be captured and reviewed more systematically.

Furthermore, from the Programme Review Report the Panel had gathered that correspondence arrangements restricted External Examiners to communicate with the Examinations Office only for much of the period under review.

However, the Panel was informed by the Registrar during the meetings that efforts had commenced to enable more direct interaction between External Examiners and the academic Programme Team. The Panel supports and encourages this, as it will increase opportunities for the programme team to reflect and act on the External Examiners' recommendations.

Recommendations:

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

Commentary:

N/A

Section F.   Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

Overall, the Panel concludes that the review of the programme has been conducted thoroughly and with the involvement of all relevant stakeholder groups. Feedback from staff, learners, External Examiners, employers as well as key reports and government policy have been taken into account in the review and proposed revisions, and the proposed programme is fit for purpose.

The programme proposed for revalidation is broad-based and well-structured. The proposed programme is built around five strong, interrelated 'pillars' or thematic streams, which are Sociology, Psychology, Criminology, Social Policy, and Research. The five pillars are well balanced and interlinked, with good cross-links between the different subject areas.

The modifications proposed are considered to be well thought through and responsive to the changing context, taking into account new limitations for professional progression into social care due to recently introduced registration requirements for that profession. The proposed programme retains a clear emphasis on research skills, and the core strands of social theory and social policy are evident in the various stages of the programme.

The Panel notes that the amplification of the Criminology strand is foregrounded quite strongly in the programme documentation, but that it might have been made clearer that few direct employment opportunities exist in this area without progression to specialised postgraduate study (for further commentary and related recommendation see Criterion 4).

The Panel also considers that the programme's USP is not fully evident in the documentation and in the way the programme is presented to potential applicants on the website. Formulating the distinct USP for this programme represents an opportunity for DBS (see also commentary and related recommendation under Criterion 3).

There are well qualified, enthusiastic staff on the programme, with evidence of a collaborative approach to review, teaching and assessment.

There are sound learning and assessment strategies proposed, including a considered blend of online and in person sessions, with sufficient resources in place to offer the programme.

Learners are well informed and cared for, and in general there are clear progression routes signposted for learners.

The programme is well managed, with sound QA procedures in place.

Recommendations:

Section G.   Revision of the programme

In this section the Panel will respond to any proposals made by the provider in respect of changes to the programme arising from the review. The revised programme's readiness for validation will be reported on in more detail in the Independent Evaluation Report for Validation.

Commentary:

The Panel found that there was a clear justification for the proposed revisions to the programme outlined in some detail in Section 7 of the Programme Review Report as well as throughout the Programme Document. The Panel also welcomed key continuities in the programme, particularly the retention of the capstone dissertation as a culmination of the research skills dimension. See Criterion 5 for further commentary on this.

Recommendations:

Part 3.   Overall Findings

In this section the Panel will give its overall feedback on the conduct of the review and the findings therein. This feedback will inform future provider review processes and will also contribute to the refinement of any programmes being proposed for revalidation following this review process.

Section A.   Commentary on review process:

The review was comprehensive and the Panel concluded that feedback from stakeholders had been factored into the process. This information was effectively combined with an analysis of data gathered from internal and external sources during the process.

Section B.   Recommendations on review process:

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the review team ensure that future programme review reports present a sufficiently exhaustive discussion of the implications of quantitative and qualitative programme performance data and feedback, including from any connections drawn between different data sets. This is useful even where the team concludes that no changes to the programme design or operation are required, or that programme-level changes would not address the root causes of certain noted issues.

Outlining the team's conclusions on the data will not only support the next external Panel in confirming the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the self-evaluation, it will also provide valuable reference points for the programme team in its own future development work.

Section C.   Commentary on programme revisions:

The Panel concluded that the programme revisions were clearly stated and well thought through to create a well-balanced programme now proposed for renewal of validation.

Section D.   Recommendations on programme revisions:

See recommendations under the criteria below.

