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Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

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

Part 1 A

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	27 May 2021
Date of report	10 June 2021
Previous Validation	September 2019

This report reflects the findings of an evaluation panel in respect of the differential validation of two programmes previously validated, one of which has an embedded award. The focus of the differential validation has been on the new context of provision, i.e. the collaborative and transnational arrangements being proposed. Accordingly, the findings of the panel presented in this report are mirrored in the report for the BA (Hons) in Business.

Overall recommendations

Principal programme	**Title**	Master of Business Administration
	Award	Master of Business Administration
	Credit	90 ECTS
	Recommendation	Satisfactory subject to proposed condition
Embedded programme	**Title**	Postgraduate Diploma in Business
	Award	Postgraduate Diploma in Business (Exit Award)
	Exit award (Yes/No)	Yes
	Credit	60 ECTS
	Recommendation	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Evaluators

Evaluators		
Name	**Role**	**Principal occupation**
Dr. Tara Ryan	Chair	Registrar, Irish Management Institute
Eva Juhl	Quality Assurance Expert (including contexts of collaborative and transnational provision)	Institutional Review Facilitator, Munster Technological University, Cork
Prof. Dr. Stefan Handke	Subject Matter Expert	HTW Dresden, University of Applied Sciences
Jacqui Tracey	Subject Matter Expert	Programme Director Faculty of Business, Griffith College. also Univ. Applied Sciences Dortmund
Julia Tronsberg	Industry Representative	Specialist, People & Leadership Development, Infineon Technologies

A learner representative was appointed to the panel, but two days before the site visit was due to occur, it unexpectedly emerged that the appointee had a conflict of interest. The learner brought this to the attention of QQI at the earliest opportunity available to them. Following dialogue with the staff of QQI, the chair of the panel agreed that the evaluation should progress given the timing involved and that the learner areas could be addressed by other members of the panel.

Part 1 B
Master of Business Administration

Names of centres where the programmes are to be provided	Maximum number of Learners (FT)	Minimum number of learners (PT)
Dublin Business School	300	150

Enrolment interval *(normally 5 years)*	Date of first intake	August 2021
	Date of last intake	August 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	3 intakes	
Maximum total number of learners per intake (over all centres)	450	
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	Full-time: 12 months Part-time: 24 months	

Target learner groups

The MBA is aimed at learners with any of the following entry qualifications:

An Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 8 primary undergraduate honours Bachelor's degree with a minimum second class second division classification (2.2) in any discipline from a recognised third level institution (or equivalent)

An equivalent professional qualification such as ACCA or CIMA

Level 6 (EQF) primary undergraduate bachelor degree with a minimum GPA of 3.0 (or equivalent); or

GMAT examination is a mandatory requirement for all applicants who do not hold an Honours Bachelor Degree (Level 8) with a minimum of second class second division classification.

English requirements

International applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a degree taught in English must provide evidence of proficiency in English language equivalent to B2+ or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as IELTS, Cambridge Certificate, or DBS English Assessment. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.

The programme is aimed at learners who wish to specialise in business administration with a view to entering industry, to progress professionally or to undertake further business studies. Learners will achieve the business expertise to inform strategic decision-making to optimise return on investment across each department. Learners will be capable of dealing with diverse intrinsic and extrinsic business realities in a creative manner to ensure sustainability and growth. Through the research dissertation, learners will develop independent research and problem-solving skills reflective of their expansion of management competencies and contribute to their chosen field of enquiry which will be valuable in a variety of contexts in the workplace.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and part-time
The teaching and learning modalities	1. Directed Learning
	2. E-learning (directed)
	3. E-learning (self-directed)
	4. Group Discussions
	5. Group Discussions/Interactions
	6. Laboratory / Studio
	7. Lectures / Classes
	8. Practical Sessions
	9. Practical/workshop/Laboratories/studio sessions
	10. Self Directed Learning
	11. Tutorials
	12. Webinars

Brief synopsis of the programme

The Master of Business Administration is a one year full time or two-year part-time programme of nine taught modules (60 ECTS) plus dissertation (30 ECTS) totalling 90 ECTS. Learners may also exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration having successfully achieved 60 ECTS if they are unable to complete the full Master of Business Administration.

The programme is designed for managers, business innovators and leaders or those who aspire to enter managerial roles within a broad spectrum of industries. The programme is intended for learners who wish to acquire in depth knowledge of business administration, theories, concepts and practical applications to enable an analytical application of such knowledge in context to generate valuable insights. Graduates will be equipped to make high level strategic business decisions, increasing productivity, profitability and an organisation's value and market share.

Summary of <u>specifications</u> for teaching staff	**Course Director – Dublin:** The Course Director for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Qualification **Programme Leader – Munich:** The Programme Leader in Munich will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Qualification [Masters is specified] **Lecturer:** Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 (EFQ Level 7) equivalent award **Administration and Support:** Such as Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to the role	
Summary of specifications for the ratio of learners to teaching-staff	**Staff to learner ratio**	**Learning activity type**
	1:150	Classroom sessions/lectures
	1:150	Online class (live)
	1:25	Online tutorial (interactive)
	1:40	Practical sessions
	1:40	Workshops/tutorials
Overall WTE staff/learner ratio.[1]		

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[1] This is the total whole time equivalent number of staff dedicated exclusively to this programme divided by the maximum number of learners that can be enrolled with that complement of staff.

