

## INDEPENDENT PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORT

<b>Provider name</b>	DBS
<b>Date of site visit</b>	27/06/2019
<b>Date of report</b>	30.08.2019

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Master of Business Administration
	<b>Award</b>	MBA
	<b>Credit</b>	90 ECTS
	<b>Duration</b> <i>(years, months, weeks)</i>	Full-time: 3 semesters of 12 weeks each across 12 months Part-time: 5 semesters of 12 week each across 24 months

<b>Embedded programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Business
	<b>Award</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Business
	<b>Credit</b>	60 ECTS
	<b>Duration</b>	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 9 months Part-time: 4 semesters of 12 weeks each across 20 months

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## 1 Introduction

The scope of this review encompassed a series of detailed interview sessions with academic staff, support staff, and students attending the course. The detailed course materials, which were provided by DBS in a timely fashion were reviewed prior to the interviews. Any particular points requiring further clarification were reviewed in detail in the course of the various meetings held between the panel members, staff, and a selection of students.

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

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

### *Objectives of the Programme Review*

Specific objectives of a Programme Review are (QQI Programme Review Manual 2016/2017) to evaluate the programme as implemented in light of the provider's experience of delivering the programme over the previous five years with a view to determining:

- (1) What has been learned about the programme, as an evolving process (by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence), from the experience of providing it for the past five or so years?
- (2) What can be concluded from a quantitative analysis of admission data, attrition rates by stage, completion rates and grades achieved by module, stage and overall?
- (3) What reputation do the programme and provider have with stakeholders (students, staff, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, communities of practice, employers, other education and training providers) and in particular what views do the stakeholders have about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning the programme's history and its future?
- (4) What challenges and opportunities are likely to arise in the next five years and what modifications to the programme are required in light of these?
- (5) Whether the programme in light of its stated objectives and intended learning outcomes demonstrably addresses explicit learning needs of target learners and society?
- (6) What other modifications need to be made to the programme and its awards to improve or reorient it?
- (7) Whether the programme (modified or not) meets the current QQI validation criteria (and sub-criteria) or, if not, what modifications need to be made to the programme to meet the current criteria?
- (8) Whether the provider continues to have the capacity and capability to provide the programme as planned (considering, for example, historical and projected enrolment numbers and profile and availability and adequacy of physical, financial and human resources) without risk of compromising educational standards or quality of provision in light of its other commitments (i.e. Competing demands) and strategy?
- (9) What is the justification (or otherwise) for the provider continuing to offer the programme (modified or unmodified)?
- (10) What changes need to be made to related policies, criteria and procedures (including QA procedures)?

## 2 Independent Review Process

### 2.1 Review Agenda

The Independent Panel Review was conducted on Wednesday June 26, 2019. The main consultation sessions were held in Room 1.2 at the DBS Campus building, 13-14 Aungier Street. See specific details of the schedule in Appendix 1.

### 2.2 Provider's Programme Team

Ann Masterson	Acting Programme Leader
Andrew Quinn	Lecturer
Gary Bernie	Lecturer
Chantal Ladias	Lecturer
Paul Laird	Lecturer
Claire Devlin	Lecturer
Eileen Corrigan	Lecturer
Dr Damian McNamara	Lecturer
David Wallace	Lecturer
John Staunton	Lecturer
Dr PJ Paul	Lecturer
Enda Murphy	Lecturer
Philip Hickey	Lecturer
Brian Raymond	Lecturer
Dr Shakeel Siddiqui	Lecturer
Paul Taaffe	Lecturer
Debora Zorzi	Lecturer
Harnaik Dhoot	Lecturer
John Rowley	Lecturer
Peter Purcell	Lecturer
Ray Whelan	Lecturer
Martin O'Dea	Lecturer
Garry Prentice	Academic/Dissertation Coordinator
Niamh Cullen	Lecturer
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Dr Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Dr Lee Richardson	Data Analytics and Reporting Manager
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Emma Balfe	Acting Head of Faculty and School Operations
Darragh Breathnach	Head of Academic Operations
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Jane Buggle	Deputy Librarian
Grant Goodwin	Quality Assurance Officer
Sarah Sharkey	Student Engagement Officer
Viviana Moreira Montero	Programme Coordinator

### 2.3 Staff, Student and Graduate Consultation Panels

#### Senior Management Team:

Andrew Conlan-Trant	Executive Dean
Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Lori Johnson	Registrar
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in teaching and learning
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Ann Masterson	Course Director (Acting) Business and Law

#### Academic Staff:

Ann Masterson	Course Director (Acting) Business and Law
Andrew Quinn	Course Director, Accounting and Finance
David Williams	Course Director, ICT
Michael Maguire	Course Director, Marketing
Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation
Shane Murphy	Head of Student Experience
Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Grant Goodwin	QA Officer
Sarah Sharkey	Student Engagement Officer
Andrew Quinn	Corporate Financial Management
Gary Bernie	Research Methods I; Research Methods II
Chantal Ladias	Marketing Innovations
Paul Laird	Developing Content for the Cloud
Claire Devlin	Business Strategy
Eileen Corrigan	Personal and Professional Development
Dr Damian McNamara	Research Methods I; Research Methods II
David Wallace	Strategies for Human Resources
John Staunton	Performance Driven Marketing; Integrated Marketing Communications in a Digital Age
Dr PJ Paul	International Management; Research Methods I; Research Methods II
Enda Murphy	International Management; Operation and Governance of Financial Markets; Financial Analysis
Philip Hickey	Financial Analysis
Brian Raymond	Information Systems Development
Dr Shakeel Siddiqui	Research Methods I; Research Methods II; Integrated Marketing; Communications in a Digital Age
Paul Taaffe	Project Management Tools and Techniques; Project Management Planning and Control
Debora Zorzi	Research Methods I
Harnaik Dhoot	Innovation and IT Management Information Systems Development
John Rowley	Theory of Cloud Computing
Peter Purcell	Performance and Reward Management
Ray Whelan	Performance and Reward Management
Martin O'Dea	Strategies for Human Resources; Business Strategy
Garry Prentice	Academic/Dissertation Coordinator

*Programme Team:*

Ann Masterson	Course Director (Acting) Business and Law
Andrew Quinn	Course Director, Accounting and Finance
David Williams	Course Director, ICT
Michael Maguire	Course Director, Marketing
Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation
Shane Murphy	Head of Student Experience
Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Grant Goodwin	QA Officer
Sarah Sharkey	Student Engagement Officer

*Support Facilities and Services Staff*

Shane Murphy	Student Engagement Officer
Jane Buggle	Deputy Librarian
Laoise Durragh	Library Team
Trevor Haugh	Library Team
Andrew Mulligan	Careers Hub
Susan Sweeney	Careers Hub
Ntsoaki Phakoe	Careers Hub

*Continuing Students and Graduates*

Patricia Monserrat Arevalo Lopez	Student
Oluwatoyin David Ajayi	Student
Nishita Joshi	Student
Sean O'Sullivan	Student
Ntsoaki Phakoe	Graduate
Johnson Varghese	Graduate

**2.4 Evidence Considered**

The review process was led by the Programme Leaders working with the Programme Team, and critically reviewed all aspects of the programme. Pertinent consultations considered a range of relevant aspects to the programme, including:

- Programme rationale.
- Programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes.
- Programme structure.
- Constituent modules and their contents.
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies and methods.
- Access, transfer and progression.

The guiding principles underpinning the review were:

- That assessment of learning achieved to adhere to the relevant QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013.
- That proposal for the programmatic review has been developed and approved internally through the DBS quality assurance procedures.
- That the proposed programme will assist DBS, and specifically the School of Arts, in the endeavours to align with the DBS institutional mission and strategic plan.
- That the programme learning outcomes will meet the needs of current and future learners, employers and other stakeholders.

- That teaching, learning, and research activity at any level will be conducted professionally and in an ethical manner.

The Programme Team undertook necessary consultations to ensure that the programme includes appropriate mix of the relevant academic content and practical application scenarios to address the needs of the various stakeholders. This process was informed by consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including current students, external examiners, employers and employment organisations, faculty, current reports by government agencies on requirements for labour force, as well as benchmarking against similar programmes offered elsewhere.

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

### **3 Outline of Programme Review**

#### **3.1 Fitness for Purpose of the Programme**

In general, this programme was considered fit-for-purpose. The modules are well thought-out and cover relevant topics for an MBA (NFQ Level 9). The academic staff are adequately qualified to deliver programme and dedicated to achieving the programme learning outcomes. On completion of the programme, graduates are adequately prepared to enter employment or to progress to further study in a business-related field. The specific noteworthy features of the programme, summary of recommended special conditions, and summary of recommendations to the provider are outlined in Section 5 *Outcomes of the Review*.

#### **3.2 Achievement of Programme's Stated Objectives**

DBS has provided the following information about the aims and objectives for the MBA programme:

- To facilitate an advanced understanding in learners of general management theoretical and conceptual frameworks in an international context.
- To develop in learners the ability to use these frameworks for evaluating business policy and practice.
- To provide learners with insight into key business management issues, trends and solutions.
- To integrate issues and principles from a variety of sources and to be in a position to synthesise these elements to diagnose existing problems and formulate solutions.
- To develop in learners transferable interpersonal, communication and leadership skills through group interaction, case discussions and presentations.
- To encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning through independent research and project work.
- To provide learners with a practical basis to support ongoing personal development and learning throughout their study and future careers.
- To provide diagnostic tools and theoretical understanding which will allow learners to assess and evaluate the impact of business decisions within the wider society.

#### **3.3 Learner Profile**

While DBS provides a welcoming environment to a diverse cohort of students, a general trend of larger numbers of enrolment of male students to the MBA programme has been noted. Moreover, within the programme, larger numbers of enrolled female students tend to focus on the HR related areas of specialisation, while a larger numbers of males are attracted to Informatics. The student population is culturally diverse, with a large number of overseas students from both the EU and abroad. This is an extremely positive feature of the student demographic, as it provides the students with a multi-cultural

learning environment, which can be stimulating and also offers many unique opportunities for cross-culture interactions as part of peer-learning process.