Signed:

Panel Chairperson

Date: 17 August 2020

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

Part 1.   Provider details

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	Monday & Tuesday 22 & 23 June 2020
Date of report	tbc

Section A.   Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
	Award	Bachelor of Arts
	Credit	180 ECTS
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory

Section B.   Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Eva Juhl	Chair	**Institutional Review Facilitator at Cork Institute of Technology**
Dr Lucy Michael	Subject Matter Expert	Independent lecturer and researcher
Dr Ciaran Acton	Subject Matter Expert	Course Director and lecturer in sociology, University of Ulster
Dr Lisa O'Rourke-Scott	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer in psychology and research methods, Limerick Institute of Technology
Mary Jennings	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Damien Furlong	Learner Representative	Damien has just completed final exams for a BA (Hons) in Social Sciences at Waterford Institute of Technology (Note: attended pre-site meetings of Panel only)
Conor Roe	Industry Representative	Manager with Focus Ireland

Section C.   Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners *(per centre)*	Minimum number of learners
DBS Main Campus	250	7

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2020
Maximum number of annual intakes	2 intakes: September, January
Maximum total number of learners per intake	250
Programme duration *(months from start to completion)*	Full-time: 3 years (6 semesters of 12 weeks each) Part-time: 4 years (8 semesters of 12 weeks each)

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

It is recommended that the long-term resource implications are very carefully considered by DBS before any significant increases in the size or number of intakes are contemplated. See Criterion 8 for further comment on this point.

Target learner groups

This programme is aimed at learners with the following qualifications:

Leaving certificate applicants must apply through the CAO system and have achieved 2 H5s + 4 O6/H7s, to include Mathematics and English or another language. Using the old pre-2017 grading scheme, applicants must have obtained a minimum of grade C3 in 2 higher level subjects and a minimum of grade D3 in 4 Ordinary Level subjects (to include Maths, English and a language).

Learners with a full FETAC award at Level 5 on the NFQ and which includes a Distinction grade in at least three modules.

Mature Learners who do not meet the minimum entry requirements will be assessed on the basis of age, work experience, general education standard, motivation and commitment to the programme for which they are applying. Mature learners are those who are 23 years of age by January1st of the year of admission.

The programme may be of interest to who wish to specialise in the interdisciplinary field of Social Science with a view to entering the industry, or those who are working in social work environment already and who require a qualification in the area in order to progress professionally. Throughout the programme, learners will acquire academic knowledge and practical skills in social science and

will draw on their personal and practical experience in order to make a significant contribution to society and/or academic research.

The programme targets graduates who wish to develop the necessary skills to compete effectively for a broad range of existing and emerging employment and postgraduate study options and to further develop lifelong learning and continuous professional development skills.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time/Part-time

The teaching and learning modalities

- Classroom lectures
- Case-based learning
- Workshops
- Tutorials
- Individual and group work
- Online synchronous and asynchronous classes

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 Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Science is designed for learners who are willing to make challenging decisions alongside a strong desire to effect positive social change in local communities. Given the increasing role of social skills in society and the workplace, Social Science is emerging as a multidisciplinary field with a breadth and depth of content that encompasses various areas of expertise such as Social Psychology, Cyberpsychology, Criminology and Organisational Psychology. Alongside the technology solutions, these play a central role in driving a broader positive social, economic and cultural change.

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Sciences is a three-year full-time or four-year part-time programme (180 ECTS).

Stage One (FT/PT) lays the groundwork for the programme and encompasses modules that focus on providing a solid and comprehensive understanding of the foundational concepts of Social Research, Social Psychology, Criminology, Social Policy and Law, whilst also providing skills in academic thinking and writing through Critical Thinking Skills module.

Stage Two (FT/PT) builds on this by covering content in which the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in Stage One are developed and applied, for instance through Criminology in Action, the Youth Justice module, Psychology in Action and Advanced Social Research. Stage Two modules offer additional knowledge and skills in contemporary areas within Social Science and politics, for example Politics in the Modern World, Economic Sociology and Contemporary Inequalities, whilst focusing on Interpersonal and Group Communication Skills and Campaigning, Advocacy, and Public Engagement.

Stage Three (FT/PT) builds on the earlier stages through the modules on Contemporary Criminology, Cyberpsychology, Environment and Society, Organisational Psychology, Global Issues and Contemporary Social Policy in Ireland. Stage Three also introduces additional contemporary issues

through the Sociology of Families, Intimacies and Personal Life module, and furthermore includes a capstone Social Science Research Project.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE
Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters in the following areas: Social Sciences Counselling or Psychotherapy Psychology Criminology Individuals with Level 8 honours bachelor degrees in the above disciplines who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience may also be considered.	An average ratio of 23:1 learners to WTE staff.

