

**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

<b>Provider name</b>	Dublin Business School
<b>Date of site visit</b>	24 May 2021
<b>Date of report</b>	5 August 2021 (final report), 4 June 2021 (draft report)

## Section A. Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2021 draft report: Higher Diploma in Science in User Experience Design 5 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 final report: Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience
	<b>Award</b>	Higher Diploma in Science
	<b>Credit</b>	60
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> August final report: Satisfactory

<b>Embedded programme 1</b>	<b>Title</b>	
	<b>Award</b>	
	<b>Credit</b>	
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Not applicable

## Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr. Marion Palmer	Chair	Formerly IADT Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Dr. Marcus Hanratty	Subject Matter Expert	National College of Art & Design (NCAD)
Mr. Sam Cogan	Subject Matter Expert	National College of Ireland
Mr. Henry Poskitt	Industry Representative	FrontEnd.com Design Agency
Ms. Laura Devlin	Report Writer	Formerly with IADT
Mr. Viet Ho	Learner Representative	MSc Digital Innovation programme, UCD

## Section C. Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)
Dublin Business School	300	300

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Full-Time</b>	29 Aug 2021	12	3	5	300
<b>Part-Time</b>	29 Aug 2021	18	3	5	300
<b>Intake Schedule</b>					

### Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The panel noted the wide variance in enrolment numbers would prove difficult to adequately support students in self-directed studies at the higher end of the scale. The provider referred to the requirements of the QQI programme template in relation to presentation of the numbers. If required, additional staff resources will be recruited and lab capacity in DBS has the ability to facilitate numbers at the upper end of the scale. The declared teaching ratio will be maintained.

**Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)**

**Original ACS and Title: (draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021)**

**Higher Diploma in Science in User Experience Design**

Semester 1:

Digital Content and Storytelling	5 credits
Psychology in User Experience	10 credits
User Research Design	10 credits
Introduction to Universal Design	5 credits

Semester 2:

Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics	10 credits
User Experience Analysis	10 credits
Digital Portfolio	10 credits

**Final, approved ACS and Title: (final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021)**

**Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience**

Semester 1:

Introduction to User-Centred Design	5 credits	(new module)
Psychology in User Experience Design	10 credits	
User Research and Design Requirements	10 credits	
Introduction to Universal Design	5 credits	

Semester 2:

UX and UI Design	10 credits	(new module)
User Testing and Analytics	10 credits	(new module)
Portfolio	10 credits	

The Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience (new title) is a one year (60 credits) Level 8 programme on the National Framework of Qualifications. The programme is delivered full time over two semesters of 12 weeks each, with 30 credits attached to each semester. The programme can be accessed part time over two years and three semesters of 12 weeks each, with 20 credits attached to each semester. The programme will be delivered using blended learning modes.

This is a conversion programme. Students will acquire foundation knowledge of the discipline area.

Semester 1 focuses on an introduction students to the discipline area; Introduction to User-Centred Design (new module, replacing Digital Content and Storytelling), Psychology in User Experience Design, User Research and Design Requirements and Introduction to Universal Design.

Semester 2 focuses on students developing the essential skills; UX and UI Design (new module, replacing Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics), User Testing and Analytics (new module, replacing User Experience Analysis) and Portfolio.

The programme will enable learners to acquire knowledge and skills in interaction design in order to apply these skills in a real-world context in the design and evaluation of interactive systems. Through discovering the user experience context and the industry-standard tools and specific project deliverables in design, learners will be able to apply their learning in personal and professional contexts. The programme has been designed for learners with non-cognate backgrounds and an interest in this area. Graduates will acquire skills in user experience design which will enable them to pursue future study and/or move into this area.

### Target learner groups

The target student cohort include applicants who wish to upskill or cross-skill, transfer to the discipline area or those who are currently unemployed. The provider has submitted an application for Springboard +, to better facilitate entry to the programme for the latter cohort.

Applicants must have a Level 8 award in a non cognate discipline, a Level 7 in a cognate discipline or apply through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

This programme will be of interest to non-technology graduates who wish to advance their careers by gaining skills and knowledge for a career in user experience design in order to play an active role in the digital marketing, visual communications design function of their organisation. It will also appeal to graduates who wish to acquire a user experience qualification for sustainability in their career.

Students will, upon completion of this programme, be able to enter the user experience design sector and hold a general or expanded role in the visual communications design function of their organisation.

