Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training v1 2020

Part 1.   Provider details

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	13 July 2022
Date of report	28th July 2022

Section A.   Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Certificate in Global Business
	Award	Certificate in Global Business [L7 – 30crs.]
	Credit	30 ECTS credits
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	Satisfactory subject to proposed condition.

Embedded programme 1	Title	N/A
	Award	
	Credit	
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	
Embedded programme 2	Title	N/A
	Award	
	Credit	
	Recommendation *Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory*	

Section B.   Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Ronnie Harrison	Chair	Registrar of Hibernia College
Mary Jennings	Secretary	Independent Report Writer
Dr Dinusha Weerawardane	Subject Matter Expert	Senior Lecturer, University of the West of London, UK
Sandra Thompson	Subject Matter Expert	Programme Manager, TU Dublin
David Gilmartin	Industry representative	CEO, Troika Relocations
Steven Doran	Learner representative	NCI

Section C.   Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (per centre)	Minimum number of learners
Dublin Business School	450	5

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2022
Maximum number of annual intakes	3
Maximum total number of learners per intake	150
Intake Schedule (e.g. September, January)	September, January, March/ April
Programme duration (months from start to completion)	3

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The panel questioned the minimum number and was assured by the provider than such minimum cohorts may exist in reality.

Target learner groups
This programme is designed for full-time and part-time learners enrolled in a higher education programme in a partner institution in a relevant cognate discipline at Level 7 (year two of a three-year BA (Honours) degree programme) or at Level 7 (year two or three of a four or five-year BA (Honours) Degree programme) or equivalent in their home institution or have completed a level 6 NFQ programme of 60 ECTS or more in Business or related areas or equivalent. The learners' cognate areas include Business Studies, International Business, European Studies or Management. Furthermore, the target learner will be International (i.e. learners whose first language is not English). The target age group is between 19 and 22 years of age.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full time

The teaching and learning modalities
Classroom/Onsite

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)
The proposed *Certificate Global Business* (Level 7, 30 ECTS) programme has been designed to provide EU study abroad learners with a range of practical skills that complement theoretical knowledge in the subject area of global business. The curriculum also aims to provide learners with the communication skills necessary to operate effectively and gain future employment in an

industry of their choice. Strong emphasis is placed on the acquisition of interpersonal skills necessary to deal effectively with customers and colleagues.

The *Certificate in Global Business* (Level 7, 30 ECTS) programme offers a specialised core academic curriculum in four mandatory 5 ECTS modules in Advanced Economic Perspectives, Global Finance, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics and Research Practice constituting 20 ECTS.

In addition, there are five elective pathways proposed: *European Studies*, *Supply Chain Management*, *Digital World*, and *IT for Business*, as well as a *General Global* pathway allowing a free choice of modules from all elective pathways. Each pathway contains learning valued at 10 ECTS.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE
Lecturer - Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 8 Honours Bachelor's degree in Business or Level 8 Honours Bachelor's degree in any of the following subjects or equivalent qualification in the following areas: • Economics • Business • Marketing • Law • Supply Chain Management • Accounting and Finance • Computer Science	7

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Lecture classroom-based sessions	1:150
Workshops & Tutorials	1:25
Practical lab sessions	1:35
Online tutorial (synchronous)	1:25

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:
Appropriate.

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
N/A	N/A	N/A

Section D.   Other noteworthy features of the application

A very complete and clear application which received many commendations from the panel.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable).   Having examined appropriate QA / Governance procedures, comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme. (Especially relevant for move to online delivery / assessment)

N/A

Part 2.   Evaluation against the validation criteria

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.[1]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

As an established provider of higher education programmes DBS has met the prerequisites to apply for validation of this programme. It was noted that DBS has in place procedures for access, transfer and progression. DBS has also established arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) which have been approved by QQI.

DBS provided the panel with a copy of the letter to be submitted to QQI with the application for the validation of the programme. The letter contained the signature and declaration required under sub-criteria 1b) and 1c).

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

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

a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
   (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.*
e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
   (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
   (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
g) For each programme and embedded programme
   (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.[2]
   (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.[3]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Partially	See condition set.

The Programme Team informed the panel that, through regular Programme Team meetings, there had been an iterative process in place to ensure that the MIPLOs and MIMLOs for the programme had been explicitly stated and carefully mapped to ensure that they were consistent with the QQI awards standards sought.

