Independent Programme Review Report

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	29th May, 2019
Date of report	28th June 2019

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Business
	Award	NFQ Level 8
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Duration[1] *(years, months, weeks)*	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 12 months Part-time: 3 semesters of 12 weeks each across 18 months

1 Introduction

The scope of the review encompassed a series of detailed interview sessions with lecturing staff, support staff, and students attending the course. The course materials, which were provided by DBS, and which were detailed and meticulous, were reviewed prior to the interviews, and a number of particular points of interest 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 are taken as an opportunity to:

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

Objectives of the Programme Review

The QQI *Programme Review Manual 2016/2017* states that the specific objectives of a Programme Review are to evaluate the programme as implemented in light of the provider's experience of providing the programme over the previous five years with a view to determining:

(1) What has been learned about the programme, as an evolving process (by which learners acquire knowledge, skill and competence), from the experience of providing it for the past five or so years?

(2) What can be concluded from a quantitative analysis of admission data, attrition rates by stage, completion rates, and grades achieved by module, stage and overall?

(3) What reputation do the programme and provider have with stakeholders (learners, staff, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, communities of practice, employers, other education and training providers) and in particular what views do the stakeholders have about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning the programme's history and its future?

(4) What challenges and opportunities are likely to arise in the next five years and what modifications to the programme are required in light of these?

(5) Whether the programme, in light of its stated objectives and intended learning outcomes, demonstrably addresses explicit learning needs of target learners and society?

(6) What other modifications need to be made to the programme and its awards to improve or reorient it?

(7) Whether the programme (modified or unmodified) meets the current QQI validation criteria (and sub-criteria) or, if not, what modifications need to be made to the programme to meet the current criteria?

(8) Whether the provider continues to have the capacity and capability to provide the programme as planned (considering, for example, historical and projected enrolment numbers and profile and availability and adequacy of physical, financial and human resources) without risk of compromising educational standards or quality of provision in light of its other commitments (i.e. competing demands) and strategy?

(9) What is the justification (or otherwise) for the provider continuing to offer the programme (modified or unmodified)?

(10) What changes need to be made to related polices, criteria and procedures (including QA procedures)?

2 Independent Review Process

2.1 Evidence Perused

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

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

The guiding principles underpinning this review were:

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

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

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

Membership of Provider's Review Team

Ann Masterson	Acting Course Director
Dr Chantal Ladias	Lecturer
Mike Venn	Lecturer
Bernie Lydon	Lecturer
Darina Reilly	Lecturer
Claire Devlin	Lecturer
Dermot Gallagher	Lecturer
James Browne	Lecturer
Dr Michael Maguire	Lecturer
David Wallace	Lecturer
Ray Whelan	Lecturer
Michael Kielty	Study Abroad Head of Department/Lecturer
Leo D'Arcy	Study Abroad Director of Studies/Lecturer
Andrew Browne	Lecturer
Donagh Farrell	Lecturer
Una Pittion	Lecturer
Donal Casey	Lecturer
Declan Scully	Lecturer
Noel Gardiner	Lecturer
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Dr Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Dr Tony Murphy	Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Dr Kerry McCall Magan	Head of Academic Programmes
Dr Lee Richardson	Data Analytics and Reporting Manager
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Jane Buggle	Deputy Librarian
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School Operations
Darragh Breathnach	Head of Academic Operations
Anita Dwyer	School Executive Officer
Eimear Forde / Macadara O'Maolbhuaidh	Programme Coordinators
Grant Goodwin	Quality Assurance Officer
Ainoa Zalabardo	Student Experience Officer – Study Abroad
Sarah Sharkey	Student Engagement Officer

2.2   Agenda

See Appendix 2.

2.3   Persons Met

Staff, Students and Graduates with whom the Panel Met

Senior Management

Andrew Conlan-Trant	Executive Dean
Kerry McCall Mangan	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
Ann Masterson	Course Director (Acting)
Michael Kielty	Head of Department, Arts, Language and Study Abroad
Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Grant Goodwin	QA Officer

Dialogue on Learning Opportunities:

Ann Masterson	Course Director
Michael Kielty	Head of Department, Arts, Language and Study Abroad
Kerry McCall Mangan	Head of Academic Programmes
Lori Johnston	Registrar
Emma Balfe	Head of Faculty and School (Acting)
Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
Martin Doris	Assistant Registrar
Tanya Balfe	Admissions Manager

Programme Team

Name	Job Title with the Provider
Darina Reilly	Management and Organisational Behaviour
Chantal Ladias	Marketing and Strategic Marketing
Michael Maguire	Marketing, Strategic Marketing and Digital Media Strategies
Mike Venn	Legal issues for Business
Dermot Gallagher	Economics
Ray Whelan	Professional Skills for Personal Development
David Wallace	Human Capital Management
Linda Moran	Human Capital Management
Richard O'Callaghan	Business Finance
John Noble	Digital Media Strategies
Ann Masterson	Business Strategy
Claire Devlin	Business Strategy

Learners and Graduates

Gabriela Melo Santos	HDIP in Business student
Osariemen Osagiede	HDIP in Business student

3   Review of the Programme Review Report

3.1   Fitness for Purpose of the Programme

The programme serves as a conversion course in business (including management and organisational behaviour) for graduates of Level 8 non-cognate degree, giving them insight into the various influences affecting peoples' behaviour, performance, management and engagement in organisations, exploring the bottom line dependent variables, or metrics, in which organisations are interested and giving them the understanding they need to manage the influencing factors in order to achieve better outcomes.

In general, this programme is fit for purpose, in that the programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with QQI Award Standards for Business. The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement of its intended programme learning outcomes.

