

**QQI**Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	28 th April 2022
Date of report	17 th May 2022

Section A. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	MSc in Health Psychology
	Award	Master of Science
	Credit	90 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to conditions set.

Embedded programme 1	Title	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology
	Award	Postgraduate Diploma in Science
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to conditions set.

Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr Annie Doona	Chair	Independent consultant and former President of IADT
Dr Claire Donnellan	Subject Matter Expert & Industry Representative Role on the panel	Assistant Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College, Dublin
Dr Gavin Breslin	Subject Matter Expert	Senior Lecturer and Research Director, School of Psychology, Ulster University
Mary Jennings	Report Writer	Independent Consultant
Evelyn Flynn	Learner Representative	Final year medical student RCSI Dublin

Section C. MSc in Health Psychology

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)
DBS Campus, Dublin	100	100

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	September 2022	1-year, full time	2	5	50
Part-Time	September 2022	2 years, part-time	2	5	50
Intake Schedule e.g., January September		September, January			

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:
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Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)
The programme comprises 90 ECTS credits and can be completed in one academic year by full-time learners and two academic years by part-time learners. The overall aim of the programme is to provide learners with the theoretical background and practical skills to apply their psychological knowledge efficiently and productively to effect positive change in the world in the pursuit of health promotion and illness prevention. The programme covers a wide range of specialist topics that provide learners with the knowledge of theories and concepts relating to the contribution of

psychological processes to health and illness and helps them understand how this knowledge can be applied in a variety of contemporary settings at individual, community and global levels.

Learners will explore human behaviour from individual, social and biological perspectives and through a detailed understanding of the discipline, both theoretically and methodologically, will be enabled to assess appropriate interventions and design appropriate solutions for health-related needs. Modules focus on the applied nature of professional and ethical issues and advanced research methods, while others have a specific focus upon the application of theory to the 'real world', allowing learners to further develop and apply competencies and knowledge in Health Psychology. Finally, the programme offers a choice of elective capstone pathways (30 ECTS) that provides an opportunity for independent placement or research and the production of a placement project or research dissertation. Learners who complete the full programme will therefore also develop and enhance their research capability through critical enquiry and detailed analytical problem solving from a solution-focussed "real-world" perspective.

Throughout this programme, learners will develop discipline specific knowledge and as well as transversal skills in communication, teamwork, leadership and digital literacy. This makes graduates appropriate to progress into further postgraduate study either in Psychology in a range of specialisms, or to progress into the workplace in a range of cognate and non-cognate roles.

There is an embedded exit award, Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology, for learners who do not progress to complete the capstone project but who have successfully completed all other modules.

Target learner groups

The Master of Science in Health Psychology is aimed at graduates of a Level 8 programme in Psychology such as a BA (Hons) in Psychology who wish to engage in further study in this field, or who hope to enter careers in Health Psychology related roles such as Clinical Health Psychologist, Public Health Advocate, Wellness Specialist, Health Researcher, or Educator. Applicants are required to hold a minimum of an upper Second-Class Honours degree in Psychology from a recognised University/College course, which confers eligibility for PSI membership or equivalent professional body in the case of overseas applicants.

Since the aim of this proposed programme is to provide learners with an insight into the field of Health Psychology, thus the learners are equipped with the competencies and skills to understand individual, organisational, social and cultural influences on behaviour in health-related settings. They will be relating theory to practical applications in terms of health promotion. Additionally, the programme encourages initiative and originality in research and learners make a significant contribution to their knowledge of Psychology in developing competency to carry out research in their chosen area. Upon completion of the programme learners are therefore able to competently investigate contemporary local and global issues in the area of health promotion or the prevention of illness and design solutions to match. More specifically, the programme prepares learners who are intending to pursue a career in which the skills and competencies developed within the programme are necessary or beneficial. As such, the programme provides preparatory training for those intending to apply for other more specialised postgraduate professional courses in Psychology by bringing them to the point of sufficient knowledge, know-how and skills and competence to match those of a graduate of award Level 9 through introduction to the advanced theoretical elements of Health Psychology. In doing so, the programme also enhances opportunities for learners to enter or progress their careers in a variety of professions in the public and private sectors through the development of evidence-based skills in specific methodological, statistical, measurement and other empirical techniques required by industry.