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Classroom sessions	1:50
Workshops and other practical sessions	1:25
Practical Lab sessions	1:35
Online class (broadcast, live)	1:50
Online tutorial (interactive)	1:25
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing: The Panel found that the programme outline was clear and comprehensive and that staffing ratio is adequate.	

Other noteworthy features of the application

N/A

Part 2.   Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">
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.[1]
</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)**</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Principal Programme**</td><td>Yes</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

As an established provider of higher education programmes DBS has met the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of this programme. It was noted that DBS has in place procedures for access, transfer and progression as set out in Section 4 of the Programme Document. DBS has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI. The Panel was informed that DBS has completed the re-engagement process with QQI. As part of the re-engagement process, policies and procedures were being reviewed.

DBS provided a copy of the letter to be submitted to QQI with the application for the revalidation of the programmes. The letter contained the signature and declaration required under sub-criteria 1b) and 1c).

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[1] 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**

<div>

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.[2]
   (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[3]

</div>

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel found that the aims, objectives and rationales for the programmes were expressed clearly, as set out in Section 2.1 of the Programme Document.

It was concluded that the programme and module learning outcomes have been clearly outlined and were appropriate to the level of the awards. The title of the programme was deemed to be appropriate and in line with the QQI standard for the award type on the NFQ.

The Panel observed that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes for the BA (Hons) in Social Science were informed by the QQI Generic Awards Standards and have been mapped against these standards.

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

Criterion 3.   **The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)**

> a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.[4]
> b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
>   (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
>   (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
>   (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
>   (iv) There is evidence[5] of learner demand for the programme.
>   (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[6].
>   (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[7]
> c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
> d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
> e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	

In general, the Panel finds that the overall concept of the proposed programme is soundly based, with adequate consideration given to its context.

The Panel heard from the students and graduates of the existing programme that in their view the knowledge, skills and competences gained compared very favourably with those of peers who had completed comparator programmes.

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

[5] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

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

With regard to the proposed programme changes, the Panel welcomes the programme team's decision to embed the employability skills within core subject modules, rather than deliver them in stand-alone modules. The Panel was informed that the DBS Careers Hub provides workshops and other resources to learners on such topics as career opportunities, preparing CVs, networking and interview skills, for instance, ensuring that learners have the opportunity to acquire relevant information and skills.

The Panel also notes, however, that there are references in the documentation to potential opportunities for graduates in social care, while at the same time it is stated that the designated role of Social Care Worker, now a protected title, would not be available to graduates of the programme.

The Panel considers that it should be very clear to potential learners that social care is distinct from social science, and that, furthermore, there are opportunities for social science graduates to use a sound social science approach across many sectors which include, but are by no means limited to a number of caring professions.

Providing applicants with a clearer view of the breadth of potential career destinations, including in research, and of opportunities for progression to postgraduate study might also broaden the appeal of the programme to male entrants, who are currently in a clear minority.

Recommendation 1:

It is recommended that the description of the programme's graduate profile should be reviewed in order to ascertain that it is not unduly defined by, or focused on, an 'absence', notably of career opportunities in social care going forward. Rather, the graduate profile should highlight the array of opportunities that the degree opens up to graduates.

Connected to the last point, the Panel found that there is need for more clarity in the outward presentation of the USP overall. This might apply, for instance, to the Research Pillar and its connection to employability and success chances in postgraduate study, not least since acquisition of research skills was identified as a strength by students and graduates of the existing programme. Research skills, along with critical thinking, reflect government policy on skills development and on the need for innovation, and are highly sought after in the workplace, as the feedback from potential employers indicates. These strengths might be presented more clearly to potential learners in the promotion of the programme.

The Panel notes that the decision as to how the programme is presented and marketed cannot be left to the 'Marketing Department' alone, but first and foremost has to grow out of and reflect a clear, shared understanding of the programme, its graduate profile, progression opportunities and employment market on the part of the programme team.

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that the programme team review the presentation of the programme's USP in programme documentation and literature, to ensure that all information provided on the programme clearly and coherently expresses its fundamental nature, unique features and distinct strengths. Care needs to be taken not to let attractive, 'catchy' individual elements such as Criminology obscure equally significant, but less immediately obvious strengths, as this might skew entrant perception of the programme as a whole.

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[8].