Other noteworthy features of the application

These programmes are being presented for differential validation i.e. a modification of an original validation of the programme. In this case, the programme is being proposed for delivery in Munich, Germany in the EU School of Business, a higher education provider operating in that city.

Hence, the programme is a collaborative and transnational venture. The quality assurance of the programme under this context is the responsibility of the original provider, Dublin Business School. The focus of the evaluation is on the provider's capacity to effectively quality assure the programme.

Part 1C Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).

Dublin Business School has already been approved by QQI to offer collaborative programmes transnationally and hence, this venture does not entail an extension of scope of approval.

Comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme.

DBS currently has established quality assurance procedures for the development, support and provision of programmes in both a collaborative and a transnational context.

This evaluation considered an application to provide two programmes in Munich, Germany in collaboration with EU Business School. The panel noted that the College has successful collaborations and transnational provision arrangements in place, in particular in Malaysia, namely a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance delivered by Kolej Poly-Tech MARA (KPTM). It was evident during dialogue with the staff of the College and following consideration of the documentation submitted that there was familiarity with both the opportunities afforded by collaborations and transnational provision, and also the challenges. Both providers are member institutions of larger, cross-national organisations which further aids their ability to operate in an international context.

 The staff mentoring model being developed by DBS is commendable in this context. Allocating individual DBS mentors to each of the teaching and management staff in EUBS should be very helpful to EUBS, will assist in developing understandings and a shared approach to the programme and may be used by other institutions as a model of good practice. The panel was confident to recommend that DBS be approved to offer the specific programmes in collaboration with EUBS in Munich.

Part 2A Evaluation against the validation criteria

As this is a differential validation of an already validated programme, the findings of the original panel will be restated. Where there are different findings arising from the differential validation, they will be stated underneath.

Criterion 1

The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme	
a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.	
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.	
c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.[2]	
Satisfactory **Yes**	**Comment** See below

Master of Business Administration

1. The relevant programme submission documents meet all of the prerequisites to apply for the programme validation.

2. At the initial meeting with DBS Senior Management Team, the panel inquired and was duly assured that the information provided was truthful, and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed, and all relevant supporting declarations of compliance were satisfied.

3. The relevant programme submission documents meet all of the prerequisites to apply for the programme validation.

4. At the initial meeting with DBS Senior Management Team, the panel inquired and was duly assured that the information provided was truthful, and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed, and all relevant supporting declarations of compliance were satisfied.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration[3]

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

Differential Validation findings:

Considering the initial programme validations the panel was satisfied that DBS meets criterion 1, and did not further investigate this matter.

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

[3] Add more subsections if there are more than one embedded programmes.

Criterion 2

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

    a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
    b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
            (i)   Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
    c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
    d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.*
    e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
    f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
            (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
    g) For each programme and embedded programme
            (i)   The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.[4]
            (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
    h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
    i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable. For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.[5]

Satisfactory	Comment
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. The MBA includes a range of modules that are designed to prepare students for the workplace, and in particular for managerial roles. The compatible array of electives permits them to select a study/career pathway—for example, by focusing on HR or IT components of the course.

2. The range of modules on offer are suitable and fit for purpose, and the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.

3. The module learning outcomes are objectively mapped to the QQI Award Standards for Business at Level 9 of the NFQ.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

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

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

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

Differential Validation findings:

The panel noted that the documentation presented appeared to have been prepared sequentially and was not sufficiently consistent or coherent. While the award title and awarding body is clear and sample websites seen provided accurate information, the panel recommends that a full review of all final documentation is undertaken to ensure that it is fully up-to-date in all respects, consistent in all of its provisions across all component elements, and clear for the additional intended target audiences, as required, see f i and ii.

Criterion 3

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

   a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.[6]

   b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched;   considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.

      (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.

      (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.

      (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).

      (iv) There is evidence[7] of learner demand for the programme.

      (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[8].

      (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[9]

   c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

   d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

   e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Satisfactory Yes	Comment
	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. DBS provided robust evidence of engagement with a range of stakeholders, including learner focus groups, class representatives, graduates, staff, and members of industry, including employers of former DBS students. Monthly meetings are held with class representatives, and DBS is actively engaged with graduates of the college. DBS staff regularly attend seminars and events for professional development and are actively engaged with the peers in similar colleges in Ireland and overseas.

2. There is a very clear demand for graduates from MBA programmes, with employers particularly interested in skills that include communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork skills, etc.

