

Independent Programme Review Report

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

Principal programme	Title	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy
	Award	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy
	Credit	90 ECTS
	Duration¹ <i>(years, months, weeks)</i>	Part-time, 2 semesters of 12 weeks each completed each academic year across 2 years (4 semesters in total)

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1 Introduction

The scope of the review encompassed the MA in Psychotherapy, a programme 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 Perused

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 programme provides 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, professional bodies, regulatory agencies, faculty, current reports by government agencies on labour force requirements, as well as a competitor analysis of similar programmes. The results and conclusions of this review process informed the proposed changes to the programme which are outlined in this report.

DBS provided the panel with a self-evaluation reports for the programme (hereafter referred to as Programme Review Report) 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 Agenda

See Appendix 2.

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

MA in 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 MA in Psychotherapy programme aims to create and foster a learning environment that produces learners who are theoretically well informed about the field of psychotherapy, skilled in the techniques of humanistic and psychodynamic psychotherapy combined in accordance with the integrative model and practised to the highest ethical standards at Level 9 on the NFQ.

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 Master of Arts in Psychotherapy is aimed at graduates of a Level 8 programme in counselling and psychotherapy or equivalent who wish to engage in supervised client practice to become a qualified psychotherapist. Overall, the programme is aimed at those who wish to acquire a postgraduate qualification in the practice of psychotherapy. The programme introduces learners to the core theoretical and practical elements of the discipline and brings them to the point of sufficient knowledge, know-how and skills and competence to match those of a graduate of award Level 9. Thus, it will enable learners to graduate with a relevant qualification suited to a broad range of career and professional development options and progress on the path towards becoming a professional working in this field. A process of selection takes place prior to admission to the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy 2-year programme.

To be considered for admission to the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy 2-year programme applicants are required to:

- Hold a minimum of a second-class honours (2.2) Counselling and Psychotherapy qualification or an equivalent qualification in a cognate area from a recognised third level institution, or
- Be a graduate of any non-cognate discipline and hold a qualification in a conversion-style programmes such as the DBS Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy (wherein they have passed all requirements at honours level, including oral examination of professional suitability), or
- Hold an equivalent qualification in the field of Humanistic, Integrative and Psychodynamic study and training, or
- Have equivalent professional qualifications.
- Have an IELTS score of a minimum of 6.5 or equivalent, where full-time study has been conducted in a language other than English or whose first language is not English.
- Undergo an interview with two members of staff, who are usually core trainers or supervisors on the MA programme.
- Provide two references from practitioners in the field of psychotherapy testifying to the candidates' suitability for supervised client work.

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.

- Enrolment analysis

The number of learners registered on the MA is strong but dipped in 2016 as 4 that were expected to progress decided to take a year out for various reasons, 1 of which returned for 2017 intake. The panel was advised that the current uncertainty in relation to regulatory requirements and accreditation is causing some uncertainty around choices prospective students have to take without having all necessary information to hand.

- Attrition, transfer, progression and completion by stage

Retention rates over the past 4 years indicated a strong retention rate from 1st year with an average rate of 88% retention in 2016/2017. Given the nature of the course, the panel noted that drop-out and deferment rates are to be expected, but noted the efforts of the DBS team is providing necessary support or advice on the best course of action for the students and rates are considered to be favourable.

- Analysis of grades and QQI award classifications

The data presented in terms of academic ability and award classification highlights how learners show themselves to be highly motivated and very capable. The most significant data above came in 2015/16 with a unique cohort of learners, 7 of which attained First Class Honours.

Overall, 78% of graduates from the programme have graduated with a H2, and 20% of graduates have graduated with a H1. By academic year, the percentage of learners graduating from the programme with a H2 ranges from 53% in the 2014/15 academic year to 100% in the 2017/18 academic year. The percentage of learners graduating with a First ranges from 0% in the 2017/18 academic year to 41% in the 2014/15 academic year. Over the previous 4 academic years there has only been 2 Pass awards in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic year. The panel was informed DBS are currently planning to review their grading systems as they had identified that they may be marking too much in the middle. The intention is to provide a

learning lab for staff on the effective use of mapping grades and feedback to the grading matrix. The panel welcomed this approach.

