

Independent Programme Review Report

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	17 th April 2019
Date of report	27 rd May 2019

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Arts Counselling and Psychotherapy
	Award	Higher Diploma in Arts Counselling and Psychotherapy
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Duration¹ <i>(years, months, weeks)</i>	2 years (4 semesters of 12 weeks each) Part-time

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1 Introduction

The scope of the review encompassed the Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy, within the School of Arts in DBS

As detailed in QQI's *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* (pp 11–12) and the *Programme Review Manual 2016/2017*, 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

Objectives of the Programme Review

The QQI *Programme Review Manual 2016/2017* 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, 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)?

2 Independent Review Process

2.1 Evidence pursued

The review process for the programmes was led by the Programme Leaders with the Programme Team in order to critically analyse all aspects of these programmes. The consultation embraced a wide range of relevant issues including:

- Programme rationale
- Programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes
- Programme structure
- Module choice and content
- Teaching, learning and assessment methodologies
- Access, transfer and progression

The guiding principles underpinning this review were:

- That assessment of learning achieved shall adhere to the relevant QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013
- That the proposal for the programmatic review of the programmes has been developed and approved internally as a result of the DBS quality assurance procedures
- That the proposed programme will assist DBS and the School of Arts in the achievement of DBS's mission and strategy
- That the programme learning outcomes will meet the needs of current and future learners, employers and other stakeholders
- That teaching and learning or research activity at any level shall be conducted in a manner morally and professionally ethical

The Programme Team has engaged in a significant consultative process to ensure that the programmes provide an appropriate and relevant mix of academic content and practical application to address the needs of the various stakeholders. This process was informed by consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including current learners, external examiners, employer organisations, faculty, current reports by government agencies on labour force requirements, as well as a competitor analysis of similar programmes, in so far as these were available. See Section 7.2 of this report for more information

The results and conclusions of this review process informed the proposed changes to the programmes which are outlined in this report. DBS provided the panel with a self-evaluation reports for each programme (hereafter referred to as Programme Review Reports) and access to documentation before and during the site visit. Requests for further documentation were facilitated in a timely manner and supported by further explanations where appropriate.

Membership of Provider's Review Team

Name	Job Title with Provider
Cathal O'Keeffe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Director, Psychology, Psychotherapy and Social Studies • Practicum Coordinator BA, HDip and MA • Lecturer for: Psychoanalysis HDip, Human Sexuality BA, Self Subject Person MA, Psychoanalysis Workshop MA
Martina Vaughan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer and Training Coordinator across the HDip, BA & MA • Theory and Practice and Counselling Skills Trainer on the HDip & MA
Terry Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer for Traditions of Psychotherapy, HDip
Siobáin O'Donnell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Coordinator BA, HDip & MA • Lecturer for Addiction and Research Methods, BA
Mary Peyton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer for Traditions of Psychotherapy, Psychopathology and Case Histories, Psychotherapy and the Public Sphere, HDip, BA, & MA
Stephen McCoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer for Psychopathology and Case Histories, Theories of Development, The Family and Psychotherapy, Introduction to the Work of Freud, Freuds Case Histories, HDip & BA
Miriam Kavanagh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer for Group Psychotherapy, HDip
Maura Leahy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer for The Family and Psychotherapy, HDip
Alison Kinsella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Allison Joyner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor • Lecture for Existential Psychotherapy, BA & MA
Eileen Tatschl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Liz McEvoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Margaret Kinsella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory & Practice Trainer, BA & MA • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Marion Moran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Mary De Courcy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Mary Hilliard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Sarah Kay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Group Supervisor, BA & MA
Gerry French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Group Facilitator, BA, HDip & MA
Marie Carroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Group Facilitator, BA, HDip & MA
Julie Howley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Group Facilitator, BA, HDip & MA
Valerie Preston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Group Facilitator, BA, HDip & MA
Noel Keane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Group Facilitator, BA, HDip & MA
Maggie O'Neill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Group Facilitator, BA, HDip & MA

Sheila Killoran Gannon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory & Practice, Stress Response and Counselling Skills Trainer and Internal moderator and consultant, BA, HDip & MA
Rachel Murphy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory & Practice and Counselling Skills Trainer, HDip
Heather Moore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory & Practice and Counselling Skills Trainer, HDip & MA
Ray McKiernan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress Response Trainer, BA and HDip
Berna Brennan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress Response and Counselling Skills Internal moderator and Consultant, HDip
Dr Rosie Burrows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturer for Gestalt Therapy, MA
Chris McNally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lectuer for Ethics & Contemporary Issues, BA & MA
Dr Angelo Bottone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturer for Ethics & Contemporary Issues, BA
Wilma Millar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturer for Self Subject Person, The Body and Psychotherapy, BA, MA Theory & Practice and Counselling Skills Trainer. Group Supervisor, BA, HDip & MA
Dr Grainne Donohue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturer for Research Project module BA, HDip & MA
Dr Susan Eustace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory and Practice trainer, BA
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Lee Richardson	Data Analytics and Reporting Manager
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Jane Buggle	Librarian
Grant Goodwin	QA Officer
Laura Mulqueen	Programme Coordinator
Sarah Sharkey	Student Retention Officer

2.2 2.2. Agenda

See Appendix 2.