The programme attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds—notably domestic and non-EU—for example, in the academic year 2017/8, there were four male and four female students, of whom three were Irish and five were from non-EU backgrounds. To date, no students from EU (other than Irish) backgrounds have applied to do the course. In terms of student enrolments, DBS explained that the programme secured Springboard funding for A/Y 2015/16, which resulted in a peak of registered students for that academic year. However, the panel expressed concern at the decline in student numbers since A/Y 2015/16 and recommended that a marketing plan be put together to increase student numbers enrolled on the programme.

Graduate Destination Surveys indicated that for 2017 and 2018 graduates of the programme, 82% of graduates 36% were in employed and 46% were in further education within 6 months of course completion.

3.2   Achievement of the Programme of its Stated Objectives

This one-year Higher Diploma in Business Programme is aimed at students with an academic background in other areas; essentially, this is a conversion course that helps students to move into the area of business. This course provides a range of modules that introduce students to relevant topics, including marketing, economics, digital literacy for business, and so on.

The programme objectives, as defined by DBS, are as follows:

1. Equip learners with an understanding of the theory and principles underlying business function(s) and administration.
2. Advance in learners an appropriate expertise in the major aspects of business, and an awareness of core disciplines.
3. Develop a range of key interpersonal skills, characteristics, and attitudes to learners to work professionally, individually, and in a team.
4. Cultivate in learners a range of key skills, personal qualities, and attitudes essential to support progression to a career in business or to further academic study.
5. Develop learner capacity to organise diverse information, arguments, and conclusions and present them in a clear, coherent way.
6. Relate business principles, concepts, and theories and frameworks to a wide range of business and industry settings.
7. Understand the various functions of business and demonstrate this awareness by producing a multi-faceted and innovative business strategy.

8. Enable learners to apply their learning through their professional lives, reflecting their professional and personal development.

Minimum intended learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme modules and are mapped against the minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

DBS provided the following information with reference to the range of modules currently provided by the course:

Stage label	Module title	ECTS	Module synopsis
Award	Management and Organisational Behaviour	5	The module aims to provide learners with the key concepts of organisational behaviour and management, with a focus on the academic management theories and models and their interpretation. The module underpins how to manage individuals and groups, leading to an increase of human capital in an organisation and enhanced organisational performance.
Award	Marketing	5	The module is an introduction to the various theories of Marketing. Learners will reflect on the various concepts and theories of Marketing dominating the field of Marketing. Learners will be encouraged, through a case study-based approach to develop a rounded view of marketing within the context of an organisation.
Award	Business ICT	5	The module focuses on the role information systems (IS) play in the modern business environment. Learners will gain insight into how information systems play a key part in enabling different types of innovation and in gaining competitive advantage. It is imperative that learners gain an appreciation of IS security, privacy and ethical aspects when managing in the digital world and in this module they will apply their skills throughout to a design project.
Award	Legal Issues for Business	5	The module aims to provide learners with an underpinning as to how the Irish legal system operates and a foundation in the fundamental principles of law as they are pertinent to the business world. The module considers the key aspects of business law including contract, tort, consumer, employment and commercial law and demonstrates to learners both the legal constraints and obligations impacting commercial enterprise. The module underpins the appropriate and relevant academic legal theories and principles enabling the learner to appraise, interpret and

			apply such theories and principles to a range of business opportunities and challenges.
Award	Economics	5	The module aims to provide learners with the key economic concepts and provides learners with an understanding of the global economy and its connection to organisations, individuals and society. The module introduces the learner to the concept of the free market and Keynesian ideology and applies the theoretical framework of economics to enable the learner develop an erudite view of the major solutions to economic problems arising from production and distribution of goods and services.
Award	Professional Skills for Personal Development	5	The module aims to improve learners' employability through learner actions. Learners are required to research the labour market and are supported in working towards achieving their desired career outcome by specialised staff and module tutors. The ability of learners to critically reflect on their personal skills development and apply this to other learning activities will be enhanced. In addition to being in possession of employer-relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes are not enough for a learner to enter and move within the labour market, and to realise their potential, learners need to be capable of exploiting their assets, of marketing them and selling them. This module will task learners with the development of an integrated and personal strategy to market their skills, competencies and personal attributes for success.
Award	Human Capital Management	5	The module aims to provide learners with the key structures and frameworks, which comprise human capital management, specifically: talent planning, management and resourcing and their strategic role within an organisation. The module evaluates the significance of managing an organisation's employees, relays, and relates their contribution to the overall productivity of an organisation focusing specifically on the pursuit of competitive advantage and sustainability.
Award	Strategic Marketing	5	This module provides learners with the opportunity to reflect on real marketing case studies and analyse these. A series of case studies will be selected at the beginning of this course as these relate to current issues in Marketing. Learners will be exposed to variety of industries and will have the opportunity to apply the body of knowledge

			they have acquired in previous marketing modules. Case studies will be presented in class and students will be required to come prepared to participate actively in the class.
Award	Business Finance	5	The module incorporates the areas of financial management and financial accounting necessary for a business graduate in a management position. The module provides knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts that underpin financial accounting within the context of business finance. The module will provide knowledge and understating of the key financial opportunities and challenges faced by managers and enable the implementation of contemporary management solutions for the individual, groups and the organisation. The module provides a platform from which the learners can assess the principles and concepts, which underpin financial accounting to ensure appropriate financial solutions, which lead to sustainable and ethical decision making within the business environment.
Award	Digital Media Strategies	5	The module aims to provide the learner with well-rounded and practical experiential learning by introducing the learner to a variety of digital social media tools in the business context. The module looks to how an effective digital media strategy articulates your business goals, the audience you are trying to reach, and the most cost-effective methods for managing your time and resources.
Award	Business Strategy	10	The module will provide the learner with the knowledge, skills and tools 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 of the nature of strategy content, and of strategic processes in a variety of industry and organisational settings. This module is proposed as a Capstone as it synthesises learning ensuring graduates are capable of research and development leading to sustainability and growth of an organisation.