### Approved countries for provision

Ireland

### Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time

Full Time one year, Part Time over 18 months

### The teaching and learning modalities

1. Directed Learning
2. E-learning (directed)
3. E-learning (self-directed)
4. Group Discussions
5. Group Discussions/Interactions
6. Lectures / Classes
7. Practical Sessions
8. Practical/workshop/Laboratories/studio sessions

9. Self Directed Learning

10. Tutorials

11. Webinars

**Summary of specifications for teaching staff**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>WTE</b>
Course Director	The Course Director for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate	0.01
Lecturer	Staff delivering this programme will hold a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma	6 PT 2 FT
Administration and Support	Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to the award	0.64

<b>Learning Activity</b>	<b>Ratio of learners to teaching staff</b>
Lecture classroom-based sessions	1:75
Online class (broadcast live)	1:75
Online tutorial (interactive)	1:25
Practical lab sessions	1:35
Workshops	1:25

**Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:**

The panel is satisfied that sufficient and appropriately qualified staff is in place for the delivery of the programme, and the provider has the capacity to recruit additional staff with subject matter expertise if required.

The panel noted the programme would benefit from a staff member with a commercial background in UX design, Interaction Design or Digital Product design. Business requirements are often the biggest drivers of UX projects over and above technical and end user requirements. Task and Business analysis are core skills.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
N/A	Not applicable	N/A

**Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application**

Not applicable

**Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision**

**(where applicable).** Having examined appropriate QA / Governance procedures, comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme. (Especially relevant for move to online delivery / assessment)

Not applicable.

## 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.<sup>1</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
<p><b>Final approved title</b> Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience</p>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme, under section 44(7) of the 2012 Act. The provider has documented quality assurance procedures in place for the delivery of programmes of education and training. Procedures for access, transfer and progression are included in the submitted programme document.</p> <p>Other documents submitted with the application include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A covering letter signed by the Registrar, declaring that DBS meets the prerequisites for programme validation, as laid out under Section 3 of the QQI document Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training.</li> <li>• Protection for enrolled learners' document, outlining arrangements between DBS and Kaplan Inc., the Guarantor of its PEL arrangement, signed by the Director.</li> <li>• The Deed of Guarantee pursuant to Section 65 of the Education and Training Act 2012.</li> <li>• Programme document</li> <li>• Student Handbook</li> <li>• Module and Assessment document</li> <li>• SER Report</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning Strategy</li> <li>• Staff CVs</li> </ul> <p>The panel are satisfied the programme meets Criterion 1.</p>

<sup>1</sup>This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

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

- a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
- b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
  - (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
- c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
- d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.
- e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
- f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
  - (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
  - (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
- g) For each programme and embedded programme
  - (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.<sup>2</sup>
  - (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
- h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
- i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.

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

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5 August 2021</u></p> <p>The panel is satisfied their stated concerns in the draft report have been addressed in the updated programme documentation. The title of the programme has been changed to a Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience (IUX). While the panel find this acceptable, they are of the opinion a more appropriate title could be Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design. The new programme structure matches the focus on interaction design.</p> <p>The revised programme document is re-focused with a subsequent clearer alignment and mapping to Award standards. The revised programme meets the NFQ and the Science Awards standards more clearly and the inclusion of the Computing awards standards is welcome.</p> <p>The programme learning outcomes have been revised and are more suitable for a NFQ Level 8 programme as are the updated module learning outcomes.</p> <p>The panel is now satisfied the programme meets Criterion 2.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

<sup>3</sup> 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.



		<p><u>Draft report 4 June 2021</u></p> <p>The panel have serious concerns in relation to the rationale for a Science award. This issue was explored in detail with the programme team during the online panel visit. The programme team outlined their rationale for a Science award. A mapping exercise was carried out and consultation took place between the provider and the UX Design Institute in developing the programme. The interdisciplinary analytical and technical skills students would acquire were highlighted to the panel.</p> <p>Ultimately the panel was not convinced of the rationale for a Science award, did not see it articulated clearly in the programme document and did not see the programme content align with a Science award.</p> <p>The number of Marketing modules on the course schedule was noted. The panel noted the UX industry has developed into a very skill specific discipline over the years, with design experts working within medical and scientific disciplines for example. The panel acknowledge the value of the proposed programme, which makes a compelling argument for a blended offering of Business/Marketing and Technology, but not with a Science award.</p> <p>It is the opinion of the panel that the award for the programme does not satisfy QQI's criteria 2 and 3 for the validation of programmes.</p> <p>Another area of concern for the panel is the title of the programme. The title over promises on the skill base students could expect to graduate with from the programme. The panel noted the focus on Business and Marketing in the programme and did not see the rationale for the inclusion of UX Design in the title.</p> <p>The panel are of the opinion that career opportunities would be at entry level, as a junior analyst or marketing associate for example, as opposed to a product designer. There was scant evidence of any core requisite implementation skills for UX design, such as journey analysis, task analysis, wire framing, criteria base review, user product design, and user centred design. The programme content has an emphasis on theory as opposed to practical application. Overall the module content did not convince the panel that the title was merited under QQI's criteria 2, 3 and 5 for the validation of programmes.</p> <p>The panel noted the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are not consistently aligned with QQI awards standards at level 8. The programme is a foundation conversation course and some of the verb descriptors for the programme learning outcomes are more appropriate for level 6, and not for level 8.</p>
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**Criterion 3. The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)**