A more challenging aspect is that the student population combines fresh graduates from business and cognate disciplines, with mature students with considerable experience in the workplace. Typically features students in their early twenties, and with little or no work experience, and more mature students, who often have an in-depth practical knowledge of fields of business and work, and therefore bring considerable set of experiences and values to the shared learning environment.

### 3.4 Learner Performance

In general, there is a high pass-rate, while there are differences in outcome between part-time and full-time students. For example, in the academic year 2015/6, the overall average pass rate was ca. 87%; with part-time learners registering higher pass-rate (94%) than full-time learners (85%). Overall, ca. 4% of Learners failed the programme, and 9% of learners were non-active. On average, ca. 11% of the students failed the programme, and 6.5% of them were inactive. The small disparity between part-time and full-time students is likely to be (at least partly) due to the higher proportion of the part-time students being more mature individuals who already have considerable workplace experience.

### 3.5 Quality of the Learning Environment

The learning environment provided is commendable in many respects. For example, the physical infrastructure of rooms and services are above average. The premises have purpose built lecture theatres/rooms, with integrated learning supports such as VLE. There is WIFI with college-wide coverage, access to the online Moodle VLE system, a well-stocked library with relevant books and electronic resources. There was evidence that both academic and support services staff are well motivated and helpful to students in their learning; there was evidence of proactive engagement with students thereby making the best use of the resources available to them.

Moreover, it is notable that the teaching staff, as well as the support staff, take their role extremely seriously. In general, the students interviewed report that they are happy with the level and quality of feedback they receive in the programme. The DBS is also proactive manner in sourcing guest lecturers for subject or topic-specific events; mentioned by the students as a highlight of their learning experiences.

Peer-to-peer learning opportunities and supports are available through various group and teamwork learning and assessment events, as well as membership of the variety of societies and clubs on offer. The student societies offer events such as breakfast meetings, innovation summits, and cross-disciplinary events, which give the students further opportunities to learn. There may be additional scope for fostering peers-to-peer learning further. The pool of knowledge and experience embodied in the part-time students (who are more likely to be Irish, and the older, with industry experience) could offer a wealth of learning opportunity to the full-time students, including enhanced social interactions.

DBS has systems in place to support students with a wide variety of learning issues and challenges, including students from non-traditional backgrounds, students with dyslexia etc. Beyond the academic support, the DBS also offers students a range of transitions supports such as the sourcing of accommodation, and which may be critical for both students from outside Dublin and from abroad.

### 3.6 Outline of Constituent Modules

DBS has provided the following information about the constituent modules in the MBA programme:

Stage	Module title	ECTS	Outline
Award	Global Issues for Management (M)	5	This module will equip learners with the knowledge and skills to take a holistic, environmental, analytical and critical approach to major issues in the management of organisations in a global

			context. The module will involve detailed evaluative studies of the modern international business context to provide learners with knowledge of the complexities of cross-cultural management and the skills to produce academic and business relevant reports on issues in the international business environment.
Award	Marketing Management (M)	5	Marketing is a concern for all people and organisations at all times. Successful marketing is based on an organisation wide philosophy that identifies, selects, provides, communicates and delivers value to chosen customer groups. Marketing as a management subject consists of a set of concepts and principles for choosing target markets, evaluating customer needs, developing products and services that satisfy wants, delivering value to customers and profit or benefit to the company or organisation. This module is designed to provide a thorough emphasis on the managerial perspective of marketing. Learners will apply specific marketing tools and marketing frameworks for evaluating companies' marketing-mix that take best advantage of the conditions in which the firm finds itself. A strategic marketing approach is evident throughout the module design and delivery. In all seminars, learners will be required to analyse marketing practices in relation to different marketing case studies. Their individual assessment will be the analysis of a company marketing strategy following a systematic approach.
Award	Managerial Financial Analysis (M)	5	This module will provide learners with knowledge, skills, concepts and tools necessary to understand and respond to the increasing complex, volatile and dynamic financial world. This module will provide a financial decision-making platform for business managers and enable learners develop a knowledge and understanding of the implications of financial information and an ability to apply this information to practical management scenarios.
Award	Research Methods 1 (M)	5	The module provides learners with the theoretical foundation for research that will allow them to contextualise the more practical aspects of research that they will engage with in Research Methods 2. During this module, learners will be provided with an overview of the main research philosophies, designs and methodologies, while also being introduced to the ethics of research. An overview of the stages of the research process will also be provided, introducing the learner to the concepts of a literature review, data collection and analysis and presenting and discussing findings. During this module, learners will be encouraged to identify their research topics and begin to refine and focus that topic toward a research question/hypothesis. This consideration of research topics and potential questions/hypothesis will require the learner to adapt and synthesise their learning and experience from other modules.
Award	Marketing Innovations (E)	10	Marketing has been transformed by the power of stakeholders and the ever-increasing urge to address sustainable issues for the future of our planet. This module provides learners with an applied knowledge of innovative marketing practices. This module leads to the creation and the presentation a marketing



			entrepreneurial project. Learners will learn by doing. They will gain a critical appreciation of the technologies used in the field of Marketing as well as an experiential dimensions of marketing products and services. This class will facilitate circular learning where entrepreneurial skills are encouraged. In this way, learners will participate and actively affirm their contributions to a more sustainable global society. The Marketing, as a process will be applied for the purpose of researching, developing, distributing and promoting a sustainable product or service to maximise positive impacts on people, profits and planet.
Award	Strategies for Human Resource Management (E)	10	The aim of this module is to give the learner a critical insight into people resourcing strategies and talent planning. The contextual and contingent activity of human resourcing strategies is recognised throughout all topics. These variables make it necessary for managers to be aware of the influences of the internal and external environments - context is key. The module addresses both the breath of HR issues and includes all the activities essential for the acquisition, management and retention of talent from HR planning through to release from employment. An international context is also explored with reference to the transfer if HR practices in foreign locales whilst recognising the importance of cultural diversity and managing ethically.
Award	Project Management Frameworks (E)	10	This module aims to develop the learners understanding of the context of the project management environment, whilst developing specific skills in project management. The subject of project management is increasingly multi-disciplinary in nature and this module reflects this by providing you with an understanding of the social, organisational, behavioural and systems issues of project management. In addition to providing an understanding of the subject of project management the module will introduce several tools and techniques for managing activities throughout the project life cycle.
Award	Corporate Financial Management (E)	10	This module provides a thorough financial platform for business managers. It will enable participants to develop a knowledge and understanding of the implications of financial information and an ability to apply this information to practical management scenarios. This module will allow learners to apply critical thinking to the area of financial analysis through the application of financial information in different valuation techniques and models.
Award	Cloud Technologies for Business (E)	10	The module aims to provide learners with the key concepts of cloud technologies used in the modern business environment. Cloud computing technologies allows businesses to access their information virtually, creating a flexible and global way of accessing your data any place, any time. The module equips learners to evaluate a set of practices that enable enterprises to profit from the use of cloud technologies and effectively manage the challenges associated with their use in an organisation.
Award	Applied Strategic Management (M)	10	This module will provide the learner with in-depth knowledge, skills, tools and frameworks necessary to critically appraise and respond to complex global, volatile and dynamic contexts in which organisations function today. The module will involve

			detailed evaluative studies in the nature of strategy content, and of strategic processes in a variety of industry and organisational settings. This module is designed to enhance the learners' business research and problem-solving capabilities. The module develops learners' analytical and evaluative skills in the field of strategic management. It allows learners to build on the knowledge acquired in Semester one in modules such as Managerial financial analysis and Global issues for Management specifically.
Award	Dynamic Leadership Development (M)	5	Leadership and motivation skills have become a crucial element of an effective manager's toolkit. This module will equip the learner with the skills and insights they need to be an effective leader and motivator. It will provide learners with a review of best practice leadership and motivational approaches and help them to develop self-awareness of their leadership preferences and behaviours, together with the skills to effectively lead others. They will be asked to identify appropriate leadership and motivational styles in a variety of contexts while focusing on optimising job and organisational performance and to adopt a reflective approach to their own leadership development journey.
Award	Research Methods 2 (M)	5	This module builds on principles and procedures covered in Research Methods in Semester 1 by applying them within an in-depth examination of the planning and management of a dissertation. The module develops the learner's ability to produce an appropriate literature review relevant to the research aims, objectives and questions. An emphasis in this module is guiding learners to effectively apply research methods to research questions whilst taking into account ethical considerations in preparing a research proposal. This module equips learners with the requisite skills to plan, investigate, critique and present data using qualitative and quantitative research methods which underpin the independent research process.
Award	Integrated Marketing Communications (E)	10	This module looks at the complexity of marketing communications within an organisation's marketing strategy and its impact on an organisation's overall infrastructure and success. The module ensures the learner acquires an in-depth understanding of the role of marketing communications and the processes involved which is currently regarded as one of the most important strategic considerations for all organisations for sustainability and growth. The module, which is an elective, is underpinned by Marketing Management which is also taken in semester one, and sees the learner gain a certain specialism in the marketing space as part of their managerial function and within the wider context of business administration at a senior level.
Award	Reinventing Performance Management (E)	10	This module helps learners to develop and implement innovative performance management strategies to improve talent management, employee engagement and business results. It presents a holistic approach to performance management. Most organisations have performance management processes in one form or another, but these are often based on formal annual

			reviews, forced rankings and directly linked to pay decisions. These traditional approaches are often at the expense of ongoing, continuous feedback and focus on looking back at what has or has not been achieved rather than looking forward. Direct links to pay decisions avert attention from people development, and managers often get lost in the bureaucracy of complex forms rather than fully engaging with their people.
Award	Strategic Information Systems	10	<p>This module looks at three fundamental questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What information systems do businesses build?</li> <li>• Why do businesses build these information systems?</li> <li>• How do businesses approach building these information systems?</li> </ul> <p>Through investigating these questions, learners will gain an in-depth awareness of how the digital economy impacts and shapes the policies, structures and processes that define the digital firm. This module will provide participants with the necessary models, theories and frameworks that can be used to elaborate a firm's digital strategy and to realise this articulated strategy in terms of a coherent implementation program. As part of the implementation program, participants will obtain an understanding of the different phases and methods involved in information systems development.</p>
Award	Project Management Practices (E)	10	<p>This module is primarily designed to build on students who already understands the complexity of the project environment. The course will develop that understanding to a deeper level across a broader spectrum of concepts to develop a level of knowledge and understanding so allowing the student to operate at a senior project level in any contemporary organisation.</p>
Award	Global Financial Markets (E)	10	<p>This module has a dynamic focus on the interplay between economic policy/outcomes and global financial markets. The central focus is to understand the factors which gave rise to the global financial crisis. The module goes on to evaluate the policy responses to the crisis and their effectiveness over the last decade. It then assesses whether the global financial system today is sufficiently robust to avoid another major correction, which in turn involves questioning whether previously accepted doctrines – efficient markets, light touch regulation, free market ideology, “too big to fail” – require modification now. Finally, the module considers contemporary developments such as Fintech, Behavioural Finance and Islamic Finance.</p>
Award	Cloud Application Management (E)	10	<p>Learners will gain a comprehensive insight into the management of cloud-based technologies and applications to serve real organisational needs. They will develop critical skills in analysing and evaluating the use of cloud applications in business and subsequently developing business solution based applications. Learners will also develop practical and hands on technical skills with relevant cloud services. Learners will also gain insight into how digital project management practices are applied and realised in a cloud environment through the use of cloud-based planning and design applications, cloud-supported cooperative work, groupware and other tools in preparing their continuous assessments.</p>