- Graduate destinations

Graduates of the programme may progress into practice as a psychotherapist on completion of the course when their pre-accreditation with the accrediting body has been completed. Some graduates go on to further study at PhD level. Others obtained employment in a variety of roles, including roles in the Learner Counsellor Department at UCD and TCD, in the health and social care area and in the voluntary and community sector.

- 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 programmes so that a more comprehensive data gathering and analysis can be undertaken. See Section 7.3 of this report. Overall, the percentage of learners who pass each programme year exceeds the DBS benchmark of 85% with the exception of second year in the 2017/18 academic year.

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 Sections 7.7;7.8 and 7.9 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 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 Section 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 Section 7.12 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 MA in Psychotherapy. Students must meet go through a selection process prior to admission on the course. Students must engage as well as verify that they have been in their own personal therapy for the duration of the programme. They must engage in group as well as personal Clinical Supervision. It is essential that learners engage with supervisors in the assessment of experiential and practical modules. This is done through the mechanism of the Feedback and Professional Suitable Interview process. On completion of the first two years' of the 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 programme were generally effective.

3.9 Proposed Modifications

An overview of the proposed modifications to the programme is set out below. Detailed action plans have been prepared to implement the revised programme from September 2019.

- Amalgamation of Modules

It is proposed to amalgamate the modules *Individual Supervision* and *Supervised Clinical Practice*. This was prompted by a close examination of the ECTS and their reflection of effort hours. Learners are required to achieve 200 hours of clinical practice experience. This practice cannot occur without continuous fortnightly individual supervision amounting to 40 hours over the two years of the programme. These two components were inextricably linked so there was good reason to amalgamate them into one 10 ECT credit module.

- Assessment Changes

Some minor reduction to assessment workload have been proposed to allow greater focus on the experiential process and independent research of key literature by learners but also to provide more scope for teachers to be more innovative in their assessment strategies.

- Focus on the experience of Psychotherapy

The programme team propose that to continue to support a learner's endeavour to engage with a reputable and recognised practitioner for the full duration of the programme. It is also a requirement of IAHIP and other professional bodies.

- Professional Body Membership Eligibility

Learners on the current programme are eligible to apply for student membership of the professional body the Irish Association for Humanistic Integrative Psychotherapy. Graduates are eligible to apply for Pre-Accredited Membership.

4 Evaluation of the Modified Programme

4.1 Report

See Appendix 1.

5 Outcome of the Review

5.1 Summary

As a result of the programmatic review process, nine 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	Master of Arts Psychotherapy
	Award	Master of Arts Psychotherapy
	Credit	90 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 Psychotherapy ICP College, Tallaght, Dublin
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	August 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	2, September and January	

Principal programme	Title	Master of Arts Psychotherapy
	Award	Master of Arts Psychotherapy
	Credit	90 ECTS
	Duration² <i>(years, months, weeks)</i>	Part-time, 2 semesters of 12 weeks each completed each academic year across 2 years (4 semesters in total)
	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 Psychotherapy ICP College, Tallaght, Dublin
Eileen Prendiville	Employer Representative	Private Practitioner, psychotherapist, Director of Academic Affairs, Children's Therapy Centre.

Master of Arts in Psychotherapy

Names of Centres Where the Programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners	Minimum number of learners
DBS Dublin Campus	60	7
Target learner groups	<p>The Master of Arts in Psychotherapy programme is aimed at graduates of a Level 8 NFQ accredited programme sympathetic to the Humanistic and Integrative tradition. An applicant for the MA must also have a recommendation from a practitioner closely familiar with the applicant's study and experience recommending that the applicant is suitable for the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy programme and for supervised client work in particular. Consideration is given to clinicians from other traditions of psychotherapeutic and psychological work as long as they also have the required minimum experience of personal psychotherapy, process group work and skills training as well as formally recognised academic study in the field of psychotherapy.</p> <p>Suitable candidates should be able to demonstrate significant life experience, self-awareness and maturity. Learners on the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy programme are required to have entered their own psychotherapy before commencement of the programme. This will have been a requirement of the required prior learning qualification indicated above. Prior learning qualifications should also have included a minimum of 60 hours process group work.</p> <p>Ideally candidates also have experience either professionally or on a voluntary basis in a role which can be</p>	