The panel recommends that the programme team reviews the mix of modules included in the programme and especially the number of credits allocated to 'marketing' modules (currently 3 modules of 5 credits each) to the possible detriment of other areas within the business discipline. The panel notes that marketing material for the programme states that work placement/work based

learning is available and the panel recommends that a work placement module be included in the programme or the reference to work placement in marketing material be clarified.

Learner consultation and feedback is an integral aspect of continuous monitoring and review in DBS and provided a valuable contribution to the review process of the programme. One of the main issues raised by learners was the desire for a wider variety of assessment across the programme. In this regard, the panel recommends that the programme board consider the assessment strategy adopted for the programme and, particularly, in terms of skills development as identified in the module and programme intended learning outcomes.

As part of the consultation process with industry and potential employers, a number of industry interviews took place. The panel noted the positive feedback received, but as highlighted, in that feedback, recommends that the topics of e-commence and ethics be reflective more clearly in the programme modules.

3.3   Learner Profile

The Higher Diploma in Business targets learners with a Level 8 degree in a non-cognate area who wish to specialise in the field of business and business administration with a view to entering business, to progress professionally, or to undertake postgraduate studies in a related field. The programme provides the learner with the fundamental skills of business administration, enabling them to play an active role in the management, sustainability, and development of commercial enterprise.

There is a comparatively high intake of students from non-Irish (generally non-EU) backgrounds on to the programme. For example, one of the students who met the panel was a graduate of engineering and a Brazilian national who had studied in Brazil, and who now wished to move into a business-related area. The panel were satisfied that DBS has the appropriate in-service supports to address the particular needs of international learners and to enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.

A smaller cohort of students on the programme comprises of learners who have studied business or a business-related topic in the past, and who wish to progress to study at master's level, but who did not do sufficiently well to move straight into a master's programme. For example, one of the students whom the panel met was a graduate of an Irish university who had successfully passed a Bachelor's degree in a business subject but had not received sufficiently high marks to progress to master's level.

DBS confirmed that 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 (CEFRL). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as the Cambridge Certificate. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.

3.4   Learner Performance

In terms of completion rates, on average over the past five years, students have achieved an average pass rate of 68.7%, a fail rate of 13.04% and a non-activity rate of 18.26%. The most successful year in this period was the academic year 2014/5, when 87.5% of the students passed. DBS referred to how

learners are monitored, guided, informed and cared for, with all efforts made to ensure that learners' needs are identified and supported as appropriate.

Between the academic years 2014/5-107.8, 14% of learners on this programme graduated with First Class Honours, a further 61% graduated with Upper Second-Class Honours, 22% with Lower Second-Class Honours and 3% with a Pass Award.

Graduates of the Higher Diploma in Business may gain entry to Level 9 Business programmes such as the MSc Management Practice, MSc Marketing and Master of Business Administration as offered by DBS. Graduates of the programme tend to progress to study for a Master's Degree in a related subject (such as business, IT, marketing, finance, etc.), either at DBS or in another third-level institution. For example, within 6 months of graduating, 36% of students from the surveyed 2017 and 2018 cohort were in employment, while 46% had progressed to further education. All graduates who have progressed to further education have proceeded to Master programmes, either full- or part-time.

3.5 Quality of the Learning Environment

The programme's social, cultural and intellectual environment including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.

DBS uses Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment. Many lectures are recorded and then placed on Moodle, which is particularly helpful for students whose first language is not English and who may benefit from viewing a lecture a number of times.

While modules are delivered through a mix of lectures, workshops, tutorials and practical sessions, teaching and learning focuses on the learner applying problem-solving skills and undertaking critical reflection and critique of case studies. Accordingly, classes are interactive sessions, with students actively engaged in the learning process.

Learner surveys are conducted annually, typically two weeks after commencement of each module and two weeks before the end of each module. The results of these surveys have indicated high levels of satisfaction with the variety and relevance of modules, with the small class sizes and the focus on interactive learning, with the quality of teaching and with the support from library and faculty operations. Students have also offered some constructive criticism, in particular, that they would like to see a wider variety of assessment across the programme. This is consistent with the findings of the panel (see below), which has identified assessment as an area of need of greater attention.

Robust systems are in place to identify at-risk students who might be vulnerable to dropping out or failing, and early interventions are made with these students to provide them, where possible, with the supports that they require. Learner attendance is taken at every lecture and an 'early warning' system ensures that where a learner's attendance falls short, with the Course Director being notified in the first instance. In conjunction with the Student Retention Officer, the Course Director determines any issue that warrants intervention and, if required, a range of measures can be adopted. The Course Director also manages the communication between the Registrar's office and the learner to ensure that the learner is aware of their obligations and responsibilities. Support services (including academic) are available to all students, as well as a careers guidance service.

DBS has invested in the physical environment of the college (including ICT) and are deemed appropriate for the delivery of the programme.

The relatively small number of students attending this course is a factor that represents a risk to the quality of the learning environment that the student experiences and the panel recommends that efforts should be made to increase student numbers to facilitate more opportunities for group and team-work and to create a more positive learning environment generally.

3.6   Suitability of Learner Workload

The full-time programme consists of 6 modules of 5 credits each in the first semester and 5 modules (4 of which are 5 credits and one of 10 credits) in the second semester. The panel recommends that DBS review the mix of modules and, in terms of helping the learner to manage workload, to consider the number of credits attached to each module (i.e. being a multiple of 5 credits).