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

The teaching and learning methodologies		
Methodology / Learning Activity	Description	Staff to Learner Ratio e.g., 1:12
Lecture classroom-based sessions	Face to face on site lecture-led classroom-based sessions	1:50
Workshops	Face to face on site workshops	1:25
Practical lab sessions	Practical on-site lab computer lab sessions	1:35
Online class (broadcast live)	Online class (broadcast live - non interactive transmission)	1:50
Online tutorial (interactive)	Online class (broadcast live - interactive such as Zoom)	1:25
Asynchronous	On demand content	n/a

Staff Role Profiles: Qualifications and Experience		
Role e.g., Lecturer, Mentor, Librarian	Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)	No. (WTEs¹) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile
Lecturer	Faculty delivering this programme will have a minimum of a Level 9 Master's Degree or PhD in Psychology or a relevant discipline. Additionally, experienced practitioners within the fields of, for example, addiction and rehabilitation, and those with research supervision experience from both quantitative and qualitative approaches are required to deliver the programme. They will have relevant academic and industry knowledge and experience in a range of pertinent fields related to Health Psychology.	5 full-time lecturers and 2 part-time lecturers. This programme can be delivered through current faculty.

¹ WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a full-time person fully dedicated to the programme. 0.5 indicates a part-time person available to this programme half of the time.

	<p>Holders of Level 8 honours Bachelor's degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, will also be considered.</p>	
Administration and Support Staff	<p>Such as Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to the role.</p>	0.64
Academic Director	<p>The Academic Director for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 10 qualification in Psychology or a related area along with programme management/ academic leadership experience.</p>	0.1
Subject Leader	<p>The Subject Leader for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 10 qualification in Psychology along with programme management/and subject area expertise.</p>	0.5

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

See conditions set by the panel under Criterion 6

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	N/A (Exit Award)
Maximum number of annual intakes	N/A (Exit Award)
Maximum total number of learners per intake	N/A (Exit Award)
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	One year full time (12 months; 2 semesters of 12 weeks each) or two years part time (18 months; 3 semesters of 12 weeks each)

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:		
Target learner groups		
The target group for the Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psych programme is as above in the principal programme. However, this award is available for those who wish to capture the value of their learning experience in a named award but cannot complete the research component of this programme. Learners who choose this exit award option will not be enrolled separately to the Master of Science in Health Psychology programme.		
Approved countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and part-time	
The teaching and learning modalities		
Depending on the module at hand, the modalities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom / Face to Face (lectures, workshops, and practical lab-based work) • Workplace work placements (for Placement Capstone only) • Online (tutorials, lectures, delivered live) • Asynchronous (online content available on demand) 		
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 Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology (60 ECTS, NFQ Level 9) is an embedded exit award from the Master of Science in Health Psychology (90 ECTS, NFQ Level 9). The programme shares the 60 ECTS taught component of this programme and is offered to learners who do not progress to, or wish to complete, the research component of the full Masters programme.</p> <p>The Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology can be completed in one academic year by full-time learners and eighteen months by part-time learners. The overall aim of the programme is to provide graduates with the opportunity to attain a Level 9 award if they cannot complete the research component of this programme for personal or professional reasons. Therefore, the Postgraduate in Science in Health Psychology (60 ECTS, NFQ Level 9) is offered only as an exit award from the Masters programme.</p>		
Summary of specifications for teaching staff		WTE
Role e.g., Lecturer, Mentor, Librarian	Profile (Qualifications and Experience expected)	No. (WTEs²) of Staff on the programme with this role and profile
Lecturer	Faculty delivering this programme will have a minimum of a Level 9 Master's Degree or PhD in Psychology or a relevant discipline. Additionally, experienced practitioners within the fields of, for example, addiction and rehabilitation, and those with research supervision experience from both	5 full-time lecturers and 2 part-time lecturers. This programme can be delivered through current faculty.

² WTE is the whole-time equivalent number. The number 1 indicates a full-time person fully dedicated to the programme. 0.5 indicates a part-time person available to this programme half of the time.