3. The course successfully attracts students from both within Ireland and overseas.

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

[7] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

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

4. However, some of the students interviewed by the panel commented that they felt that their peers on similar MBA programmes in competing colleges were being challenged more, raising some concern that possibly some of the modules are not sufficiently demanding, particularly for students who have already acquired several years' experience in industry (See item 1 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

The College and its partner, EUBS provided information on the potential target audience for the programmes and also their potential career trajectories. In discussing future employment opportunities, EUBS focused in particular on the large multi-national companies based in the Munich area who wish to recruit English speaking business graduates. It was noted that future demand for the programmes is evidenced through the current EUBS arrangements which exist with a UK provider where EUBS provides similar programmes leading to the awards of a UK university. EUBS is 'teaching out' those programmes, and, because of the implications of Brexit, has sought a collaboration with an alternative provider.

The panel noted that DBS and EUBS are aware of the local regulatory context for the provision of the programme and that an application will be made to the Bavarian Ministry for Science and the Arts (Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst). It was further noted that, as per the relevant provisions of Bavarian Higher Education legislation (Bayerisches Hochschulgesetz) the Bavarian Ministry will rely on the QQI quality assurance processes and procedures to ensure compliance with good standards and practices, rather than in engaging in a further independent evaluation. This was understood by all parties, and it was clear to DBS that it is their responsibility to provide effective oversight and management of the programmes, as well as sustain the quality assurance system in which the programmes are provided.

Criterion 4

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

a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied[10].

b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.

c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL[11]) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.

d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).

e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.

f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-

   (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; (iii) Has long-lasting significance.

g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Satisfactory	Comment:
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. Should students wish to transfer from another institution to DBS, the relevant academic transcripts are produced. Should students wish to transfer from DBS to another institution, the academic transcripts are similarly provided.

2. The manual provided to students is comprehensive. DBS is aware that students do not always read all of the data relevant to them, so various mechanisms are in place to help them to access the information. There may be some scope for streamlining and simplifying this material. DBS also uses Moodle VLE.

3. International applicants whose first language is not English and who have not previously undertaken a degree taught in English must provide evidence of proficiency in English language equivalent to B2+ or above on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This must be evidenced through a recognised English Language test such as IELTS, Cambridge Certificate or DBS English Assessment. Test certificates should be dated within the last two years to be considered valid.

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

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

4. The recognition and evaluation of experiential learning (RPL) will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Applicants who do not have a Level 8 qualification may also be considered through the College's normal RPL procedures. In such instances, an interview of the candidate may be required. The interview assessment criteria will include education record, motivation to take the programme, ability to demonstrate knowledge of the cognate area through work experience, applicant's career plan, how the programme will support their career path, and their understanding of the challenges and demands of taking a Level 9 programme. Applicants will be required to complete the application form and provide written evidence as to their application for acceptance onto the programme with prior experiential learning. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances, candidates with level 7 qualifications can access the MBA course.

5. DBS documentation is clear about entry requirements.

6. However, concern was raised at student interview, which has a strong bearing on the admission criteria to the MBA programme. The programme admits recent graduates. As such, a concern was expressed that, in specific cases, students with more industry experience prior to enrolment felt insufficiently challenged in coursework and assessments as compared to students enrolled in similar programmes in other colleges (See item 1 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

The panel noted that while the programmes will be provided in Germany, the majority of the students will be international students, i.e. travelling to Germany to study, or having travelled to Germany for work or previous study.

While the entry requirements have been clearly stated, there is a need to improve the detail around them to ensure that all local and international applicants fully understand the pre-requisite learning expected, especially in terms of work experience.

The panel further recommends that detailed information on electives and streams within the programme be provided on the website and in publications. It is very important that prior to committing to a programme, all applicants are aware that particular electives or streams might not be offered in a particular year, depending on the numbers required to make a particular elective or stream viable.

Criterion 5

The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.

b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.

c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.

d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.

e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles[12].

f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.

g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.

i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.

j) The programme duration (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its fulltime equivalent contact time (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.[13]

Satisfactory	Comment:
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. Generally, the programme's curriculum is well structured and fit for purpose. The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented; i.e., course and constituent module contents are well described with clear programme learning outcomes and module learning outcomes pitched at appropriate NFQ level. They align well with assessment strategies to meet the designated outcomes.

2. Students can choose from a range of electives that guide their educational path, in accordance with their career goals.

3. However, the panel notes that the same module "Reinventing Performance Management" scheduled in Semester 2 (FT) and Semester 4 (PT) is also replicated in the undergraduate BA programme. While DBS has provided assurances that the courses are not actually taught in an identical manner, it was unclear how any distinction could be achieved in practice (See item 2 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

4. DBS course management process has noted the relatively high failure rates in subjects with a high maths component, and therefore additional supports are available for such modules.

5. The panel noted that specific module titles should be reassessed to gain clarity of coverage. For example, consider revising the module titled "Marketing Management" to "Strategic Marketing" for more accurate description of contents.