2.3 2.3 Persons Met

Staff, Students and Graduates with whom the Panel Met

Dialogue on Learning Opportunities

Name	Job Title with Provider
Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Terry Ball	Programme Lead (Acting)
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Tanya Balfe	Admissions Manager

Jane Buggle	Librarian
Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Ciara Lambe	Faculty Manager
Grand Goodwin	Quality Assurance Officer
Siobhain O Donnell	Academic Coordinator, Clinical Placement Officer
Martina Vaughan	Training Officer
Laura Mulqueen	Programme Coordinator

H Dip in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy Teaching Team

Name	Job Title with Provider
Terry Ball	Programme Lead (Acting)
Siobáin O'Donnell	Academic Coordinator, Clinical Placement Officer
Alison Kinsella	Clinical Group Supervisor
Grainne Donohue	Research Project
Heather Moore	Skills Trainer
John Philips	Stress Response
Marie Carroll	Process
Rachel Murphy	Skills Trainer
Monica Errity	Lecturer
Gerry French	Process
Miriam Kavanagh	Lecturer
Laura Mulqueen	Programme Coordinator
Martina Vaughan	Training Officer

Facilities Review

Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
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Learners and Graduates

David Leonard-Scully	First year, part time (MA)
Sheila Crowley	First year, part time (H.Dip)
Caroline Brady	First year, part-time (MA)
Daniel Keogh	First year, part-time (MA)
Padraig Shinnick	Second year, art-time (MA)
Ruth Kerins	Graduate , MA

3 Review of the Programme Review Report

In general, the panel found that the document was well structured and easy to read. The content followed the template provided in Section 5.2 of the Programme Review Manual 2016/2017. There follows a summary of the commentary on nine major areas of the report and findings in relation to each area.

3.1 Fitness for Purpose of the Programme

The panel evaluated the observations, comments and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders and these were duly factored into the review process. Internal stakeholders consisted of students and staff (academic, support and administrative). Professional bodies included the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) Irish Council for Psychotherapy (ICP) Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP) and CORU, Ireland's multi-professional health regulator. Consultations with key stakeholders such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), private counselling and psychotherapy providers such as Pieta House, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and CAHMS Consultations with graduates, employers and charitable organisations were carried out for the review. The review process was also informed by the comparator analysis undertaken by DBS, a review of External Examiner reports and feedback obtained from industry and professional organisations.

The panel found that the consultation process had been comprehensive and it was concluded that the proposed programme was fit for purpose. Further commentary is provided in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 of this report.

3.2 Achievement of the Programme of its Stated Objectives

The aims, objectives and graduate profile for the programme were outlined. It was stated that the Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy programme aims to create and foster a learning environment that produces learners who are theoretically well informed about the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

The panel found that the programme objectives and outcomes were clear and consistent with the QQI award sought. Further commentary is included in Section 7.2 of this report.

3.3 Learner Profile

The Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy programme is aimed at graduates with a Level 8 non-cognate qualification. It serves to introduce learners to the field of psychotherapy and specifically to the skills, practice and experience of humanistic / psychodynamic integrative psychotherapy. It requires its learners to submit to the principles of this work for the duration of the programme.

These principles are realised in the components of the Higher Diploma – the academic, the skills delivered in an experiential mode and personal development in the form of personal psychotherapy and process group work over a minimum of a two-year period.

The Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy is not a training in itself. It does not include supervised client work. While it does not require its graduates to choose to go on to training with supervised client work at MA level, nor necessarily recommend this step to all its learners, the

Higher Diploma programme's principle purpose is to provide the required first two-years of the four-year professional training programme expected by the Irish Association for Humanistic Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP) for practitioners working in this mode of psychotherapy. However, the Higher Diploma can serve as a qualification in its own right informing work in such diverse fields as health and social care, policing, education and human management.

The minimum entry requirements for the Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy are:

- A Level 8 full award (primary honours bachelor degree) of at least pass level in a noncognate discipline from a recognised third level institution, or
- An equivalent professional qualification and be able to provide evidence of an ability to study at this level.
- Applicants are also required to submit a personal statement of approximately 400 words outlining why they wish to pursue this particular course.
- Upon receipt of application for the Higher Diploma in Counselling & Psychotherapy programme at DBS and as part of the professional requirements for this programme, applicants will also provide two references. Applicants are required to complete and return these forms to the Admissions Office in order to process their application.
- Suitable candidates should be able to demonstrate significant life experience, self-awareness and maturity are ideally required to be aged 23 years or older.
- Ideally candidates should also have experience either professionally or on a voluntary basis in a role which can be related to the work of counselling/psychotherapy. Candidates are expected to be able to show evidence of having the personal qualities necessary to undertake the Higher Diploma course.

