



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

Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	Dublin Business School
Programme(s) Reviewed	Bachelor of Business NFQ Level 7, 180 ECTS Higher Certificate in Business (embedded exit award only programme) NFQ Level 6, 120 ECTS

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Dr Annie Doona	Chair	Independent consultant
Dr Deirdre Nuttall	Report Writer	Adverbage Ltd
Dr. Timothy McNichols	Academic	Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Dr. Valerie McTaggart	Academic	Atlantic Technological University
Gillian Saeva	Industry Expert	Bennett and Bell
Airdas Kacenas	Student Representative	Technological University of the Shannon

All members of the independent Panel declared their independence of Dublin Business School and that they have no conflict of interest.

Part 1. Introduction

The purpose of this review report is to evaluate the Bachelor of Business against the QQI validation criteria. The programme is at level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Its embedded exit award programme, the Higher Certificate in Business, is at level 6 on the NFQ.

The Panel met with representatives of Dublin Business School on Zoom on Friday 2nd May 2025 to explore the matter of whether or not the Bachelor of Business should be recommended for revalidation and, in the event of a positive outcome, whether or not certain conditions or recommendations should be attached. The Panel had previously explored the extensive documentation provided by Dublin Business School and each reviewer had raised a number of issues for further consideration. These issues, and others, were discussed in detail over the course of the day.

The evaluation examines in detail the programme review process and the evaluation of the programme proposed for revalidation against QQI validation criteria.

The programme review process is examined under the following criteria, context and terms of reference for the programme review:

- Provider information and programme context
- Baseline qualitative and quantitative information
- Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders
- Programme quality assurance
- Summary analysis of the programme
- Revision of the programme.

For the evaluation of the programme proposed for revalidation, the QQI validation criteria that the programme is examined under are:

- The provider's eligibility to apply for validation
- Programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with QQI awards sought
- Programme concept
- Implementation strategy and interpretation of QQI award standards are well informed and soundly based
- Access transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory
- Written curriculum is well-structured and fit for purpose
- There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned
- There are sufficient physical resources available to implement the programme as planned
- The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme learners
- There are sound learning and teaching strategies
- There are sound assessment strategies
- Learners enrolled on the programme are well-informed and cared for
- The programme is well-managed.

This review and overall recommendations are presented to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) as part of the College's proposal for the revalidation of the programme for a further five-year period, commencing in September 2025.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Key documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business, Law and Marketing Assessment Workload Standardisation Criteria (2024) • Bachelor of Business Programme Handbook • Module and Assessment Document • Programme Document • Programme Team CVs • Programme Review Report
2.	Supporting Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Programme Reports • Board of Studies Reports • Certificate of Validation • Class Representative Meeting Minutes • Exams and Continuous Assessment Samples • External Examiner Reports • Feedback Surveys • Handbooks • QQI Criteria • SESU Revalidation Data 2024 • Timetable • Grading Criteria • Assessment Audit • Existing Versus Proposed Structure • Transfer and Progression Mapping
3.	Regulatory Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dublin Business School Cover Letter Declaration • Dublin Business School Deed of Guarantee • Fee Cover Note Bachelor of Business • PEL Refund Arrangements
4.	Programme Review Supporting Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda • Terms of Reference

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Darragh Breathnach	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar
2.	Lori Johnston	Academic Dean
3.	Tanya Zubrzycki	Acting Academic Director
4.	Niamh Cullen	Assistant Academic Director
5.	Daniel Molnar	Assistant Academic Director
6.	Keelin Lee	Programme Level Manager
7.	Anita Dwyer	Assistant Registrar
8.	Amy Hayes	Academic Programmes Manager
9.	Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
10.	Francisca Knight	Head of Academic Operations
11.	Trevor Haugh	Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre
12.	Tanya Balfe	Admissions Manager

13	Sarah Sharkey	Retention Officer
14	Nicholas Kelly	Head of Faculty Management
15	Julie Ahern	Faculty Manager
16	Various Members of Faculty	

Description of evaluation process

The programme review process for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing was examined virtually with representatives of Dublin Business School (Dublin Business School), on 2nd May 2025. Before this meeting, the Panel members individually and carefully reviewed all the materials relating to the Bachelor of Business provided to them by Dublin Business School. Each Panel member completed an initial feedback form and provided comments on the Programme Review Report, Programme Validation Document and Supporting Documents. This included:

- The programme’s adherence to the 12 validation criteria
- The Panel’s overall impression of the programme
- Specific questions/clarifications to be raised with the provider

The Panel members compiled a list of queries and comments regarding areas for discussion, potential weaknesses, and areas for improvement. These comments were compiled by the Panel chair, Dr Annie Doona. The document was shared with the Panel and tabled for discussion during the online programme review.