	<p>quantitative and qualitative approaches are required to deliver the programme. They will have relevant academic and industry knowledge and experience in a range of pertinent fields related to Health Psychology.</p> <p>Holders of Level 8 honours Bachelor's degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, will also be considered.</p>	
Administration and Support Staff	Such as Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to the role.	0.64
Academic Director	The Academic Director for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 10 qualification in Psychology or a related area along with programme management/ academic leadership experience.	0.1
Subject Leader	The Subject Leader for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 10 qualification in Psychology along with programme management/and subject area expertise.	0.5

The teaching and learning methodologies		
Methodology / Learning Activity	Description	Staff to Learner Ratio e.g., 1:12
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Online tutorial (interactive)	Online class (broadcast live - interactive such as Zoom)	1:25
Asynchronous	On demand content	n/a
<p>Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing: See conditions set by the panel under Criterion 6</p>		

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

<p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.³</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

As an established provider of higher education programmes DBS has met the prerequisites to apply for validation of this programme. It was noted that DBS has in place procedures for access, transfer and progression. DBS has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI.

DBS provided the panel with 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).

³ This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

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

<p>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</p> <p>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</p> <p>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</p> <p>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</p> <p>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</p> <p>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</p> <p>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</p>		
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Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

The panel found that the aims, objectives and rationale for the programme were clearly expressed. It was noted that the Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology will be available to learners who have successfully completed the taught modules of the MSc in Health Psychology but are not progressing to do the Capstone Project necessary to be awarded the MSc.

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

The panel noted that in the module on Global Health, MIMLO 5.5 states that the objective is to 'Critically evaluate key factors that may affect the organisation and implementation of effective

⁴ Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

⁵ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

health inequality protests.’ The panel considered that this was not sufficiently clear and made the following recommendation in relation to the wording as set out below.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider changing or removing the word ‘protests’ in MIMLO 5.5.

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)

<p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(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.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(iv) There is evidence⁷ of learner demand for the programme.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁸.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁹</p> <p>c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.</p>
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Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that the programme concept and implementation strategy, together with its interpretation of the QQI award are well informed and soundly based.

The panel was advised that DBS has undertaken extensive consultation with a range of external and internal stakeholders in relation to the development of the proposed programme.

⁶ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

⁷ This might be predictive or indirect.

⁸ It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

⁹ There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

The programme team indicated that there was a long-term plan within DBS to have a stand-alone MSc in Health Psychology, building on DBS's existing MSc in Applied Psychology. The latter programme has two main strands in Health Psychology and Organisational Psychology. It was stated that, in focus groups with learners and graduates of its undergraduate psychology programmes, the option of having a programme dealing specifically with Health Psychology was strongly favoured. The proposed multi-modal structure of the proposed programme, with the option of undertaking study part-time was also welcomed by those consulted.

Further research with comparative programmes pointed to the potential to offer a distinctive programme with the addition of specific modules such as Survivorship, an area in which DBS has specific expertise among faculty staff, and a research placement option for the Capstone project as well as a dissertation option.

Consultation has taken place with a range of potential employers, including the HSE, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Amazon, the Irish Prison Service as well as community drug rehabilitation and prevention organisations. Feedback from the health sector, backed up by ongoing government policy in the health area, suggests that the need for practitioners in Health Psychology will grow in the coming years. It was stated that, within the health sector, there is an increasing emphasis on behaviour change through prevention, health promotion as well as treatment interventions.

At the review session, the programme team outlined the potential employment opportunities for graduates in both the health care sector itself as well as in private industry. The panel noted that this was less clearly stated in the programme document reviewed. The panel is not fully confident that potential applicants may be sufficiently aware of the diversity of employment opportunities open to them on completion of the programme and made the following recommendation:

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS outlines all potential employment opportunities available for qualified Health Psychologists more explicitly in the programme document.

The panel was informed that DBS has a specific Industry Advisory Board for Human and Social Sciences, drawn from a broad range of organisations, including the health sector itself, as well as private companies, that are proactively concerned with the general health and well-being of employees. The Board provides input and advice on programme development, including the current programme under review, suggestions on guest lecturers and advises on emerging areas for research or inclusion in the programme. It was stated that the Board is supportive of the proposed programme and considered that there would be opportunities for graduates with this qualification.

It was noted that DBS intend to apply to the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) for accreditation of the programme and that, in the design of the programme, account had been taken of its specific requirements in relation to Health Psychology. See Criterion 4 and 6 for further comment on this.

Commendation

The panel commends DBS for its industry links and networks, including the DBS Industry Advisory Board for Human and Social Sciences.

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

<p>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 satisfied¹⁰.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 (CEFR¹¹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

The panel is generally satisfied that the arrangements for the programme's access, transfer and progression are in place.