The inclusion of transversal skills in the proposed programme was welcomed by the panel. The panel considered that it would be beneficial to specifically include reference to learning to learn, role, communications and teamwork skills in the MIPLOs so that reference to these skills is made more explicit and make the recommendation below.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS include explicit reference to the competence learning to learn and role, communications and teamwork skills in the existing MIPLOs to reflect the overall content and approach of the programme.

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[2] Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.
[3] 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.

The panel commended the team for the work undertaken on mapping the MIPLOs and MIMLOs and made the following commendation:

Commendation

The panel commends The Programme Team for the work undertaken on mapping the MIPLOs and MIMLOs in a coherent and comprehensive manner.

The panel noted that, in the Proposed Programme Schedule, Section 5.11 of the Programme Document that the way the EQF level is stated is incorrect as it should be at Level 6, not Level 5.

Condition

It is a condition that DBS correct the way the EQF level is stated against the stage in Section 5.11 (Proposed Programme Schedule): it should be Level 6, not Level 5 as currently stated.

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.[4]

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[5] of learner demand for the programme.
   (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant[6].
   (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.[7]

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, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

The panel was told that the proposed programme had been informed by QQI Generic Award Standards and influenced by QQI Business Award Standards. The panel considered that this was appropriate for the type of award proposed.

DBS outlined its recently completed strategy for the college which emphasised an 'international ethos' in its overall approach to provision of programmes, including the one under review. The strategy was developed following extensive consultation with learners, many of them international learners who wished to participate in study abroad programmes. For this specific programme, DBS also consulted with its over 40 partner programmes, mainly in Europe, but also in the USA, who send learners on study abroad programmes. It was stated that the profile of learners on study abroad programmes was changing: many are coming later in their studies – in 2nd or 3rd year. These learners

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[4] 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.

[5] This might be predictive or indirect.

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

[7] 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.

want to take programmes at a higher academic level than the one currently offered by existing study-abroad type programmes. It was further stated that many learners are concerned about global issues and expressed interest in taking a programme that specifically addressed these issues. The appeal of participating in a programme that offers opportunities to integrate with learners from the host country was also considered important.

As DBS propose to offer a QQI Special Purpose Award for successful completion of the Certificate in Global Business, this not only differentiates it from other Erasmus-type programmes but also has the potential to aid mobility for learners as many employers value validated learning.

In its survey of its institutional partners, DBS had proposed a number of options on topics and modules, seeking feedback as the programme was being finalised. Results showed that, for instance, most home institutions wanted to have HR Management on their own programmes and, although DBS considered offering Arabic as a language option, this was not considered to be sufficiently relevant at this time. The demand for transversal skills set was evident in the feedback obtained. All of the consultation was factored into the shape of the programme being proposed. See Criterion 5 for further comment.

The panel noted DBS's intention to implement the programme beginning January 2023. It is satisfied that a clear demand for the programme has been demonstrated.

The panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

Criterion 4. **The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory**

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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[8].

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[9]) 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.

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<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)**</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Certificate in Global Business</td><td>Yes</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

DBS works with partner colleges in Europe and the USA on study abroad programmes, including the proposed programme. As noted, the majority of learners likely to enrol on the programme are in the 2nd or 3rd year in their home institutions. It was stated that DBS works closely with their partners on issues relating to eligibility and suitability for the programme. This includes ensuring that learners do not opt for subjects in DBS for which they have already gained credit, so that double credit is not accruing to the learner.

In response to queries from the panel, DBS stated that learners taking business programmes are likely to have covered basic economics and have the capacity to progress to the mandatory module on Advanced Economic Perspectives. It was further stated that, should learners require support with

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[8] 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

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

this or other subjects, additional resources can be made available in line with DBS's policy on learner supports. See Criterion 8 for further elaboration on this point.

In discussion at the review, DBS clarified that, should a learner on this programme wish to continue studying at DBS instead of returning home, they can apply through DBS's clearly articulated RPL process. With the learner's permission, DBS may also liaise with their home institution to ensure that the learner enrols on the most appropriate programme.

The panel was advised that there are opportunities for learners to repeat modules if this is required. It was stated that, when necessary, learners return to the college to resit exams.

In discussion at the review, it was suggested that the programme might also be open to entry by mature learners, provided they met the requisite entry requirements. DBS indicated that they would consider this as it might provide opportunities for locally based learners interested in having a 'taster programme' in an area of interest. Any such applicant would follow the set-out RPL procedure, with information available on the DBS website and other sources on how to apply.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider accepting mature learners onto the programme, using the stated RPL policies already in place to evaluate their suitability for the programme.

The panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

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[10].
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.[11]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

The proposed programme has four mandatory 5-ECTS credit modules in Advanced Economic Perspectives, Global Finance, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics and Research Practice, constituting 20 ECTS.

In addition, there are five elective pathways proposed: *European Studies*, *Supply Chain Management, Digital World, and IT for Business,* as well as a *General Global* pathway allowing a free choice of modules from all elective pathways. Each pathway consists of two modules and contains learning valued at 10 ECTS.

The panel welcomed the 'pathway approach' as it offers greater choice to learners and commended DBS for this initiative.

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[10] 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.
[11] If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

Commendation

The panel commends DBS for providing greater choice to learners through the pathways and electives provided in the programme.

Overall, the panel considered that the curriculum was well-structured and that, in general, the global contextualisation came through in the content but might be more clearly stated. The panel emphasised the importance of ensuring that the topic of globalisation is explicitly embedded throughout the curriculum and that any teaching, learning and assessment strategy adopted would be contextualised for a global context. See Criterion 9 and 10 also.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that globalisation is embedded in teaching learning and assessment strategies and that these are contextualised for a global context.

It was stated that there are no specific prerequisites for modules such as Advanced Economic Perspectives, Global Finance or Programming for Global Business as learners in their 2nd or 3rd year of study would, more than likely, have sufficient foundation in these subjects. If required, additional supports can be put in place for learners who require assistance. It was not sufficiently clear to the panel how and when needed supports would be made available and made the recommendation that this be more explicitly stated both in the documentation provided as well as in the information provided to learners.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS outline for learners what specific additional supports are available for targeted modules, including Advanced Economic Perspectives.

DBS stated that the topics of ESG (Environment, Sustainability and Governance) were integral to the overall programme and were embedded in the content, teaching and learning strategies and in the assessment strategy. For instance, it was stated that, in the modules on Business Ethics and Research Practice, learners were encouraged to consider their own personal lifestyle and aspirations as these affected issues around the environment and sustainability. Similarly, issues around supply chain management were put in the context of current geo-political relationships in the module on Supply Chain and Procurement Management. The panel considered that, while the examples provided demonstrated a commitment to covering ESG, consideration might be given as to how these topics were more explicitly covered in modules such as Innovation and Entrepreneurship or other modules.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider ways to ensure that the topics of ESG are made more explicit in the modules of the programme.

The panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

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

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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[12] (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[13] opportunities[14].

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.

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<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)**</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Certificate in Global Business</td><td>Yes</td><td></td></tr>
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The panel is satisfied that there are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned. There are 9 full-time staff and 3 part-time staff allocated to it. It was noted that there are new modules proposed for the programme and the panel was informed that DBS had ensured that there were suitably qualified faculty to teach on these modules. It was stated that all academic staff who take on teaching a module are evaluated by the DBS Academic Sub-Committee to ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications and experience required.

In discussion with the Programme Team, it was evident to the panel that there was a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching, learning and assessment and that the team was able to draw on many resources in developing the programme. The panel commends this approach.

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[12] 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.

[13] 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.

[14] 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.

Commendation

The panel commends the multi-disciplinary approach and college-wide contribution to the programme.

The panel noted the high standard of documentation provided in the application for validation of the programme. It was comprehensive and demonstrated that the team had taken a measured approach in developing a well-thought-through programme. The panel commends this work as well as the open engagement with the panel at the review.

Commendation

The panel commends the Programme Team on their validation application and open engagement with the panel session.

It was noted that there is some inconsistency in the way staff and faculty are listed in the documentation provided – see for instance, the different listings in Section 1 and Section 9 of the Programme Document.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS review all programme documentation to ensure that there is consistency in the way staff and faculty are listed in all sections.

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? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that there are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned.

It was reported at the site review that DBS had added additional interactive tools that can be plugged into MOODLE and other platforms to facilitate learners with presentations, asynchronous learning and project work. It was said that there is a clear process in place for faculty members to request required items such as updates or new software or publications for the library and that in general any requests are met.

As part of its teaching, learning and assessment strategy, DBS requires learners to be able to use tools such as Zoom as effectively as possible, particularly as the whole emphasis of the programme is about working or presenting to a global audience. The panel is satisfied that there are sufficient resources to enable learners to use these kinds of facilities as part of their study.

DBS indicated that the recent purchase and installation of new furniture meant that room configuration was optimised for group projects or group study in this onsite programme.