The review process involved all representatives from Dublin Business School in the person of President, Academic Dean, Academic Director, Assistant Academic Director, Faculty Manager, Head of Student Experience, Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production, Assistant Registrar, Programmes Manager, Dublin Business School note-taker, administrators, lecturing staff and three student representatives.

The discussion centred around the programme review document and programme validation document and included the following:

- Stakeholder engagement with industry and professional bodies
- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Capability of staff
- Policies and procedures
- The learning environment (tools to engage learners; how to handle students who do not engage and how to handle withdrawals)
- The programme is broadly well-managed but requires revisions, update and improvements to meet learners’ needs in a complex learning environment.

Following this series of meetings with representatives of Dublin Business School, the Panel met in private to discuss and formulate its group of recommendations. These were then presented verbally by the Panel to representatives of Dublin Business School in the final session of the day. The Panel found that the representatives of Dublin Business School were receptive to suggestions for improvement and potential changes to the programme, both relatively significant and relatively minor, as expounded by them and presented below as both conditions and recommendations.

The Panel is satisfied to recommend to QQI that the Bachelor of Business meets the QQI evaluation criterion for the revalidation of the programme, provided the conditions discussed below are met, and with the strong suggestion that the additional recommendations be closely explored and used in developing an updated curriculum and approach to learning.

Part 3. Panel Findings on Provider Programme Review Report

The following is the Panel's commentary and recommendations on the provider's programme review report. It follows the section structure of the report in headings and in sequence. References to specific parts of the provider report will use the relevant report reference e.g. 2.2.4 Programme Management

Section A. Context and Terms of Reference for the Programme Review

Commentary:

This programme review applies to the Bachelor of Business (Level 7, 180 ECTS) and embedded exit award, the Higher Certificate in Business (Level 6, 120 ECTS) programmes offered by Dublin Business School. Programme approval is required from 1 September 2025.

The programmes are due for review under the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) requirement for periodic monitoring and review, and to conform with QQI policies published since the last validation of the programme, including QQI Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training (QQI, 2016), Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (QQI, 2016) and in accordance with the Programme Review Manuals (QQI, 2018, 2022).

As detailed in QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines and the Programme Review Manual 2022, programme monitoring and review is taken as an opportunity to:

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

The QQI *Programme Review Manual 2022* (p 5) states that the specific objectives of a Programme Review are to evaluate the programme as implemented in light of the provider's experience of providing the programme over the previous five years with a view to determining:

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

- What can be concluded from a quantitative analysis of admission data, attrition rates by stage, completion rates and grades achieved by module, stage and overall?
- What reputation do the programme and provider have with stakeholders (learners, staff, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, communities of practice, employers, other education and training providers) and what views do the stakeholders have about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats concerning the programme's history and its future?
- What challenges and opportunities are likely to arise in the next five years and what modifications to the programme are required in light of these?
- In light of its stated objectives and intended learning outcomes, does the programme demonstrably address the explicit learning needs of target learners and society?
- What other modifications need to be made to the programme and its awards to improve or reorient it?
- Does the programme (modified or unmodified) meet the current QQI validation criteria (and sub-criteria) or, if not, what modifications need to be made to the programme to meet the current criteria?
- Does the provider still have the capacity and capability to provide the programme as planned (considering, for example, historical and projected enrolment numbers and profile and availability and adequacy of physical, financial and human resources) without risk of compromising educational standards or quality of provision in light of its other commitments (i.e. competing demands) and strategy?
- What is the justification (or lack thereof) for the provider continuing to offer the programme (modified or unmodified)?
- What changes need to be made to related policies, criteria and procedures (including QA procedures)?

Recommendations:

Having carefully reviewed the material provided and engaged in detailed discussion with representatives of Dublin Business School regarding the proposed changes to the curriculum and the curriculum more generally, the Panel had a number of comments and recommendations, which will be elucidated below in a series of conditions and recommendations.

Briefly, there are some specific issues with the curriculum as it stands that, in the Panel's view, require revision:

- The content of the curriculum – which, notwithstanding changes, remains substantially the same as at the time of the previous review for validation – requires revision beyond that already mooted by Dublin Business School to adequately reflect a globalised, diverse changing world and management practices.
- The content and assessment of the capstone module must be updated to accurately reflect the new strategic management title.
- The business maths title must be updated to reflect an applied business focus.
- All assessment material, including case studies and in-class tests must be updated – currently *and* regularly – to reflect contemporary business practice.
- All rubrics must be standardised in line with best practice.
- The module titled 'AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship' must be changed. The word 'entrepreneurship' must be removed from the title and included in the module

content alongside intrapreneurship, allowing the title to reflect the wider enterprising context of business.