	related to the work of counselling/psychotherapy. Candidates are expected to be able to show evidence of having the personal qualities necessary to undertake psychotherapy training. To this end there is an interview process as part of the admissions procedure in order to assess academic and personal suitability.
Number of learners per intake	60 max, 7 min
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 Master of Arts in Psychotherapy award consists of: experiential training groups, personal development through the experience of psychotherapy and process groups and supervised clinical practice. These components are represented throughout the modules over the two years of the MA programme.</p> <p>The orientation of the programme is humanistic, psychodynamic and from an integrative model, and learners are introduced to the principles of existential psychotherapy, Gestalt therapy, the body in psychotherapy and so on. The programme is centred around the learners' supervised clinical practice, skills training and continued personal development, and also provides them with experience of psychotherapy through both group and individual settings. The programme includes the required experiential skills, personal development and theoretical components which means it is recognised by the Irish Association for Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP).</p> <p>The programme is constructed as the final two years of a professional four-year postgraduate training in psychotherapy in combination with the Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy part-time programme. The Master of Arts in Psychotherapy is a thorough clinical and theoretical education in the field. It has a strong research component. It is designed for learners interested in pursuing careers in a counselling and psychotherapy practice in diverse settings both in private practice and employment. It is designed for learners interested in developing research skills appropriate to the field of counselling and psychotherapy in order for them to support their own professional development and</p>

	<p>contribute significantly to the development of the field nationally and internationally.</p> <p>The Master of Arts in Psychotherapy programme serves to produce graduates who are employable in mental health and social care settings as well as being in a position to establish and build up a private practice. The components of the programme deliver this aim. The clinical skills components of the programme (the theory and practice modules and the clinical supervision modules) are crucial to the robustness of the programme. It is the premise of the design and rationale of the programme that these components would not be possible to learn without the requirement to be in personal psychotherapy, the modules in personal development and self-care (process group) alongside the academic modules of the programme. This combination of modules is vital to the robustness of the programme.</p>
Specifications for teaching staff	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Masters or equivalent in Counselling and Psychotherapy. They should also have teaching, training, supervising or research experience within the counselling and psychotherapy field but also specific to the modality being taught. Staff should have considerable practical / clinical experience in mutually supporting theory and practice-learning opportunities for learning.
Specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	<p>1:30 Classroom Sessions</p> <p>1:12 Process</p> <p>1:15 Skills classes</p> <p>1:4 Supervision Group</p>
WTE	0:062

Other noteworthy features of the application

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

7.1 Criterion 1: 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 QQI's <i>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 MA in 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, 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 was actively engaged in forums with professional and statutory bodies concerned 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 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.

The panel noted that one of the criteria for entry requirements stated that 'Ideally candidates also have experience either professionally or on a voluntary basis in a role which can be related to the work of counselling/psychotherapy'. The panel considered that this was not sufficiently clear and may not address professional body requirements for future accreditation. 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 programmes have obtained employment as therapists in the health and social care areas. Some had begun the process of accreditation and towards private practice in the profession. They also indicated that many of the skills learned were transferable to a range of occupations.

It was noted that graduates of the MA Psychotherapy may progress to further study in DBS in the MA programmes psychoanalytic psychotherapy and addiction studies.

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 MA in Psychotherapy programme had been reviewed against the QQI Counselling and Psychotherapy Award Standards. The programme is a supervised practice-based training programme in humanistic and psychodynamic psychotherapy in the integrative model.

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 an 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, the panel concluded.

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

The panel also found that the students and graduate 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, self-awareness and self-regulation around stress, for instance.

The panel noted that the documentation provided in relation to clinical practice on placements does not adequately align with QQI standards, particularly QQI standards in relation to safe practice (controlled practice with volunteers under supervision) and professional practice (with volunteers). This point was discussed with teaching staff, including those with responsibility for clinical placements and clinical supervision and the panel concluded that the application of these standards in relation to safe practice was not clear.

It is recommended that DBS develop a suite of documents, both for students and placement partners, that would set out suitable clinical practice for Levels, 7, 8 and 9, in accordance with QQI standards.

The availability of the Higher Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy, after two years of study was considered to be an effective mechanism for the management of the question of suitability for continued clinical practice in the MA programme for those students wishing to progress to this programme, and provided students who are unable or do not wish to continue with further study with an appropriate award. The panel noted that the Higher Diploma is a separate award in its own right.

