

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

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Microcredential Programme

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of report	25 January 2021

Section A. Overall recommendations

Programme	Code	PG24435
	Title	Certificate in Marketing Essentials
	Award Class	Special Purpose Award
	Credit	10 ECTS
	NFQ Level	6
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

Section B. Expert Panel details

Name	Role	Affiliation
Rory Byrne	Subject Matter Expert	Independent Consultant. 22 years experience in HE management, programme development and delivery
Deirdre Hanamy	Subject Matter Expert	Independent Consultant. 30 years experience in FE management, programme development delivery and management

Section C. Programme Profile Information (as supplied by provider)

Brief synopsis of the programme

(As supplied by provider)

This Marketing Essentials (10 ECTS, Level 6) programme introduces learners to the foundational concepts that are central to the marketing functioning of any business. Learners will acquire knowledge of theories relating to the marketing subject area and will develop industry-aligned skills to support them in their future career ambitions. Learners will understand the key elements in planning, managing, and executing the marketing mix and learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of an organisation's marketing plan. Learners will develop skills in analysing marketing opportunities and learn how to identify the impact of consumer trends and branding on marketing activities. Learners will also become familiar with the core legal issues in marketing and particularly GDPR. On completion of this programme, learners will be able to effectively integrate marketing into the decision-making in their company.

Target learner groups

(As supplied by provider)

The Marketing Essentials micro-credential programme is targeted towards learners who wish to gain essential knowledge of marketing. It has been designed for those who are self-employed with limited marketing experience, unemployed from an administration role, or in employment and who require cross-skilling or up-skilling in marketing skills.

It is primarily aimed at those who wish to advance their careers by gaining skills and knowledge in marketing in order to play an active role in the marketing function of their organisation. Upon successful completion of this programme, learners will be able to apply their knowledge and effectively integrate marketing into decision-making in their company. They will be well positioned to pursue roles within organisations that require a marketing function or marketing related tasks.

The minimum entry requirements for the Marketing Essentials micro-credential programme are:

- * Leaving Certificate applicants who have achieved 5 O6/H7s, to include English or another language or a full Level 5 FETAC Award or equivalent.
- * Mature Learners who do not meet the minimum entry requirements will be assessed on the basis of age, work experience, general education standard, motivation and commitment to the programme for which they are applying.
- * Applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a relevant qualification 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).

Rationale for Programme

(As supplied by provider)

Marketing is key to any business, in any sector, and has become a core function for a business to survive and thrive in a digital landscape. As more organisations rely on rich content to drive marketing success and serve customers, the ability to effectively manage the marketing mix and connect creative content across platforms and touchpoints becomes imperative. DBS has witnessed an increased demand from applicants across a number of marketing programmes and the BA (Hons) in Marketing has been fully subscribed over the past five years. Data to date shows 1420 learners have enrolled on the BA (Hons) in Marketing programme, and therefore the Marketing Essentials module.

For the academic year ending June 2019, of the 1,011 learners enrolled on the programme, 960 learners sat exams, with a 95% pass rate. Graduates from the BA (Hons) in Marketing programme work in areas such as strategic marketing, market research and digital marketing, both inhouse and in consultancy roles.

The range of opportunities continue to expand due to rapid growth in digital and online media and in marketing generally. DBS currently offers two undergraduate degrees in the area of Marketing: the BA (Hons) in Marketing, and the Bachelor of Business which has a specialism in Marketing in the final year. At Level 7, DBS offers a Special Purpose Award: the Certificate in Digital Marketing which has proved a particularly popular Springboard+ programme. DBS recently validated a conversion programme titled the Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing and at Masters Level, the College offers a Master of Science in Marketing and a Master of Science in Digital Marketing, which was shortlisted for an award at the Grad Ireland awards 2018.

Numbers have grown steadily on these programmes over the past number of years. Many of the industries also emphasised a desire to send their employees to upskill themselves. Many learners on DBS's current marketing programmes have highlighted the growing marketing sector and need for marketing across many sectors and expressed an interest in further studies in this area. The recent July Stimulus package suggested that certain fundamental business areas, such as marketing, were underserved in higher education skills provision. The July Stimulus call also noted the need for 'shorter, more focused courses/modules that can be offered in a flexible manner and allow people to gain important skills without taking a considerable period away from the labour market' (hea.ie/assets/uploads/2020/08/JulyStimulus-HE-Initiatives-Call). DBS has included Marketing Essentials as one of the programmes submitted in the Modular Skills Provision tender.

Evidence of learner demand

(As supplied by provider)

According to indeed.com (2020), there are 890 jobs available that require functional skills and expertise in marketing in Ireland, for example: Digital Marketing Manager, Advertising Sales Manager, Partner Manager, Social Media Client, Content Marketing Manager and 795 specifically for Graduates. Currently, there are 193 openings in Digital Marketing in Ireland posted on Irish jobs (2020), for example, Digital Marketing Lead, ECommerce & Digital Marketing Executive, Digital Marketing & Social Media Executive, and Junior Digital Marketing Executive. This, along with the rationale for programme development noted above, demonstrates a demand in the subject area at a variety of different levels. As such, the opportunity to study a single module as a distinct programme in its own right and as a 'taster' to the discipline area is a beneficial proposition for any learner and a valuable addition to the wider offering of DBS.

Duration and Enrolment (As supplied by provider)					
	First Intake Date	Duration (months)	Cohorts / Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	March/April 2021	12 – 24 weeks	100	15	300
Part-Time	N/A				

Panel Commentary on Section C: Programme Profile Information

This should set out the panel's views on the adequacy of the case made by the provider for the approval of this programme as a viable, standalone offering for the target learner group. The panel should take into account the proposed rationale, evidence of market demand, learner numbers, entry criteria, and marketing information. The information on objectives, MIPLO's and marketing information, rationale, should also be checked.