- a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.<sup>4</sup>
- 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<sup>5</sup> of learner demand for the programme.
  - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>6</sup>.
  - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>7</sup>
- 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.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u></p> <p>The panel are satisfied the new programme structure matches the focus on interaction design. The breath and relevance of theoretical content is now more aligned to the core domains in the UX and Interaction Design fields than the original submission.</p> <p>Aspects of applied UX practice are still lacking from the programme specification, however given the programme duration, award level and the context of delivery with non-cognate learners, this can be deemed acceptable in a foundational course.</p> <p>The panel is now satisfied the programme meets Criterion 3.</p>

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

<sup>6</sup> It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

		<p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u></p> <p>The panel is of the opinion that the provider partially meets this criterion.</p> <p>The programme development process and consultation with stakeholders and industry professionals is outlined in Section 3 of the programme document. The development of the programme was informed by diverse industry reports, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UX Design Institute publications, 2020</li> <li>• National Skills Strategy 2025 27th January 2016</li> <li>• Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders consulted with include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James O’Brien has over 10 years’ experience building and managing UX teams</li> <li>• Giles Colborne founder of digital agency, cpartners and a renowned UX author and speaker</li> <li>• John O’Brien, leading expert in the field</li> <li>• The Industry Advisory Board</li> </ul> <p>The provider worked with the User Experience Design Institute to explore opportunities as an industry collaborator on the programme. A desk top review was carried out and testimonials are included in the programme document.</p> <p>In relation to the interpretation of awards standards the panel view is that the aims, objectives and learning outcomes on the programme do not align with the industry standards required for level 8 graduates who wish to find employment as UX designers. The level of knowledge, breadth and competence students will acquire on this programme will provide limited opportunities to enter the UX design industry, for example at ground level as a product manager, not as a designer.</p> <p>The rationale for the programme is cited in section 3.1 of the programme document. There is evidence of growing industry demand for UX design expertise, this is a rapidly expanding industry and graduates are in high demand both in Ireland and abroad. However the panel have a concern that overall the focus of the proposed programme is on peripherals around UX design – storytelling for example. The panel are of the opinion that a conversion programme will not deliver for students the level 8 skill set demanded by industry standards.</p> <p>The programme learning MIPOs were compared against higher diploma Springboard programmes in two Irish universities, a higher diploma in an Irish IT, and a four year BSc Honours degree in a university in the UK.</p>
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#### Criterion 4. The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

- a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied<sup>8</sup>.
- 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<sup>9</sup>) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
- d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
- e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
- f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-
  - (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
  - (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
  - (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
- g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u> In relation to Panel Recommendation #2: The team will provide more comprehensive details of careers and further study options in the marketing materials for the programme. A sample document containing updated information on the programme for inclusion on the college website was provided with the team's response. The panel is now satisfied the programme meets Criterion 4.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u> The panel is satisfied that the provider partially meets this criterion. Access, transfer and progression are detailed in section 4 of the programme document.</p>

<sup>8</sup> 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

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf) (accessed 26/09/2015)

		<p>During discussion, the panel voiced concern that applicants from diverse employment backgrounds, with varying skill levels, may be confused about what the programme offers and what kind of employment graduates can reasonably expect to find.</p> <p>The programme team outlined their strategy for supporting new applicants. An interview may be scheduled if required, to talk informally to applicants about any issues.</p> <p>A sizable cohort of applicants will have a level 8 award and enter the programme with critical learning skills already in place.</p> <p>Entry criteria for the programme are well defined. Non-standard applicants can apply through the Recognition of Prior Learning process.</p> <p>Pastoral care is well managed by the Academic Operations and Student Services team. A dedicated co-ordinator and librarian help to manage student expectations. Learner data analytics are mapped, and an early warning system is in place to identify any problems at an early stage.</p> <p>As discussed under Criterion 2, the panel are of the opinion that the title of the proposed programme does not reflect the core intended programme learning outcomes, consistent with QQI standards.</p>
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### Criterion 5. The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

- a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
- b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
- c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
- d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.
- e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles<sup>10</sup>.
- 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.<sup>11</sup>

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u></p> <p>In relation to Panel Recommendations #3 and #5: The revised programme documentation demonstrates significant changes which largely address the panel's original concerns. The increase in skills based modules is welcome.</p> <p>Module descriptors have been revised. With the addition of new modules and the revision of retained modules, these amendments will better support the stated programme title and programme aims. The course content is now more aligned to the field of UX and Interaction Design. The revised schedule is:</p> <p>Semester 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to User-Centred Design (new module) 5 credits</li> <li>• Psychology in User Experience Design 10 credits</li> <li>• User Research and Design Requirement 10 credits</li> <li>• Introduction to Universal Design 5 credits</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