The programme is accredited by IAHIP which ensures that the hours accrued during this training contribute towards the student's accreditation. Each learner will still have to present to IAHIP once they complete the pre-accreditation hours required post-graduation.

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 (7.12c).
		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 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 by 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 (7.12d).
		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.

An overview of the support services available to students is outlined in **Section 7.11** of this report. 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.

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. The panel was informed by staff and learners that senior management and teaching staff were monitoring developments in this area and provided oral briefings to learners on developments on an informal basis.

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 professional body accreditation requirements, forthcoming statutory registration (CORU) 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.

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 suitably 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

The panel was advised that all assessment for the programmes conforms to the DBS Assessment Regulations which are informed by QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013.

The panel noted that in conversation with students and the graduate that there is a high work load on the programme and that they are having difficulty in achieving any kind of work life balance as a result. Despite the challenges it was clear that there is a 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. The panel noted, for instance, that there was a significant increase in the workload for the MA course in the proposed programme, which is to be expected since the ECTS rises from 30-45 and that incoming students be made of this increased demand.

In conversation with the students and graduate the panel found that assessments were clear and well-thought out and 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.

With more hours devoted to client work and supervision in the 3rd and 4th years, as is appropriate, the panel noted that the generic grading system used for assessment does take sufficient account of the practice and reflective elements of the work and the intended learning outcomes that are to the fore in this part of the programme.

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 learners and enable such learners to

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)

		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).

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.

7.12 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

MA in 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.

8.1 Reasons²⁶ for the overall recommendation

The panel was satisfied that the criteria have been met.

8.2 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 develop a suite of documents, both for students and placement partners, that would set out suitable clinical practice for Levels, 7, 8 and 9, in accordance with QQI standards.
6. 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. 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.
8. It is recommended that, as the teaching team develops, that they make their teaching and learning strategy and pedagogy more explicit.
9. 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

8.1 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: Donna Bell

Date: 23rd May 2019

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Bell". The letter "D" is large and stylized, with a loop at the top. The name "Bell" is written in a cursive-like script.

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 schedule

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School							
Programme Title	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy							
Award Title	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy							
Stage Exit Award Title³	N/A							
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Part-time							
Teaching and learning modalities	As per module descriptors							
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	9	7	Award	9	7	90	2019	0313

Module Title (Up to 70 characters)	Semester no where applicable.	Module	Credit Number	Total Student Effort Module (hours)	Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)
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including spaces)	(Semester 1 or Semester2)	Status	NFQ Level where specified	Credit Units	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Supervised Clinical Practice	1-4	M	9	10	250	200		10	40			100	
Clinical Group Supervision	1-4	M	9	5	60	60				60		40	
Process Group	1-2	M	9	5	60	60						100	
Theory and Practice 1: Psychodynamic Psychotherapy	1	M	9	5	125	18		107		60		40	
Theory and Practice 2: Integrative Psychotherapy	2	M	9	5	125	18		107		60		40	
Theory and Practice 3: Object Relations	3	M	9	5	125	18		107		60		40	
Theory and Practice 4: Integrative Psychotherapy	4	M	9	5	125	18		107		60		40	

Gestalt Therapy	1 and 2	M	9	5	125	24		101		100		
Existential Psychotherapy	1 and 2	M	9	5	125	22		103		100		
Ethics and Contemporary Issues	4	M	9	5	125	18		107		100		
The Body in Psychotherapy	1	M	9	5	125	18		107		100		
Psychotherapy and the Public Sphere	2	M	9	5	125	18		107		100		
Workshops	3 and 4	M	9	5	125	24		101		100		
Self, Subject, Person	3	M	9	5	125	18		107		100		
Research Project	Sem2 in year1 Linear in year2	M	9	15	375	50		325		100		

Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)

Special Regulation 1: For the modules Clinical Group Supervision, Theory and Practise 1, 2, 3 and 4, special regulations apply in that it is required that a learner pass each component of assessment.

Special Regulation 2: Learners on the MA will verify with written documentation that they have been in their own personal psychotherapy weekly with a reputable and recognised practitioner for the duration of the programme. The same applies to fortnightly individual supervision.

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