Where there is ambiguity regarding any of these requirements there will be an interview with the Course Director and another member of staff who is either a core trainer or supervisor on programmes in the Department.

3.4 Learner Performance

A quantitative analysis was provided for the programme covering the areas specified in the Programme Review Manual 2016/2017 Section 3.

The panel noted that in choosing programmes for benchmarking purposes, DBS needs to ensure that they have access to the learning outcomes of those programme so that a more comprehensive data gathering and analysis can be undertaken. See Section 7.3 below.

- Enrolment analysis

It was noted that recruitment numbers are steady on the Higher Diploma programme despite the marked increase in the number of Counselling and Psychotherapy courses being offered by a variety of colleges and institutes.

- Attrition, transfer, progression and completion by stage

The number of enrolled learners has remained reasonably consistent with an average of 42 learners per Academic Year across both first and second year, although there was a small

reduction in Academic Year 2016/17 (N=35) which reversed in Academic Year 2017/18 (N=44). In part, this is due to learners who already possess a primary degree who would have traditionally enrolled on the BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy are choosing to enrol on the Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy due to the further progression possibility to the Masters of Arts in Psychotherapy and thereby completing a postgraduate qualification in Psychotherapy at Level 9 on the NFQ. In addition, the number of competitors offering a qualification in Counselling and Psychotherapy has also increased over the years.

- Analysis of grades and QQI award classifications

The percentage of learners who pass each programme year exceeds the DBS benchmark of 85%, with the exception of first year in Academic Year 2015/16 and first year in Academic Year 2014/15, where the pass rate is 79.17% and 81.82% respectively. However, it should be noted that 0 learners failed the year, rather, the reason for non-completion was due to deferrals or withdrawals. The panel noted that the pass rates are quite high in comparison to the fails and non-active percentages. Since the introduction of the coordinator roles in 2010, the pass rates have steadily increased, as anyone that is struggling has been supported to either continue or to step away from the programme by deferring or withdrawing.

Overall, 77% of graduates from the programme have graduated with a H2:1, and 13.51% of graduates have graduated with a First. No learners have graduated with a pass award. The percentage of learners graduating with a H2:1 ranges from 68.75% in Academic Year 2017/18 to 83.33% in Academic Year 2014/15. Either side of this, a small number of learners each Academic Year generally graduate with either a First-Class honours or a H2:2. The high percentage of H2:1s is in line with DBS's other Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes. The high percentage of H2:1s is in line with our other Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes but is somewhat out of line with other Private Providers where the average percentage of H2:1s is 55%.

The panel noted that DBS had reviewed their grading and marking strategy and were of the view that they were marking too much in the middle. It was indicated that grading criteria would be reviewed and a learning lab provided for staff on the effective use of mapping grades and feedback to the grading matrix. The panel welcomed this approach.

- Graduate destinations

The Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy programme is not a training in itself. However, holders of this qualification may seek employment in the following areas:

- The Voluntary Sector
- Primary Care settings
- Social Care settings
- Educational settings

The Higher Diploma can serve as a qualification in its own right informing work in such diverse fields as health and social care, policing, education and human management. Presently, there is no formal employment of psychotherapists in the health services Ireland which is beginning to change.

Although the majority of learners convert to the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy programme, there is a minority that do not as they have been recommended to defer or take a year out. This decision is made in the feedback interview at the end of the two-year

Higher Diploma Programme with the objective of monitoring and evaluating learners progress in terms of their continuing suitability to train as psychotherapists.

- **Benchmarking Grades and QQI Award Classifications**
The panel noted that in choosing programmes for benchmarking purposes, DBS needs to ensure that they have access to the learning outcomes of those programme so that a more comprehensive data gathering and analysis can be undertaken. See Section 7.3 below.

3.5 Quality of the Learning Environment

Commentary was provided on access to lecturers, the use of MOODLE as a virtual learning environment, teaching strategy and clinical placements and clinical supervision. Programme-specific arrangements for monitoring progress and guiding, informing and caring for learners were also discussed. An outline of physical facilities and resources was also included. The panel noted that the use of MOODLE by lecturers was inconsistent and also noted that DBS was taking steps to address this area by providing staff induction and training in its use.

The panel concluded that the learning environment was consistent with the needs of the learners. Further commentary is provided in Section 7.8 of this report.

3.6 Suitability of Learner Workload

The suitability of the learner workload is one of the areas monitored by the Programme Team through feedback from learners, alumni, external examiners, professional bodies and through review and discussion at team meetings.

The panel noted that that the workload was considered to be onerous by learners, who, nevertheless were fully committed to taking on work associated with the different practical and theoretical elements of the programme. The panel also noted the willingness of teaching staff to address any issues brought to them by the students in this regard. See Section 7.8 and 7.11 of this report.

3.7 Effectiveness of Procedures for Assessment

It was noted that all assessment for the programmes conforms to the DBS assessment regulations which are informed by QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013. The evaluation of assessment is based on feedback from learners, external examiners, employers, as well as feedback from reviews and validations. It was noted by the panel that formative assessment forms an integral part of the learner journey and overall assessment strategy. The panel found the assessment processes relating to the programmes to be appropriate. Further commentary is provided in Sections 7.11 of this report.