		<p>Semester 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UX and UI Design (new module) 10 credits</li> <li>• User Testing and Analytics (new module) 10 credits</li> <li>• Portfolio 10 credits</li> </ul> <p>As stated previously under Criterion 3, given the programme duration, award level and the context of delivery with non-cognate learners, the content can be deemed acceptable in a foundational course.</p> <p>The panel is now satisfied the programme meets Criterion 5.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u></p> <p>The panel is of the opinion that overall the curriculum is clear and the modules are well outlined. The programme and module documentation outline the objectives and purpose of each element and the reasoning for inclusion in the programme.</p> <p>The rationale for the programme is well constructed in terms of defining industry needs, but the preponderance of digital marketing content is a concern as is the lack of core design skills.</p> <p>In the view of the panel, the curriculum modules will provide a foundation level understanding of UX, as referred to previously, but will not provide the skills and competencies to meet industry standard expectations.</p> <p>Panel commentary on the modules, where relevant, is listed below:</p> <p><u>Digital Content and Storytelling</u></p> <p>The rationale for the Storytelling module at the start of semester 1 is to support the new learner in developing the relevant skills. The fundamentals are addressed in the class and case studies are developed and reviewed from a professional point of view.</p> <p>Industry experts are invited as guest lecturers. Students begin to implement their own ideas in writing, photos and video to create a commercial brief.</p> <p><u>Panel feedback</u></p> <p>The panel noted Storytelling might be better applied in the context of telling someone else's story (to generate empathy, a key UX skill), or aligning more closely with the Design Research module.</p> <p>This module is also on the course schedule of the provider's Digital Marketing programme. For the proposed programme, additional content creation could be considered.</p> <p><u>Psychology in User Experience</u></p> <p>This module investigates the principles of user experience design, to enable the learner acquire a deeper level of understanding. The idea is to examine GDPR and legal ethics, using a privacy-by-design principle, particularly in the level of cookies.</p>
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	<p><u>Panel feedback</u> The students should be able to conduct heuristic evaluation and usability testing of existing interfaces, but these are not specified. A 3000 word report is perhaps light for 10 credits considering group submission.</p> <p><u>User Research Design</u> The module aims to provide a clear understanding of the persona, examine what features are required for specific tasks and how to formulate them. Qualitative and quantitative research is carried out, learners are encouraged to meet with people to discuss any concerns and get appropriate release forms.</p> <p><u>Panel feedback</u> The module structure is focused on the theoretical aspect of research, however the module outputs are more focused on implementing a design research process. This transition from research to defining stakeholder and user requirements is a core skill in UX.</p> <p><u>Introduction to Universal Design</u> This module investigates the heuristic, human factors of design. Learners take a scenario, a video game for example, and employ reverse engineering to identify weaknesses in the design. Students are kept motivated with forum discussions, small group activities and constant participation. The asynchronous session is directed at e-learning structured content.</p> <p><u>Panel feedback</u> This module provides a solid overview of a Universal design approach with good methodologies. However the assessment is based on research and evaluation of existing service and does not provide the student with an opportunity to design an application through the lens of Universal design.</p> <p><u>Digital Marketing Analytics and Metrics</u> This module is also on the course schedule of the provider's Digital Marketing programme. Web technology is always relevant to understand how people navigate online, and provides an insight from behind the scenes.</p> <p>Students will understand the metrics used in industry, create a website, and collect data connected to analytics. Once students understand this type of platform, they can develop a practical piece, for example a live blog or website. Applying their user design experience, learners can begin to understand how user interaction evolves, what entices a user to click through the opening page and continue browsing.</p> <p><u>Panel feedback</u> A robust sounding module in of itself, but it is the second module which falls under the banner of digital marketing. The relevance of such a sizable module is questioned, the programme could benefit from a module more focused on delivering core UX competencies.</p> <p><u>User Experience Analysis</u> This module provides the learner with the tools to practice ideation and prototyping.</p>
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		<p>The module provides a very structured design toolkit, with a focus on demonstration.</p> <p><u>Panel feedback.</u></p> <p>The title may cause confusion. Iterative design approaches are covered but key areas such as UI patterns and a user centred approach to design are absent from the content. Consider rewriting the assignment to provide clarity. Traditionally a project proposal could be initiated by secondary research and competitor analysis, or primary research with users, as opposed to self-generating research.</p> <p><u>Digital portfolio</u></p> <p>This module is an amalgamation of learning, where the student can demonstrate growth across the programme. Students may choose to create a product with a commercial element, than analyse the consumer journey through a particular scenario.</p> <p>A storyboard can be generated to allow students to lead their own development. The digital portfolio will be a calling card for students accessing the industry.</p> <p><u>Panel feedback</u></p> <p>The focus appears to specify the generation of a digital marketing report, to be hosted on a website as the main output. The language is weighted towards digital marketing as opposed to UX topics and approaches. How does it provide an opportunity for the learner to apply a UX approach, and translate those skills into the creation of a milestone project?</p> <p>A review of the mapping of the programme learning outcomes to the module outcomes would be of benefit. The panel noted the value of the module content, but had some difficulty in the mapping of MIMLOs.</p> <p>The inclusion of descriptors for each module learning outcome, as opposed to a numerical list, would facilitate easier referencing.</p> <p>There is discrepancy in student hours in the programme document and the module and assessment document. The schedule should be amended for clarification.</p>
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**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 staff<sup>12</sup> (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 development<sup>13</sup> opportunities<sup>14</sup>.</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
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5 August 2021</u></p> <p>Staff for the revised curriculum will be available as outlined by the provider. Page 65 of the amended programme document lists current staff, 2 new staff members and a plan to recruit a third new academic to deliver the modules. New hires from the subject area will be added to the complement of staff prior to commencement of the programme, along with any additional current DBS business faculty as required.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied the programme meets Criterion 6.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4 June 2021</u></p> <p>The panel is satisfied that overall the provider meets this criterion. The provider employs 300 staff.</p>