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[9]) 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
Principal Programme	Yes	

Overall, the Panel was satisfied that the programmes' access, transfer and progression arrangements are appropriate and are working in practice. Information on access, transfer and progression is available through DBS website, promotional material and the Student Handbooks. This includes information on EU and non-EU entry requirements and information for students with disabilities.

In conversation with the Panel, the graduates and students showed that they viewed this broad-based undergraduate degree as part of a progression pathway towards a more specialised post-

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[8] Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings
   -   Progression and transfer routes
   -   Entry arrangements
   -   Information provision
[9] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

graduate degree in an area of their choice. This did not emerge as clearly from the description of career opportunities in the programme documentation however.

Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that the programme team review the information on career paths provided to applicants, students and other stakeholders to ensure that all documentation states with sufficient clarity that many possible careers will be predicated on completion of a more specialised post-graduate degree, e.g. in the area of criminal justice.

The Panel noted that an exit award was not available to participants who had completed 2 years' study and who may have had to step back for a number of reasons. In light of the advantages offered by such an award, the Panel encouraged DBS to consider this further, including facilitating advanced entry for this cohort of students into future programmes.

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[10].
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.[11]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel found that the programme proposed for revalidation is broad-based and well-structured. The proposed programme is built around five strong, interrelated 'pillars' or thematic streams, which are Sociology, Psychology, Criminology, Social Policy, and Research. The five pillars are well balanced and interlinked, with good cross-links between the different subject areas confirmed by students and graduates for the existing programme also. The academic progression within stages is well considered.

In the programme documentation the Panel found several references to opportunities for specialisation from Stage 2 onward. However, the programme curriculum does not confirm this. While this is a well-constructed broad-based programme, it consists exclusively of mandatory modules, with no module larger than 10 ECTS credits. By dint of being a three-year (full-time) honours programme, stage progression is also relatively steep. The Panel noted that completion of a 10-credit final year topic does not amount to specialisation, and that to allow for true specialisation

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[10] This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.
In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.
[11] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

within a programme one would expect to see broad elective choice, possibly grouped into a number of discrete elective streams between which the student would choose in each stage. A graduate of the proposed BA (Hons) in Social Science will not be a specialist, but possess an excellent, broad-based platform for subsequent specialisation through postgraduate opportunities or professional training.

For instance, the Panel observed that in the documentation provided, there was a particular emphasis on how the topic of criminology had been strengthened in the overall curriculum. The Panel was concerned that may create an expectation in the learners that they would have sufficient skills to take up employment in this area after graduation, whereas it would require further, specialised postgraduate study in order to have to be fully grounded in the area.

Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that the programme team guard against use of the term 'specialisation' when describing thematic progression within the programme to applicants and other interested stakeholders. The Panel similarly cautions against an overuse of the term 'flexibility' in connection with the programme structure.

With regard to Module 16, *Psychology in Action*, the Panel recognised the resource issues posed by providing placements and the necessity of providing work experience, but has significant concerns about the learning outcomes met by the current model, as well as the sufficiency of DBS oversight from both a Quality Assurance and a student welfare perspective. At the review, the Panel was informed that the emphasis on this module was as much on the process of seeking work experience, and reflecting on that experience, as on the actual time spent in particular organisations. The Panel concluded that learning outcomes would merit further consideration.

The Panel also concluded that the level of institutional oversight was insufficient, with no evidence of formal supervision arrangements in place.

Recommendation 5:

It is recommended that the programme team take a closer look at the intended learning outcomes of the volunteering experience in this module and consider whether the process of looking for, but failing to attain experience, can really be equivalent to actual experience of working as a volunteer within the specialised field.

Recommendation 6:

It is also strongly recommended that DBS put in place mechanisms for identifying appropriate volunteering experience, and that DBS furthermore determine and implement a sufficient amount of institutional oversight over the volunteering arrangements to ensure that a) any volunteering environment meets defined minimum learner safety parameters, and that b) the minimum intended learning outcomes are consistently and reliably met by any and all learners who are deemed successful.

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

<table>
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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[12] (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[13] opportunities[14].

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.

</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory?** (yes, no, partially)</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Principal Programme**</td><td>Yes</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The Panel was advised that teaching staff are qualified to a minimum of NFQ Level 9, with many qualified to doctoral level or enrolled in doctoral studies. CVs of teaching staff were provided in the documentation provided to the Panel. As per the Programme Document, the current staff complement comprises 9 F-T and 4 P-T staff.