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[12] This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion. In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

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

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

The panel is satisfied that the programmes are well designed and that DBS is clear that where electives are focused on exclusively Irish contexts, they should not be made available to the Munich cohort; and that local customisation cannot occur unless a formal change is made to the programme and receives the relevant approvals from DBS and QQI. Nevertheless, DBS is encouraged to consider whether there is scope for additional electives either for the Munich cohort exclusively, or perhaps for the student groups in both locations, which focus on either German specific contexts or other more international contexts. Modules on law and taxation are good examples of where local electives may be more appropriate. As long as there is a sufficiently sized group, there is no reason bespoke electives cannot be delivered in one or both locations. These can be considered over the coming two or three years as the programmes are rolled out. It is important that DBS communicates this regulatory context clearly to EUBS to ensure there are no misunderstandings around the degree to which a programme may or may not be customised to a local context. The intended learning outcomes of both modules and the programme, which have been approved through the validation process, cannot be compromised. A deeper understanding of this could be included in the training to be provided to EUBS and reinforced through dialogue which may occur in the buddy system which is discussed under criterion 6.

Criterion 6

> **There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**
>
> a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to-practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).
>
> 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.
>
> 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.
>
> 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].
>
> e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.
>
> 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.

Satisfactory	Comment:
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. Staff/student ratios compare reasonably well with similar programmes elsewhere at the designated level of the award, both for purposes of course delivery and for provision of student support such as pastoral care.

2. The programme is supported by a good complement of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. DBS also shows great initiative in bringing in a large number of guest lecturers, notably from industry, who can provide the students with fascinating and educational insights. The students interviewed by the panel themselves commented on the usefulness of this approach.

3. However, the curriculum vitae for a number of staff were thin on relevant information, primarily focusing on current teaching roles and not how they qualify for the same, therefore incongruent to the declared staff specification. It is recommended that DBS adopt a standard CV format to clearly reflect the relevant qualifications and experience against staff teaching and supervision assignments.

4. Given the heavy teaching workload, the opportunity for staff to engage in research and professional development is limited, despite the fact that DBS does have systems in place to facilitate staff development. In cases of staff who do not yet hold doctorates, where appropriate for respective areas of specialisation, staff members are encouraged to pursue PhD studies.

5. There is a high dependency on hiring part-time academic staff. While this is understandable on an MBA programme where specialist knowledge is required from time to time, or even academics with specialist

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

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

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

skills for integrating group work, such staffing regime imposes vulnerability in continuity and consistency in the programme.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

The panel considered in detail the teaching arrangements in place for the proposed Munich provision. The qualification standards specified for the teaching staff are equivalent to those required in higher education institutions providing programmes leading to QQI awards in Ireland. It was noted that Ireland does not have specific requirements for a particular balance between full-time and part-time or adjunct faculty/ academic staff. In this context it was noted by the panel that the teaching commitments of staff, and associated training requirements, are established in a contract between EUBS and its teachers at the commencement of a semester; this helps to ensure that there is no interruption to lecturing through conflicting external commitments of lecturing staff. DBS, in collaboration with EUBS, will also collect student feedback on a regular basis to monitor the consistency in teaching. The panel strongly recommends that there is careful consideration of the detail which goes into these contracts, and that there is careful monitoring of the teaching provision by DBS. Learners should not be exposed to situations either where lecturers are not available, or where lecturer commitment to other employments impact negatively on their learning opportunities.

The panel further noted that a model of peer mentoring is being established, with each Munich teacher and member of staff being assigned a DBS buddy to support them in their teaching and in the management of the programme. This is also being complemented with the training being provided by DBS to EUBS staff on teaching and learning, and assessment. The panel commends DBS on their innovation and commitment in developing the buddy system; it has the potential to be a very effective support and training tool, as well as enabling an informal 'monitoring' by DBS of the provision of the programmes in Munich, particularly during the first period of the partnership. DBS is encouraged to continue its development and implementation of this model. The panel recommends that in the training provided, a particular emphasis be placed on assessment, e.g. assessment standards; grading, focusing in particular on differences in approach between DBS and EUBS; classifications; assessment rubrics; managing academic impropriety; formative qualitative feedback; etc..

Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).

b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:

   (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)

   (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)

   (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable (v) technical support

   (vi) administrative support

   (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable

c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).

d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address

   (i) Planned intake (first five years) and

   (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.

e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Satisfactory	Comment:
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. DBS has suitable accommodation for meeting the learning and human needs of its students. The review panel visited a range of teaching spaces and IT labs and noted that the learning spaces were well-equipped and provided comfortable working environment.

2. DBS library was noted to be an exceptionally well-run facility supported by qualified, engaged, helpful staff. Students have access to a wide range of printed and online resources.

3. DBS uses Moodle Virtual Learning Environment to support course delivery.

4. DBS has a detailed five-year plan, incorporating all necessary elements and criteria.

5. Programme controls include programme agreement as part of the Quality process and considers a range of operations aspects including intellectual property rights (see DBS Quality Handbook, pp. 73)

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

The panel noted that DBS submitted a business plan for the programmes' provision in Munich as required. The panel has not commented on its efficacy, as this it outside the scope of the panel.