3.8 Quality Assurance Arrangements

All DBS quality assurance policies and procedures are detailed in the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH). This is the first point of reference for all stakeholders involved in the design and monitoring of programmes. The programmes under review have been designed to comply with the DBS QAH and, in turn, with QQI's statutory quality assurance guidelines with respect to governance, quality assurance, assessment access to transfer and progression. Programme-specific quality assurance also comply with the guidelines laid down by IAHIP in relation to clinical training, governance, quality assurance, assessment, access, transfer and progression. Mandatory workshops are provided on

DBS's Child Protection Policy and on Clinical Induction, prior to beginning year 3 of the programmes when learners take up client practice. Learners must sign a declaration that they have read and understood DBS Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants.

There are additional quality assurance requirements for the Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy. A rigorous initial selection process is involved as set out in the Programme Document. Students must engage as well as verify that they have been in their own personal therapy for the duration of the programme. At the end of the two years of this academic programme, suitable candidates may progress to clinical practice and supervision; if learners are not deemed suitable for clinical practice by the team, they may exist with the Higher Diploma award.

The panel concluded that the quality assurance arrangements applied to the programmes were generally effective.

3.9 Proposed Modifications

There are no substantive changes to content being proposed for the Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy with one exception. The stakeholder input did not require the proposal of any changes apart from some content distribution and revision of assessment strategy and weighting but most significantly the replacing of closed book examinations with more innovative assessment strategies appropriate to this training.

The changes entail the following:

- A number of minor changes to content within modules both to update but also to allow the descriptor to realistically represent the amount of content any one module can deliver.
- A review of the number of assessment points within modules including the removing and replacing of closed book exam-hall style examinations. They will be replaced with continuous assessments appropriate to the content.
- Along with the updating of syllabi and reading lists, there are a number of other changes in module content arising from the opportunity to articulate more specifically the objectives in light of the experience of delivering the programme over the past two cycles.

4 Evaluation of the Modified Programme

4.1 Report

See Appendix 1.

5 Outcome of the Review

As a result of the programmatic review process, eight recommendations and one commendation were made. The recommendations and commendation are listed in Section 7 Appendix 1, Part 2 of this report.

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Arts Counselling and Psychotherapy
	Award	Higher Diploma in Arts Counselling and Psychotherapy
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

6 Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Donna Bell	Chair	Independent Consultant, Education and QA
Mary Jennings	Secretary	Independent Consultant
Gerry Moore	Subject Expert	Associate Professor and Chair of the Masters in Psychotherapy, DCU
Gerry Myers	Subject Expert	Course Director for MA in Integrative Psychotherapy, University of Limerick; Psychotherapist in Private Practice
Alan Dignam	Learner Representative	MA student in Pluralistic Psychotherapy IICP College, Tallaght, Dublin; Psychotherapist in Private Practice
Eileen Prendiville	Employer Representative	Private Practitioner, psychotherapist, Director of Academic Affairs, Children's Therapy Centre.

All members of the panel have declared that they are independent of DBS and have no conflict of interest.

7 Appendix 1: independent Programme Review Report

Part 1

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	17 th April 2019
Date of report	23 rd May, 2019

	First intake	Last intake
Proposed Enrolment interval	September 2019	September 2023
Maximum number of annual intakes	2, September and January	

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Arts Counselling and Psychotherapy
	Award	Higher Diploma in Arts Counselling and Psychotherapy
	Credit	60ECTS
	Duration² <i>(years, months, weeks)</i>	2 years (4 semesters of 12 weeks each) Part-time
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

² Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion

Evaluators

Name	Role	Affiliation
Donna Bell	Chair	Independent Consultant, Education and QA
Mary Jennings	Secretary	Independent Consultant
Gerry Moore	Subject Expert	Associate Professor and Chair of the Masters in Psychotherapy, DCU
Gerry Myers	Subject Expert	Course Director for MA in Integrative Psychotherapy, University of Limerick; Psychotherapist in Private Practice
Alan Dignam	Learner Representative	MA student in Pluralistic Psychotherapy IICP College, Tallaght, Dublin; Psychotherapist in Private Practice
Eileen Prendiville	Employer Representative	Private Practitioner, psychotherapist, Director of Academic Affairs, Children's Therapy Centre.

Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy

Names of Centres Where the Programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners	Minimum number of learners
DBS Dublin Campus	120	10
Target learner groups	<p>The Higher Diploma is aimed at non-counselling and/or psychotherapy graduates of a Level 8 full award (a bachelor's honours degree or equivalent). The programme is aimed, primarily, at graduates of disciplines outside of this field, introducing them to the core theoretical and practical elements of the disciplines and bringing them to the point of sufficient skills, knowledge and know-how to match those of a graduate of a Level 8 award. In addition, graduates of this programme, who progress on to the Masters in Psychotherapy and complete the four-year training required of the professional bodies, will be eligible to apply for pre-accredited membership of the relevant professional body of IAHIP.</p> <p>The programme is aimed at applicants who are drawn to study and work involving the exercise of listening who have encountered counselling and psychotherapy in some capacity and have been drawn to pursue formal study and training in the field. They may or may not have engaged in prior formal study of counselling and psychotherapy but will possibly have been involved experientially in areas related to psychology or psychotherapy or have engaged in their own personal therapy.</p>	

	<p>Suitable candidates should be able to demonstrate significant life experience, self-awareness and maturity and are ideally required to be aged 23 years or older. Ideally candidates should also have experience either professionally or on a voluntary basis in a role which can be related to the work of counselling/psychotherapy. Candidates are expected to be able to show evidence of having the personal qualities necessary to undertake the Higher Diploma course</p>
Number of learners per intake	
Countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Part-time
The teaching and learning modalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom lectures 2. Case-based learning 3. Practical skills sessions 4. Workshops 5. Tutorials 6. Individual and group work 7. Blended Learning
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	<p>The orientation of the programme is humanistic, psychodynamic from an integrative model and learners are also introduced to the principles of psychoanalysis, developmental psychology, family systems, group psychotherapy, and psychopathology and so on. The programme is centred on the learners' personal development, and provides them with experience of counselling and psychotherapy through both group and individual settings. Alongside the learners' own experiential learning, the programme also develops knowledge of different forms of psychopathology and theories of psychotherapy and counselling.</p> <p>The programme includes the required counselling skills, personal development and theoretical components which mean that the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy in combination with this Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy is recognised by the Irish Association for Humanistic Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP). The programme is constructed as a two-year part-time programme of 12 modules leading to an award of Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy.</p> <p>The Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy consists of three interconnected strands: experiential training groups; personal development through the experience of psychotherapy and process groups.</p> <p>In summary, the Higher Diploma, as the first two years of the four-year professional training in combination with the</p>

	<p>Master of Arts in Psychotherapy, is crucial to allow a decision to be made on the basis of a knowledge of a learner’s work and participation concerning their suitability for supervised clinical practice. The Higher Diploma is therefore a period primarily of personal development for the learner and allows DBS to establish a profile of the learner so that a fair and balanced informed decision can be made regarding suitability for supervised clinical practice. Suitable candidates may progress to the MA in Arts in Psychotherapy.</p>
<p>Specifications for teaching staff</p>	<p>Staff to be qualified to at least Masters Level 9 or equivalent in counselling and/or psychotherapy related disciplines, with some teaching, training, supervising or research experience within the counselling and psychotherapy field and also specific to the modality being taught. Staff in a practice-oriented programme should have considerable practical/clinical experience in mutually supporting theory and practice learning opportunities for learning.</p>
<p>Specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</p>	<p>1:60 Classroom 1:15 Skills 1:12 Process work</p>

Other noteworthy features of the application

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

7.1 Criterion1: The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub criteria
		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. ³

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 the 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 is currently taking part in the re-engagement process with QQI and has completed the Pilot Phase. 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).

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 <i>QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i> .
		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. ⁴
		(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.
		(i) For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards. ⁵

The panel found that the aims, objectives and rationales for the programme was expressed clearly as set out in Section 2.1 of the Programme Document. It was concluded that, overall, the programme and module learning outcomes have been clearly outlined and were appropriate to the level of the award.

The title of the programme was deemed to be appropriate and in line with the QQI standard for the Major Award Type on the NFQ. It was noted that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes for the H Dip in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy was informed by the QQI Counselling and Psychotherapy Award Standards and have been mapped against these standards.

At the site visit, in meetings with teaching staff and with students and a graduate, the panel found that the MIPLOS did not fully communicate the range of transferable skills that were evidence in conversations with staff, students and graduates. Learners cited examples of how they had used the skills learned on the programme in their current employment in both the private, community and voluntary and public sector. These skills include team work, managing people, communication and presentation skills, capacity to manage stress, problem-solving and group facilitation, among others.

It is recommended that the MIPLOS are more explicitly stated to incorporate the transferable skills that the programme teaches.

7.3 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).

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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. ⁶
		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 ⁷ of learner demand for the programme.
		(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant ⁸ .
		(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs. ⁹
		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.

The panel found that the consultation process with stakeholders has been comprehensive and feedback received had been factored into the programme. See Section 3.1 for further commentary.

In discussions with staff and with learners, the panel was informed that work remains to be done by the incoming regulatory body CORU on clarifying regulatory arrangements and accreditation for counselling and psychotherapy. In conversation with staff, the panel learned that DBS were actively engaged in forums with professional and statutory bodies concerned with regulation and accreditation and that, as a team, they were actively keeping possible developments that might affect the programme under review.

The panel made the observation that in choosing programmes for benchmarking purposes, DBS needs to ensure that they have access to the learning outcomes of those programmes so that a more comprehensive data gathering and analysis can be undertaken. From a review of the programme documentation, it was not clear to the panel what difficulties arose in identifying and selecting a comparable programme. See Section 3.4 of this report also.