The panel queried the volume of assessment that the learner is expected to complete and recommended that the number of assessments across the programme be reviewed and joint assessment be considered.

3.7   Effectiveness of Procedures for Assessment

DBS provided the following information with respect to assessment on the programme:

Module	Continuous Assessment	Examination
Legal Issues for Business	50%	50%
Economics	30%	70%
Business Finance	40%	60%
Business ICT	50%	50%
Marketing	50%	50%
Strategic Marketing	50%	50%
Management and Organisational Behaviour	50%	50%
Human Capital Management	100%	-
Business Strategy	100%	-
Personal Skills for Professional Development	100%	-

The panel queried that students are being over-assessed. Lecturing staff admitted that this had been a matter of concern with efforts made to address in reviewing the programme, but appears to remain as an outstanding issue. Students are given a large number of assignments to complete, and even though some of these assignments incorporate elements applicable to more than one module, greater attention could be given to ensuring that the students' workload is balanced.

The panel expressed concern at the inconsistency across the modules with regard to assignment expectation, exam lengths and % of total module marks given for particular assessment element and recommended that this matter be reviewed. The panel emphasised the need for greater level of dialogue between teaching staff in terms of ensuring that assessments are consistent across modules. In addition, the panel recommends that the mixture of group and individual assessment be examined.

3.8 Quality Assurance Arrangements

DBS emphasised the following in terms of quality assurance arrangements:

- DBS has created a robust, provider-owned and established quality assurance infrastructure. This is intended to ensure consistent and transparent application of policy across all schools and programmes within DBS. DBS policies and procedures are published in the Quality Assurance Handbook, which is reviewed annually, and updated editions are published periodically. The current edition can be found on the DBS website.
- All academic programmes are subject to DBS assessment regulations, which are published in the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) and are in accordance with *QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2013* and documents referred to therein.
- The Course Director, in conjunction with the lecturing team and Programme Coordinator, is responsible for ensuring that all QA functions on the programme are carried out in compliance with overarching College policies. There are no programme-specific Quality Assurance policies for this programme from an academic perspective.
- Programme content and delivery are monitored on an on-going basis through Programme Board meetings, reporting up to the Board of Studies. Changes to the programme, within the scope of its current validation, are discussed by the Programme Board and ratified through the Board of Studies. Any significant changes may be required to be referred to the Registrar's Office to ensure they do not fall outside the scope of the validated programme.
- DBS ensure an equitable process which covers matters such as recognition of prior learning to learner supports. All such processes are streamlined as follows:

  - Recognition of Prior Learning - applications for the recognition of prior learning are made to admissions and processed by the Course Director, who maps the prior learning, ensuring it maps to the modules and learning outcomes of each particular module.
  - Appeals and Complaints are processed by the Quality Assurance Manager. To date, only one such complaint has been lodged by a learner on the Higher Diploma in Business.
  - Academic Support - programme coordinators provide academic support such as registration, updating student profiles, providing student cards, providing information on timetable matters and module selection.
  - Assessment Policy, Procedures and Regulations are managed by the Assessment and Regulations Manger and are relevant from submission of assessments to the process of examinations, processing papers and the release of results.
  - Learner Supports - processed by our learner supports officer as well as programme coordinators. Learner supports range from extra time in examinations to a scribe.
  - Extensions and/or deferrals are processed by programme coordinators and approved by course directors when supported by relevant documentation. Applications can take the form of either Personal Mitigating Circumstances or Continuous Assessment Extension The Quality Assurance Handbook is available to students through the Moodle system. Learners are also given information about how to initiate a complaints procedure, if necessary.

DBS encourages lecturing staff, and facilitates to some degree, to acquire a teaching qualification; several staff members have recently upgraded their qualifications from bachelor's to master's level, and from master's to PhD. Staff in the Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning Unit attend a large number of conferences addressing current teaching methods and trends, staying up to date with what students need to prepare them for today's workforce. The college provides ten research scholarships per year for staff and also fund staff when they attend conferences.

Programme team meetings are held monthly and include a student representative. Class representatives are trained with Enstep; the Student Council meets on a monthly basis and provides feedback to the college.

3.9 Proposed Modifications

DBS proposes the following changes to the Higher Diploma in Business Programme:

- Incorporate syllabus content from module on 'Lifelong Learning' to module on 'Professional Skills for Personal Development' due to overlap. The need for the module on 'Professional Skills for Personal Development' was emphasised as students are given the opportunity to practice these skills in the controlled environment offered by the college, which will facilitate them in bringing these skills to the workplace.
- A reduction in content in the module 'Management and Organisational Behaviour'. It was felt that the module was too detailed previously, and that this module's syllabus content needs to be made more general, considering that the student intake is largely composed of graduates in non-business areas.
- The Marketing module is being changed slightly to incorporate a greater emphasis on ethical matters and to take a more holistic, integrated look at marketing, combining observation and critical data.
- The module on Business ICT is being changed to allow more scope for creativity on the part of the students, with greater emphasis being placed on understanding e-commerce and web design, but retaining working with spreadsheets, PowerPoint, and other practical skills.
- The assessment in the Human Capital Management module is being changed to have continuous assessment as its main focus, to facilitate greater levels of group work.
- The Strategic Marketing module is being modified slightly to incorporate a greater emphasis on case studies.
- The module on Business Finance is being changed to move away from cost management to concentrate on financial statements and analysis, with a view to giving students a strong foundation on which they can build.
- Digital Media Strategies is moving towards an understanding of how the internet is used for marketing, etc. Students will be given basic training in understanding code but not trained in writing code *per se.* Plans are in train to provide students with digital badges that reflect their progress, which the panel strongly encourages.
- The module on Business Strategy, which incorporates Corporate Social Responsibility, is retaining much of the same content, but will be delivered over four rather than three hours to reflect the increase in the number of credits from 5 to 10. This module will now include a capstone project.