As noted in Criterion 3 above, it is DBS's intention to ensure that graduates of the proposed programme will be eligible to apply PSI Health Psychology Division membership. Accreditation by the PSI would most likely require that the proposed programme be led from the start by a registered/chartered Health Psychologist. If this is not the case, graduates of the proposed

¹⁰ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

¹¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

programme may not meet the stringent requirements of the professional body and their study/career progression may be affected. See Criterion 6 for further comment and condition set.

It was stated that it is mandatory for learners to pass every module in order to graduate. It was stated the cohort of learners who do not pass the modules taken in semesters 1 & 2 may continue to progress work on their Capstone project. This is generally completed in semester 3. There is not a pre-requisite for learners to have passed the two taught modules in qualitative and quantitative research before embarking on the formal research project, the panel was told. Learners may repeat any modules which they have not passed in July/August as required.

In further discussion, the programme team indicated that it was felt that, in general, learners at this level would have sufficient knowledge and skill to undertake the research project, even if they had not successfully completed the taught research modules. The panel considered that it would be advisable for DBS to review the policy on progression from taught elements to the Capstone project to ensure that there is full clarity for faculty, learners and external examiners.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that there is clarity around the policy on progression from the taught elements of the course to the dissertation.

Criterion 5. The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹².</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>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</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that the programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose.

As noted in Criterion 3 above, DBS indicated that there was a long-term plan to have a stand-alone MSc in Health Psychology, building on DBS’s existing MSc in Applied Psychology. The Health Psychology programme will share modules with the Applied Psychology programme (30ECTS) as part of the proposed curriculum for the stand-alone programme.

There are additional modules (30ECTS) developed specifically for the proposed programme, that include Survivorship, Public and Community Health and Personal Development and Stress Management. The panel was informed that the expertise to deliver these novel modules is available within the programme team.

¹² This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

¹³ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

It was stated that the emphasis and approach to the curriculum was on bringing psychology to life, applying theory to real life situations as well as ensuring that core skills such as research methods were embedded in the programme.

The final component of the MSc is a Capstone Project (30 ECTS). Learners have the option of a research placement or a dissertation. See Criterion 8 for further comment on this area.

In discussion with the teaching team, it was evident that there is a high level of enthusiasm and commitment for delivery of the modules in the programme. The panel considered that there may also be an opportunity to have a greater degree of shared learning to avoid duplication and unnecessary overlap between modules. This may be achieved through collective module team meetings between teaching staff and module leaders. For instance, the topic of rehabilitation straddles the module on Survivorship and Addiction and Rehabilitation and there is considerable cross-over between the topics of Global Health and Public and Community Health. Regular communication would also provide an opportunity to ensure that emerging topics in Health Psychology, such as healthcare worker stress, are included as appropriate. The panel made the following recommendation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that there is effective communication between faculty to avoid duplication of content across modules; to identify opportunities for shared learning and the inclusion of new developments, e.g., healthcare worker stress.

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

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹⁴ (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 development¹⁵ opportunities¹⁶.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Partially	See conditions set in relation to this criterion below.
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Partially	See condition set in relation to this criterion below.

The panel has set two conditions in relation to this criterion which need to be addressed as indicated below.

The panel was informed that, at present, there is not a designated Course Leader/Director who is a registered/chartered Health Psychologist with either the PSI or the British Psychological Society (BPS). The panel considered that this was a critical issue which would need to be addressed prior to the commencement of the course. It was noted in Criterion 3 above that it is DBS’s intention to ensure that graduates of the proposed programme will be eligible to apply for membership of the

¹⁴ Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme’s provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

¹⁵ Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

¹⁶ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff’s professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

PSI's Health Psychology division. It is the considered view of the panel that, unless a registered/chartered Health Psychologist is in place at the commencement of the programme, this could jeopardise the prospect of graduates' registration as the programme would not have met one of PSI's requirements.

The panel also considered that it is best practice that a Health Psychologist lead the ongoing development of the programme, since this area of psychology was the sole focus of the proposed programme.

The panel set the following condition:

Condition

It is a condition that, prior to the commencement of this programme, the Course Leader/Director must be a registered/chartered Health Psychologist.