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

		<p>The staff profile for the programme demonstrates teaching and industry expertise in the domains of Business, Digital Marketing, Psychology and Technology. All lecturers have a minimum of level 9 qualifications.</p> <p>Some staff members on the programme run their own business in design or are practitioners as well as lecturers.</p> <p>The panel has some concerns around the delivery of UX design on the programme, to reflect industry level experience and expertise. The panel are of the view that the course would benefit from a staff member with a commercial background in UX design, Interaction Design or Digital Product design.</p> <p>During discussion, the panel were informed that the provider has the ability to recruit new staff, where these individuals are not already in place, to deliver subject matter expertise. The provider will work with a dedicated recruiting agency to recruit around these areas. The panel welcomed the on-boarding of new staff.</p> <p>New members of academic staff undergo an induction process which is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Manager, Course Director and the Academic Mentor with input from senior academic management.</p> <p>There are arrangements for monitoring the academic staff performance, including student feedback and class rep meetings. Staff engage in an annual performance review. Two learner reviews are conducted each year and the anonymised feedback is provided to lecturers.</p> <p>Regular meetings are held with class representatives and lecturer specific feedback is provided. Where specific issues need to be addressed with a lecturer, this will be done by the faculty manager in a performance management meeting</p> <p>All staff are expected to engage in continuous professional development.</p>
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**Criterion 7. There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned**

- a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).
- b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:
  - (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme’s learning environments including the workplace learning environment)
  - (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
  - (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
  - (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
  - (v) technical support
  - (vi) administrative support
  - (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable
- c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).
- d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
  - (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
  - (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.
- e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider meets this criterion.</p> <p>The provider operates from premises with a total of 70,000 square feet of space. There are 64 lecture rooms across 5 buildings, 12 IT laboratories and also mobile laboratories available. These resources will ensure intake numbers over a five year period can be facilitated.</p> <p>Students are required to have ongoing access to a computer and a reliable internet connection. There is no need for students to have dedicated software for the programme as this will be supplied by the provider. However, a minimum specification of equipment required would be of benefit to students, for example Sketch specific courses would require the use of a Mac by students.</p> <p>The team could consider a review of all systems, to ensure they run on Citrix. Future student cohorts may utilise specific packages that are not compatible with Citrix.</p> <p>Students will have a full online induction providing information on the college premises, IT supports and sessions on online learning.</p>