4 Evaluation of the Modified Programme

4.1 Report

See Appendix 1.

5 Outcome of the Review

5.1 Summary

The Panel proposes the continued approval of the Higher Diploma in Business. The panel commends the lecturing staff for their engagement and a well-developed sense of their duty of care to the students. In addition, the panel commends DBS on the learning supports and resources available to the learners and the communication channels between the members of staff and the student body.

5.2 Recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Business
	Award	Higher Diploma
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation *Satisfactory*	- The assessment strategy adopted for the programme needs to be considered, particularly, a)_in terms of skills development as identified in the module and programme intended learning outcomes. b) the number of assessments across the programme be reviewed and joint assessment. c) the mixture of group and individual assessment. d) the consistency/equity across modules with regard to assignment expectation, exam lengths and % of total module marks given for particular assessment element. - A work placement module be included in the programme or the reference to work placement in marketing material be clarified. - The mix of modules be reviewed, especially the number of credits allocated to 'marketing' modules (currently 3 modules of 5 credits each) to the possible detriment of other areas within the business discipline. - The application for Digital Badges is encouraged.

		• Ecommerce needs to be brought to the fore and reflected more across a range of modules. • Ethics also needs a more focused approach in different modules. • A marketing plan be put together to increase student numbers enrolled on the programme and improve student experience on the programme.

6 Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Marian Duggan	Chair	Limerick Institute of Technology
Deirdre Nuttall	Secretary	Independent writer and researcher
Martin Meagher	Academic Expert	Institute of Technology Carlow
Graham Heaslip	Academic Expert	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
Brian Marrinan	Industry Expert	Journey Partners
Barbara Mangan	Industry Expert	Independent HR Consultant
Ivan Robertson	Academic Expert	Lecturer ISB/CEA Dublin Adjunct Professor, Champlain College (Vermont/Dublin)
Emily Costigan	Student	Maynooth University

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

7 Appendix 1: independent Programme Review Report

Part 1

Provider name	DBS
Date of site visit	29/05/2019
Date of report	29/06/2019

	First intake	Last intake
Proposed Enrolment interval	September 2019	August 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	3 intakes (September, January and March)	

Principal programme	Title	Higher Diploma in Business
	Award	Higher Diploma
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Duration[2] *(years, months, weeks)*	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 12 months Part-time: 3 semesters of 12 weeks each across 18 months
	Recommendation *Satisfactory*	Satisfactory

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[2] Expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion

7 Principal Programme: Higher Diploma in Business

Names of Centres Where the Programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of learners	Minimum number of learners
DBS: Dublin Campus	450	10
Target learner groups	Learners with a Level 8 Honours Bachelor's Degree in a non-cognate discipline who wish to specialise in the field of business and business administration with a view to entering industry, progress professionally or to undertake postgraduate studies in a related field.	
Number of learners per intake	10-150	
Countries for provision	Ireland	
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time and Part time	
The teaching and learning modalities	1. Classroom-lectures 2. Case-based learning 3. Practical skills sessions 4. Workshops 5. Tutorials 6. Individual and group work 7. Blended Learning	
Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)	The programme is designed as a conversion course for graduates of a Level 8 non-cognate degree who aspire to enter the business world and to enter a management role. Graduates will be eligible for general management roles within a specific subfield of business complimenting their previous experience and learning.	
Specifications for teaching staff	Teaching staff are expected to have at least a level 9 qualification in a relevant field (Business, Human Resource Management, Law, Accounting and/or Finance, Management, Marketing, Digital Marketing, Economics, ICT), which can be waived in the case of staff members with at least a level 8 qualification in a relevant field, and a broad range of relevant industry experience	
Specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	552 (Total contact hours) 552/500 = 1.1 1.1 x 1.64 = 1.8 WTE = 1.8 FT - 360 CH = 590 total WTE [360 x 1.64] = 1.18 WTE [590/500] PT - 234 CH = 384 total WTE = 0.77 WTE ratio is 0.64 support for 1 faculty = 1.64 total WTE Lecturing	

Part 2 Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub criteria
Yes	The provider meets the prerequisites as stipulated	a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.
Yes	DBS Executive Dean confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.	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.
Yes	DBS has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory, and professional body requirements.	c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[3]

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria	
Yes	The aims and objectives of the programme were stated clearly both in the programme material provided by DBS to the panel and in meetings with the staff.	a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.	
Yes	The QQI Award sought in a Higher Diploma in Business	b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.	
N/A			(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
Yes	This is a conversion programme, therefore Higher Diploma Award is appropriate.	c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).	
Yes		d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.*	
Yes		e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.	
		f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are	
Yes	Programme title is a Higher Diploma in Business		(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
Yes	Programme title is fit for purpose		(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
		g) For each programme and embedded programme	
Yes	Minimum programme learning outcomes are clearly specified		(i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.[4]
Yes	Minimum programmes learning outcomes have been matched again QQI Business Award Standards		(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
Yes	Minimum learning outcomes are clearly stated	h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.	
N/A		i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.	
N/A			(i) For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[5]

7.3 Criterion 3: The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives).

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	DBS has engaged with relevant stakeholders to obtain feedback in the review of this programme.	a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.[6]
Yes	The minimum programme learning outcomes have been matched to the QQI Award Standards for Business	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.
Yes	The rationale for providing the programme has been clearly expressed.	(i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
Yes	DBS has engaged in comparing their courses not just with other similar institutions in Ireland, but also in the UK and further afield.	(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.
Yes	This course answers definite needs in the marketplace and benefits from regular interaction with a range of industries.	(iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
Yes	In terms of student enrolments, DBS explained that the programme secured Springboard funding for A/Y 2015/16, which resulted in a peak of registered students for that academic year. However, the panel expressed concern at the decline in student numbers since A/Y 2015/16 and recommended that a marketing plan be put together to increase student numbers enrolled on the programme.	(iv) There is evidence[7] of learner demand for the programme.