In addition to access to EUBS facilities, DBS staff advised how the EUBS students would have full access to DBS' learning resources and supports, including the library and pastoral supports. It was noted that learners are expected to have their own laptops.

The panel further asked whether, should the programmes recruit similar numbers to those recruited to the previously offered programmes EUBS would be at full physical capacity (post Covid). EUBS advised that they have retained an additional floor in the building in which they are located and that the student numbers on the current UK programmes are not too far behind the expected numbers identified. EUBS noted that three years previously, the school accommodated 580 students on campus prior to having use of the new wing of the building. The panel recommends that DBS monitor this situation to ensure that plans are in place for growing numbers and also to ensure that at all times there are appropriate physical resources available to the learners.

Criterion 8

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners	

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners

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.

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.

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.

Satisfactory	Comment
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. The programme admits both local and international students, and there was evidence of adequate considerations of both social and cultural supports to learners.

2. Supports for student engagement included provision for peer learning, assigned project supervision, and invited guest lecturers to reinforce contextual aspects of the programme.

3. DBS has adopted Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which complements and supports the onsite face-to-face delivery of programmes.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

In both sets of programme documentation provided, and in the dialogue at the site visit, DBS staff stated that the EUBS students would have full access to DBS' learning resources and supports. The panel noted this, and also that the learners would of course engage firstly with the EUBS campus and staff in Munich. It was evident during dialogue at the site visit that EUBS staff members have a strong support and pastoral care culture, and their learners are well known to them. Supports for international students – learners travelling to Munich – are clearly provided, from assistance with accommodation, to assistance with visas, and additional German language classes.

The panel heard that there was an open-door policy at EUBS, and learners could always approach any of their lecturers or other relevant EUBS support staff with any academic, welfare or mental health issues arising. The panel supports this. In relation to learners presenting with mental health issues, however, the panel recommends that EUBS should ensure that learners are always directed towards formal mechanisms for advice and support as soon as possible. The procedural scaffolding of a formal framework will help protect both learners and EUBS staff where issues turn out to be of a more serious nature.

Criterion 9

> ## There are sound teaching and learning strategies
> a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
> b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
> 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).
> d) Learning is monitored/supervised.
> e) Individualised guidance, support[17] and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Satisfactory Yes	Comment: See below

Master of Business Administration

1. The course documents reviewed showed evidence of comprehensive teaching strategies capable of meeting programme outcomes and learning outcomes of the designated award.

2. There was general evidence that learning is monitored and supervised, including the provisions for individual guidance, support and timely formative feedback.

3. The deficit noted under Criterion 10 (item 6) is relevant to meeting the requirements for sound teaching and learning strategies (Criterion 9).

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

As indicated in the commentary under criterion 6, the panel commends DBS on the supports being provided to EUBS staff through the buddy system, and at the same time strongly recommends that the planned programme of training for EUBS staff, focusing on teaching, learning and assessment in particular, be progressed. The small learning environment can be an advantage for many students, and the accessibility of teaching staff in a small college can be very positive. Nevertheless the panel recommends that a focus on the formal mechanisms for feedback to learners also be well developed, as not all students will be comfortable in an informal environment.

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

Criterion 10

> ### There are sound assessment strategies
>
>   a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*[18]
>
>   b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.
>
>   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]
>
>   d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.
>
>   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]
>
>   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.
>
>   g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.
>
>   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]

Satisfactory Yes	Comment: See below+

Master of Business Administration

1. The assessment strategies used in the programme were generally consistent with assessment guidelines, conventions, and protocols for programmes leading to QQI awards. This was evidenced from individual module descriptors, examination papers and student scripts and direct interactions with academic staff during the panel visit.

2. A substantial portion of assessment strategy is via continuous assessments, encompassing presentations, teamwork and other modes of formative opportunities for learning. The submission and course documents reviewed included sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence to indicate that the assessments were likely to be valid/reliable.

3. The programme teams are aware of the necessity for maintaining academic integrity in assessments, visà-vis the challenges posed by the internet with respect to plagiarism and/or contract cheating in the educational environment. The college employs Urkund plagiarism detection software for counterchecking of academic integrity of assignments submitted by students Assessment strategies also encompass individual student presentations and interviews for course elements requiring group and/or teamwork.

4. External examiners are appointed and retained for defined periods as sound bases for moderation of summative assessments and assessment results. However, a substantial proportion of modules are

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[18] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

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

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

assessed through 100% continuous assessment weighting. Currently, the course descriptors do not contain enough detail on the assessment instruments employed in such modules, to enable review and/or determination of the rigour of related assessment; hence, there seems to be no provision for moderation of such modules (See item 3 under Summary of recommended special conditions of validation).

5. From a number of external examiner feedback reports seen, it is the panel's considered opinion that DBS needs to be more transparent and timely in its interactions with designated external examiners to its programmes. For example, an external examiner's report (GG 2017-2018), noted a specific case where there was evidence of possible plagiarism, but two examiners proceeded to award marks for the noted assessment. Whereas the panel was accorded with sufficient evidence that the specific case had been evaluated and discounted, the external examiner's report emanated from lack of communication regarding the investigation and closure of the specific case.