In discussion with the programme team, it was stated that, as far as possible, DBS ensures that learners have a supervisor with expertise that matches their area of research interest when undertaking their Capstone Project. It was stated that, generally, every such supervisor has a qualification to Master's level, but that this was not always the case. The panel is not satisfied with this situation and is of the view that all project supervisors must have at least a Master's degree. The panel set the following condition:

Condition

It is a condition that research project supervisors have a minimum qualification at Master's level.

It was noted that DBS stated there are currently faculty members who may be eligible to apply for registration with PSI or BPS as chartered/registered Health Psychologists given that many faculty members already have experience in teaching and researching the topic. It was stated that this is an area that DBS intend to focus on through its discipline-related CPD initiatives for staff in the coming years. The panel recommended that a process for eligible staff to apply for accreditation as Health Psychologists be prioritised in the imminent future.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider a formal strategy for professional Health Psychology accreditation to enhance the programme and staff development.

The panel was informed that DBS is transitioning to be an institution with more of a focus on applied research. A Practice Research Coordinator had been appointed to support this strategy for the college as a whole. A full Research Strategy was due to be published in 2023.

It was stated that research support is available to faculty in the human and social sciences section of DBS and many were active in research and publication. As a private institution, DBS has less access to funds than publicly funded colleges. Nevertheless, DBS was looking at other avenues, including collaborating with other institutions and industry, as a way to support research opportunities for academics. The panel welcomes this development.

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

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 <p>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).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planned intake (first five years) and (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

This criterion has been satisfactorily met.

The panel was informed that DBS had sufficient resources in place to undertake the proposed programme. Facilities available include 12 laboratories, 400 mobile labs and sufficient licences for Zoom to provide online delivery as appropriate. The panel was informed that there is a laboratory technician on hand to support learners to use the equipment and available software effectively when conducting their own research; this includes how to conduct interviews online as necessary to meet any public health guidelines.

The panel was also informed that DBS has in place a dedicated AV studio which produces on-demand, asynchronous material for learners. Training has been provided to lectures and tutors to become more skilled in these delivery methods, with assistance provided by specialist script writers and designers to assist them.

The library has sufficient online resources, including two data bases which make up to 25,000 psychology-related academic articles available to learners. The panel indicated that, as the proposed programme had a specific focus on Health Psychology, it would be important to ensure that core journals on the topic were in place from the beginning. The panel stressed the importance of ensuring that all reading lists were regularly reviewed to ensure they reflected contemporary research.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS considers the timely acquisition of core journals that are specific to Health Psychology before the programme commences. This is in addition to the programme reading lists which should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are current and reflect contemporary research.

The panel noted that some reading lists were not in the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider that all reading lists are in the appropriate APA referencing style.

Criterion 8. The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme’s learners

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that, in general, the learning environment is consistent with the needs of the learners.

It was stated that in DBS there is a culture of open communication between lectures, tutors, supervisors and professional and support staff and learners. This is the case whether that was in relation to timely feedback on assignments, requests for reschedule of assignments, or flexible support for the well-being of learners. It was further stated that this would be part of the overall approach to the proposed programme.

A particular feature of the proposed programme that was discussed at the session was the research placement option, Capstone 1. This involves learners undertaking a placement in a setting relevant to Health Psychology, undertaking assigned tasks within the organisation, as well as conducting a research project. It was stated that the learner develops their own specific research proposal on a theme that interests them and that this is agreed in advance with DBS and the organisation.

While DBS, through its own well-developed network of organisations, provides assistance with identifying a placement, it is up to the learner to secure it for themselves, the panel was informed. It is anticipated that a large cohort will choose this option as it provides valuable work experience as well as a research opportunity.

A dedicated Capstone Coordinator is in place for the proposed programme. The role is to liaise between DBS, the learner and the organisation offering the placement to ensure that it goes smoothly. The Coordinator is the first port-of-call for any difficulties that may arise on either side.

DBS has developed guidelines for the learner and the organisation offering the placement on what to expect and how to deal with any issues that may arise. This covers issues such as health and safety for instance as well as other matters, such as what to expect in a clinical setting as this may be challenging for some learners. The learner has an onsite supervisor during placement as well as a research supervisor.

There are also guidelines for the learner on conducting a research project as part of the overall teaching and learning strategy.