		<p>Where required, students will have remote access to all software. Students are provided with an individual log-on to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal college network</li> <li>• Temporary personal storage of 1GB</li> <li>• Moodle ( the college VLE)</li> <li>• Paper cut print system</li> <li>• MS Outlook 365, including cloud mail of 50 GB online storage, Office in the cloud (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote 43</li> <li>• 5 free copies of the latest Office for Windows, Mac and mobile devices</li> <li>• 1TB of OneDrive cloud storage</li> <li>• Messenger (instant chat) in the cloud</li> </ul> <p>With the advent of increased online learning, the panel emphasised the importance of students being clear on the use of licences. The provider does not have a VLE policy in place, this is currently under consideration.</p> <p>The main library is in Aungier Street. There is an extensive online library, which is accessible via the library website. The library is fully RFID enabled. The majority of library circulations are carried out on self-issuing stations, freeing up staff time to assist students with their more complex research enquiries. DBS Library is an institutional member of the Library Association of Ireland and of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK. In normal circumstances (outside of COVID 19 restrictions), the physical library is open 6 days a week.</p>
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**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>		
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u> In relation to Panel Recommendation #1: A minimum specification of equipment and devices for learners has been detailed and it has been confirmed that all software required will run on Citrix or Openstack (DBS's private cloud). The panel is satisfied the programme meets Criterion 8.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u> The panel is satisfied that the provider meets this criterion.</p> <p>There has been considerable investment and improvement in the physical, ICT and learner support service environments. A number of classroom layouts have been transformed, with additions such as two new café-style rooms to promote group work and upgraded ICT facilities. The library now has three private study rooms for group work and an enhanced learner support area. The online library is available 24/7 on and off campus.</p> <p>The provider established alternative modes of delivery in response to the pandemic. These enabled learners to continue to interact with peers and academic staff. Supports around online delivery continue to be enhanced by the IT department.</p> <p>From March 2020 to August 2020 a No Disadvantage Policy was put in place (approved through Academic Board) to ensure appropriate accommodations for any students affected by COVID-19.</p>

### 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, support<sup>15</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u></p> <p>In relation to Panel Recommendation #4: The information on e-learning has been expanded in the programme document and programme handbook. The programme schedule and the module headline information have also been amended for clarity.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u></p> <p>The provider's teaching and learning strategy was included in the documentation submitted. The teaching and learning strategy articulated in Appendix 8 is clear and well-developed. Teaching and learning strategies are also detailed in the module descriptors. Appendix 2 of the programme document outlines the provider's supports for learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>During discussion, clarification was sought by the panel on how e-learning was managed. The hours of student effort as outlined in the programme and module and assessments documents are confusing. The terms directed and synchronous learning have been conflated in the document. The programme team acknowledged a lack of clarity around e-learning in the programme document and the approved course schedule, and these will be amended.</p> <p>Asynchronous directed e-learning is counted as part of the student effort, with a value of 1 hour attached. Structured asynchronous learning allows the student more time to focus on the nuanced aims of what they are trying to achieve. Methodologies can be delivered in asynchronous mode. Asynchronous is tied to synchronous delivery. Directed e-learning provides a level of scaffolding under independent learning. Staff are open to the idea of providing informal Q and A sessions for students to clarify any issues around e-learning.</p>

<sup>15</sup> 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.

		A refinement of the module descriptors, to outline the good practice on the ground around e-learning as described to the panel, would demonstrate how the strategies tie to modules. In concluding the discussion, the panel encourage the team to keep the teaching and learning and the assessment strategy separate, and to make clear that e-learning is part of the independent study that a student is expected to do.
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**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><sup>16</sup></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.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written <b>programme assessment strategy</b> for the programme as a whole and</p> <p>f) there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>g) 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>h) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>i) 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.<sup>19</sup></p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Partially	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u></p> <p>In relation to Panel Recommendation #6: The team has detailed the formative assessment strategy for the programme and included this in the both the updated document and the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The formative assessment has been revised not only in the program document and T&amp;L strategy, but in the module and assessment document, which will provide the learner with insights on the ongoing feedback process.</p> <p>In relation to Panel Recommendation #7: DBS has recently convened a Working Group on Assessments, to review current practice and devise principles and guidelines.</p>

<sup>16</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>17</sup> This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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).



	<p>The aim is to ensure that faculty and learners are provided with a set of standards to ensure that assessment is occurring in a consistent and equitable manner. It is envisaged the output will be a number of templates relating to formative and summative assessments.</p> <p>The group will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a comparable list of appropriate assessment types at NFQ level</li> <li>• update the current marking policy</li> <li>• review the existing guide to grading criteria</li> <li>• clarify standards for feedback</li> </ul> <p>The panel is now satisfied Criterion 10 has been met.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u></p> <p>The panel was satisfied that overall the provider satisfied this criterion. The panel noted a lack of formative assessment strategy at programme level, while it is part of the teaching and learning strategy at module level. There is a reference to this (point 6 in the module document, page 13) but it does not indicate programme level. While continual assessment is positive, formative assessment is crucial as a student progresses.</p> <p>The provider outlined how formative assessment is facilitated through quizzes, audits, projects and presentations. Peer to peer learning takes place and feedback and guidance is given. In the programme document (section 5.6), there is a reference to formative assessment, but does not describe a strategy, rather it is a list of options.</p> <p>The information in the T&amp;L strategy, the programme document and the student handbook should be aligned. The panel noted that summative assessment was supplied for each module. The assessment selected was appropriate but the standard of the written assignments was variable. Many lack assessment criteria. A standard template for programme assignments would be useful.</p>
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**Criterion 11. Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for**