6. Whereas there was evidence that, in most part, assessments were returned in a timely manner to enable achievement of the formative objectives, there were reported cases of learner dissatisfaction with the speed and quality of feedback including at panel interview with ongoing students (See item 5 under Summary of recommendations to the provider).

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

The panel confirmed that all examinations on the respective programmes will be scheduled at the same time in DBS and EUBS. Arrangements for the sharing and distribution of examination papers are in place. For each programme, a single external examiner will consider the programme learners' assessments in both locations of provision. The extern will visit each site (Covid permitting) each year. All assessment instruments will be set by DBS, but the panel commended the openness of DBS staff to doing so in consultation with EUBS, and encourages DBS in deepening the engagement of EUBS staff over time. It was noted that a sample of all assessed work for learners in Munich (as is the practice in Dublin) would be moderated, i.e. a second lecturer in the field will consider if the marks allocated are appropriate and where not appropriate, will engage with the lecturer to agree an alternative mark. DBS may wish to consider larger than typical sampling sizes in the first iterations of the programme; or where there is any concern or query identified, arrange for the moderation of a full set of assignments.

Where a programme assessment strategy includes group work projects, the panel noted that DBS is considering organising single groups drawing on students in both the Dublin and Munich cohorts. This could be a very effective learning opportunity and the panel would encourage DBS in considering this. While requiring careful management, the potential challenges may be outweighed by the benefits to learners and to the programme's ongoing development.

Criterion 11

> ## Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for
>
> a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.
>
> b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
>
> c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
>
> d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.
>
> e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.
>
> f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.
>
> g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.
>
> h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities[22].
>
> 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.
>
> 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).

Satisfactory	Comment:
Yes	See below

Master of Business Administration

1. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure that the most at-risk students are quickly identified and supported. DBS formally encourages peer support and peer mentoring. It was noted that the majority of part-time MBA students are Irish, while most full-time students are from overseas. This has provided a unique cohort combination to foster peer-support to overseas students when required.

2. There are provisions to accommodate students with a variety of particular educational needs, e.g.: provisions for students with a variety of disabilities; provisions for language support etc (see Learning Support in DBS incorporating promotion of inclusion in DBS Quality Assurance Handbook, section 9.3.1).

3. There is strong support for student well-being and pastoral care. For example, international students are assisted in identifying suitable accommodation and settling into life in Ireland.

4. At programme level, students may be assisted to tailor their MBA to match their personal and career goals.

5. There is a transparent and fair procedure for appeals complaints (see section 6.12 in DBS Quality Assurance Handbook).

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

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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)

Differential Validation findings:

As indicated in commentary under criterion 8, EUBS is a small campus with a focus on strong pastoral care and informal communications. This can be a very positive learning environment for some students. The panel noted that the EUBS provides supports for accommodation, visa arrangements, careers, maths clinics, German language classes as well as access to social clubs and societies. While there is a nominated general medical practitioner available to students, there were no specific mental health or psychological supports provided at the EUBS campus. The panel recommends that DBS and EUBS consider how additional mental health supports could be provided ensuring that the learners at the EUBS campus have equivalent supports to students in Dublin.

Under criterion 4, the panel recommended that full and clear information be provided to all prospective learners about the elective and stream options on the programmes. The nature of the award as an Irish qualification, the nature and legislative basis of the Bavarian ministry approval – when obtained, and any unique contexts for holders of a qualification obtained in a transnational context should be clearly and fully described on websites and in written literature. For example: are there any countries where there are special requirements around the recognition of a qualification received in a transnational context – and will DBS and EUBS be recruiting students from such locations?

Criterion 12

The programme is well managed

  a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures.

  b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.

  c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.

  d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.

  e) Quality assurance[24] is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.

  f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.

  g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.

  h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

Satisfactory Partially	Comment: See below

Master of Business Administration

1. The programme has a comprehensive quality assurance framework defining relevant policies and procedures,[25] and which was available to the panel. Among other aspects, the QA manual defines intrinsic governance strictures and processes, protocols for course development, monitoring and review, and teaching, learning and compatible assessment frameworks.

2. The programme governance structure include the following posts (among others): An Executive Dean; Registrar; Discipline-specific Course Directors for covering the thematic subjects on offer at DBS; Head of Academic Programmes; Head of Faculty and School; Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning; Head of Student Experience; Admissions Manager; Student Engagement Officer. These posts ensure that their jurisdictions functionally interface with the general institutional procedures.

3. While the overall assessment of programme management was deemed satisfactory, a systematic Annual Programme Review (APR) is critical to ensuring that any problems /issues identified in the programme are dealt with conclusively, and do not spill into the next academic year. Such a strategy and accompanying reporting can be informed by learner feedback, lecturer performance feedback, and External Examiners feedback, which are all collated by DBS in each academic year.