- The allocation of ECT credits for core modules and electives must be carefully considered.
- A larger, more diverse number of industry guest lectures would enhance the student experience with real-world learning, particularly as the programme does not incorporate a work placement or industry experience.

Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Dublin Business School was established in 1975 and over the following 50 years has increased its range of programmes and specialisms. Currently, programmes span a broad range of disciplines including accounting, business, film and creative media, finance, humanities and social sciences, law, marketing, and the computer sciences. Typically, Dublin Business School has over 8,000 active students every year, over half of whom are part-time evening students and the remainder full-time, day students.

Approximately three quarters are enrolled on QQI validated programmes, specifically full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at NFQ Level 6 to Level 9 including Higher Certificate, Higher Diploma, BA, BA Hons, BSc Hons, Postgraduate Diploma, MA, MBA, and MSc programmes. The remaining quarter of the students take programmes that are not on the NFQ, some of which are accredited by professional bodies such as the Project Management Institute or ACCA.

Dublin Business School also offers a small number of programmes that are on the UK Ofqual framework. These are awarded by Kaplan Professional Awards (<https://kaplanpa.co.uk/>). Dublin Business School also offers some English language programmes though only where the learner is planning to progress to a higher education award programme. Dublin Business School has held ACELS accreditation for some years.

The Dublin Business School campus is located in Dublin city centre, with premises on Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street and Bow Lane. Facilities include lecture theatres, PC labs and tutorial rooms, a library including study rooms, study areas and PC terminals, canteen facilities and student services, including student welfare and counselling, and careers services. Dublin Business School has been flexible in adapting to the evolving needs of its learners post-Covid, through the delivery of a range of delivery options which are constantly under review.

Dublin Business School is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kaplan Inc. (<https://kaplan.com/>), the education division of the Graham Holdings Company (<http://www.ghco.com/company-profile>). Kaplan is a global education company, serving more than one million learners per year in over 400 locations in 30 countries. Kaplan's programmes include higher and professional education, language instruction, test preparation and services to primary/secondary learners and schools. In the field of professional education alone, Kaplan last year provided some 600,000 programmes to individuals and firms in financial services and related fields around the globe. Kaplan has a turnover of approximately \$1.5 billion and represents about half the overall Graham Holdings company business.

Dublin Business School currently employs 474 people (as of February 2025). Of these, 305 are directly involved in teaching delivery while 169 are non-faculty staff. Dublin Business School successfully completed the re-engagement process with QQI in 2019, including gaining approval for the provision of blended learning. Dublin Business School continues to develop its range of programmes, its quality assurance systems, its teaching and learning capacity and its learning environment to deliver high-quality learning and education to an increasing number of students. To enable the College to meet this need it has also set a strategic objective of being in a position to seek Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI within the life of its current strategic plan. Dublin Business School is currently planning its route to apply for DA.

In submitting a programme for validation or revalidation, Dublin Business School fully considers the potential market for the programme, the size of previous intakes, where applicable, and its specific content, the competitive landscape, its capacity to deliver such a programme and the fit of this programme with its strategic intent. The programme being presented here will continue to enhance the Dublin Business School portfolio of programmes and enable Dublin Business School to contribute to the increasing demand for higher education along with addressing skills gaps in Ireland.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied with the provider information and programme context and has no specific recommendations to make.

Section C. Baseline qualitative and quantitative information

Programme Data Overview

This section will include the Panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Applications, Enrolment, Attrition Transfer and Progression, Award Classification and Graduate Destinations

Commentary:

According to the Quality Assurance Handbook, all applicants who can demonstrate that they meet the entry requirements should be eligible to enter a programme. Thus, Dublin Business School defines an applicant as a person who meets the entry requirements and, in doing so, distinguishes applications that are speculative. These are judged to be 'enquiries' since the person has not yet demonstrated eligibility.

The total number of applications for the programme under consideration has increased substantially from 446 in 2019/20 to 2,459 in 2023/24. The most significant growth occurred between 2021/22 and 2022/23, during which applications tripled from 703 to 2,362. While this upward trajectory has continued into 2023/24, the rate of increase has moderated compared to the previous year's surge.