The panel is not completely satisfied that there are clear procedures in place to follow if some issues arise on placement that may affect the capacity of the learner to complete the placement research project. For instance, it was not clear that if a placement breaks down for whatever reason, or, if it proves difficult to collect sufficient data for the project, that the learner has the option to choose a research dissertation (Capstone 2) with sufficient time allocated to complete this option should the need arise. The panel made the following recommendation in this regard.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that all stakeholders are clear on the procedures to follow in relation to potential issues that may occur on placements.

The panel is not fully satisfied that the weightings for the ECTS are clearly visible across all the documentation provided. It considered that this would be important information for learners to have easy access to prior to the commencement of their studies and to understand the student effort hours required for each assignment. This information to be available across all programme information platforms, including the modules descriptors and the Student Handbook.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that the weightings of ECTS are clearly visible in all documentation, e.g., Student Handbook, module descriptors.

See also Criterion 9 for further comment on the selection of research projects by learners.

Criterion 9. There are sound teaching and learning strategies

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁷ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

In general, the panel is satisfied that there are sound teaching and learning strategies in place for the proposed programme.

The issue of research topics chosen by learners for either the Capstone 1 (research placement) or Capstone 2 (dissertation) modules was discussed with the team at the review session. It was noted that learners are encouraged to choose their own research topic. Once the topic had been approved, including ensuring ethical research standards have been met, DBS would, as far as possible, facilitate the learner to undertake the chosen topic by providing an appropriate supervisor (See Criterion 6 above), laboratory facilities to conduct research and on-going support from staff as required.

As noted in Criterion 6 above, DBS is moving towards more of a focus on applied research, seeking a range of opportunities for faculty members to undertake and build research themes and projects. The intention is to source funding and collaborative research partners. The panel suggested that one such collaborative option that may benefit both academic staff and learners is if DBS considered directing learners to specific research themes for their Capstone projects that are developed and of interest to faculty members. This would be in addition to the option for learners to choose their own research topic independently.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider directing learners to specific research themes in line with Faculty interests and priorities as well as allowing them to choose their own topic.

¹⁷ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Criterion 10. There are sound assessment strategies

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i>¹⁸</p> <p>b) The programme’s assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>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</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>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</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

In general, the panel is satisfied that there are sound assessments strategies in place.

In discussion with the programme team at the review, the panel is not satisfied that there is sufficient clarity on the balance of different assessment methods used in the research placement (Capstone 1) and the dissertation (Capstone 2) modules. It was noted, for instance, that there are key differences between the two in that the research placement has an element of assessment related to the performance on placement (20%), while the dissertation has a specific *viva voce* requirement. The word counts for the final documents were also different (10,000 words for Capstone 1 and 12,000 for Capstone 2). The panel recommends that the rationale for the differences is more clearly stated and that there is clear evidence of an equitable balance between the options in terms of the learner effort required and the skills and knowledge being assessed.

¹⁸ See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁹ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

²⁰ The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

²¹ If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS give consideration to ensuring that there is an equitable balance in terms of learner effort hours, word counts and skills assessed across the research placement (Capstone 1) and the dissertation (Capstone 2) modules.

The panel noted that there were inconsistencies in word counts and weightings assigned to different assessment across different modules and that, in the interests of fairness and equity, that this be reviewed for the proposed programme. It was noted, for instance, there were different formats for how case studies were to be formatted and presented by learners in different modules. The panel considered that this might be potentially confusing for learners and would benefit from a review. See also Criterion 5 for further comment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider equity across all modules with particular reference to:

- a. word counts for assessments**
- b. assessment formats and weightings e.g., case studies and presentations**

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

<p>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.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²².</p> <p>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 successfully participate in the programme.</p> <p>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).</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

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

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)

- Sports and societies, with many student-led events
- Entertainment
- Study and meeting spaces within the campus

The panel was informed that, as a private college, DBS does not qualify for Government student support services for people with disabilities, although this is under review. A recent example involving a learner who needed the support of a Personal Assistant to attend a programme in DBS was refused funding for the service. The person then successfully lobbied for funding and is now attending the college. DBS stated that it is hoped that this case will set a precedent for other learners with a disability to get the necessary support to attend DBS programmes.

The panel was informed that DBS operates on the principle of providing fair and equal opportunity to each learner. Where possible, DBS employs universal learning and design practices which provides learners with greater opportunity to participate in all teaching and learning modalities as well as in the social life of the college.

Any learner with special needs has the opportunity meet with members of the Student Services team to discuss their specific needs and every effort is made to accommodate them.