It is recommended that DBS should select the closest comparable programme for which intended programme learning outcomes are available.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 ¹⁰ .
		b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.
		c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR ¹¹) 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 <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i> , 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.

The panel was satisfied that, in general, the programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are clearly articulated and in line with QQI requirements and working in practice. Information on access, transfer and progression is available through DBS website, promotional material and the Student Handbooks.

As a stand-alone academic programme, the panel concluded that the entry requirements are clear, and it is stated that the programme is aimed primarily at non-cognate graduates of a Level 8 full award (a bachelor's honours degree or equivalent). The panel noted as the two years of this programme, although stand-alone, is also part of the four-year psychotherapy training for professional purposes, there may be a conflict with current professional body requirements which are not comparable, i.e., for the requirement in relation to cognate disciplines set by professional bodies. It was noted that DBS is actively keeping this process under review. The panel concluded that current arrangements are in line with QQI requirements, as stated.

The panel noted that while there is an institute-wide Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, that for this programme it would be helpful to have a more specific RPL process and criteria to more effectively address professional body requirements. The panel was aware that, as the regulatory and accreditation process is currently being reviewed through the new regulatory body CORU that requirements may change. It was noted that DBS is actively keeping this process under review. See Section 7.3.

It is recommended that DBS generate a programme-specific RPL process and criteria.

Discussions with students and a graduate confirmed that graduates from the programme have obtained employment, or continue to work in their current employment in such diverse fields as health and social care, policing, education and human management, using the many transferable skills gained.

Graduates of the Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy may progress to further study in DBS on the MA in Psychotherapy or MA programmes in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and addiction studies, provided that they meet the standard required for clinical work with clients, the panel noted.

7.5 Criterion 5: The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 <i>programme</i> 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 ¹² .
		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. ¹³

The panel was generally satisfied that the programmes and related modules were appropriately structured and scheduled.

The panel noted that the Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy programme had been reviewed against the QQI Counselling and Psychotherapy Award Standards.

The panel was informed that the programme introduces learners to a broad range of traditions in psychotherapy. The predominant theoretical model of the course is humanistic and psychodynamic in accordance with the integrative model, which, the panel noted, was not defined. Other traditions of psychotherapeutic work are represented on the curriculum. In conversation with students and graduates, the panel found that they were able to articulate the integrating nature of the programme for themselves but that it was not sufficiently evident in the written curriculum as to how the integration would be brought about. It was concluded that this is a lost opportunity for DBS to communicate the richness of the programme.

It is recommended that DBS develop an explicit integrating principle to scaffold the curriculum.

In conversation with students and a graduate at the site visit, the panel found that they were appreciative of both the professional skills in psychotherapy as well as the transferable skills gained during the course which they had been able to apply in their existing employment over the course of their studies. These included capacity for team building and team work, decision-making critical thinking, research skills, self-awareness and self-regulation around stress, for instance.

The Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy, awarded after successful completion of two years of study, is a stand-alone programme that provides learners with a range of transferable skills as noted above. It is also an effective mechanism for the management of the question of suitability for continued clinical practice in the four-year MA programme, or provides students who are unable or do not wish to continue with further study with an appropriate award, the panel found.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 unit (7.13c).
		b) The programme has an identified complement of staff ¹⁴ (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 ¹⁵ opportunities ¹⁶ .
		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.

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. The panel noted that a cohort of experienced counselling and psychotherapy practitioners were involved in the delivery of the programme.

The panel noted that the WTE is 0:062. The panel deemed this to be appropriate.

In conversation with staff, the panel was informed that DBS had mechanisms in place for the large cohort of staff involved in the programme to meet for regular reviews as a team or in small groups to ensure that there was a cohesive and coordinated approach to delivery of the programme. There are a number of coordinator roles specific to the programme, following the distinctions in the programme between experiential, skills-based modules, theoretical modules and supervision and group process modules which assist in the coordination of the faculty as well as the work of the learners.

The panel noted that some staff expressed the view that they were not fully up to speed with the consistent and effective use of MOODLE. The panel was informed that DBS now taken action to increase the competence of staff in the use of this technology, with training initiatives underway through the office of the newly appointed Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning in the college.

DBS has a research strategy in place to encourage staff to undertake research in their own disciplines. The staff scholarship scheme for research was outlined at the site visit and the panel was informed about the annual Research Day at the college where faculty from different disciplines presented updates on current research projects. DBS publishes its own scholarly journal, featuring research by both staff and students.

The panel welcomed the initiatives, now in their early stage of implementation, being undertaken by DBS in relation to supporting scholarly activities. The panel noted, for instance, that students are actively encouraged to engage in joint projects with staff which may then be published in DBS or other peer-reviewed journals and welcomed this development.

The panel found that there is an emerging research culture within DBS. This culture needs to be developed so that synergies can arise between staff CPD and faculty and student research.