The Panel was informed that the overall learner to WTE staff ratio is 23:1 and this was deemed to be appropriate.

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

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

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

The Panel noted that many staff were actively engaged in developing innovative teaching and learning activities. The Panel was informed that DBS has a specific strategy for enhancing teaching and learning with a dedicated Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning section. Both formal and informal processes were deployed in encouraging and developing innovation. Both part-time and full-time staff were given opportunities to participate in workshops and seminars on a range of topics from on-line pedagogy, managing large groups, asynchronous learning and on-line tutorials as well as technical and practical advice on the many uses of MOODLE. The Panel noted that several staff were involved in an Educational Technology Users Group and commented on the willingness of participants to test new approaches and share this learning with colleagues in a collaborative way.

It was not clear to the Panel, however, what formal mechanisms were in place to reward successful innovation in teaching and learning,

Commendation 1:

The Panel commends the way staff are actively engaged in developing innovative teaching and learning activities.

Recommendation 7:

It is recommended that DBS consider developing internal mechanisms for rewarding successful innovation in teaching and learning more formally.

The Panel noted that a number of annual research scholarships were available to full-time and part-time staff across the college, with allocated time on the timetable for successful applicant to undertake research projects. An annual Research Day was held at the college during which staff shared the results of their research with each other.

The Panel noted that DBS were demonstrating good practice regarding the accreditation of staff who engaged in pedagogical research, e.g. through Advance HE.

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
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel is satisfied that there are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned.

Since the Panel review took place via Zoom, members of the Programme Team made a PowerPoint presentation on the library facilities, classroom and study facilities and technology services. The Panel was informed that DBS Library comprises a physical library at Aungier Street and an extensive online library, which is accessible via the Library Website (http://library.dbs.ie/). As a result of recent investment in the physical infrastructure, additional technology-enhanced study places recently became available to learners.

The Panel was informed that Computer Services department provides IT support for all technology-based services throughout the college, supporting learners both on and off-campus. As technology is likely to play an increasing role in facilitating learning in future, it is understood that DBS keeps this service under regular review.

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
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel is satisfied that there are appropriate review processes in place to manage provision of appropriate learning materials, including e-books and journals.

The Panel was informed that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that learners have the appropriate level of learner supports in the current environment, involving more delivery online and restricted numbers on campus due to social distancing requirements. Contingency planning for the new academic year foresees a proposed induction to online learning as the new term begins, provision of access to appropriate software, recording of classes and the loan of equipment where necessary. As DBS has a 'No Disadvantage' Policy, learners who, for whatever reason, are not in a position to learn online will have access to the premises as much as possible, the Panel learned.

DBS informed the Panel that it has developed a Diversity and Inclusion statement relating to both staff and students who come from diverse backgrounds and many countries. Inclusiveness was a core value for the college as well as for its corporate owner, Kaplan. The Panel learned that, while DBS does not receive grants from government agencies to provide appropriate facilities for people with disabilities, nevertheless it makes every effort to accommodate people with disabilities.

The Panel noted that the DBS revalidation application provides for the possibility of two annual intakes over the 5 years of the programme, with a projected annual first year intake of 132 and a maximum of 250 enrolments per annum. Apart from the projected considerable growth in new entrants, the Panel considers that two intakes per year would require a large scaling up of resources from the current situation and it was not clear from the documentation how this might be achieved.

Recommendation 8:

It is recommended that the long-term resource implications be very carefully considered by DBS before any significant increases in the size or number of intakes are contemplated.

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, support15 and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	**Comment**
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel is satisfied that there are sound teaching and learning strategies in place to deliver the programme as proposed.

The Programme Team advised the Panel that the whole area of technology-enhanced, blended learning was changing, with disruption caused by Covid-19 pandemic accelerating a process already in train. Examples provided to the Panel included the more interactive use of MOODLE to both enhance student engagement and promote more independent learning, whereby activities and resources are well scaffolded through in-class learning and continued on MOODLE. It was stated that, while there used to be a firm line between MOODLE and classroom activities, this distinction is blurring, allowing a question to be raised in class which is then researched and debated by learners via MOODLE, for example. These developments also facilitated learners to begin assessed assignments at an earlier stage, thereby spreading the workload more evenly.

It was stated that staff are actively engaged with learning about and developing these and other teaching, learning and assessment strategies. This was noted and welcomed by the Panel. See Criterion 6 above for further commentary.