This growth has been primarily driven by Year 1 applications, which have expanded nearly sixfold, from 404 in 2019/20 to 2,387 in 2023/24. The most pronounced increase took place between 2021/22 and 2022/23, when Year 1 applications rose sharply from 656 to 2,292. This surge may be attributed, in part, to the impact of calculated Leaving Certificate grades introduced as a response to Covid-19 measures, potentially influencing applicant numbers and first/second choice listings on CAO forms.

In contrast, Year 2 applications remain relatively low and variable compared to Year 1. Numbers peaked at 19 in 2023/24, up from a low of 3 in 2020/21, suggesting challenges in student retention and progression beyond the first year. Year 3 applications have remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 28 and 53 over the five-year period. While there was a modest increase from 32 in 2019/20 to 53 in 2022/23, no significant spikes were observed.

The disparity between Year 1 intake and subsequent Year 2 and Year 3 numbers raises significant concerns regarding retention and progression rates, and even the long-term viability of the programme. It is important to note that the grades of school-leavers, which have been inflated since the covid pandemic, are expected to revert to the mean in 2025, which is likely to impact on enrolment numbers.

The collection of data for this programme dates back to 2020, facilitated by SESU, coinciding with the programme's last validation by QQI. The Bachelor of Business programme is certified for both full-time and part-time delivery. It can take two intakes a year, with a minimum student intake of 7 in first year and a maximum first year intake of 250. However, part-time delivery of this programme has not run since the programme's validation in 2020, nor has the second intake in January, raising additional concerns about the extent of interest among potential domestic and international learners.

Enrolment trends for the Bachelor of Business programme pathways from 2020/21 to 2023/24 highlight evolving student preferences and pathway popularity. At the start of the revalidation cycle in 2020/21, the Bachelor of Business (General Business pathway) dominated with 55% of enrolments. This pathway maintained its leading position through 2021/22 (59%) but gradually declined to 46% in 2022/23 and 41% in 2023/24, indicating a shift in interest toward the other specialised options - and particularly Marketing. The Bachelor of Business in Marketing pathway showed the most significant growth, rising from 6% in 2020/21 to 34% in 2023/24.

The Accounting pathway has experienced the most significant decline in interest, whereas the Information Technology pathway has shown steady, albeit slight, growth during the validation cycle. A key factor in the decision is the viability of the modules within each pathway. The Accounting electives are cross-listed with the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance programme. This ensures that, regardless of how many Bachelor of Business students choose these electives, they will still run as part of a larger class, allowing for meaningful engagement and interaction.

In contrast, the Information Technology pathway faces additional viability concerns. The removal of the Information Systems pathway, primarily due to low demand, from the revalidated Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business programme - for implementation in September 2025 - further weakens the sustainability of Information Technology modules. Moreover, the primary progression route for graduates of the Information Technology pathway is no longer available. Considering these factors, along with consistently low enrolment numbers, the Programme Team at Dublin Business School has determined that retiring the Information Technology pathway is the most viable course of action.

There is a marked gender imbalance on the programme. Between the academic years 2020/21 to 2023/24, male learner enrolment has accounted for 73% of total enrolment figures, while female learner enrolment has accounted for 27%. This negatively compares with HEA 2021/22 data showing that the gender gap has continued to widen in Irish higher education, with females accounting for 54.5% of the overall student population, up from 54.0% in 2020/21, and up from 51.4% in 2015/16. This gender divide is relatively stable year-on-year and reflective of the overall gender percentage, although it is not clear why so many more male than female learners have enrolled in the previous four years. (The Panel does, however, note that there is a good gender balance among the teaching staff, and much more gender balance in many of the other programmes offered at Dublin Business School.)

The largest cohort of learners is domestic, with attention learners from continental Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

Over the five academic years from 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, the Bachelor of Business programme exhibits fluctuating trends in learner success rates, withdrawals, and exit awards. These variations indicate differing levels of academic performance across the four pathways: General Business, Accounting, Information Technology (IT), and Marketing. In the 2019/2020 academic year, pass rates within the General Business pathway were generally strong, ranging from 75% to 100%; however, some cohorts experienced high withdrawal rates of up to 25%. The Accounting pathway demonstrated positive outcomes, with 100% pass rates in two out of three cohorts. Similarly, the IT pathway exhibited high success, achieving 100% pass rates in two cohorts and 75% in another. Conversely, the Marketing pathway faced significant challenges, with a pass rate of only 40% in one cohort and no enrolment in another.