Yes	Graduate Destination Surveys indicated that for 2017 and 2018 graduates of the programme, 82% of graduates 36% were in employed and 46% were in further education within 6 months of course completion.	(v)	There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[8].
Yes	Graduates are eligible for general management roles or management roles within a specific subfield of business complimenting their previous experience and learning.	(vi)	The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[9]
Yes	DBS conducts learner surveys each year, typically two weeks after commencement of each module, and two weeks before the end of each module. DBS is actively engaged with external stakeholders, e.g. through various forums, placement arrangements	c)	There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
Yes	As part of the consultation process with industry and potential employers in the review of the programme, a number of interviews took place with details provided.	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.
Yes		e)	The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	Minimum entry requirements are clearly stated as well as potential progression opportunities to postgraduate level.	a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied[10].
Yes	Programme information is clearly enunciated. The panel notes that marketing material for the programme states that work placement/work-based learning is available and the panel recommends that a work placement module be included in the programme or the reference to work placement in marketing material be clarified.	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.
Yes	DBS confirmed that 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 (CEFRL). Such students are also supported in improving their English language skills while they are studying at DBS through provision of additional tuition (if applicable).	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 (CEFRL[11]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
Yes	Minimum entry requirements are stated as a Level 8 primary honours degree award of at least pass level in a non-cognate discipline from a recognised third level institution.	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).

	Evidence of overseas awards will be assessed via the NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualification Database.		
Yes	RPL applicants will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account educational record, work experience, problem solving skills and a capacity to successfully participate in the programme. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have a sufficient knowledge appropriate for Level 8 Business Award Standards.	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):-
Yes	The title reflects that the programme is a conversion course for those wishing to enter the field of business.	(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).
Yes		(ii)	Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
Yes		(iii)	Has long-lasting significance.
Yes		g)	The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	The programme is suitably structured to enable learners to achieve the programme learning outcomes. The panel recommends that the programme team reviews the mix of modules included in the programme and especially the number of credits allocated to 'marketing' modules (currently 3 modules of 5 credits each) to the possible detriment of other areas within the business discipline.	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.
Yes	As the programme is a one-year full-time conversion course, electives are not deemed feasible.	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.
Yes	The panel recommends that DBS review the mix of modules and, in terms of helping the learner to manage workload, to consider the number of credits attached to each module (i.e. being a multiple of 5 credits).	c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
Yes	The objectives of the programme are clearly stated.	d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.
Yes	The programme is structured and classes scheduled to best served the needs of the learners.	e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[12].
Yes	Module documentation is comprehensive. The panel recommends that the topics of e-commence and ethics be reflective more clearly in the programme modules.	f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
Yes	The programme is a one-year full-time programme of 60 credits.	g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
Yes	The full-time programme consists of 6 modules of 5 credits each in the first semester and 5 modules (4	h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between

	of which are 5 credits and one of 10 credits) in the second semester.		the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
Yes	The programme does not contain a module on work placement. The panel notes that marketing material for the programme states that work placement/work-based learning is available and the panel recommends that a work placement module be included in the programme or the reference to work placement in marketing material be clarified.	i)	Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
Yes	Full-time: 2 semesters of 12 weeks each across 12 months Part-time: 3 semesters of 12 weeks each across 18 months	j)	The programme **duration** (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its **fulltime equivalent contact time** (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.[13]

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	Staffing requirements to deliver the programme are precise and appropriate.	a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to-practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also unit (7.12c).
Yes	DBS has an identified complement of staff who are in a position to provide the specified programme.	b) The programme has an identified complement of staff[14] (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.
Yes	The staff are well-qualified to enable learners to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. Considering the focus of the course, the panel noted that staff members have a broad range of industry experience.	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.
Yes	Staff are encouraged and facilitated to engage in appropriate continuous professional development opportunities. Staff members attend conferences with learning and networking opportunities, and there is (limited) funding available for research.	d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development[15] opportunities[16].
Yes	Staff are subject to current DBS staff appraisal procedures.	e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.
N/A		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.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	Physical resource requirements to deliver the programme are precise and appropriate.	a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also (7.12d).
		b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:
Yes	DBS provides a suitable environment for learning in which students can study comfortably and safely, either individually or in groups.	(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)
Yes	DBS uses Moodle as its virtual learning environment, and also has a full range of online and other digital resources (electronic journals, etc.) along with a highly-qualified complement of staff to assist students in this area. There is college-wide WIFI access.	(ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
Yes	DBS has an award-winning library facilty with a wide variety of printed and digital materials for teaching, learning and assessment.	(iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
Yes	Classrooms and other venues for learning are fully equipped with all of the elements necessary for an appropriate learning experience.	(iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
Yes	Technical support is available to both students and staff.	(v) technical support
Yes	Administrative support is available to both students and staff.	(vi) administrative support
N/A		(vii) company placements/internships – if applicable
N/A	Students receive the same high-equality teaching and support regardless of when and where they are engaging in learning.	c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).

		d)	There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
Yes	The panel has recommended that a marketing plan be put together to increase student numbers enrolled on the programme.	(i)	Planned intake (first five years) and
Yes	DBS has provided estimates of costs and income associated with the course for the next five years.	(ii)	The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.
Yes		e)	The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	The programme's social, cultural and intellectual environment including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.	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.
Yes	Learners are supported not only by lecturing team but also by staff in the range of support services available within DBS.	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.
N/A		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.