Where possible, in the allocation of rooms, account is taken of any particular access needs by learners. See Criterion 11 for further comment.

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

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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.
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<tr><td></td><td>**Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)**</td><td>**Comment**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Certificate in Global Business</td><td>Yes</td><td></td></tr>
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DBS outlined a range of supports available to learners for the proposed programme. DBS acknowledged that learners who are away from their own country and home institution may experience a range of issues be they academic, cultural or personal. To provide support from the beginning, there is an induction programme for learners covering fundamental issues such as interacting with different cultures, dealing with issues of consent or harassment, support in dealing with visa issues or how to prepare for changeable Irish weather conditions.

To support learners, the SESU (Student Engagement and Success Unit) adopts an early warning system, tracking learner attendance at class and working with lecturers to identify learners who may need support in academic writing, maths or use of MOODLE or other facilities. The team can point the learner to supports available. This might be short courses offered via the library or specific courses on, for instance, economics, if required. Later in the term, short courses on preparing for the first assignment or exams are made available.

The panel was informed that any faculty member may contact the Student Welfare Officer should they have any concern over the well-being of any learner or any learner can contact the Officer directly. Free external counselling services are available, in a range of languages, in relation to issues of mental health.

Specific supports are available for learners with a disability, and it was noted that DBS has recently appointed a Disability and Inclusion Officer to increase its supports in this area.

It was reported that learners are encouraged to join existing DBS Societies which host a range of events throughout the year and it is a way to engage with learners from many countries, including Ireland-based learners. It was said that this was an important aspect of the programme as it did not have a specific social programme as a formal part of the curriculum.

In discussion at the review, it was suggested that, with long-established partners sending learners to DBS, it would be worth considering the establishment of a learner network which graduates of the programme could join on their return home. This has the potential to not only support learners as they progress but also could effectively promote the DBS programme to others.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS consider creating a network for learners which they could join on their return to their home institutions to both support learners and promote the DBS programme.

The panel is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

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, support15 and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.	

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

It was stated that the teaching and learning strategy for the programme is to have an integrated approach, making the most of the opportunities that exist in what is an intensive, short 12-week programme. As some of the mandatory modules are cross-listed with other DBS programmes, this may put some constraint on what can be undertaken within the timeframe. DBS informed that panel about proposed initiatives to encourage integration that include:

The Common Read
The *Common Read* is essentially a topical, insightful text that is read together by learners and faculty with online or in-class discussions. For the programme under review, the proposed text is: Zakaria, F., (2020), *Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World***.** The book speaks to past, present, and future, beyond the immediate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cross-Module Teams
For the integration of learning, it is proposed that teams will be established for Group Work across the four mandatory modules. This means that a team of four or five members will interact more regularly and have a heightened engagement with each other in the completion of *Advanced Economic Perspectives, Global Finance, Innovation & Entrepreneurship* and *Business Ethics and Research Practice,* reducing the number of meetings and co-ordination events required and reducing overall workload.

Commendation

The panel commends DBS on the Common Reading initiative as a way to encourage learner communication across all pathways.

The panel was informed that there will be a mix of lecturers and tutorials, which allows for the reflection and consideration of theories, concepts and issues followed by facilitated discussion. Active learning is to be fostered through activities that include group debates and discussions and peer review. The Programme Team have access to a number of education technologies, such as

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15 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.

online walls and polls, to generate learning activities in class and online. The asynchronous on-demand content uses multiple media to present theory and concepts to encourage reflective learning.

Recordings of in-class and online learning environments are made available to learners, when appropriate to do so. All modules and each mode of delivery utilise directed e-learning, which means lecturers direct learner interaction with online reusable learning objects and/or discussion forums.

The Programme Team indicated that learners will receive timely and constructive feedback to allow learners to continuously improve their understanding of the material and to competently apply it to the summative assessments.

It was clear to the panel that there was an emphasis on encouraging learners to develop transversal skills such as teamwork, effective presentation and communication skills and a sensitivity to intercultural issues. This emphasis reflects the feedback from industry on the need for these skills in the workplace, particularly in the global context. Opportunities for skill development included group project work, presentation assignments, reflective practices and group discussion as well as input from lecturers.

Commendation

The panel commends DBS on the inclusion of a core transversal skills toolkit embedded in the programme.

The panel is satisfied that the criterion has been met.

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*[16]

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.[17]

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.[18]

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.[19]

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

In general, the panel is satisfied that there are sound assessment strategies in place for the proposed programme.