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[24] See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

[25] DBS Quality Assurance Handbook 2016-17 Edition, 359 pp.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business

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

Differential Validation findings:

Following consideration of the documents and dialogue at the site visit, the programme management arrangements for both programmes need to be finalised and "re-documented". Errors in documentation were identified, as well as contradictions, and there is a need to update the texts to reflect the evident evolution in the agreements for and understanding of programme management arrangements.

Both DBS and its collaborative partner, EUBS, demonstrated a good working relationship during the site visit and a strong willingness on both sides to work together and build and effective collaboration. This is a very positive position from which to grow the relationship. There were many features discussed which did not appear in the collaborative agreement, e.g. detailed membership of collaborative programme boards; how shared annual and periodic reviews will occur; moderation of assessment instruments and moderation of student work; etc.. Detail in the transnational delivery handbook seemed more up to date, but it too was incomplete. The legally binding documents need to be complete, consistent throughout and clear, and should explicitly include the matters discussed during the site visit as well as arrangements for appeals (both for entry to the programme and in respect of results) and complaints. It is not sufficient to refer to standard DBS QA arrangements for this – they have a distinct context within EUBS Munich. The panel recommends that validation of the programmes for provision in Munich be made subject to a condition that all the documents are fully aligned and updated prior to the enrolment of any learners, ensuring that there is absolute clarity about the relationship between the documents and the precise quality assurance infrastructure governing the programme provision.

Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision

In view of the potential conflict of interest arising for the proposed learner representative on the panel, which was promptly notified to the panel by the proposed student member, the panel recommends that DBS should ensure that EUBS staff are familiar with DBS policy on conflict of interest, and that both DBS and EUBS should remain alert to the need to avoid – real or perceived – conflicts of interest in the context of the quality assurance mechanisms for these programmes.

Quality Assurance of Transnational Provision

Part 2B Overall recommendation to QQI

Principal programme

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
X	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);26
	Not satisfactory.

Embedded programme

Select one	
	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
X	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);27
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons[28] for the overall recommendation

As indicated in the body of the report, there are a number of positive features of the collaboration between DBS and EUBS. DBS has also a track record of providing collaborative programmes in a transnational context, and evidenced during the dialogue at the site visit, and in the due diligence documentation, an understanding of the challenges involved. Many aspects of the programme management documentation – in particular the transnational handbook – showed an appreciation of the need to communicate clearly and completely with the staff and students of EUBS. However, the documentation needs to be revised and harmonised to fully and accurately reflect the proposals to manage the programmes as they are currently

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

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

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

proposed. It is very important that there are very clear, explicit, detailed documents to describe the arrangements so that all stakeholders are absolutely clear on the regulatory context both within DBS and also within Ireland and Germany respectively.   Learners need to have absolute clarity on who is doing what and who has responsibility for what – both in the first instance and ultimately. Equally EUBS needs to be aware of the regulatory context of DBS as a provider of programmes leading to awards of the Irish state, existing in a quality assurance environment which adheres to QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, and also the Standards and Guidelines for Higher Education in the European Area (ESG). The ESG is particularly important in the transnational context of the collaboration.

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

Prior to the enrolment of any learners the programme management documentation needs to be revised and harmonised to fully and accurately reflect the proposals to manage the programmes as they are currently proposed. It is very important that there are very clear, explicit, detailed documents to describe the arrangements so that all stakeholders are absolutely clear on the regulatory context both within DBS and also within Ireland and Germany respectively.   Learners need to have absolute clarity on who is doing what and who has responsibility for what – both in the first instance and ultimately. This includes the collaborative agreement and the transnational programme handbooks and any other documents in which the programme management arrangements are referenced.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. While the entry requirements have been clearly stated, there is a need to improve the detail around them to ensure that all local and international applicants fully understand the pre-requisite learning expected, especially in terms of work experience.

2. Detailed information on electives and streams within the programme be provided on the website and in publications. It is very important that prior to committing to a programme, all applicants are aware that particular electives or streams might not be offered in a particular year, depending on the numbers required to make a particular elective or stream viable.

3. While the panel commends DBS on the supports being provided to EUBS staff through the buddy system, and at the same time strongly recommends that the planned programme of training for EUBS staff, focusing on teaching, learning and assessment in particular, be progressed.

4. The small learning environment can be an advantage for many students, and the accessibility of teaching staff in a small college can be very positive. Nevertheless the panel recommends that a focus on the formal mechanisms for feedback to learners also be well developed, as not all students will be comfortable in an informal environment.

5. EUBS has a contract of employment with its teachers. The panel strongly recommends that there is careful consideration of the detail which goes into these contracts, and that there is careful monitoring of the teaching provision by DBS.

6. The panel recommends that DBS monitor the annual recruitment of student numbers to ensure that plans are in place for growing numbers and also to ensure that at all times there are appropriate physical resources available to the learners.

7. The panel recommends that in the training provided by DBS staff to EUBS staff, a particular emphasis be placed on assessment, e.g. assessment standards; grading, focusing in particular on differences in approach between DBS and EUBS; classifications; assessment rubrics; managing academic impropriety; formative qualitative feedback; etc..