Award	Innovation and Disruptive Technologies (E)	10	This module provides learners with the key concepts of innovation and disruptive technologies that ensure businesses are fit for purpose in a digitally empowered world. In every industry, the introduction of innovative digital technologies and the rise of new disruptive opportunities or threats are transforming business models and processes. To stay competitive, companies must fundamentally change how they operate. This module equips learners to evaluate new innovations and disruptive technologies that enable organisations to profit from technological developments, and understand how companies can take advantage of various technological advances by changing business processes, and offering new products and solutions.
Award	Dissertation	30	This module synthesises learning in a dissertation. It comprises of research project or dissertation, consolidating learners' research capability, theoretical knowledge and applied skills through the production of a dissertation. This should combine both research and technical skills to investigate, design, produce and evaluate the solution put forward. This involves researching a problem with significant implications for a chosen organisation or industry, applying key concepts and techniques from business to deliver a solution, the construction of an artefact implementing the chosen solution, or the creation of new knowledge or add value to the business world with the critical evaluation and defence of the project outcomes.

In general, these are well-designed modules that are well-suited to an MBA programme. However, the module on Reinventing Performance Management, appears to be taught on both the BA in Business and the MBA programme which presents a serious deficit. While the module leader explained that the subject matter is taught in more depth at MBA level, the explanation was unconvincing to the panel.

### 3.7 Outline of Assessment Strategies

Material provide by DBS states that its aims are:

- To develop graduates who can demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes of this programme.
- To develop graduates who possess the attributes expected of a graduate of the programme.
- To evaluate how successfully the graduate has achieved those learning outcomes by way of an award classified on the basis of criterion referenced assessment of the stated programme learning outcomes.

In general, DBS has robust systems for assessment in place, including a rigorous approach to ensuring that its standards are consistent with those on offer elsewhere. The assessment are moderated by external examiners to ensure consistency in standards of assessment. However, a large portion of the coursework is based on 100% continuous assessment—which is entirely appropriate for a course of this nature, but potentially presents significant challenge in terms of external moderation. Whereas examiners review the precise, specific questions posed in examinations, their oversight of continuous assessment is more complex. DBS provides them with material about indicative assessments, and samples of assessments after the work has been carried out rather than the specific tasks given to the students before they have actually done the work.

### 3.8 Quality Assurance Arrangements

All academic programmes are subject to DBS assessment regulations, which are published in the Quality Assurance Handbook and are in line with *QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013* and documents

referred to therein. The Handbook is reviewed on an annual basis, and a current copy is also published on the institution website.

DBS takes an active approach to obtaining learner feedback, in the form of focus groups, formal and informal contact with former students, and interaction with class representatives, who are provided with training via the Enstep programme and from the student council. Students are also facilitated in providing feedback anonymously via the Moodle VLE. The institution takes all such feedback on board, and considered the same in formulating the proposed modifications to the programme outlined below.

Plagiarism and contract cheating are notable potential breaches to academic integrity in all third-level institutions. DBS take a proactive stance on this matter that includes teaching students how to avoid plagiarism and expecting students to give presentations of their own work, to demonstrate that they are familiar with it and are not merely repeating someone else's words. Plagiarism detection system is used to identify plagiarism where it occurs.

### 3.9 Proposed Modifications to Programme

DBS plans to make a number of minor changes to some modules, intended to be reflective of the wider business environment and to ensure student exposure to the latest thinking. The material provided to the panel enumerates the proposed changes as follows:

- Course content has been reviewed in line with current trends.
- Module specific content has been updated.
- Research Methods 1 and Research Methods 2 have been critically reviewed and refocussed.
- Learner support hours have been increased in the non-credit bearing Writing for Graduate Studies classes.
- The programme better balances academic content with practical application of theories to real world scenarios.
- Assessment includes more of an applied element and where appropriate has more industry focused.

Specific changes proposed for the programme are:

- **Personal and Professional Development** (Mandatory module, 5 ECTS)

In line with stakeholder feedback (both employer and industry), this module is to be replaced by the new module entitled *Dynamic Leadership Development* (Mandatory module, 5 credits). The previous learning outcomes of the *Personal and Professional Development* module would be achieved through the assessment strategies used across other modules and by introducing *Dynamic Leadership Development*. Whilst *Personal and Professional Development* covers important skills for graduates, the programme team takes the view that, at Level 9, it is more appropriate to integrate this content across the programme through modules and introduce the module on *Dynamic Leadership Development*.

- **Dynamic Leadership Development** (Mandatory module, 5 ECTS)

As noted, it is proposed to introduce *Dynamic Leadership Development* as a substitute module for *Personal and Professional Development*. *Dynamic Leadership Development* will focus on the development of the individual learner in the context of leadership as well as embedding theoretical knowledge on leadership styles and practices. The proposed module ensures that learners are suitably prepared to advance their careers in the spirit of leadership coupled with an innovative and entrepreneurial approaches in a dynamic business environment. *Dynamic Leadership Development* will be offered during Semester two.

- **Performance Driven Marketing** (Mandatory module, 5 ECTS)

It is proposed to rename *Performance Driven Marketing* to *Marketing Management* and refocus the content towards marketing as a management subject. This refocus is designed to provide a thorough emphasis on the managerial perspective of marketing as learners will apply specific marketing tools and marketing frameworks for evaluating companies' marketing-mix that take best advantage of contextual conditions. A strategic marketing approach is evident throughout the module design and delivery. The

programme team believe that this ensures learners will gain essential knowledge in marketing theories and concepts, which will ensure progression to Semester two modules such as Business Strategy. This realignment fits the overall design and flow of the Programme.

- **Managerial Financial Analysis** (Mandatory module, 5 ECTS)

This module was titled *Financial Analysis* and is now retitled as *Managerial Financial Analysis*. This retitling is considered by the programme team to be reflect the module which provides a financial decision-making platform for business managers and enable learners develop a knowledge and understanding of the implications of financial information and an ability to apply this information to practical management scenarios.

- **Operation and Governance of Financial Markets** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

This module has been retitled to *Global Financial Markets* as it focuses on the dynamic interplay between economic policy/outcomes and global financial markets. The programme team believe that this better reflects module content and aligns more effectively with other module titles.

- **International Management** (Mandatory module, 5 ECTS)

This module will be updated and renamed as *Global Issues for Management* to align with use of 'global' in other modules titles and better reflect module content and stakeholder feedback.

- **Integrated Marketing Communications in a Digital Age** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

This module will be updated and renamed as *Integrated Marketing Communications* to best reflect the fact that the digital age is all around us and is an ongoing, continuous context in which we live and work and not a brief moment in time as may be implied by the previous title.

- **Project Management Tools and Techniques** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

This Elective will be renamed *Project Management Frameworks* to better reflect the module content and focus on the project management context, skill sets and various frameworks that encompass the tools and techniques of project management. As a more holistic title, the programme team believe this is a suitable refresh of the module title.

- **Project Management Planning and Control** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

This Elective will be renamed *Project Management Practices* to better reflect the module content and focus on the applied nature of this module. As a more behaviourally-focussed title, the programme team believe this is a suitable updating of the module title which is more reflective of the stakeholder feedback and trends in the professional environment.

- **Information Systems Development** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

It is proposed that *Information Systems Development* be refreshed and retitled *Strategic Information Systems*. This module will provide participants with the necessary models, theories and frameworks that can be used to elaborate a firm's digital strategy and to realize this articulated strategy in terms of a coherent implementation programme. The retitled module will align with those graduate skills required by MBA graduates and will ensure that graduates are equipped to obtain a critical understanding of the different phases and methods involved in information systems development and strategic practices that enable organisations to meet the challenges and opportunities derived from technological developments.

- **Theory of Cloud Computing** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

It is proposed that the module *Theory of Cloud Computing* will be renamed as *Cloud Technologies for Business*. This will better reflect the updated module content which has been redesigned in response to employer and industry feedback in what is a rapidly changing sector within the global business environment. The renamed module will equip learners with an understanding of those best practices that enable enterprises to profit from the use of cloud technologies.

- **Innovation and IT Management** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

It is proposed that Innovation and IT Management be refreshed and renamed as *Innovation and Disruptive Technologies*. In every industry, the introduction of innovative digital technologies and the rise of new disruptive opportunities or threats is transforming business models and processes. To stay competitive, companies must fundamentally change how they operate. This module equips learners to evaluate new innovations and disruptive technologies that enable organisations to profit from technological developments and understand how companies can take advantage of various technological advances by changing business processes and offering new products and solutions. This proposed change is similarly motivated by industry and learner feedback.

- **Developing Content for the Cloud** (Elective module, 10 ECTS)

It is proposed that *Developing Content for the Cloud* be renamed as *Cloud Application Management*. The module content has been updated in response to industry and employer feedback in what is a rapidly changing sector of the global business environment. The renamed module will equip learners with a comprehensive insight into the analysis, evaluation and management of cloud-based technologies and applications to serve real organisational needs. Learners will also gain insight into how digital project management practices are applied and realised in a cloud environment through the use of cloud-based planning and design applications, cloud-supported cooperative work, groupware and other tools. DBS also proposes reintroducing the Higher Diploma in Business as an exit award in recognition of the fact that some students who enrol on the programme and successfully complete various modules may realise that they do not wish to do a dissertation. The Diploma recognises the skills that they have acquired and ensures that their efforts are recognised.