In reviewing the proposed assessment schedule, the panel is of the view that there are many assessments to be completed in weeks 10, 11 and 12 of the 12-week programme and is concerned that this may place an undue burden on learners towards the end of their study, with little time for feedback allowed in the tight timeframe. In discussion with the Programme Team, it emerged that there might be a possibility to have the assessments on Advanced Economic Perspectives and Global Finance take place in week 7 of the programme, without compromising the integrity of the modules, while easing the burden in the later weeks. The panel made the following recommendation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS give consideration to having the assessments for the modules on Advanced Economic Perspectives and Global Finance in Week 7, rather than later in the programme.

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[16] See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

[18] 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.

[19] 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).

Similarly, in order to further reduce the burden of assessments on learners, the panel put forward the suggestion for consideration that there might be scope to have integrated assessments for some modules, such as in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics and Research Methods modules, and made the following recommendation:

Recommendation

It is recommendation that DBS consider integrated assessments for some modules where appropriate.

The panel was informed that group projects are an integral part of the overall programme, including the assessment strategy. The Programme Team said that an overall group mark, as well as an individual mark is allocated in this type of assessment. DBS said that it was an institution-wide policy that at least 10% of project marks is allocated to individual contributions. The panel indicated that this is not consistently well documented so as to provide total clarity on this important point and made the following recommendation:

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that, in group work projects, the individual contribution is more consistently documented and that the individual contribution is at least 10% of total marks.

In reviewing the information provided on assessment weightings and other information (Section 5.10 of the Programme Document), the panel considered that the outline did not provide sufficient clarity and suggested that DBS review how this information is presented.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS ensure that the weightings and other information provided on assessment outlines are clear.

As noted, providing opportunities for learners to develop transversal skills, including communication skills, is a feature of the proposed programme. The panel observed that the development of communication skills is being actively promoted through the proposed assessment strategy across the modules, with marks consistently being allocated to the effectiveness of communication skills displayed. The panel commends DBS for this integrated approach.

Commendation

The panel commends DBS for the way in which communications skills are being actively developed throughout the assessment strategy used within the modules.

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[20].

i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*[21] 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? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

The panel was advised that DBS uses a number of mechanisms to develop and implement supports for learners including:

- Learner surveys
- Peer Mentoring Support (with training provided for mentors)
- Support for, and engagement with, an elected Student Union
- Student services for:
    - Accommodation
    - Counselling and referral services
    - Sports and societies, with many student-led events
    - Entertainment
    - Study and meeting spaces within the campus

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[20] 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).

[21] See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

The panel was informed that DBS operates on the principle of providing fair and equal opportunity to each earner. Where possible, DBS employs universal learning and design practices which provide learners with greater opportunity to participate in all teaching and learning modalities as well as in the social life of the College. See Criterion 8 above for further comment.

The panel was informed that, as a private college, DBS does not quality for government student support services for people with disabilities, although this is under active review by government. DBS has recently appointed its own Disability Inclusion Officer to be part as of the Student Services Team. It was stated that the team meets on a weekly basis to review all touchpoints with learners on its disability register to ensure that the correct provision is in place at all times. The new appointment was welcomed by the panel.

Commendation

The panel commends DBS on the appointment of a Disability Inclusion Officer.

It was stated that there is learner representation on both the Academic Board and Board of Studies within DBS. From the documentation, it was not sufficiently clear to the panel how this worked in practice and recommends that this be further clarified in the Programme Document.

Recommendation

It is recommended that DBS clarify in the programme documentation the specific way learner representation on the Academic Board and Board of Studies works in practice.

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[22] 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? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Certificate in Global Business	Yes	

The panel is satisfied that there are effective structures in place for the governance and management of the programme under review. The Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) contains the governance structures for the College and procedures for access, transfer and progression, learner assessments and supports, and teaching and learning.

It was noted that the QAH and associated policies and procedures have been developed in line with QQI statutory guidelines.

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

Part 3.   Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1   Certificate in Global Business:

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;
Satisfactory subject to condition set.	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
1. The criteria have been satisfactorily met, subject to one condition.

Commendations
1. The panel commends The Programme Team for the work undertaken on mapping the MIPLOs and MIMLOs in a coherent and comprehensive manner.
2. The panel commends DBS for providing greater choice to learners through the pathways and electives provided in the programme.
3. The panel commends the multi-disciplinary approach and college-wide contribution to the programme.
4. The panel commends the Programme Team on their validation application and open engagement with the panel session.
5. The panel commends DBS on the Common Reading initiative as a way to encourage learner communication across all pathways.
6. The panel commends DBS on the inclusion of a core transversal skills toolkit embedded in the programme.