8. The panel recommends that DBS and EUBS consider how additional mental health supports could be provided ensuring that the learners at the EUBS campus have equivalent supports to students in Dublin.

9. In relation to learners presenting with mental health issues the panel recommends that EUBS should ensure that learners are always directed towards formal mechanisms for advice and support as soon as possible. The procedural scaffolding of a formal framework will help protect both learners and EUBS staff where issues turn out to be of a more serious nature.

10. The panel recommended that full and clear information be provided to all prospective learners about the elective and stream options on the programmes. The nature of the award as an

Irish qualification, the nature and legislative basis of the Bavarian ministry approval – when obtained, and any unique contexts for holders of a qualification obtained.

11. DBS should consider larger than typical sampling sizes for external examiner consideration and moderation in the first iterations of the programme; or where there is any concern or query identified, arrange for the moderation of a full set of assignments.

12. Where a programme assessment strategy includes group work projects, the panel noted that DBS is considering organising single groups drawing on students in both the Dublin and Munich cohorts. This could be a very effective learning opportunity and the panel would encourage DBS in considering this. While requiring careful management, the potential challenges may be outweighed by the benefits to learners and to a programme's ongoing development.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

No interests have been declared.

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

Signed:

Disclaimer

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Programme and stage schedules

PG24549 Master of Business Administration in Business

Name of Provider	Dublin Business School		
Programme Title	PG24549 Master of Business Administration in Business		
Award Title	Master of Business Administration	Exit Award	N/A
Teaching and learning modalities	Directed Learning; E-learning (directed); E-learning (self-directed); Group Discussions; Group Discussions/Interactions; Laboratory / Studio; Lectures / Classes; Practical Sessions; Self Directed Learning; Practical/workshop/Laboratories/studio sessions; Tutorials; Webinars		

Delivery Modes	Award Class	Award NFQ Level	Award EQF Level	Stage	Stage NFQ Level	Stage Credits	First Intake	ISCED Code
Both	Major	9	7	Award Stage	7	90	30 Aug 2021	04.1.3

Module				Total Student Effort Module (Hours)						Allocation of Marks				
Title	Semester	Status	Credit	Total Hours	Class Contact Hours	Direct e-learning	Hours of independing learning	Work-based learning efforts	C.A. %	Project %	Skills demonstration %	Exam %	Workbased %
Global Issues for Management	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	50	0	0	50	0
Strategic Marketing Analysis	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Managerial Financial Analysis	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Research Methods 1	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Marketing Innovations	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Strategies for Human Resource Management	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Strategic Information Systems	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Project Management Frameworks	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Corporate Financial Management	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	40	0	0	60	0
Cloud Technologies for Business	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Applied Strategic Management	2	M	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Dynamic Leadership Development	2	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Research Methods 2	2	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Integrated Marketing Communications	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0

Reinventing Performance Management	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Innovation and Disruptive Technologies	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Project Management Practices	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Global Financial Markets	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Cloud Application Management	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Dissertation	Not Applicable	M	30	750	6	0	744	0	100	0	0	0	0

PG24550 Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Business

Name of Provider	Dublin Business School		
Programme Title	PG24550 Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Business		
Award Title	Postgraduate Diploma in Business	Exit Award	Yes
Teaching and learning modalities	Directed Learning; E-learning (directed); E-learning (self-directed); Group Discussions; Group Discussions/Interactions; Lectures / Classes; Laboratory / Studio; Practical Sessions; Other; Practical/workshop/Laboratories/studio sessions; Self Directed Learning; Tutorials; Webinars		

Delivery Modes	Award Class	Award NFQ Level	Award EQF Level	Stage	Stage NFQ Level	Stage Credits	First Intake	ISCED Code
Both	Major	9	7	Award Stage	7	60	30 Aug 2021	04.1.3

Module					Total Student Effort Module (Hours)					Allocation of Marks				
Title	Semester	Status	Credit	Total Hours	Class Contact Hours	Direct e-learning	Hours of independing learning	Work-based learning efforts	C.A. %	Project %	Skills demonstration %	Exam %	Workbased %
Global Issues for Management	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	50	0	0	50	0
Strategic Marketing Analysis	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Managerial Financial Analysis	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Research Methods 1	1	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Marketing Innovations	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Strategies for Human Resource Management	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Strategic Information Systems	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Project Management Frameworks	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Corporate Financial Management	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	40	0	0	60	0
Cloud Technologies for Business	1	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Applied Strategic Management	2	M	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Dynamic Leadership Development	2	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Research Methods 2	2	M	5	125	24	50	51	0	100	0	0	0	0
Integrated Marketing Communications	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Reinventing Performance Management	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0

Innovation and Disruptive Technologies	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Project Management Practices	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0
Global Financial Markets	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	50	0	0	50	0
Cloud Application Management	2	E	10	250	48	50	152	0	100	0	0	0	0