#### **4 Evaluation of the Application and the Modified Programme**

See full text of the Independent Programme Review Report in Appendix 2.

#### **5 Outcome of the Review**

##### **5.1 Noteworthy features of the application**

1. DBS Senior Management Team, Academic and Support Staff, and samples of both continuing students and graduates interviewed as part of the review, engaged fully with the process. The Review Panel is most grateful for the comprehensive review programme schedule, cooperation through pre-visit communications and during the on-site sessions, and the overall hospitality accorded throughout the visit on June 26, 2019.
2. DBS has systems in place to support students with a wide variety of learning needs and challenges, including students from non-traditional backgrounds, students with dyslexia etc. Beyond academic support for students, a wide range of practical supports is also in place, including assistance with accommodation and other practical matters, which are especially important in facilitating smooth transitions, particularly for the international students.
3. The MBA curriculum (Aims and Objectives, Objective 4) provides for developing learners knowledge of the 'complexities of cross- cultural management', which is an increasingly important part of business, but it is equally important to students who are placed in an intense, highly structured environment for the MBA programme durations of one to two years. The cognisance of this importance and fostering of cultural awareness in student experience within DBS is commendable as a positive intervention that can help address potential pressure points before impact, particularly in the academic environment constituting teamwork assignment with prescribed deadlines.
4. The review application included the DBS's own comprehensive Quality Assurance Handbook (2016/17 Edition). The handbook provides relevant information and guidance on Academic Quality matters to the management team and academic staff and those involved in curriculum design/development, programme delivery, and oversight on academic quality assurance and enhancement across different

modules. The handbook contains approved DBS quality assurance policies and procedures intended to be easily accessible to staff, learners, and other stakeholders. Associated regulations or policies relating to the use of services such as the library, facilities or IT are only referenced in the handbook, but are accessible through the DBS web pages. The approach to management of quality matters is through both the DBS governance structures and various academic committee structure as assigned.

5. There was evidence of a high level of interest in the wellbeing of students, with clear support structures provided.
6. There was evidence that DBS responds to recommendations of its External Examiners. For example, a new module on Report Writing for Graduate Students was introduced because of such feedback.

## **5.2 Summary of Recommended Special Conditions**

1. It is the panel's considered opinion that the primary function of an MBA programme is to provide a rigorous academic training to participants with prior work/industry experience. With the current student cohorts that include recent graduates lacking in work/industry experience, this inevitably has a negative impact on the learning experience; evidence collected from the graduate interview session indicated that students with work/industry experience at enrolment felt insufficiently challenged in elements of coursework and assessments as compared to students enrolled in similar programmes in equivalent institutions. Therefore:
  - 1.1 The panel recommends entry qualification of 2 to 3 years' minimum industry experience, or for DBS to rationalise how the lack of experience can be practicably bridged to enable candidates to achieve the designated award standard.
  - 1.2 DBS should consider amending relevant modules in the programme, with sole purposes of integrating contemporary case studies to enhance the learning experience, and as best practice in MBA programme offering.
2. It was noted that the module "Reinventing Performance Management" in the MBA programme is replicated as "Contemporary Performance Management" module in the BA programme at DBS. While DBS asserted at the panel interviews that the courses are not actually taught in an identical manner, it was unclear how any distinction could be achieved in practice when the defined content is the same, while the designated award standards are distinctively different. The "Reinventing Performance Management" module should be re-written, i.e., Module Aims, Learning Outcomes, Syllabus Contents, and supporting resources per the NFQ Level 9 Award Standard.
3. A substantial proportion of modules (ca. 60% or 11/18, including mandatory and electives) are weighted at 100% Continuous Assessment. For 100% CA weighting, it is recommended that:
  - 3.1 DBS to provide rationale or basis for the assignment the weighting;
  - 3.2 The individual module descriptors to include enough detail on the assessment instruments/briefs employed in such modules, to enable review and/or determination of the rigour of related assessment;
  - 3.3 DBS to provide clear guidelines for External Examiner moderation of such modules. Adduced evidence indicates that, currently, the external examiners can only see the outcome of the assessment and do not contribute in any way in the peer-review and/or moderation of contents and process to instil best practice for the formative intents.
4. The DBS should adopt a systematic Annual Programme Review (APR) process that will ensure that any problems /issues identified in the programme are dealt with conclusively by the end of each academic year, and that such do not spill into the next academic year (see extended comment under Criterion 12).



### 5.3 Summary of Recommendations to the Provider

1. Whereas the application includes DBS's own comprehensive Quality Assurance Handbook (2016/17 Edition), it is the considered view of the panel that an objective QA framework must be communicated to all DBS staff who are required to use or implement different aspect of quality assurance and quality enhancement; 356 pages is a tome does not easily lend itself to such a requirement. Therefore, it is recommended that DBS consider electronic publication of the independent sections to provide for more focused access. While the handbook is still useful in the consolidated form, a smaller, pithy and more targeted user-friendly Course Design & Delivery Handbook would be a more pragmatic approach to ensuring that the manual is communicative.
2. The panel recognises that, as a private college, DBS may have challenges to enhancing scholarship of its staff not shared by HE institutions in the public sector. However, to ensure currency of competence and scholarship, it is recommended that DBS encourage its staff to participate in relevant networks and communities of practice in order to maintain appropriate qualifications and capability to implement the programme as planned (Refer Criterion 6). Scholarship work and CPD are the hallmarks of any designated areas of staff specialisation; it was notable and discussed with the programme team that some of the staff CVs submitted were thin on detail.
3. Section 2.4, p.11, of the MBA programme document recognises that, 'Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) is integral to teaching and learning and essential to the growth of knowledge and its transference. It underpins the educational process, benefitting learners and academic staff by enhancing and enriching the teaching and learning experience'. The panel was unable to find any evidence of the research strategy documents (vide, 'The current research strategy is available as a separate document') and/or a systematic support implementation, if they exist.
4. Concerns have previously been raised by external examiners (2013/14; 2017/18) requiring internal examiners to desist from repeating examination questions from the first sitting in the repeat examination. Whereas the evidenced scale was not rampant as to attract sanction in this review, it is recommended that DBS implement a more rigorous internal review process for all draft examination papers to ensure that such do not repeat or escalate.
5. Module specific recommendations include:
  - 1.1 The panel came across evidence of unsatisfactory feedback to learners specifically touching on both the speed of return and quality of such feedback. It is important that such issues are comprehensively addressed in periodic course reviews.
  - 1.2 "Marketing Management" as a module title seems basic for a Level 9 programme, and it also does not reflect contents therein.
  - 1.3 The noted potential vulnerability in continuity and consistency in the programmes due to DBS's high dependency on part-time academic staff (see comment Criterion 6) is a risk, therefore, requires comprehensive mitigation arrangements.

Lastly, as an overarching comment on the panel's experience with the review process as a whole: A Criterion-Specific Summary Report, incorporating pointers to *How*, *Who* and *Where* the institutions under review deems to satisfy all the prescribed QQI Criteria 1 through 12 should accompany the documents provided to the QQI Review Panels. In this case, the core programme handbook as presented did not interface well with the criteria for review of programme. As such (and to effectively review and engage with the programme team) the review team members had to root through a lot of information, much of which was secondary to the criteria and/or repetitious. This was more challenging and obstructive to the review process, as the panel had to consider both the BA and MBA programmes of DBS in a day's sitting. This is not to say that the core programme handbook should never have been provided, but a concise criteria-oriented synopsis, and appropriately formulated to guide to the relevant parts of the core programme document(s) should have considerably enhanced the panel's efficacy towards completion of review tasks.

## Appendix 1: Schedule of the Review Panel Visit

DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Programme Review Schedule<sup>1</sup>

Master of Business Administration & Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business

Wednesday 26 June 2019

Location: DBS Campus building, 13-14 Aungier Street, Room 1.2

Time	Item	DBS Attendees
8.45am – 10am	Private meeting of the Panel	
10am – 10.15am	<p><b>Meeting with Senior Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic and Institutional Issues</li> <li>• Rationale for the development of the programmes</li> </ul> <p><i>Criterion 1: The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programmes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Conlan-Trant, Executive Dean</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting)</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience</li> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> </ul>
	<b>Master of Business Administration</b>	
10.15am – 10.45am	<b>Evaluation of the Programme Review process and Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Andrew Quinn, Course Director, Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• David Williams, Course Director, ICT</li> <li>• Michael Maguire, Course Director, Marketing</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting)</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> <li>• Grant Goodwin, QA Officer</li> <li>• Sarah Sharkey, Student Engagement Officer</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Note that the panel requested for amalgamation of the following sessions for the respective reviews:

(a) MBA sessions 10.15 am to 12:45 pm

(b) BA sessions 2.00pm to 4 pm

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>DBS Attendees</b>
10.45am – 11.15am	<p><b>Evaluation of the Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation – Programme rationale, overall structure and dialogue on learning opportunities</b></p> <p><i>Criterion 2: Programme objectives are clear and consistent with QQI awards sought</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 3: Programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI award standards are well informed and soundly based</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 4: Access Transfer and Progression arrangements are satisfactory</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Andrew Quinn, Course Director, Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• David Williams, Course Director, ICT</li> <li>• Michael Maguire, Course Director, Marketing</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting)</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> <li>• Grant Goodwin, QA Officer</li> <li>• Tanya Balfe, Admissions Manager</li> <li>• Sarah Sharkey, Student Engagement Officer</li> </ul> <p>• Teaching Faculty (list to be provided separately)</p>
11.15– 11.30am	<b>Tea/Coffee break and private meeting of the panel</b>	
11.30am – 12.45pm	<p><b>Curriculum, Learning Teaching and Assessment</b></p> <p><i>Criterion 5: Written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 9: There are sound learning and teaching strategies</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Andrew Quinn, Course Director, Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• David Williams, Course Director, ICT</li> <li>• Michael Maguire, Course Director, Marketing</li> <li>• Teaching Faculty (list to be provided separately)</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> </ul>
12.45pm – 1.15pm	<b>Tour of the College with Panel</b>	
1.15pm – 2pm	<b>Lunch with private panel discussion</b>	