Where the proposed award is at a different NFQ level to that of its parent programme e.g. where the programme is taken from Stage 1 of a validated Level 8 programme, the panel should check the MIPLO to Level Indicator mapping for consistency.

The following Validation Criteria as they apply to this programme should be borne in mind, while also recognising that the programme of which this microcredential is a module, has already been deemed to have met these criteria.

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)*

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

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

Criterion 12: *The programme is well managed.*

Rationale, Learner Demand, Viability:

The Expert Panel (hereafter referred to as EP) agree that the rationale to offer a Level 6 Special Purpose (shorter and more focused) programme in Marketing Essentials to reskill and upskill learners is a strong educational initiative which meets Validation **Criterion 3**.

Proposed Award - consistency with NFQ:

The EP confirm and supported by the details given in section 3 of the Programme Descriptor (Mapping of intended programme learning outcome against QQI Standards) that the programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with QQI's Grde of Level 6 Indicators which meets Validation **Criterion 2**.

Learner Interests: - (Information, QA, Supports, Benefits / Skills accruing from programme):

The additional information provided and endorsed by DBS's industry advisory board which included a statement on external stakeholders consulted and relevant sample excerpts from interviews held provides evidence of a strong alignment of the rationale, programme outline and programme objectives with the availability of job opportunities and career opportunities/progression for people with core marketing knowledge and digital skills. This consultation assures the EP that DBS can confidently promote this programme as providing potential candidates with opportunities to upskill or reskill in a high demand, growth and evolving industry area which meets Validation **Criterion 11**.

The EP agree that the details in the Programme Descriptor, in particular, sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.15 supported by the policies and procedures outlined in DBS's QA Handbook Part B section 3 and 5 demonstrates a quality assured planned programme which meets Validation **Criterion 11 and 12**.

Section D. Programme Content, Delivery and Assessment

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role (As supplied by provider)	Profile (As supplied by provider)	WTE(As supplied by provider)
Lecturer	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 8 Honours bachelor's degree in marketing or equivalent qualification in the following areas: Digital Marketing; Strategic Marketing; Services Marketing; Other relevant marketing disciplines. Where industry experience is desirable, holders of Level 6 qualification in Marketing who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant business experience at senior level may also be considered.	.1

Course Director	Will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in Marketing or related business areas along with programme management/ academic leadership experience.	.001
Administration and Support Staff	Such as Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to role.	.64

Mode(s) of Delivery

(As supplied by provider)

It is proposed to deliver this microcredential programme in any of four modes: classroom, synchronous online, on-demand asynchronous online or blended.

Assessment Strategy

(As supplied by provider)

A formative midterm test consisting of multiple-choice questions examining the learners understanding of marketing theory to date. A practical group assignment (to include an individual component within the group submission) is designed to emphasise skills relating to the application of practical marketing actions within a given situation. Finally, an individual assignment will assess learners overall theoretical underpinning.

Reassessment strategy comprises a repeat continuous assessment test or equivalent and/or project if that is the element which the learner has been unsuccessful in.

Panel Commentary on Section D: Programme Content, Delivery and Assessment *This should set out the panel's views on the programme content, mode(s) of delivery and assessment, human and ICT resources. If the parent programme is more than a year old, the currency of module content and supporting technology should be checked.*

The following Validation Criteria as they apply to this programme should be borne in mind, while also recognising that the programme of which this microcredential is a module, has already been deemed to have met these criteria.

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

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

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

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

Criterion 10: *There are sound assessment strategies*

Currency of content:

The EP agree with the provider's statement that the *programme introduces learners to the foundational concepts that are central to the marketing functioning of any business*. The EP confirm that the programme's written curriculum supported by additional information provided in Appendix 1 and 2 is well structured and fit for purpose which meets Validation **Criterion 5**.

The EP approve of the standard of qualifications required by staff in areas of stated knowledge, skills and experience outlined in section 2.14 of the Programme Descriptor to teach and manage this programme which meets Validation **Criterion 6**.

Delivery mode(s):

The delivery modes proposed are suitable and relevant in the current environment. Information provided in the programme descriptor and outlined on the schedule of delivery hours for each mode of delivery gives clear guidelines on how each of four delivery modes will facilitate the teaching and learning so that all learning outcomes and programme objectives are achieved and meets Validation **Criterion 5 and 7**.

Physical and ICT resources: As this is a desk review, it is not possible to comment on these areas, however, the EP approve of the facilities, learner and software support such as Moodle outlined the section 2.11 and 2.12 of the Programme Descriptor which meets Validation **Criterion 7**. The EP also approve of the stated ICT learner resources required (laptop, broadband connectivity etc) to participate on the programme as outlined in section 2.13 and the planned ICT induction for all learners which meets Validation **Criterion 8**.

Assessment strategy:

The EP confirm that the assessment strategy supported by the provider's QA policies and procedures (QA Handbook Part B section 5) are suitable, the assessment techniques assess all MIMLOs and learners will be assessed in a fair and consistency manner which meets Validation **Criterion 10**.

Part 2. Overall recommendation to QQI

2.1 Programme:

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

Reasons for the overall recommendation

The EP agree that the rationale to offer a Level 6 Special Purpose (shorter and more focused) programme in Marketing Essentials to reskill and upskill learners is a strong educational initiative that meets, in particular, an identified specific industry knowledge and skills shortage. The EP agree that

the programme's written curriculum outlined in the Programme Descriptor and the submitted additional supporting information confirms that the all Validation Criterion have been meet

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

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

This report has been agreed by both members of the Expert Panel.

Date: 26 January 2021

Signed:



2.2 Disclaimer

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