It is recommended that DBS further develop the research strategy in order to create a synergy between CPD, staff scholarly activities and student research.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 (7.13d).
		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.
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A tour of the physical facilities in the Aungier St and Castle House Campuses was undertaken by the panel. The on-going development and upgrading of common meeting and study areas throughout the campus to facilitate group work and peer study support was acknowledged.

The panel found that the library uses technology effectively to support learners and staff, including access to an assignment planner, Kindle lending facilities, a Registrar of Scholarly Activity as well as a user-friendly search engine to enable ease of search for books and academic journals. It was noted that specialist library staff are employed to assist students to develop their research capabilities. The library is engaged in publishing the DBS journals for the School of Arts and the School of Business and Law featuring peer-reviewed research by both staff and students. This initiative is in line with a core pillar of DBS's strategy on achieving academic excellence.

The panel considered that the information technology facilities were of a high standard, with mobile laboratories available to students throughout the campus, providing ease of access to library and MOODLE resources. The panel noted that the information technology support services had been integrated with other student services making it easier for students to avail of this service on an on-going basis.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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.

The panel noted that the Student Handbooks and website contained relevant information in relation to the supports and services available to students. Use was made of noticeboards to provide up-to-date information throughout the campus.

Students and the graduate with whom the panel met confirmed that support services are well publicised. information technology skills were provided and this service is integrated with other student services, making it very accessible for students.

The panel was advised that DBS uses a number of mechanisms to develop and implement supports for students including:

- Learner surveys
- Peer Mentoring Support (with training provided for mentors)
- Student representation on the Academic Board and Board of Studies
- Support for, and engagement with, an elected Student Union
- Student services for:
 - Accommodation
 - Counselling and referral services, including specific contact with the provider of mental health for young people, *Jigsaw*
 - Sports and societies, with many student-led events
 - Entertainment
 - Study and meeting spaces within the campus.

The panel concluded that the staff with responsibility for support services were proactive in responding to student feedback for improvements in facilities which was undertaken on a continuous basis.

The panel was informed of the state of uncertainty and ambiguity around upcoming state regulation and accreditation in the area of counselling and psychotherapy and the difficulty this caused in providing clarity to students around accreditation requirements, registration and awards standards. Both senior management and teaching staff were monitoring developments in this area and provided oral briefings to learners on developments on an informal basis, the panel was informed by staff and learners.

In discussion with students and a graduate at the site visit, there was evidence that learners had not been given clear information in relation to issues related to professional body accreditation requirements, forthcoming statutory registration (CORU) and clear awards standards.

It is recommended that transparency is captured in the form of appropriate written material being developed to inform learners in relation to accreditation requirements, CORU registration and clear awards standards.

7.9 Criterion 9: There are sound teaching and learning strategies

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
		b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
		c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).
		d) Learning is monitored/supervised.
		e) Individualised guidance, support ¹⁷ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.
		f)

The panel noted that there was a clear structure for the coordination of the programme with specific responsibility assigned to staff in a coordination role. It was clear that staff were well qualified (See Criterion 6) and brought a wide variety of theoretical, practical and specialised knowledge to the programme, particularly in the area of supervision, which is a key component of the programme.

What was less clear to the panel was any 'anchoring philosophy' or pedagogy and delivering the programme among the large cohort of staff, many of whom are part-time.

The panel found that there was a mismatch between the documentation and the subsequent discussion with teaching staff regarding pedagogy and they concluded that the pedagogy was not clear and explicit.

It is recommended that, as the teaching team develops, that they make their teaching and learning strategy and pedagogy more explicit.

In discussion with teaching staff at the site visit, the panel learned that there was an inconsistent use of MOODLE by staff, some of whom were not conversant with all its features and capabilities. The panel noted that DBS had put in place a post to support staff in relation to the effective and consistent use of MOODLE and welcomed this initiative in response to a stated need.

7.10 Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards ¹⁸
		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. ¹⁹
		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. ²⁰
		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. ²¹

Despite the challenges, the panel were made very aware of the students' and graduates' commitment to finishing the journey, on which they placed a high personal and professional value.

Given the high credit load and workload, the panel noted that it would be important that DBS ensure that prospective students be made aware of this and consider the capacity of learners to maintain work-life balance.

In conversation with learners the panel found that academic assignments central to the programme were clear and well-thought out assessments were tailored to what was being assessed. It was noted that staff were responsive to specific queries on assignments and assessments, both in class and on MOODLE, with clear and constructive feedback provided in a timely manner.

The panel noted that the generic grading system used for assessment does not take sufficient account of the intended learning outcomes.

It is recommended that DBS review the assessment strategy with a view to evaluating the nature and effectiveness of assessment, with use of assignment-specific marking rubrics, bearing in mind the intended learning outcomes.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 ²² .
		i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i> ²³ 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

²² 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).

²³ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

		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).

7.12

The panel noted that the Student Handbooks and website contained relevant information in relation to the supports and services available to students. Use was made of notice boards to provide up-to-date information throughout the campus.

Students and the graduate with whom the panel met confirmed that support services are well publicised. information technology skills were provided and this service is integrated with other student services, making it very accessible for students. They made particularly positive comments on the responsiveness of staff to queries or problems arising in relation to their studies and to the effective system of class representatives that provided an effective dialogue mechanism between students and the college.