Time	Item	DBS Attendees
	<b>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business</b>	
2pm – 2.30pm	<b>Evaluation of the Programme Review process and Report</b>	Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law Andrew Quinn, Course Director, Accounting and Finance David Williams, Course Director, ICT Michael Maguire, Course Director, Marketing Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes Lori Johnston, Registrar Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting) Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar Grant Goodwin, QA Officer Sarah Sharkey, Student Retention Officer Maria Barry, Lecturer Damian Kettle, Lecturer Darina Reilly, Lecturer David Wallace, Lecturer Patrick Mongey, Lecturer Dr Patricia Orr, Lecturer Mary Rose Molloy, Lecturer
2.30pm – 3pm	<b>Evaluation of the Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation – Programme rationale, overall structure and dialogue on learning opportunities</b>  <i>Criterion 2: Programme objectives are clear and consistent with QQI awards sought</i>  <i>Criterion 3: Programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI award standards are well informed and soundly based</i>  <i>Criterion 4: Access Transfer and Progression arrangements are satisfactory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Andrew Quinn, Course Director, Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• David Williams, Course Director, ICT</li> <li>• Michael Maguire, Course Director, Marketing</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting)</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> <li>• Grant Goodwin, QA Officer</li> <li>• Tanya Balfe, Admissions Manager</li> <li>• Sarah Sharkey, Student Retention Officer</li> <li>• Teaching Faculty (list to be provided separately)</li> </ul>

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>DBS Attendees</b>
3pm – 3.15pm	<b>Tea/Coffee break and private meeting of the panel</b>	
3.15pm – 4pm	<p><b>Curriculum, Learning Teaching and Assessment</b></p> <p><i>Criterion 5: Written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 9: There are sound learning and teaching strategies</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Andrew Quinn, Course Director, Accounting and Finance</li> <li>• David Williams, Course Director, ICT</li> <li>• Michael Maguire, Course Director, Marketing</li> <li>• Teaching Faculty (list to be provided separately)</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> </ul>
4pm – 4.15pm	<b>Private meeting of the Panel</b>	
4.15pm – 4.45pm	<p><b>Panel meeting with Learners and Graduate representatives –</b></p> <p>Parallel meetings with representatives from both programmes</p>	<p><b>MBA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patricia Montserrat Arevalo Lopez</li> <li>• Oluwatoyin David Ajayi,</li> <li>• Nishita Joshi</li> <li>• Sean O'Sullivan</li> <li>• Ntsoaki Phakoe (Graduate)</li> <li>• Johnson Varghese (Graduate)</li> </ul> <p><b>BA (Hons)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banahan Richard (3rd year)</li> <li>• Jack O'Sullivan (2nd year)</li> <li>• Conor Lalor (1st year)</li> <li>• Laura Lyons (1st year)</li> <li>• Michael Kearns (Graduate)</li> </ul>
4.45pm – 5.15pm	<p><b>Resourcing and Supports for Learners</b></p> <p><i>Criterion 6: There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programmes as planned</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 7: There are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programmes as planned</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 8: The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme learners</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting) Business and Law</li> <li>• Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes</li> <li>• Lori Johnston, Registrar</li> <li>• Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting)</li> <li>• Tony Murphy, Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience</li> <li>• Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar</li> <li>• Grant Goodwin, QA Officer</li> <li>• Darragh Breathnach, Head of Academic Operations</li> <li>• Jane Buggle, Deputy Librarian</li> <li>• Tanya Balfe, Admissions Manager</li> <li>• Viviana Moreira Montero, MBA Programme Coordinator</li> <li>• Macdara O'Maolbhuidh, BA (Hons) in Business Programme Coordinator</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Criterion 11: Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed and cared for</i></p> <p><i>Criterion 12: The programmes are well managed</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarah Sharkey, Student Engagement Officer</li> </ul>
5.15pm – 5.45pm	<b>Deliberation of the Panel</b>	
5.45pm – 6pm	<b>Preliminary oral feedback to senior DBS staff</b>	

## Appendix 2: Full Text of the Independent Programme Review Report

### 6 Part 1 Programme Overview

<b>Provider name</b>	DBS
<b>Date of site visit</b>	27.06.2019
<b>Date of report</b>	30.08.2019

	<b>First intake</b>	<b>Last intake</b>
<b>Proposed Enrolment interval</b>	September 2019	April 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	3 intakes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● September intake</li> <li>● January intake</li> <li>● April intake</li> </ul>	

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Master's in Business Administration
	<b>Award</b>	MBA
	<b>Credit</b>	90 ECTS
	<b>Duration<sup>2</sup> (years, months, weeks)</b>	Full-time: 3 semesters of 12 weeks each across 12 months Part-time: 5 semesters of 12 week each across 24 months
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

<b>Embedded programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Business
	<b>Award</b>	Postgraduate Diploma
	<b>Credit</b>	60 ECTS
	<b>Duration (years, months, weeks)</b>	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 9 months Part-time: 4 semesters of 12 weeks each across 20 months
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

#### Evaluators:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr Philip Owende	Chair	TU Dublin
Dr Deirdre Nuttall	Secretary	Adverbage Ltd
Jacqui Tracy	Academic Panellist	Griffith College, Dublin
Paul McGuckin	Academic Panellist	Letterkenny IT
Prof. David Gwynn Morgan	Academic Panellist	Kuwait International Law School and University College Cork
Marie O'Flynn	Academic Panellist	TU Dublin
Barbara Mangan	Industry Rep.	Independent Management Consultant
Stephen Fitzgerald	Student Rep. (BA)	Carlow IT (BA Business Student)
Brian Power	Student Rep. (MBA)	Trinity (MBA Student)

<sup>2</sup> Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion

## Principal Programme: Master of Business Administration

Names of Centres Where the Programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners	Minimum number of learners
Dublin Business School	600	10
Enrolment interval ( <i>normally 5 years</i> )	Date of first intake	September 2019
	Date of last intake	April 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	3 intakes: September intake January intake April intake	
Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)	600	
Programme duration ( <u>months</u> from start to completion)	Full-time: 3 semesters of 12 weeks each across 12 months Part-time: 5 semesters of 12 week each across 24 months	
Target learner groups	<p>The MBA is aimed at learners with any of the following entry qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 8 primary undergraduate honours bachelor degree with a minimum second class second division classification (2.2) in any discipline from a recognised third level institution (or equivalent); or</li> <li>• An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA.</li> </ul> <p>English Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a degree taught in English must provide evidence of proficiency in English language equivalent to B2+ or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as IELTS, Cambridge Certificate or DBS English Assessment. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.</li> <li>• GMAT examination is a mandatory requirement for all applicants who do not hold a primary undergraduate honours bachelor degree (Level 8) with a minimum of second class second division classification.</li> </ul>	
Number of learners per intake	Minimum 10, maximum 200	
Countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and part-time	
The teaching and learning modalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom lectures</li> <li>• Case-based learning</li> <li>• Practical skills sessions</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Tutorials</li> <li>• Individual and group work</li> <li>• Online synchronous and asynchronous learning</li> </ul>	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for,	The programme is aimed at learners who wish to specialise in business administration with a view to entering industry, to progress professionally or to undertake further business studies.	



<b>what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	Learners will achieve the business expertise to inform strategic decision-making to optimise return on investment across each department. Learners will be capable of dealing with diverse intrinsic and extrinsic business realities in a creative manner to ensure sustainability and growth. Through the research dissertation, learners will develop independent research and problem-solving skills reflective of their expansion of management competencies and contribute to their chosen field of enquiry which will be valuable in a variety of contexts in the workplace.	
<b>Specifications for teaching staff</b>	Faculty will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma, with relevant and significant industry experience and/or PhD. Holders of level 8 honours degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, will also be considered. DBS has provided detailed Curriculum Vitae information for all of the lecturing staff, itemising their qualifications for each module taught by them.	
<b>Specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b>	Staff to learner ratio	Learning activity type
	1/150	Classroom sessions
	1/40	Workshops/Tutorials
	1/40	Practical sessions
	1/150	Online class (live)
	1/25	Online tutorial (interactive)
	1/150	Classroom sessions
	1/40	Workshops/Tutorials

#### Embedded Programme Higher Diploma in Business

<b>Names of Centres Where the Programmes are to be provided</b>	<b>Maximum number of learners</b>	<b>Minimum number of learners</b>
DBS	600	10
<b>Enrolment interval (normally 5 years)</b>	<b>Date of first intake</b>	September 2019
	<b>Date of last intake</b>	April 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	3 intakes: September intake January intake April intake	
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)</b>	600	
<b>Programme duration (months from start to completion)</b>	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 9 months	
	Part-time: 4 semesters of 12 weeks each across 20 months	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	The programme is aimed at learners who wish to specialise in business administration with a view to entering industry, to progress professionally or to undertake further business studies. Learners will achieve the business expertise to inform strategic decision-making to optimise return on investment across each department. Learners will be capable of dealing with diverse intrinsic and extrinsic business realities in a creative manner to ensure sustainability and growth.	
<b>Number of learners per intake</b>	Minimum 10, maximum 200	
<b>Countries for provision</b>	Ireland	

<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 9 months Part-time: 4 semesters of 12 weeks each across 20 months	
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom lectures</li> <li>• Case-based learning</li> <li>• Practical skills sessions</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Tutorials</li> <li>• Individual and group work</li> <li>• Online synchronous and asynchronous learning</li> </ul>	
<b>Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)</b>	<p>The Postgraduate Diploma in Business is aimed at learners with any of the following entry qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 8 primary undergraduate honours bachelor's degree with a minimum second class second division (2.2) classification in any discipline from a recognised third level institution (or equivalent); or</li> <li>• An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA.</li> </ul> <p>English Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a degree taught in English must provide evidence of proficiency in English language equivalent to B2+ or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as IELTS, Cambridge Certificate or DBS English Assessment. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.</li> <li>• GMAT examination is a mandatory requirement for all applicants who do not hold an Honours Bachelor Degree (Level 8) with a minimum of second class second division classification.</li> </ul>	
<b>Specifications for teaching staff</b>	<p>Faculty lecturing this module will have a minimum of a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree in HR or related area, with relevant and significant industry experience and/or PhD. Holders of Level 8 honours degrees in a relevant discipline, who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant senior industry experience, will also be considered.</p> <p>DBS has provided detailed Curriculum Vitae information for all of the lecturing staff, itemising their qualifications for each module taught by them.</p>	
<b>Specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff</b>		
	1/150	Classroom sessions
	1/40	Workshops/Tutorials
	1/40	Practical Sessions
	1/150	Online class (live)
	1/25	Online tutorial (interactive)

## 7 Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b> Yes, the provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme.