As noted under Criterion 5 above, there was evidence of good collaboration between faculty staff in developing a balanced curriculum with clear, multi-disciplinary stages of learning for the core topics across the three years of the programme. There was evidence of collaborative teaching strategies where topics were approached from a multi-disciplinary point of view. The Panel was informed of a staged approach whereby learners were introduced to a topic at an appropriate level at each stage, building in complexity as learners integrated the material presented along with their own independent study.

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

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

<table>
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a)   All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[16]

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.[17]

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.[18]

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.[19]
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<td>**Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)**</td>
<td colspan="2">**Comment**</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Principal Programme**</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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The Panel is satisfied that there are sound assessment strategies in place for the programme.

Feedback from External Examiners had raised the issue of grade inflation and over-assessment (see Section C above). The Panel was informed that as a consequence of the review, the number of assessments for the proposed programme had been reduced and more evenly spread to create a more balanced workload. The Panel was informed that the team used a variety of assessment methods, including essays, group projects, exams and debates, and that in general there was a move towards having more formative rather than summative assessment, in whatever form this was appropriate to the content of the particular module.

The Panel expressed some concern that the alignment of the assessment with the module content and learning outcomes was not always clear. For instance, the Criminology in Action Module requires an interview to be conducted in the field. It was not clear what support was available for that assignment and whether interview skills formed part of the intended module learning. It was stated that this particular assignment was intended to connect students with the reality of work in the field, merging theory with practice. It was further stated that the actual task was not the

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[16] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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

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

interview itself, but the summation of this interview from an appropriate theoretical viewpoint subsequently.

Recommendation 9:

It is recommended that the programme team review the assessment descriptions across the module descriptors prior to their publication, with a view to ensuring that every description clearly and fully reflects the nature of the assessment and its link with the relevant module 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[20].
i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[21] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.
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
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel is satisfied that the learners are well informed, guided and cared for.

The Panel was advised that DBS has a number of specific supports at a central level to provide services to learners. This includes the Student Experience Department which encompasses Careers and Student Services who work to enhance the experience of students at all stages. With a diverse range of students from many countries, the team stated that the overall focus was to promote a DBS community and a culture that is focused on student wellbeing and success.

It was stated that DBS provides a Learner Supports Service to ensure that programmes and facilities are accessible to students with a disability or a specific learning difficulty.

The Panel was informed that there is a particular focus on welcoming and supporting first year students in their transition to third level education. DBS has recently established a Student

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[20] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).
[21] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

Engagement and Success Unit (SESU) which aims to help all new students at DBS to transition successfully into Higher Education.

At the review session, the Panel was informed of the specific mechanisms in place to monitor engagement, including digital tagging of attendance, library usage and/or low levels of MOODLE usage. DBS staff explained that attendance tagging was not perfect, and that DBS furthermore did not consider attendance data on their own to provide the full picture of learner engagement. However, attendance forms just one of 40 learner metrics recorded on a central dashboard. Learners with low levels of both interaction and attendance are identified and interventions put in place both by faculty staff and the central student support teams. Particular attention is placed on first-year students to enable early, supportive interventions. Interventions range from additional classes in maths to additional courses on academic writing and flexible timetabling, particularly for part-time students.

The students and graduates who spoke to the Panel unanimously expressed satisfaction with the support provided by both lecturing staff and central services.

Commendation 2:

The Panel commends the DBS Student Support Service, particularly in relation to the support provided to first year students.

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[22] 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
Principal Programme	Yes	

The Panel is satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review. The QAH contains the governance structures for the College and sets out procedures for access, transfer and progression, learner assessments and supports, and teaching and learning. It was noted that the QAH and associated policies and procedures have been developed in line with QQI statutory guidelines.

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

Part 3.   Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1   Principal programme:

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The Panel is satisfied that all the criteria have been met satisfactorily.

Commendations

1. The Panel commends the way staff are actively engaged in developing innovative teaching and learning activities.

2. The Panel commends the DBS Student Support Service, particularly in relation to the support provided to first year students.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. It is recommended that the description of the programme's graduate profile should be reviewed in order to ascertain that it is not unduly defined by, or focused on, an 'absence', notably of career opportunities in social care going forward. Rather, the graduate profile should highlight the array of opportunities that the degree opens up to graduates.