7. The panel commends DBS for the way in which communications skills are being actively developed throughout the assessment strategy used within the modules.
8. The panel commends DBS on the appointment of a Disability Inclusion Officer.

Special Conditions of Validation (directive and with timescale for compliance)
1. It is a condition that DBS correct the way, in Section 5.11 (Proposed Programme Schedule), the EQF level is stated against the stage: it should be Level 6, not Level 5 as currently stated.

Embedded programme 1:   N/A

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;
	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

1. N/A

Commendations

1. N/A

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

1. N/A

Embedded programme 2: N/A

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;
	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

N/A

Commendations

N/A

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

N/A

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

It is a condition that DBS correct the way, in Section 5.11 (Proposed Programme Schedule), the EQF level is stated against the stage: it should be Level 6, not Level 5 as currently stated.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. It is recommended that DBS include explicit reference to the competence learning to learn and role, communications and teamwork skills in the existing MIPLOs to reflect the overall content and approach of the programme.
2. It is recommended that DBS consider accepting mature learners onto the programme, using the stated RPL policies already in place to evaluate their suitability for the programme.
3. It is recommendation that DBS ensure that globalisation is embedded in teaching learning and assessment strategies and that these are contextualised for a global context.
4. It is recommended that DBS outline for learners what specific additional supports are available for targeted modules, including Advanced Economic Perspectives.
5. It is recommended that DBS consider ways to ensure that the topics of ESG are made more explicit in the modules of the programme.
6. It is recommended that DBS review all programme documentation to ensure that there is consistency in the way staff and faculty are listed in all sections.
7. It is recommended that DBS consider creating a network for learners which they could join on their return to their home institutions to both support learners and promote the DBS programme.
8. It is recommended that DBS give consideration to having the assessments for the modules on Advanced Economic Perspectives and Global Finance in Week 7, rather than later in the programme.
9. It is recommended that DBS consider integrated assessments for some modules.
10. It is recommended that DBS ensure that, in group work projects, the individual contribution is more consistently documented and that the individual contribution is at least 10% of total marks.
11. It is recommended that DBS ensure that the weightings and other information provided on assessment outlines are clear.
12. It is recommended that DBS clarify in the programme documentation the specific way learner representation on the Academic Board and Board of Studies works in practice.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: Mr Ronnie Harrison   Date: 29th August 2022

Signed:

3.2   Disclaimer

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

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Part 4. Proposed programme schedules

Name of Provider:	Dublin Business School
Programme Title	Certificate in Global Business
Award Title	Certificate in Global Business
Stage Exit Award Title[3]	N/A
Modes of Delivery (FT/PT):	F/T (Classroom Onsite)
Teaching and learning modalities	As per module descriptors

Award Class[4]	Award NFQ level	Award EQF Level	Stage (1, 2, 3, 4, …, or Award Stage):	Stage NFQ Level[2]	Stage EQF Level[2]	Stage Credit (ECTS)	Date Effective	ISCED Subject code
SPA	7	6	Award	7	6	30	Sept 2022	0413

Module Title (Up to 70 characters including spaces)	Semester no where applicable. (Semester 1 or Semester2)	Module Status[29]	Module NFQ Level[1] where specified	Credit Number[5] Credit Units	Total Student Effort Module (hours) Total Hours	Class (or equiv) Contact Hours	Directed e-learning	Hours of Independent Learning	Work-based learning effort[30]	Allocation Of Marks (from the module assessment strategy) C.A. %	Supervised Project %	Proctored practical demonstration %	Proctored written exam %
Advanced Economic Perspectives	1	M	7	5	125	32	25	68		50			50
Global Finance	1	M	7	5	125	32	25	68		50			50
Innovation & Entrepreneurship	1	M	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Business Ethics and Research Practice	1	M	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
European Legal Systems	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Political Economy of the EU	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Supply Chain & Procurement Management	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Global Supply Chain Strategies	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Social Media Marketing	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Digital Marketing Concepts	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		50			50
Artificial intelligence for Global Business	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			
Programming for Global Business	1	E	7	5	125	32	25	68		100			

Special Regulations (Up to 280 characters)
Learners can choose one Elective pathway

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[29] Mandatory (m) or elective (E)

[30] Work-based learning effort is not the number of hours in the workplace. For example, a person might spend 35 hours in the workplace as a trainee and this might involve 7 hours of learning effort.