#### Master of Business Administration

1. The relevant programme submission documents meet all of the prerequisites to apply for the programme validation.
2. At the initial meeting with DBS Senior Management Team, the panel inquired and was duly assured that the information provided was truthful, and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed, and all relevant supporting declarations of compliance were satisfied.

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration<sup>4</sup>

As the proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 1 for the MBA Award will apply.

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</li> <li>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</li> <li>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</li> <li>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</li> <li>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.</li> <li>(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>g) For each programme and embedded programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The <b>minimum intended programme learning outcomes</b> and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are <b>consistent with</b> the relevant QQI awards standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>h) Where applicable, the <b>minimum intended module learning outcomes</b> are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</li> <li>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>6</sup></li> </ul>
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<sup>3</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.

<sup>4</sup> Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes.

<sup>5</sup> Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

<sup>6</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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	Yes. The programme's aims and objectives are clearly expressed with respect to both the principal programme and the embedded programme.

#### Master of Business Administration

1. The MBA includes a range of modules that are designed to prepare students for the workplace, and in particular for managerial roles. The compatible array of electives permits them to select a study/career pathway—for example, by focusing on HR or IT components of the course.
2. The range of modules on offer are suitable and fit for purpose, and the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
3. The module learning outcomes are objectively mapped to the QQI Award Standards for Business at Level 9 of the NFQ.

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

DBS has proposed re-introducing the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration as an exit award. This is in recognition of the fact that some students who enrol on the MBA programme, and having successfully completed various modules, may realise that they do not wish to do a dissertation, or decide to leave for another reason after accruing the requisite credits. The Diploma recognises the skills that they have acquired and ensures that their efforts are recognised.

As the proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 2 for the MBA Award will apply.

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>7</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>8</sup> of learner demand for the programme.
  - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>9</sup>.
  - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>10</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.

<sup>7</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>8</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

<sup>9</sup> It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

<sup>10</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.

Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)	Comment
	Yes. The programme concept, implementation strategy, and interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based. In particular, DBS shows good evidence of engagement with industry.

#### Master of Business Administration

1. DBS provided robust evidence of engagement with a range of stakeholders, including learner focus groups, class representatives, graduates, staff, and members of industry, including employers of former DBS students. Formal meetings are held with class representatives (once per semester), and DBS is actively engaged with graduates of the college. DBS staff regularly attend seminars and events for professional development and are actively engaged with the peers in similar colleges in Ireland and overseas.
2. There is a very clear demand for graduates from MBA programmes, which employers particularly interested in skills that include communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork skills, etc.
3. The course successfully attracts students from both within Ireland and overseas.
4. However, some of the students interviewed by the panel commented that they felt that their peers on similar MBA programmes in competing colleges were being challenged more, raising some concern that possibly some of the modules are not sufficiently demanding, particularly for students who have already acquired several years' experience in industry (See item 1 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award; therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 3 for the MBA Award will apply.

#### 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>11</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>12</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.

<sup>11</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>12</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)

<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Partially satisfactory. The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory. However, a deficit related to Criterion 4 (d) was noted in respect to the admission of recent graduates to the MBA programme.
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#### Master of Business Administration

1. Should students wish to transfer from another institution to DBS, the relevant academic transcripts are produced. Should students wish to transfer from DBS to another institution, the academic transcripts are similarly provided.
2. The manual provided to students is comprehensive. DBS is aware that students do not always read all of the data relevant to them, so various mechanisms are in place to help them to access the information. There may be some scope for streamlining and simplifying this material. DBS also uses Moodle VLE.
3. International applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a degree taught in English must provide evidence of proficiency in English language equivalent to B2+ or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as IELTS, Cambridge Certificate or DBS English Assessment. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.
4. The recognition and evaluation of experiential learning (RPL) will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Applicants who do not have a Level 8 qualification may also be considered through the College's normal RPL procedures. In such instances, an interview of the candidate may be required. The interview assessment criteria will include education record, motivation to take the programme, ability to demonstrate knowledge of the cognate area through work experience, applicant's career plan, how the programme will support their career path, and their understanding of the challenges and demands of taking a Level 9 programme. Applicants will be required to complete the application form and provide written evidence as to their application for acceptance onto the programme with prior experiential learning. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances, candidates with level 7 qualifications can access the MBA course.
5. DBS documentation is clear about entry requirements.
6. However, concern was raised at student interview, which has a strong bearing on the admission criteria to the MBA programme. The programme admits recent graduates. As such, a concern was expressed that, in specific cases, students with more industry experience prior to enrolment felt insufficiently challenged in coursework and assessments as compared to students enrolled in similar programmes in other colleges (See item 1 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 4 for the MBA Award will apply.

#### 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>13</sup>.

<sup>13</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.



<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 <b>duration</b> (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its <b>fulltime equivalent contact time</b> (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.<sup>14</sup></p>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Partially satisfactory. In general, the programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose. However, there was a deficit in respect of Criterion 5 (e)(g).

**Master of Business Administration**

1. Generally, the programme’s curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose. The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented; i.e., course and constituent module contents are well described with clear programme learning outcomes and module learning outcomes pitched at appropriate NFQ level. They align well with assessment strategies to meet the designated outcomes.
2. Students can choose from a range of electives that guide their educational path, in accordance with their career goals.
3. However, the panel notes that the same module “Reinventing Performance Management” scheduled in Semester 2 (FT) and Semester 4 (PT) is also replicated in the undergraduate BA programme. While DBS has provided assurances that the courses are not actually taught in an identical manner, it was unclear how any distinction could be achieved in practice (See item 2 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).
4. DBS course management process has noted the relatively high failure rates in subjects with a high maths component, and therefore additional supports are available for such modules.
5. The panel noted that specific module titles should be reassessed to gain clarity of coverage. For example, consider revising the module titled “Marketing Management” to “Strategic Marketing” for more accurate description of contents.

**Postgraduate Diploma in Business**

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 5 for the MBA Award will apply.

**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>15</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>
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<sup>14</sup> If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

<sup>15</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.

<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>16</sup> opportunities<sup>17</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>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Yes, DBS has a full complement of suitably qualified, capable and engaged staff.

#### Master of Business Administration

7. Staff/student ratios compare reasonably well with similar programmes elsewhere at the designated level of the award, both for purposes of course delivery and for provision of student support such as pastoral care.
8. The programme is supported by a good complement of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. DBS also shows great initiative in bringing in a large number of guest lecturers, notably from industry, who can provide the students with fascinating and educational insights. The students interviewed by the panel themselves commented on the usefulness of this approach.
9. However, the curriculum vitae for a number of staff were thin on relevant information, primarily focusing on current teaching roles and not how they qualify for the same, therefore incongruent to the declared staff specification. It is recommended that DBS adopt a standard CV format to clearly reflect the relevant qualifications and experience against staff teaching and supervision assignments.
10. Given the heavy teaching workload, the opportunity for staff to engage in research and professional development is limited, despite the fact that DBS does have systems in place to facilitate staff development. In cases of staff who do not yet hold doctorates, where appropriate for respective areas of specialisation, staff members are encouraged to pursue PhD studies.
11. There is a high dependency on hiring part-time academic staff. While this is understandable on an MBA programme where specialist knowledge is required from time to time, or even academics with specialist skills for integrating group work, such staffing regime imposes vulnerability in continuity and consistency in the programme.

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 6 for the MBA Award will apply.

#### 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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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)</li> <li>(ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)</li> </ol>
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<sup>16</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>17</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.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment</li> <li>(iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable</li> <li>(v) technical support</li> <li>(vi) administrative support</li> <li>(vii) company placements/internships – if applicable</li> </ul> <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"> <li>(i) Planned intake (first five years) and</li> <li>(ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.</li> </ul> <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Yes, the physical resources provided by DBS to implement the programme as planned are adequate. Minimum provisions are prescribed under quality framework.

Master of Business Administration

1. DBS has suitable accommodation for meeting the learning and human needs of its students. The review panel visited a range of teaching spaces and IT labs and noted that the learning spaces were well-equipped and provided comfortable working environment.
2. DBS library was noted to be an exceptionally well-run facility supported by qualified, engaged, helpful staff. Students have access to a wide range of printed and online resources.
3. DBS uses Moodle Virtual Learning Environment to support course delivery.
4. DBS has a detailed five-year plan, incorporating all necessary elements and criteria.
5. Programme controls include programme agreement as part of the Quality process and considers a range of operations aspects including intellectual property rights (see DBS Quality Handbook, pp. 73)

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Higher Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 7 for the MBA Award will apply.

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b> Yes. There was evidence of an embedded sense of duty of care by staff to DBS students, which was confirmed in the interview with both ongoing students and recent graduates.

Master of Business Administration

1. The programme admits both local and international students, and there was evidence of adequate considerations of both social and cultural supports to learners.
2. Supports for student engagement included provision for peer learning, assigned project supervision, and invited guest lecturers to reinforce contextual aspects of the programme.
3. DBS has adopted Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which complements and supports the onsite face-to-face delivery of programmes.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 8 for the MBA Award will apply.

Criterion 9 There are sound teaching and learning strategies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</li> <li>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</li> <li>e) Individualised guidance, support<sup>18</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b></p>	<p><b>Comment:</b> Yes. Generally, the teaching and learning strategies are adjudged to be sound. However, interaction with students yielded some concerns that should be addressed in respect of admission criteria to the programme.</p>

Master of Business Administration

1. The course documents reviewed showed evidence of comprehensive teaching strategies capable of meeting programme outcomes and learning outcomes of the designated award.
2. There was general evidence that learning is monitored and supervised, including the provisions for individual guidance, support and timely formative feedback.
3. The deficit noted under Criterion 10 (item 6) is relevant to meeting the requirements for sound teaching and learning strategies (Criterion 9).