2. It is recommended that the programme team review the presentation of the programme's USP in programme documentation and literature, to ensure that all information provided on the programme clearly and coherently expresses its fundamental nature, unique features and distinct strengths. Care needs to be taken not to let attractive, 'catchy' individual elements such as Criminology obscure equally significant, but less immediately obvious strengths, as this might skew entrant perception of the programme as a whole.

3. It is recommended that the programme team review the information on career paths provided to applicants, students and other stakeholders to ensure that all documentation states with sufficient clarity that many possible careers will be predicated on completion of a more specialised post-graduate degree, e.g. in the area of criminal justice.

4. It is recommended that the programme team guard against use of the term 'specialisation' when describing thematic progression within the programme to applicants and other interested stakeholders. The Panel similarly cautions against an overuse of the term 'flexibility' in connection with the programme structure.

5. It is recommended that the programme team take a closer look at the intended learning outcomes of the volunteering experience in this module and consider whether the process of looking for, but failing to attain experience, can really be equivalent to actual experience of working as a volunteer within the specialised field.

6. It is also strongly recommended that DBS put in place mechanisms for identifying appropriate volunteering experience, and that DBS furthermore determine and implement a sufficient amount of institutional oversight over the volunteering arrangements to ensure that a) any volunteering environment meets defined minimum learner safety parameters, and that b) the minimum intended learning outcomes are consistently and reliably met by any and all learners who are deemed successful.

7. It is recommended that DBS consider developing internal mechanisms for rewarding successful innovation in teaching and learning more formally.

8. It is recommended that the long-term resource implications be very carefully considered by DBS before any significant increases in the size or number of intakes are contemplated.

9. It is recommended that the programme team review the assessment descriptions across the module descriptors prior to their publication, with a view to ensuring that every description clearly and fully reflects the nature of the assessment and its link with the relevant module learning outcomes.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Eva Juhl   Date: 17 August 2020

Signed:

3.2   Disclaimer

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

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

Part 4 Proposed programme schedules

Proposed programme and stage schedule Stage 1

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Stage Exit Award Title3	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full-time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, online lectures, seminars, interactive group work, workshops, laboratory practicals

Award Class4	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level2	Stage EQF Level2	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
major	8	6	1	6	5	60	Sept 2020	0314

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number5	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status23	NFQ Level1 where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort24	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Foundations in Social Psychology	1	M	6	5ECTS	125	35	12	78		100			
The Sociological Imagination	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	72	48	130		50			50

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23 Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

24 Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Module Title	Stage	Module	Credit	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
Introduction to Social Research	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	72	48	130		100			
Psychology through the Lifespan 1	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	72	48	130		50			50
Social Policy and Law for Social Care 1	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	72	50	128		100			
Critical Thinking Skills	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	72	50	128		100			
Foundations in Criminology	2	M	6	5ECTS	125	36	20	69		100			
Special Regulations													

Proposed programme and stage schedule Stage 2

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Stage Exit Award Title3	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full-time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, online lectures, seminars, interactive group work, workshops, laboratory practicals

Award Class4	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level2	Stage EQF Level2	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
major	8	6	2	7	5	60	Sept 2020	0314

Module Title		Module	Credit Number5	Total Student Effort Module (hours)		Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)	

(Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Status[25]	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[26]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Economic Sociology	1	M	7	5ECTS	125	32	16	77		100			
Criminology in Action – Youth Justice	1	M	7	5ECTS	125	32	24	69		100			
Campaigning, Advocacy, and Public Engagement	1	M	7	5ECTS	125	32	16	77		100			
Interpersonal and Group Communication Skills	1 and 2	M	7	10ECTS	250	64	28	158		100			
Advanced Social Research	1 and 2	M	7	10ECTS	250	64	28	158		100			
Contemporary Inequalities	1 and 2	M	7	10ECTS	250	64	50	136		100			
Politics in the Modern World	2	M	7	5ECTS	125	32	16	77		50			50
Social Psychology	2	M	7	5ECTS	125	35	13	77		50			50
Psychology in Action	2	M	7	5ECTS	125	23	13	64	25	100			
Special Regulations													

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[25] Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

[26] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Proposed programme and stage schedule Stage 3

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Stage Exit Award Title3	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full-time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, online lectures, seminars, interactive group work, workshops, laboratory practicals