During 2020/2021, the General Business pathway presented mixed results. While some cohorts achieved pass rates as high as 86.67%, others declined to 71.43%, with 14.29% failing and an equivalent percentage withdrawing. The IT pathway maintained 100% pass rates in one cohort: however, other cohorts experienced instances of failure. The Marketing pathway continued to struggle, with one cohort lacking enrolment and another experiencing a low pass rate of 33.33% and a significantly high failure rate of 66.67%. Notably, the withdrawal rate in the General Business pathway increased compared to the previous academic year.

In 2021/2022, the General Business pathway demonstrated robust performance, with pass rates of 81.82%, alongside withdrawal and failure rates of 13.64% and 4.55%, respectively. The Accounting pathway sustained its high standards, achieving 100% pass rates across all cohorts, while the IT

pathway also attained full pass rates. The Marketing pathway showed improvement, with at least one cohort achieving a 100% pass rate.

The 2022/2023 academic year saw a decline in General Business performance, with one cohort attaining a pass rate of 57.14%, while 28.57% failed and 14.29% withdrew. The Accounting pathway maintained its consistent success, with 100% pass rates across all cohorts. Although the Marketing pathway achieved a 100% pass rate in one cohort, another cohort recorded a 40% failure rate, reflecting ongoing inconsistencies in performance. The IT pathway also experienced a slight decline, with pass rates dropping to 66.67% and one cohort reporting a 33.33% failure rate.

In 2023/2024, the General Business pathway continued to face challenges, with pass rates falling to 58.33% in one cohort, while 25% failed and 16.67% withdrew. Another cohort recorded an even lower pass rate of 54.55%, with 45.45% failing. The Accounting pathway remained strong, with most cohorts achieving 100% pass rates, except for one cohort where 60% passed, 20% failed, and 20% withdrew. The IT pathway experienced a notable decline, with one cohort reporting a pass rate of 40% and a high failure rate of 60%. The Marketing pathway also exhibited inconsistencies, with one cohort attaining a 71.43% pass rate and 28.57% failing, while another cohort recorded a 60% pass rate with 40% failing. Accounting remains the most consistently successful pathway, demonstrating high pass rates with minimal withdrawals or failures. The IT pathway, while initially strong, has shown a declining trend in recent years. The General Business pathway exhibits significant variability in performance, particularly in terms of high withdrawal and failure rates in certain years. The Marketing pathway remains the least stable, experiencing both high and low pass rates across different cohorts.

According to the records of Dublin Business School, just four students progressed from the Level 7 programme to a Level 8 course in the 2023/24 academic year, which is a conversion rate of only 5.9%, suggesting that additional measures are needed to enhance student transition to Level 8.

On the basis of the limited alumni feedback received by Dublin Business School, graduates of the programme have found positions at companies like Sherry Fitzgerald and Outlier.ai, working in various capacities from Training Negotiators to Data Annotators. Dublin Business School asserts that the programme prepares students for diverse industries, with alumni entering both real estate and tech sectors. The feedback, Dublin Business School maintains, reflects the broad skill set acquired, enabling graduates to thrive in different professional environments, from sales-focused roles to those in data-driven technology companies.

Recommendations:

The Panel notes that, across Ireland, the general trend is for third level institutions to move away from offering level 7 programmes towards level 8, and also that many institutions offer similar general business programmes. In combination with the fact that Dublin Business School is clearly struggling to maintain numbers in this programme, this does seem to suggest that learner interest may not be as high as Dublin Business School would like.

In order to attract learners, to engage them with the material, and to obtain higher rates of progression and good graduate outcomes generally, Dublin Business School should revise its curriculum according to the criteria explicated below.

Programme Delivery and Teaching & Learning Strategies

This section will include the Panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Physical Facilities and Resources, Timetabling, Learner Workload, Attendance, Teacher Learner Ratios,

Commentary:

Dublin Business School informed the Panel that there has been considerable investment and improvement in the physical, ICT, and learner support service environments at Dublin Business School. A number of physical environments have been transformed with the addition of new classroom layouts, such as two new café-style rooms to promote group work, and upgraded ICT facilities. The library now has three private study rooms for group work and an enhanced learner support area.

Dublin Business School also provided detailed information about its physical facilities, integrated technologies, library facilities and services, and ongoing investments in technology and facilities.

A dedicated timetabling team within Dublin Business School is charged with developing and monitoring the timetables. They ensure that all required classes can be delivered within the resources available, including available classrooms, while not putting excessive pressure on learners by having classes run without breaks throughout the day or week.

There are some challenges in timetabling, however. The existing facilities are running at almost full capacity, meaning that it is not always possible to timetable classes at times that are convenient to the learner. Dublin Business School is hopeful that with the recent addition of Marconi House space for administrative offices, which freed up more classroom space in Castle House, this problem will become less frequent.