7.9 Criterion 9: There are sound teaching and learning strategies

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	The teaching strategies are thoughtful and well-designed.	a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
Yes	While modules will be delivered through a mix of lectures, workshops, tutorials and practical sessions, teaching and learning will focus on the learner applying problem-solving skills and undertaking critical reflection and critique of case studies.	b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
Yes	However, the panel recommends that the mix of modules and, in terms of helping the learner to manage workload, to consider the number of credits attached to each module (i.e. being a multiple of 5 credits).	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).
Yes		d) Learning is monitored/supervised.
Yes	Students benefit from a close relationship with lecturers, which provides an environment in which mentorship and attention to the students' needs is given great importance.	e) Individualised guidance, support[17] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

7.10 Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria	
Yes		a)	All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[18]
Yes		b)	The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.
Yes	Assessments are fair and consistent to ensure that the programme learning outcomes are achieved by learners who successful completes the programme.	c)	The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.[19]
Yes		d)	The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.
Yes	The assessment strategy adopted for the programme needs to be considered, particularly, a)_in terms of skills development as identified in the module and programme intended learning outcomes. b) the number of assessments across the programme be reviewed and joint assessment. c) the mixture of group and individual assessment. d) the consistency/equity across modules with regard to assignment expectation, exam lengths and % of total module marks given for particular assessment element.	e)	There is a satisfactory written **programme assessment strategy** for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.[20]
Yes	External examiners comments received over the last number of years reviewed, with no major issues identified.	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.
Yes		g)	There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.

Satisfactory Yes		Sub-criteria
Yes		h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.[21]

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

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes	Students are well-informed; with DBS having systems in place to keep students up to date with schedules that relate to their learning.	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.
Yes	Students are given full information about all the learning supports that are available to them.	b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
Yes	From the outset, the students are given the information they need to make appeals and complaints in a manner consistent with best quality assurance practice. Only one complaint to date received from a student pursuing the programme.	c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
N/A		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.
Yes	The teaching and learning methodologies adopted are enriched by a diverse student population.. DBS welcomes student diversity and accommodates diverse needs.	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.
Yes	DBS has a well-developed sense of its duty of care, and actively engages with all of the students enrolled on its programmes, including reaching out to those who have been identified as at risk.	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.
Yes	Reasonable provision is made for students with a range of needs. For example, supports are in place for students with dyslexia, etc.	g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.

Yes	Reasonable accommodation is made for students with disabilities.	h)	The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[22].
Yes	A large portion of DBS's students comes from overseas, and the college places great emphasis on support with language, technology and with adjusting to different cultural expectations, etc. DBS feels that a diverse student population is one of its great strengths and fosters a strong sense of collegiality and support for students from overseas.	i)	If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[23] and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.
Yes	DBS's duty of care extends to providing students with a safe physical and psycho-social environment, and it is cognisant and mindful of this fact.	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).

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[22] For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).
[23] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

7.12 Criterion 12: The programme is well managed

Satisfactory Yes	Comment	Sub-criteria
Yes		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.
Yes	DBS is actively engaged with QQI in ensuring that all quality assurance requirements are met.	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.
Yes	DBS has effective procedures in place for selecting suitably qualified staff to teach on the programme.	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.
Yes	DBS is committed to ensuring that programmes are provided with the specific resources necessary to create the optimum learning environment.	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.
Yes		e) Quality assurance[24] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.
N/A		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.
Yes	Programme operation and management arrangements are carefully documented and suited to their purpose.	g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.
Yes		h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

8 Overall recommendation to DBS

HDip in Business

Select one	
Yes	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (**minor**) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);[25]
	Not satisfactory.

8.1 Reasons[26] for the overall recommendation

DBS provides an intellectual and physical environment that enables the learner to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

8.2 Summary of recommendations

1) The assessment strategy adopted for the programme needs to be considered, particularly,
   a) in terms of skills development as identified in the module and programme intended learning outcomes.
   b) the number of assessments across the programme be reviewed and joint assessment.
   c) the mixture of group and individual assessment.
   d) the consistency/equity across modules with regard to assignment expectation, exam lengths and % of total module marks given for particular assessment element.

2) A work placement module be included in the programme or the reference to work placement in marketing material be clarified.

3) The mix of modules be reviewed, especially the number of credits allocated to 'marketing' modules (currently 3 modules of 5 credits each) to the possible detriment of other areas within the business discipline.

4) The application for Digital Badges is encouraged.

5) Ecommerce needs to be brought to the fore and reflected more across a range of modules.

6) Ethics also needs a more focused approach in different modules.

7) A marketing plan be put together to increase student numbers enrolled on the programme and improve student experience on the programme.

8.3 Summary of commendations

DBS is to be commended for the open and enthusiastic approach of staff in engaging with the queries from the Panel. The panel also commended the programme team on the documentation provided. The panel notes that the college devotes great attention to supporting students' welfare, experience of learning, and outcomes.