Award Class4	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level2	Stage EQF Level2	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
major	8	6	3	8	6	60	Sept 2020	0314

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number5	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status27	NFQ Level1 where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort28	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Contemporary Criminology	1	M	8	5ECTS	125	30	20	75		100			
Cyberpsychology	1	M	8	5ECTS	125	30	20	75		100			
Organisational Psychology	1 and 2	M	8	10ECTS	250	60	50	140		100			

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27 Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

28 Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Social Science Research Project	1 and 2	M	8	10ECTS	250	18	60	172			100		
Sociology of Families, Intimacies and Personal Life	1 and 2	M	8	10ECTS	250	60	35	155		100			
Contemporary Social Policy in Ireland	1 and 2	M	8	10ECTS	250	60	35	155		100			
Environment and Society	2	M	8	5ECTS	125	30	30	65		50			50
Global Issues	2	M	8	5ECTS	125	30	30	65		50			50
Special Regulations													

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Proposed programme and stage schedule PT Stage 1

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Stage Exit Award Title3	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Part-time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, online lectures, seminars, interactive group work, workshops, laboratory practicals

Award Class4	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level2	Stage EQF Level2	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject Code
major	8	6	1	6	5	60	Sept 2020	0314

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module Status[29]	NFQ Level1 where specified	Credit Number5 Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[30]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Foundations in Social Psychology	1	M	6	5ECTS	125	18	12	95		100			
The Sociological Imagination	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Social Policy and Law for Social Care 1	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	36	60	154		100			
Critical Thinking Skills	1 and 2	M	6	10ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Foundations in Criminology	2	M	6	5ECTS	125	18	20	87		100			
Introduction to Social Research	3 and 4	M	6	10ECTS	250	36	55	159		100			
Psychology through the Lifespan 1	3 and 4	M	6	10ECTS	250	36	65	149		50			50

Special Regulations

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[29] Mandatory (m) or elective (E)
[30] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Proposed programme and stage schedule PT Stage 2

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Stage Exit Award Title3	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Part-time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, online lectures, seminars, interactive group work, workshops, laboratory practicals

Award Class4	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level2	Stage EQF Level2	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject Code
major	8	6	2	7	6	60	Sept 2020	0314

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number 5	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)				
		Status[31]	NFQ Level1 where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[32]	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Campaigning, Advocacy, and Public Engagement	3	M	7	5ECTS	125	18	22	85		100			
Interpersonal and Group Communication Skills	3 and 4	M	7	10ECTS	250	36	44	170		100			
Psychology in Action	4	M	7	5ECTS	125	23	13	64	25	100			
Social Psychology	4	M	7	5ECTS	125	18	12	95		50			50
Economic Sociology	5	M	7	5ECTS	125	18	22	85		100			
Criminology in Action – Youth Justice	5	M	7	5ECTS	125	18	22	85		100			
Advanced Social Research	5 and 6	M	7	10ECTS	250	36	44	170		100			
Contemporary Inequalities	5 and 6	M	7	10ECTS	250	36	44	170		100			
Politics in the Modern World	6	M	7	5ECTS	125	18	22	85		50			50
Special Regulations													

[31] Mandatory (m) or elective (E)
[32] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.

Proposed programme and stage schedule PT Stage 3

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
Award Title	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Stage Exit Award Title3	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Part-time
Teaching and learning modalities	Formal lectures, online lectures, seminars, interactive group work, workshops, laboratory practicals

Award Class4	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level2	Stage EQF Level2	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject Code
major	8	6	3	8	6	60	Sept 2020	0314

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number5	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status33	NFQ Level1 where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort 34	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Sociology of Families, Intimacies and Personal Life	5 and 6	M	8	10ECTS	250	30	45	169		100			
Contemporary Criminology	7	M	8	5ECTS	125	18	25	82		100			
Cyberpsychology	7	M	8	5ECTS	125	18	25	82		100			
Contemporary Social Policy in Ireland	7 and 8	M	8	10ECTS	250	30	45	169		100			
Organisational Psychology	7 and 8	M	8	10ECTS	250	30	50	170		100			
Social Science Research Project	7 and 8	M	8	10ECTS	250	18	50	182			100		
Environment and Society	8	M	8	5ECTS	125	18	25	82		50			50
Global Issues	8	M	8	5ECTS	125	18	25	82		50			50
Special Regulations													

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33 Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

34 Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.