In general, the timetable works well and facilitates the learning to occur in a way that is balanced between the needs of the learner and the capacity of the institution. Additionally, the timetable supports the rationale for the curriculum structure. There are circumstances where a lecturer may need to reschedule a class for some good reason and it is expected that the class is rescheduled in a timely manner and in such a way so as not to overload the learner. Some modules have multiple lecturers (though typically no more than two) which may lead to class schedule changes halfway.

The assignments and assessments are calibrated such that the average learner can complete the designated work in the notional timeframe of the module. Feedback is either summative or formative and ensures learners receive adequate, timely feedback for their assessments. Learners receive their assessment marks and comments from the module leader, ideally within two weeks of submission.

Assignment feedback is provided to the learner in an electronic individual feedback report, accessed by the learner on the Dublin Business School e-learning site Moodle. Each learner receives an individual mark for a group assignment. This mark is weighted between a mark for the group assignment itself, which is the same for all members of the group, and a mark for the individual learner's contribution to the group. Various strategies agree the weighting between product and process and these are agreed for each module by the Programme Management Team Recommendations.

Dublin Business School has previously placed considerable emphasis on groupwork but the revalidated programme will have a revised balance. Practice across the HEI sector recommends a more balanced approach to ensure fair assessment of individual competency, and excessive reliance on groupwork can be stressful for learners, and also make it difficult to accurately assess personal

understanding and contribution accurately, particularly on quantitative modules such as on the Accounting pathway.

Dublin Business School also intends to implement a standardised assessment workload process to ensure consistency across modules, and to support both learners and faculty in the administration of group work.

Teacher-to-learner ratios are determined by considering the teaching activity, content, and learning outcomes, within the context of the mode of delivery.. However, the current validated programme has an in-class ratio of 1:50 and will be limited to these numbers to facilitate learner engagement. The ratios, however, may be different when the modules are cross-listed with other programmes. Interactive and engaging teaching activities that occur in a lab would be restricted to a ratio of 1:35, allowing lecturers to differentiate the teaching by providing one-to-one and small group support within a larger group.

When delivering tutorials fully live online or in a hybrid mode, the maximum ratio is 1:25. Live online and hybrid delivery requires a level of prescriptive delivery to generate the interaction and engagement required for the teaching activities that would occur, which would be too cognitively demanding for lecturers and learners at ratios in excess of 1:50. Similarly, in-class tutorials and workshops, where there is an expectation of interactive and discursive activity to analyse or evaluate, or to provide formative assessment and feedback, the ratios are reduced to 1:25.

Whereas Covid accelerated a trend towards online learning, the Programme Team at Dublin Business School has ascertained that on-campus learning offers advantages to many teachers and learners, with some modules simply unsuited to online learning.

To address the matter of work-readiness, Dublin Business School offers a Graduate Work Ready Programme, which is a series of non-credit modules integrated into the timetable, offering learners valuable opportunities to enhance their career readiness and overall employability. Students can learn three award levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold) for areas including leadership and management skills, effective communication, time management and productivity, emotional intelligence, team collaboration, and conflict resolution, adapting to corporate environments, and networking and professional presence.

Recommendations:

The Panel is generally satisfied that Dublin Business School has satisfactory infrastructure in place. However, learner feedback suggested that there are times when the library is overwhelmed. Dublin Business School has an inner city campus in which space is at a premium so while it is understandable that this can be an issue, clearly steps need to be taken to address it. The Panel notes that Dublin Business School does make additional study space availing during particularly busy times, by repurposing classrooms. Every effort must continue to be made to accommodate learner preparing for exams.

While Dublin Business School has extensive supports in place for learners with additional needs and for whom English is a second language, etc., it is not clear whether all learners who might benefit from these supports are aware of this.

In addition, while the Panel note that Dublin Business School has inclusive policies, it is not always very clear how these are managed with respect to assessment strategies, in particular how the needs of neurodivergent learners are accommodated, particularly with respect to the 10% mark awarded for participation in modules. Dublin Business School needs to communicate its inclusive

policies much more explicitly to all students but especially those who are neurodivergent and those who may be unfamiliar with the concept of grading relating to participation.

Currently, the assessment schedule results in 'bunching' with large numbers of assignments all due during the same time period. This was identified by learner representatives as a considerable source of anxiety to students, many of whom struggle to balance their workload (and certainly contributing to the above-mentioned issues with library and study space at certain times of the year).