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: MARIAN DUGGAN   Date: 3,/7/2019

Signed: Marian Dugg

9.1 Disclaimer

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

Part 3: Proposed programme schedules

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Higher Diploma in Business
Award Title	Higher Diploma in Business
Stage Exit Award Title[3]	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Full-Time
Teaching and learning modalities	As per module descriptors

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8	6	Award	8	6	60	1st Sept 2019	0413

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number[5]	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units / ECTS Credits	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	CA. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Management and Organisational Behaviour	1	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		50			50

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Marketing	1	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		50			50
Business ICT	1	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		50		50	
Legal Issues for Business	1	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		50			50
Economics	1	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		30			70
Professional Skills for Personal Development	1	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		100			-
Human Capital Management	2	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		100			-
Strategic Marketing	2	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		100			
Business Finance	2	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		40			60
Digital Media Strategies	2	M	8	5	125	36	24	65		100			-
Business Strategy (Capstone)	2	M	8	10	250	48	50	151		100			-

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Higher Diploma in Business
Award Title	Higher Diploma in Business
Stage Exit Award Title[3]	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	Part-Time
Teaching and learning modalities	As per module descriptors

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award Level EQF	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
Major	8	6	Award	8	6	60	1st Sept 2019	0404

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable (Semester 1 or Semester 2)	Module		Credit Number[5]	Total Student Effort Module (hours)					Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)			
		Status	NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Units / ECTS Credits	Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort	CA. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Management and Organisational Behaviour	1	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		50			50

Marketing	1	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		50			50
Business ICT	1	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		50		50	
Legal Issues for Business	1	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		50			50
Economics	1	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		30			70
Professional Skills for Personal Development	1	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		100			-
Human Capital Management	2	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		100			-
Strategic Marketing	2	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		100			
Business Finance	3	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		40			60
Digital Media Strategies	3	M	8	5	125	18	41	66		100			-
Business Strategy (Capstone)	3	M	8	10	250	36	50	164		100			-

10 Appendix 2: Agenda

DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Programme Review and Revalidation

Higher Diploma in Business

Certificate in Business and English Language

Agenda: Wednesday 29th May 2019

[Room 1.2, DBS, 13/14 Aungier Street, Dublin 2]

Time	Location	Item	DBS Attendees
08.45hrs		**Panel Private Meeting (with Tea & Coffee)**	N/a
10.00 hrs		**1. Evaluation of Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation criteria** *Criterion 1. The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programmes(s)*	• Andrew Conlan-Trant, Executive Dean • Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes • Lori Johnston, Registrar
10.15 hrs		**2. Evaluation of the Programme Review Process and Report** a. the fitness for purpose of the programme (including its objectives, intended learning outcomes, organisation, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, staffing, resources and management) in light of experience; b. the actual achievement by the programme of its stated objectives; c. the profile of learners who were enrolled and its suitability for the programme; d. the performance of enrolled learners (grades, attrition, completion, benchmarking) and how the provider has responded to this; e. the quality of the learning environment and the learning opportunities afforded to learners by the programme; f. the suitability of the learner workload in light of experience (whether it is excessive or inadequate); g. the effectiveness of procedures for the assessment of learners including summative and formative assessment of learners and external examining procedures; h. the quality assurance arrangements that are specific to the programme;	• 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 • Michael Kielty, Head of Department, Arts, Language and Study Abroad • Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar • Grant Goodwin, QA Officer

		i. the proposed modifications to the programme.	
10.45 hrs		**Break – Tea & Coffee**	N/a
11.00 hrs		**3. Evaluation of Programme Proposed for Revalidation against QQI validation criteria** **he Rationale and overall structure** *Criterion 2: Programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with QQI awards sought.* *Criterion 3: Programme concept, implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI award standards are well informed and soundly based* *Criterion 4: Access Transfer & Progression arrangements are satisfactory*	• Ann Masterson, Course Director(Acting), Business and Law • Michael Kielty, Head of Department, Arts, Language and Study Abroad • Kerry McCall Magan, Head of Academic Programmes • Lori Johnston, Registrar • Emma Balfe, Head of Faculty and School (Acting) • Shane Mooney, Head of Student Experience • Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar • Grant Goodwin, QA Officer • Tanya Balfe, Admissions Manager
11.45hrs		**4. Tour of College for Panel**	
12.15hrs		**Private Panel Discussion (with Lunch)**	N/a
13.00hrs		**5. (a) Curriculum, Learning Teaching & Assessment** **Programme: HDip in Business** *Criterion 5: Written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose* *Criterion 9: There are sound learning and teaching strategies* *Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies*	• Ann Masterson, Course Director (Acting), Business and Law • Teaching Faculty (list provided separately)
14.00hrs		**Private Panel Discussion**	N/a
14.15hrs		**(b) Curriculum, Learning Teaching & Assessment** **l Programme: Certificate in Business and lish Language** *Criterion 5: Written curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose* *Criterion 9: There are sound learning and teaching strategies* *Criterion 10: There are sound assessment strategies*	• Michael Kielty, Head of Department, Arts, Language and Study Abroad • Teaching Faculty d separately)
15.15hrs		**Private Panel Discussion**	N/a

15.30hrs		6. Panel Meeting with Student and Graduate Representatives	
16.00hrs		7. Resourcing and Supports for Learners *Criterion 6: There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned* *Criterion 7: There are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned* *Criterion 8: The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme learners* *Criterion 11: Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed and cared for* *Criterion 12: The programme is well managed*	• Ann Masterson, Course Director(Acting), Business and Law • Michael Kielty, Head of Department, Arts, Language and Study Abroad • 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 • Darragh Breathnach, Head of Academic Operations • Jane Buggle, Deputy Librarian • Martin Doris, Assistant Registrar • Grant Goodwin, QA Officer • Programme Coordinator (tbc)
16.30hrs		**Deliberation of the panel**	N/a
17.15hrs-17.45hrs		**Oral feedback to Senior DBS Staff**	