It was stated that the team meets on a weekly basis to review all touchpoints with learners on its disability register to ensure that the correct provision is in place at all times.

It was noted that there is a confidential external service to support learners experiencing mental health issues.

There are services to advise learners about potential employment opportunities and assistance with preparation of CVs and for interview.

The panel noted that much of the information outlined during the review session about the student services described, particularly about disability support services, was not easily found in the DBS handbook or on their website. DBS indicated that there was further information available in the Quality Assurance section of the website while acknowledging that this might not be the first port-of-call for prospective learners.

The panel recommended that this valuable information be made more readily available and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS highlight the range of student support services available in the programme documentation, student handbook and DBS website.

The panel noted the extent and depth of the student support services available within the college and commends DBS for its approach.

Commendation

The panel commends DBS for its comprehensive range of student support services.

Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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-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 assurance²⁴ is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria. f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI’s statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved. g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable. h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification. 		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
MSc in Health Psychology	Yes	
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology	Yes	

The panel were satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review. The Quality Assurance Handbook (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.

²⁴ See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 MSc in Health Psychology:

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The criteria have been met subject to conditions set.

Commendations

1. The panel commends DBS for its industry links and networks, including the DBS Industry Advisory Board for Human and Social Sciences.
2. The panel commends DBS for its comprehensive range of student support services.

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

1. It is a condition that, prior to the commencement of this programme. the Course Leader/Director must be a registered/chartered Health Psychologist.
2. It is a condition that research project supervisors have a minimum qualification at Master's level.

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology:

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. The criteria have been met, subject to condition set.

Commendations

1. The panel commends DBS for its industry links and networks, including the DBS Industry Advisory Board for Human and Social Sciences.
2. The panel commends DBS for its comprehensive range of student support services.

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)

1. It is a condition that, prior to the commencement of this programme. the Course Leader/Director must be a registered/chartered Health Psychologist.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. It is a condition that, prior to the commencement of this programme. the Course Leader/Director must be a registered/chartered Health Psychologist.
2. It is a condition that research project supervisors have a minimum qualification at Master's level.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

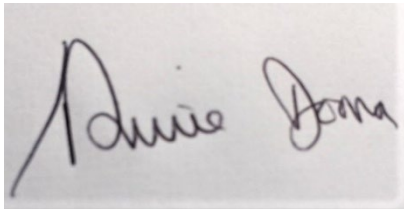
1. It is recommended that DBS consider changing or removing the word 'protests' in MIMLO 5.5.
2. **It is recommended that DBS outlines all potential employment opportunities available for qualified Health Psychologists more explicitly in the programme document.**
3. It is recommended that DBS ensure that there is clarity around the policy on progression from the taught elements of the course to the dissertation.
4. It is recommended that DBS ensure that there is effective communication between faculty to avoid duplication of content across modules; to identify opportunities for shared learning and the inclusion of new developments, e.g., healthcare worker stress.
5. It is recommended that DBS consider a formal strategy for professional Health Psychology accreditation to enhance the programme and staff development.
6. It is recommended that DBS considers timely acquisition of core journals that are specific to Health Psychology before the programme commences. This is in addition to the programme reading lists which should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are current and reflect contemporary research.
7. It is recommended that DBS consider that all reading lists are in the appropriate APA format.
8. It is recommended that DBS ensure that all stakeholders are clear on the procedures to follow in relation to potential issues that may occur on placements.
9. It is recommended that DBS ensure that the weightings of ECTS are clearly visible in all documentation, e.g., Student Handbook, module descriptors
10. It is recommended that DBS consider directing learners to specific research themes in line with Faculty interests and priorities as well as allowing them to choose their own topic.
11. It is recommended that DBS give consideration to ensuring that there is an equitable balance in terms of learner effort hours, word counts and skills assessed across the research placement (Capstone 1) and the dissertation (Capstone 2) modules.
12. It is recommended that DBS consider equity across all modules with particular reference to:
 - a. word counts for assessments
 - b. assessment formats and weightings e.g., case studies and presentations
13. It is recommended that DBS highlight the range of student support services available in the programme documentation, student handbook and DBS website.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Dr Annie Doona

Date: 16th May 2022

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Annie Doona".

Signed:

3.2 Disclaimer

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

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

Part 4. Proposed programme schedules *(post panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)*