With respect to the Graduate Work Ready programme, the Panel found that student representatives were largely unaware of this opportunity, and also noted that engaging students in a programme that is not credit-bearing is likely to be challenging, as students will be focused on elements bearing credits. Better communication from Dublin Business School about the value of this programme would help to address this issue.

Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

Dublin Business School asserted that learner consultation and feedback are an integral aspect of continuous monitoring and review and provided detailed material supporting this assertion to the Panel.

Dublin Business School carries out an annual Teaching and Learning review. In 2024, it also carried out a qualitative survey of current students on the Bachelor of Business. The results of this survey were provided to the Panel. They included the information that most Business models (excepting Digital and Media Skills for Business) are regarded highly by learners, with some modules (Business Maths, Applied Digital Skills for Business, Management Practice Project and Business Financial Management) exceeding expectations.

Elective modules are generally less well-received than mandatory. Most learners agreed that the overall programme is balanced, with a reasonable workload. They further agreed that online hybrid learning options are well-managed, although it is worth noting that only 4% of learners surveyed chose fully online as their preferred mode of teaching delivery.

Dublin Business School asserted that learner feedback was considered carefully in revising the programme. Modules with relatively high 'below expectations' and/or 'not sure' ratings will be revised in terms of curriculum, structure, and assessment workload, and modules with low attendance and low performance will be subjected to interventions aimed at improving learner engagement and satisfaction.

Moreover, in response to learner feedback, Dublin Business School will remove excessive group work, streamline content, and move towards an increasingly practical, skills-focused approach, with better time-tabling and enhanced relevance to industry needs.

The Panel had the opportunity to meet and interview a small number of students currently enrolled on the programme. All spoke in broadly positive terms about their experiences at Dublin Business School, but also mentioned significant issues with the bunching of assessments, and at times with the nature of the feedback obtained, as well as occasional issues around access to library facilities etc. Also, while Dublin Business School does have good systems in place to support students with particular needs, or during times of stress or difficulty, the learners interviewed appeared to be largely unaware of these supports and how to access them.

Recommendations:

While it is clear that Dublin Business School has carried out extensive consultations with learners and aims to respond creatively to their feedback, the actual revisions to the programme previously revalidated in 2020 are actually rather slight. The Panel recommends that Dublin Business School interrogate the material, its manner of delivery, and their approach to assessment much more rigorously than appears to have been the case from the supplied material. Moreover, with respect to these supports, we recommend that Dublin Business School take particular care in reinforcing awareness of them during orientation and early stage modules.

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

Dublin Business School captures feedback from staff on an ongoing basis, in particular from the Programme Team Meetings, when academic and logistical issues are discussed, as well as any matters relating to assessment, resources, and/or delivery of the programme, which can then be brought forward to the internal Board of Studies for consideration and ratification. A survey was carried out with the lecturing team ahead of the revalidation process, and feedback was also gathered using other means.

Following this process, the Programme Team decided to emphasise more strongly how international digital companies achieve global success, to provide students with the opportunity to apply pragmatic technical skills.

Recent years have seen dramatic developments in artificial intelligence, especially Generative AI. Some of these developments are already covered to some extent but the programme needs to be adapted. The programme team expressed their view that digital skills should be integrated throughout the programme across all three years of study.

Teaching staff at Dublin Business school stressed the importance of practical engagement in assessment, and the usefulness of integrating guest lectures throughout the course, as well as transitioning to oral interview assessments, mitigating the risk that students may be relying excessively on tools such as AI-generated content.

Recommendations:

The evaluation of the programme by staff showed that they are engaged with the material and keenly aware of the opportunities and challenges represented by rapidly developing AI, etc. However, the proposed changes to the curriculum suggest that this awareness has not actually been fully applied to the programme being put forward for revalidation, and the Panel feels that a bolder approach would help to make the programme more relevant in an extremely competitive field.

As mentioned above, the Panel feels strongly that the content of the programme should be revised to reflect a globalised, diverse changing world and management practises and that the module titled 'AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship' must be changed. The word 'entrepreneurship' must be removed from the title and included in the module content alongside intrapreneurship, allowing the title to reflect the wider enterprising context of business.

In general, the Panel urges Dublin Business School to thoroughly assess its programme offering with a critical eye. It was concerning to note that examples of case studies given in the literature supplied were not at all up to date. While staff assured the Panel that case studies provided in class *are* up to date, the lack of care given to the supplied material was not entirely reassuring. Moreover, the Panel queried why, given the abundance of real-life case studies available, and the importance of exposing learners to industry situations, fictional case studies are being used at all.