- a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.
- b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
- c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
- d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.
- e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.
- f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.
- g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.
- h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities<sup>20</sup>.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*<sup>21</sup> and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.
- j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p><u>Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u> In relation to Panel Recommendation #2: As already stated under Criterion 4, the Team will provide more comprehensive details of careers and further study options in the marketing materials for the programme. A sample document submitted to the Panel provides an example of information that is sent to the Marketing Department (post validation) for inclusion on the website.</p> <p><u>Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021</u> The panel is satisfied that this criterion is met, and commended the provider on the wide range of supports available for students.</p> <p>Student Welfare is located in the Student Services Hub and via Zoom during office hours. Support is imparted in an impartial and confidential manner, along with information regarding counselling options and free specific support services.</p>

<sup>20</sup> For more information on making reasonable accommodations see [www.AHEAD.ie](http://www.AHEAD.ie) and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

<sup>21</sup> See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

	<p>The provider has a student engagement and success unit (SESU) and a student experience team, to support the learners in their transition to third-level education.</p> <p>The student handbook provides clear, comprehensive information for students. Induction sessions provide information about supports students can access – financial, health, library, deferrals, reading and writing etc.</p> <p>Class representatives are trained by USI and NSTeP, and are members of the provider’s student council. This is an important part of the feedback loop to management.</p> <p>Surveys are carried out a number of times throughout the year, to glean feedback. Learner attendance is taken at every lecture and an ‘early warning’ system ensures that where a learner’s attendance falls short, counselling is available from the Course Director. Poster campaigns provide students with information on supports available.</p> <p>Two dashboards have been developed to look at the metrics each year. Instagram is a major forum for student communication. Moodle has also been a good indicator of student engagement and is used to create personalised targets.</p> <p>The dedicated team of four meet on a regular basis, supported by a dedicated librarian for the programme. The library delivers over one thousand hours of information sessions each year for students.</p> <p>There are step by step supports for students in preparation for employment opportunities. The Careers team meet with students in class to give guidance and advice. Workshops are run, covering interview skills and how to build a CV. One to one career advice sessions can also be facilitated. The award winning Careers office has been renamed the Careers Hub, and the dedicated team help coach students on their employment journey.</p> <p>Weekly podcasts keep students updated on developments. The provider is a member of AI Ireland, and has a number of communication channels to industry links. Students are encouraged to engage with societies in the college, to help build a profile. A number of themed weeks are organised for students as are a number of personal career development weeks.</p> <p>The student handbook contains information on career opportunities and further study options. Companies are invited in speak to students, providing networking opportunities.</p>
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**Criterion 12. The programme is well managed**

- a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider’s general or institutional procedures.
- b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.
- c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.
- d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.
- e) Quality assurance<sup>22</sup> 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
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider meets this criterion. The provider has established corporate governance and quality assurance procedures in place. The management structure for the programme is detailed in the programme document (page 85).</p> <p>The Academic Systems Manager (ASM) is responsible for the management of the Student Management System. The Academic Systems Team is responsible for ensuring that students are correctly registered and progressed and report regularly to ensure accuracy of data on the system. The ASM undertakes on-going review of the approved programmes in the Student Management System, with the QA Officer and Registrar’s Office.</p> <p>Programme Coordinators provide administrative support to learners and ensure all students are provided with full details of their programme of study. They are the first point of contact for learners on a range of issues such as programme queries, deferrals, personal mitigating circumstances (PMCs) that may affect their learning. Programme Coordinators are responsible for day-to-day management of student information and data.</p>

<sup>22</sup> See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

## Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

### 3.1 Principal programme: Higher Diploma in Science in User Experience Design

Select one	
<b>X</b>	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed ( <b>minor</b> ) 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

##### Final report 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021

The panel thanks DBS for the considerable work and effort in responding to the panel's concerns in the draft report. The core concerns of the panel – the programme title and the award standard - (Criteria 2 and 3) have been addressed, with the shift in focus to Interaction Design and the redesign of the programme.

1. The new programme title is a Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience (IUX). The panel view is that the title is acceptable; an example of a more appropriate option could be a Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design on its own.
2. The revised programme meets the NFQ and the Science Awards standards more clearly and the inclusion of the Computing awards standards is welcome. The panel now agrees that the programme aligns with the Science awards standards.

Overall the panel now considers the programme satisfactory and recommends to QQI that it be validated.

##### Draft report 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The panel is of the view that there are major concerns to be addressed by the provider prior to implementation of the programme. These are discussed in detail under criteria 1 – 12 of this report and relate specifically to the proposed Title of the programme and the Science award standard. The Title and Award standard are very serious criteria.