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 9 for the MBA Award will apply.

Criterion 10 There are sound assessment strategies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i><sup>19</sup></li> <li>b) The programme’s assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</li> <li>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>20</sup></li> <li>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</li> <li>e) There is a satisfactory written <b>programme assessment strategy</b> for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.<sup>21</sup></li> <li>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.</li> <li>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</li> </ul>	
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<sup>18</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.

<sup>19</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

<sup>20</sup> This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

<sup>21</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.

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. <sup>22</sup>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Partially satisfactory. Assessment is undertaken consistently with assessment guidelines, conventions and protocols for programmes leading to QQI awards. Specific areas of concern to the panel were highlighted and discussed with programme team.

#### Master of Business Administration

1. The assessment strategies used in the programme were generally consistent with assessment guidelines, conventions, and protocols for programmes leading to QQI awards. This was evidenced from individual module descriptors, examination papers and student scripts and direct interactions with academic staff during the panel visit.
2. A substantial portion of assessment strategy is via continuous assessments, encompassing presentations, teamwork and other modes of formative opportunities for learning. The submission and course documents reviewed included sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence to indicate that the assessments were likely to be valid/reliable.
3. The programme teams are aware of the necessity for maintaining academic integrity in assessments, vis-à-vis the challenges posed by the internet with respect to plagiarism and/or contract cheating in the educational environment. The college employs Urkund plagiarism detection software for counterchecking of academic integrity of assignments submitted by students. Assessment strategies also encompass individual student presentations and interviews for course elements requiring group and/or teamwork.
4. External examiners are appointed and retained for defined periods as sound bases for moderation of summative assessments and assessment results. However, a substantial proportion of modules are assessed through 100% continuous assessment weighting. Currently, the course descriptors do not contain enough detail on the assessment instruments employed in such modules, to enable review and/or determination of the rigour of related assessment; hence, there seems to be no provision for moderation of such modules (See item 3 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).
5. From a number of external examiner feedback reports seen, it is the panel's considered opinion that DBS needs to be more transparent and timely in its interactions with designated external examiners to its programmes. For example, an external examiner's report (GG 2017-2018), noted a specific case where there was evidence of possible plagiarism, but two examiners proceeded to award marks for the noted assessment. Whereas the panel was accorded with sufficient evidence that the specific case had been evaluated and discounted, the external examiner's report emanated from lack of communication regarding the investigation and closure of the specific case.
6. Whereas there was evidence that, in most part, assessments were returned in a timely manner to enable achievement of the formative objectives, there were reported cases of learner dissatisfaction with the speed and quality of feedback including at panel interview with ongoing students (See item 5 under Summary of recommendations to the provider).

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 10 for the MBA Award will apply.

#### 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.
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<sup>22</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).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</li> <li>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</li> <li>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities<sup>23</sup>.</li> <li>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><sup>24</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.</li> <li>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).</li> </ul>	
<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Yes, there were multiple evidences that enrolled learners are well informed, guided and cared for.

#### Master of Business Administration

2. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure that the most at-risk students are quickly identified and supported. DBS formally encourages peer support and peer mentoring. It was noted that the majority of part-time MBA students are Irish, while most full-time students are from overseas. This has provided a unique cohort combination to foster peer-support to overseas students when required.
3. There are provisions to accommodate students with a variety of particular educational needs, e.g.: provisions for students with a variety of disabilities; provisions for language support etc (see Learning Support in DBS incorporating promotion of inclusion in DBS Quality Assurance Handbook, section 9.3.1).
4. There is strong support for student well-being and pastoral care. For example, international students are assisted in identifying suitable accommodation and settling into life in Ireland.
5. At programme level, students may be assisted to tailor their MBA to match their personal and career goals.
6. There is a transparent and fair procedure for appeals complaints (see section 6.12 in DBS Quality Assurance Handbook).

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award, therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 11 for the MBA Award will apply.

#### Criterion 12 The programme is well managed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
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<sup>23</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>24</sup> See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

- 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>25</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.

<b>Satisfactory (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment:</b> Partially Satisfactory. Generally, there was evidence that the programme is well-managed. However, Annual Programme Review (APR) is critical to ensure consistent learning experience (item (e), (g) above).
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#### Master of Business Administration

1. The programme has a comprehensive quality assurance framework defining relevant policies and procedures,<sup>26</sup> and which was available to the panel. Among other aspects, the QA manual defines intrinsic governance strictures and processes, protocols for course development, monitoring and review, and teaching, learning and compatible assessment frameworks.
2. The programme governance structure include the following posts (among others): An Executive Dean; Registrar; Discipline-specific Course Directors for covering the thematic subjects on offer at DBS; Head of Academic Programmes; Head of Faculty and School; Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning; Head of Student Experience; Admissions Manager; Student Engagement Officer. These posts ensure that their jurisdictions functionally interface with the general institutional procedures.
3. While the overall assessment of programme management was deemed satisfactory, a systematic Annual Programme Review (APR) is critical to ensuring that any problems /issues identified in the programme are dealt with conclusively, and do not spill into the next academic year. Such a strategy and accompanying reporting can be informed by learner feedback, lecturer performance feedback, and External Examiners feedback, which are all collated by DBS in each academic year.

#### Postgraduate Diploma in Business

The proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Business Award of DBS is an exit award; therefore, the recommendation under Criterion 12 for the MBA Award will apply.

<sup>25</sup> See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

<sup>26</sup> DBS Quality Assurance Handbook 2016-17 Edition, 359 pp.

## 8 Overall recommendation to QQI

### Principal programme

Select one	
	<del>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;</del>
√	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); <sup>27</sup>
	<del>Not satisfactory.</del>

### Embedded programme

Select one	
	<del>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;</del>
√	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); <sup>28</sup>
	<del>Not satisfactory.</del>

### 8.1 Reasons<sup>29</sup> for the overall recommendation

From the evidences adduced to the panel and the subsequent discussions with the programme team, the following criteria were determined as *Partially Satisfactory*:

- *Criterion 4*: The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory.
- *Criterion 5*: The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose
- *Criterion 10*: There are sound assessment strategies.
- *Criterion 12*: The programme is well managed.

Whereas the noted deficits were not adjudged as qualifying to determine the MBA programme Unsatisfactory; individually and collectively, they bear significant impedance to meeting the designated awards standards and high-quality learning experience.

<sup>27</sup>Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude “Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions” where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

<sup>28</sup>Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude “Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions” where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

<sup>29</sup>Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A “Not Satisfactory” recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

## 8.2 Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

1. It is the panel's considered opinion that the primary function of an MBA programme is to provide a rigorous academic training to participants with prior work/industry experience. With the current student cohorts that include recent graduates lacking in work/industry experience, this inevitably has a negative impact on the learning experience; evidence collected from the graduate interview session indicated that students with work/industry experience at enrolment felt insufficiently challenged in elements of coursework and assessments as compared to students enrolled in similar programmes in equivalent institutions. Therefore:
  - 1.1 The panel recommends entry qualification of 2 to 3 years' minimum industry experience, or for DBS to rationalise how the lack of experience can be practicably bridged to enable candidates to achieve the designated award standard.
  - 1.2 DBS should consider amending relevant modules in the programme, with sole purposes of integrating contemporary case studies to enhance the learning experience, and as best practice in MBA programme offering.
2. It was noted that the module "Reinventing Performance Management" in the MBA programme is replicated as "Contemporary Performance Management" module in the BA programme at DBS. While DBS asserted at the panel interviews that the courses are not actually taught in an identical manner, it was unclear how any distinction could be achieved in practice when the defined content is the same, while the designated award standards are distinctively different. The "Reinventing Performance Management" module should be re-written, i.e., Module Aims, Learning Outcomes, Syllabus Contents, and supporting resources per the NFQ Level 9 Award Standard.
3. A substantial proportion of modules (ca. 60% or 11/18, including mandatory and electives) are weighted at 100% Continuous Assessment. For 100% CA weighting, it is recommended that:
  - 3.1 DBS to provide rationale or basis for the assignment the weighting;
  - 3.2 The individual module descriptors to include enough detail on the assessment instruments/briefs employed in such modules, to enable review and/or determination of the rigour of related assessment;
  - 3.3 DBS to provide clear guidelines for External Examiner moderation of such modules. Adduced evidence indicates that, currently, the external examiners can only see the outcome of the assessment and do not contribute in any way in the peer-review and/or moderation of contents and process to instil best practice for the formative intents.
4. The DBS should adopt a systematic Annual Programme Review (APR) process that will ensure that any problems /issues identified in the programme are dealt with conclusively by the end of each academic year, and that such do not spill into the next academic year (see extended comment under Criterion 12).



#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. Whereas the application includes DBS's own comprehensive Quality Assurance Handbook (2016/17 Edition), it is the considered view of the panel that an objective QA framework must be communicated to all DBS staff who are required to use or implement different aspect of quality assurance and quality enhancement; 356 pages is a tome does not easily lend itself to such a requirement. Therefore, it is recommended that DBS consider electronic publication of the independent sections to provide for more focused access. While the handbook is still useful in the consolidated form, a smaller, pithy and more targeted user-friendly Course Design & Delivery Handbook would be a more pragmatic approach to ensuring that the manual is communicative.
2. The panel recognises that, as a private college, DBS may have challenges to enhancing scholarship of its staff not shared by HE institutions in the public sector. However, to ensure currency of competence and scholarship, it is recommended that DBS encourage its staff to participate in relevant networks and communities of practice in order to maintain appropriate qualifications and capability to implement the programme as planned (Refer Criterion 6). Scholarship work and CPD are the hallmarks of any designated areas of staff specialisation; it was notable and discussed with the programme team that some of the staff CVs submitted were thin on detail.
3. Section 2.4, p.11, of the MBA programme document recognises that, 'Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) is integral to teaching and learning and essential to the growth of knowledge and its transference. It underpins the educational process, benefitting learners and academic staff by enhancing and enriching the teaching and learning experience'. The panel was unable to find any evidence of the research strategy documents (vide, 'The current research strategy is available as a separate document') and/or a systematic support implementation, if they exist.
4. Concerns have previously been raised by external examiners (2013/14; 2017/18) requiring internal examiners to desist from repeating examination questions from the first sitting in the repeat examination. Whereas the evidenced scale was not rampant as to attract sanction in this review, it is recommended that DBS implement a more rigorous internal review process for all draft examination papers to ensure that such do not repeat or escalate.
5. Module specific recommendations include:
  - 6.1 The panel came across evidence of unsatisfactory feedback to learners specifically touching on both the speed of return and quality of such feedback. It is important that such issues are comprehensively addressed in periodic course reviews.
  - 6.2 "Marketing Management" as a module title seems basic for a Level 9 programme, and it also does not reflect contents therein.
  - 6.3 The noted potential vulnerability in continuity and consistency in the programmes due to DBS's high dependency on part-time academic staff (see comment Criterion 6) is a risk, therefore, requires comprehensive mitigation arrangements.