The panel commends DBS on the culture of care and responsiveness generated that is enjoyed by the students.

The panel noted from the Programme Review document that no formal appeals or complaints were lodged by students in the period under review. In discussion with staff the panel was informed that learners are systematically provided with feedback on their performance and that this practice is an integral part of the programme. The students and graduate met confirmed that this was the case. This constant dialogue means that any issues arising are dealt with as early as possible at the local level with lecturers and supervisors, the panel concluded. The students and graduate further confirmed that they were aware of how to make a complaint or an appeal and that this information was widely disseminated throughout the college.

7.13 Criterion 12: The programme is well managed

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
		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 ²⁴ 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.

The panel was 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 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.

Programme-specific quality assurance also comply with the guidelines laid down by IAHIP in relation to clinical training, governance, quality assurance, assessment, access, transfer and progression. Mandatory workshops are provided on DBS's Child Protection Policy and on Clinical Induction, prior to taking up client practice. Learners must sign a declaration that they have read and understood DBS Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants. See also Section 3.8 of this report.

8 Overall recommendation to DBS

8.1 Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy

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 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); ²⁵
	Not satisfactory.

8.2 Reasons²⁶ for the overall recommendation

The panel was satisfied that the criteria have been met.

8.3 Summary of recommendations

1. It is recommended that the MIPLOS are more explicitly stated to incorporate the transferable skills that the programme teaches.
2. It is recommended that DBS should select the closest comparable programme for which intended programme learning outcomes are available.
3. It is recommended that DBS generate a programme-specific RPL process and criteria.
4. It is recommended that DBS develop an explicit integrating principle to scaffold the curriculum.
5. It is recommended that DBS further develop the research strategy in order to create a synergy between CPD, staff scholarly activities and student research.
6. It is recommended that transparency is captured in the form of appropriate written material being developed to inform learners in relation to accreditation requirements, CORU registration and clear awards standards.
7. It is recommended that, as the teaching team develops, that they make their teaching and learning strategy and pedagogy more explicit.
8. It is recommended that DBS review the assessment strategy with a view to evaluating the nature and effectiveness of assessment, with use of assignment-specific marking rubrics, bearing in mind the intended learning outcomes

8.4 Summary of commendations

The panel commends DBS on the culture of care and responsiveness generated that is enjoyed by the students.

9 Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson:

Date: 27th May 2019

Donna Bell

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Bell". The letter 'D' is large and stylized, followed by a period and the name "Bell".

9.1 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.

Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School											
Programme Title		Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy											
Award Title		Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy											
Stage Exit Award Title³		N/A											
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):		Part-time											
Teaching and learning modalities		Lectures, workshops, group work											
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					
Honours	8	6	Award	8	6	60	2019	0313					
Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	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 %
Counselling and Psychotherapy Skills I	1 and 2	M	8	5	125	36		89		60		40	
Stress Response I	1 and 2	M	8	5	125	36		89		100			
Process Group	1-4	M	8	5	72			Subjective (not quantifiable)				100	
Traditions of Psychotherapy	1	M	8	5	125	18		107		100			

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.

Theories of Development	1	M	8	5	125	18		107		100			
Psychoanalysis	1	M	8	5	125	18		107		100			
Group Psychotherapy	2	M	8	5	125	18		107		100			
The Family and Psychotherapy	4	M	8	5	125	18		107		100			
Counselling and Psychotherapy Skills II	3 and 4	M	8	5	125	36		89		60		40	
Stress Response II	3 and 4	M	8	5	125	36		89		40		60	
Psychopathology and Case Histories	3	M	8	5	125	18		107		100			
Research Methods and Minor Dissertation	3 and 4	M	8	5	125	24		101		100			
Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)													
<i>Counselling and Psychotherapy Skills I and II, Stress Response I and II and Process Group:</i> learners are required to pass each component individually of each assessment in these modules.													
Learners must engage in their own psychotherapy weekly for the duration of the programme.													

10 Appendix 2: Agenda

**School of Arts
Programmatic Review**

MA in Psychotherapy

H Dip in Counselling and Psychotherapy

Location: DBS Aungier Street building, Room AS1.2

Agenda

17th April 2019

Time	Activity
9.00 - 10.15am	Private Meeting of Panel
10:15 - 11.00am	Dialogue on Learning Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model of Provision• Resourcing of proposed programme provision• Staffing of the proposed programme provision
11.00 – 11:30am	Tea/Coffee Break and Private Meeting of Panel
11:30 – 12.45pm	Standards and Participation in the Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal approval process• Access and admission requirements for the programmes• Structure, aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programmes• Curriculum design and content• Assessment
12.45 - 13.30pm	Lunch and Private Meeting of Panel
13:30 – 14:15pm	Meet with Students and Graduates
14:15 – 15.45pm	Tea/ Coffee Break and Private meeting of Panel
15.45 – 16.00pm	Preliminary Oral Feedback to DBS Senior Staff