The panel are not convinced by the argument put forward by the provider for the Title and the Award. A clear title is required for learners to ensure their expectations of what the programme delivers aligns with the experience. The course schedule content does not map satisfactorily with the Science award criteria, and the provider should consider alternatives.

Consequently, at this stage the panel is unable to make a decision. The provider is now provided with an opportunity to review the programme, consider their options and re-submit the programme to this panel for a decision, which can be one of three decisions as indicated on page 1 of this report. The review of the programme should focus on criteria 2 and 3 specifically.

An interim report will be issued to the provider as soon as possible.

## Commendations

1. The panel commends the comprehensive range of supports that are available to students.
2. The panel commends the NSTeP initiative implemented by the provider, which delivers good training for students.
3. The panel commends the recruitment of new staff to provide any necessary subject expertise required to deliver the programme.
4. The panel commends the introduction of an 'early warning system' to augment student retention.
5. The panel commends the quality of information contained in the Student Handbook.

## Further Recommendations 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021 (final report)

In terms of the panel recommendations in the draft report, the panel thanks DBS for addressing them so thoroughly. DBS submitted responses to the seven panel recommendations for the programme. A summary sheet was also provided for the panel, indicating where in the relevant documents all the changes and amendments could be found.

The panel further suggest that:

1. the revised programme learning outcomes are included in the student handbook
2. DBS identifies the feedback date within the sample assessment materials so the learner can pro-actively perceive the timeline and follow up as needed.

There are still errors in the document for amendment:

- Page 50 of the programme document still states that the part-time credits are three 12-week semesters with 30 credits each.
- It is unclear in the User Research and Design module if the sample assessment is an individual or group assignment.
- The pagination of the programme document - please see the table of contents.

The following are the DBS responses to the Recommendations contained in the draft report of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021;

## Recommendations 4 June 2021 (draft report)

1. The panel recommends a minimum specification of equipment and devices required, which would be of benefit to students, for example Sketch specific programmes would require the use of a Mac. In addition, all equipment should be checked to ensure they run on Citrix.

Response:

*A minimum specification of equipment and devices for learners has been detailed and it has been confirmed that all software required will run on Citrix or Openstack (DBS's private cloud).*

2. The panel recommends including the details of careers and further study options in marketing materials, instead of the Student Handbook.

Response:

*Details of careers and further study options will be included in the marketing materials for the programme. Please see sample document which provides an example of information that is sent to the Marketing Department (post validation) for inclusion on the website.*

3. The inclusion of descriptors for each of the module learning outcome as opposed to a numerical list in the programme document would facilitate easier referencing.

Response:

*The Programme Document has been updated to show the module learning outcomes. An updated Table 2.8 has been provided.*

4. The information provided on how e-learning is managed on the programme could be clarified and expanded in the programme document.

Response:

*Information on e-learning has been expanded in the Programme Document and Programme Handbook. The Programme Schedule and the module headline information have also been amended for clarity.*

5. The panel recommends a review of the verbs used in the descriptors for module learning outcomes, to ensure they reflect the standard for level 8 on the NFQ.

Response:

*The programme learning outcomes and the module learning outcomes have been reviewed and updated, with reference to the verb descriptors from both the Science and Computing Awards Standards at Level 8.*

6. The panel recommends a formative assessment strategy should be more clearly articulated in the programme document and the Teaching and Learning Strategy document.

Response:

*The DBS programme development team has detailed the formative assessment strategy for the programme and included this in the Programme Document and the Teaching and Learning Strategy document.*

7. The panel recommends that the summative assignments be reviewed to clearly inform the students about the level of performance required to complete the assignment. A standard template for module assignments is suggested.

Response:

*At an institutional level DBS has recently convened a Working Group on Assessments, to review current practice and devise principles and guidelines for assessment, develop a comparable list of appropriate assessment types at NFQ level, update the current marking policy, and review the existing DBS generic guide to grading criteria and clarify standards for feedback.*

*The aim is to ensure that DBS faculty and learners are provided with a set of standards to guide assessment in order to ensure that assessment is occurring in a consistent and equitable manner and it is envisaged that the output will be a number of templates relating to formative and summative assessments. This work at an institutional level will then be fed in at a programme level.*

## Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Marion Palmer

Date: 13 August 2021

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.

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

**HIGHER DIPLOMA IN SCIENCE IN INTERACTION DESIGN AND USER EXPERIENCE**

<b>Semester 1</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Introduction to User-Centred Design	5 Credits
Psychology in User Experience Design	10 Credits
User Research and Design Requirements	10 Credits
Introduction to Universal Design	5 Credits
<b>Semester 2</b>	
UX and UI Design	10 Credits
User Testing and Analytics	10 Credits
Portfolio	10 Credits