Lastly, as an overarching comment on the panel's experience with the review process as a whole: A Criterion-Specific Summary Report, incorporating pointers to *How*, *Who* and *Where* an institution under review deems to satisfy all the prescribed QQI Criteria 1 through 12 should accompany the documents provided to the QQI Review Panels. In this case, the core programme handbook as presented did not interface well with the criteria for review of programme. As such (and to effectively review and engage with the programme team) the review team members had to root through a lot of information, much of which was secondary to the criteria and/or repetitious. This was more challenging and obstructive to the review process, as the panel had to consider both the BA and MBA programmes of DBS in a day's sitting. This is not to say that the core programme handbook should never have been provided, but a concise criteria-oriented synopsis, and appropriately formulated to guide to the relevant parts of the core programme document(s) should have considerably enhanced the panel's efficacy towards completion of review tasks.



## 9 Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Dr Philip Owende

Date: August 30, 2019



Signed:

### 9.1 Disclaimer

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

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.

## 10 Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

### 3.1 Course Schedule for Master of Business Administration (Full-time Mode)

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		Dublin Business School												
<b>Programme Title</b>		Master of Business Administration												
<b>Award Title</b>		Master of Business Administration												
<b>Stage Exit Award Title<sup>3</sup></b>		Postgraduate Diploma in Business												
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		Full-time												
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		As per module descriptors												
<b>Award Class<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>	<b>Stage NFQ Level<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>Stage EQF Level<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>		<b>ISCED Subject code</b>		
Major	9	7	Award	9		7			90	September 2019		0413		
<b>Module Title</b> (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		<b>Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)</b>	<b>Module</b>		<b>Credit Number<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>					<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>			
			<b>Status</b>	<b>NFQ Level<sup>1</sup> where specified</b>	<b>Credit Units</b> HET Credits	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Class (or equiv) Contact Hours</b>	<b>Directed e-learning</b>	<b>Hours of Independent Learning</b>	<b>Work-based learning effort</b>	<b>C.A. %</b>	<b>Supervised Project %</b>	<b>Proctored practical demonstration %</b>	<b>Proctored written exam %</b>
Global Issues for Management		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		50			50
Marketing Management		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-
Managerial Financial Analysis		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-

Research Methods 1	1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100				-
Marketing Innovations	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100				-
Strategies for Human Resource Management	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50				50
Strategic Information Systems	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50				50
Project Management Frameworks	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100				-
Corporate Financial Management	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		40				60
Cloud Technologies for Business	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50				50
Applied Strategic Management	2	M	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100				-
Dynamic Leadership Development	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100				-
Research Methods 2	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100				-
Integrated Marketing Communications	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100				-
Reinventing Performance Management	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50				50

Innovation and Disruptive Technologies	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			
Project Management Practices	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			
Global Financial Markets	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50			50
Cloud Application Management	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			-
Dissertation	3	M	9	30 ECTS	750	6		744		100			-
<b>Special Regulations</b> (Up to 280 characters)	* Students will not progress to Dissertation unless all taught modules have been passed i.e. 60 ECTS * *Learners take 30 ECTS per semester												

### 3.2 Course Schedule for Master of Business Administration (Part-time Mode)

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		Dublin Business School											
<b>Programme Title</b>		Master of Business Administration											
<b>Award Title</b>		Master of Business Administration											
<b>Stage Exit Award Title<sup>3</sup></b>		Postgraduate Diploma in Business											
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		Part-time											
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		As per module descriptors											
<b>Award Class<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>	<b>Stage NFQ Level<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>Stage EQF Level<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>ISCED Subject code</b>		
Major	9	7	Award	9		7			90	September 2019	0413		
<b>Module Title</b> (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	<b>Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)</b>	<b>Module</b>		<b>Credit Number<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>					<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>			
		<b>Status</b>	<b>NFQ Level<sup>1</sup> where specified</b>	<b>Credit Units</b> HET Credits	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Class (or equiv) Contact Hours</b>	<b>Directed e-learning</b>	<b>Hours of Independent Learning</b>	<b>Work-based learning effort</b>	<b>C.A. %</b>	<b>Supervised Project %</b>	<b>Proctored practical demonstration %</b>	<b>Proctored written exam %</b>
Global Issues for Management	1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		50			50
Marketing Management	1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			-
Managerial Financial Analysis	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			-

Research Methods 1	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			-
Dynamic Leadership Development	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			
Integrated Marketing Communications	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
Strategies for Human Resource Management	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Strategic Information Systems	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Project Management Frameworks	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
Corporate Financial Management	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		40			60
Cloud Technologies for Business	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Applied Strategic Management	3	M	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
Research Methods 2	4	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			-
Marketing Innovations	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
Reinventing Performance Management	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Innovation and Disruptive Technologies	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			

Project Management Practices	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Global Financial Markets	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Cloud Application Management	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
Dissertation	5	M	9	30 ECTS	750	6		744		100			-
<b>Special Regulations</b> (Up to 280 characters)	* Students will not progress to Dissertation unless all taught modules have been passed i.e. 60 ECTS * *Learners take 30 ECTS per semester												

### 3.3 Course Schedule for Postgraduate Diploma of Business Administration (Full-time Mode)

<b>Name of Provider:</b>		Dublin Business School												
<b>Programme Title</b>		Postgraduate Diploma in Business												
<b>Award Title</b>		Postgraduate Diploma in Business												
<b>Stage Exit Award Title<sup>3</sup></b>		N/A												
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>		Full-time												
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>		As per module descriptors												
<b>Award Class<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>	<b>Stage NFQ Level<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>Stage EQF Level<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>ISCED Subject code</b>		
Major	9	7	Award	9			7			90	September 2019	0413		
<b>Module Title</b> (Up to 70 characters including spaces)		<b>Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)</b>	<b>Module</b>		<b>Credit Number<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>					<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>			
			<b>Status</b>	<b>NFQ Level<sup>1</sup> where specified</b>	<b>Credit Units</b> HET Credits	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Class (or equiv) Contact Hours</b>	<b>Directed e-learning</b>	<b>Hours of Independent Learning</b>	<b>Work-based learning effort</b>	<b>C.A. %</b>	<b>Supervised Project %</b>	<b>Proctored practical demonstration %</b>	<b>Proctored written exam %</b>
Global Issues for Management		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		50			50
Marketing Management		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-
Managerial Financial Analysis		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-
Research Methods 1		1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-



Marketing Innovations	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			-
Strategies for Human Resource Management	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50			50
Strategic Information Systems	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50			50
Project Management Frameworks	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			-
Corporate Financial Management	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		40			60
Cloud Technologies for Business	1	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50			50
Applied Strategic Management	2	M	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			-
Dynamic Leadership Development	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-
Research Methods 2	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	24	50	51		100			-
Integrated Marketing Communications	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			-
Reinventing Performance Management	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50			50
Innovation and Disruptive Technologies	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			

Project Management Practices	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			
Global Financial Markets	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		50			50
Cloud Application Management	2	E	9	10 ECTS	250	48	50	152		100			-
<b>Special Regulations</b> (Up to 280 characters)	* *Learners take 30 ECTS per semester												

### 3.4 Course Schedule for Postgraduate Diploma of Business Administration (Part-time Mode)

<b>Name of Provider:</b>	Dublin Business School												
<b>Programme Title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Business												
<b>Award Title</b>	Postgraduate Diploma in Business												
<b>Stage Exit Award Title<sup>3</sup></b>	N/A												
<b>Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):</b>	Part-time												
<b>Teaching and learning modalities</b>	As per module descriptors												
<b>Award Class<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Award NFQ level</b>	<b>Award EQF Level</b>	<b>Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, ..., or Award Stage):</b>	<b>Stage NFQ Level<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Stage EQF Level<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Stage Credit (ECTS)</b>	<b>Date Effective</b>	<b>ISCED Subject code</b>					
Major	9	7	Award	9	7	90	September 2019	0413					
<b>Module Title</b> (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	<b>Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)</b>	<b>Module</b>		<b>Credit Number<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>					<b>Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)</b>			
		<b>Status</b>	<b>NFQ Level<sup>1</sup> where specified</b>	<b>Credit Units</b> HET Credits	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Class (or equiv) Contact Hours</b>	<b>Directed e-learning</b>	<b>Hours of Independent Learning</b>	<b>Work-based learning effort</b>	<b>C.A. %</b>	<b>Supervised Project %</b>	<b>Proctored practical demonstration %</b>	<b>Proctored written exam %</b>
Global Issues for Management	1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		50			50
Marketing Management	1	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			-

Managerial Financial Analysis	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			
Research Methods 1	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			
Dynamic Leadership Development	2	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57	100				
Integrated Marketing Communications	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Strategies for Human Resource Management	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Strategic Information Systems	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Project Management Frameworks	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Corporate Financial Management	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		40			60
Cloud Technologies for Business	3	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Applied Strategic Management	3	M	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Research Methods 2	4	M	9	5 ECTS	125	18	50	57		100			

Marketing Innovations	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
Reinventing Performance Management	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Innovation and Disruptive Technologies	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Project Management Practices	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			
Global Financial Markets	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		50			50
Cloud Application Management	4	E	9	10 ECTS	250	36	50	164		100			-
<b>Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)</b>	* *Learners take 30 ECTS per semester												