The Panel noted the good practice of incorporating guest lectures into the programme. The Panel feels that – particularly given that there is no work placement in this programme – a larger number of guest lectures from relevant industry figures would be of great benefit to the programme, as well as focused, alternative real-world learning options such as simulated projects or participation in external competitions. The Panel also recommends that Dublin Business School establish a team-

focused approach for all review processes to ensure alignment between management and teaching staff.

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

Dublin Business School sound feedback from a range of external stakeholders, including industry representatives and the programme's own External Examiners on the programme. The Dublin Business School Business, Marketing, and Law Industry Advisory Board is an active forum fostering discussion and debate between Dublin Business School academic staff and a diverse range of industry professionals, some of whom are actively engaged in senior business roles. These meetings, which occur 3-4 times per year, are an important mechanism for discussing how to create links between learners and industry. Dublin Business School commenced consultations with external stakeholders in November 2024 and distributed a survey in December 2024 and January 2025. The survey revealed industry perceptions of the Marketing pathway as being the most relevant, followed by Information Technology and Accounting, although the surveys also revealed scope for all pathways to become more closely aligned with industry demands. There was generally positive feedback from external examiners on all the modules in the programme, with a number (Business Environment; Digital and Media Skills for Business; Fundamentals of Accounting; Fundamentals of Marketing; Organisational Behaviour; Applied Digital Skills for Business; Critical Thinking Skills; Management Practice Project; Digital Technologies for Business; Business Financial Management; Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Digital Marketing Planning and Management; and International Marketing Practice) being deemed 'very relevant'.

Recommendations:

The Panel was pleased to note the good levels of engagement with industry experts among the external examiners and Dublin Business School's determination to consider their recommendations in revising the programme ahead of revalidation. However, it would like to see this engagement with industry experts also extend more broadly into the curriculum, with a greater number of guest lectures and a keener focus on exposing learners to the realities of industry, particularly in light of the fact that industry work experience does not form part of the programme.

Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

The Panel notes that Dublin Business School has a robust system in place for complaints and appeals. The Dublin Business School Quality Assurance Handbook provides clear guidelines regarding what learners can expect from their educational experience, and there are procedures in place for complaints. The School Administrative Officer manages the formal Complaint process, to prevent contamination or bias of findings following an Appeal. When complaints are received, these are initially escalated to the Programme Leader to review, or the Faculty Manager where the Programme Leader is ineligible to undertake the review. If the Complaint cannot be resolved at this level, it can be escalated to a formal Complaint, through the School Administrative Officer.

Students also have a clearly-defined right of appeal against a decision of a lower-level decision-making authority by making a request to a higher one. Students are always advised to refer to their

lecturer for feedback regarding queries in the first instance, to determine if there are potential reasons to Appeal or request a Verification, or if disputed grades are the result of deficient performance in an assessment. Through this feedback process, some students who initially query the possibility of an Appeal choose not to proceed, having sufficient feedback from the lecturer.

The Appeals process is set out in the *Quality Assurance Handbook*, and is available on the Exams page on the website.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School has good procedures in place for dealing with complaints, appeals and commendations and has no specific recommendations to make.

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

Dublin Business School has established a number of systems to support quality to realise Dublin Business School objectives and the aims for the Bachelor of Business programme. The programme team has indicated its satisfaction with the QA systems in place.

Recommendations:

The Panel is satisfied that there are good Quality Assurance systems in place and has no specific recommendations to make.

Additional Quality Assurance Systems and Processes required (e.g. online delivery / assessment)

Commentary:

The development and rapid growth of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies is a matter of interest and concern to all institutions of learning, and Dublin Business School is no exception to this. The Panel noted that Dublin Business School is taking a proactive and informed approach to the various challenges – and opportunities – presented by these technologies, and that it is engaging actively with learners to manage them.

Five years after the onset of Covid and a period of necessary online delivery of education across the sector, it is interesting to note that now most students prefer online or hybrid learning, with only a very small number seeking to engage entirely online with their education provider.

Recommendations:

The Panel has no specific recommendations to make in relation to this area. As the digital world continues to move through a period of rapid growth and development, it is essential that Dublin Business School, and other providers, remain closely engaged with changes and the many adaptations that they require.

Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

Dublin Business School has furnished the Panel with data derived from its own SWOT analysis suggesting that in the current educational and industry climate the programme has both strengths and weaknesses.

Among its strengths it observes the learners and Dublin Business School benefit from relatively small class sizes, from the college's excellent reputation, a diverse, multi-cultural student body, and teaching staff who are highly qualified from both an academic standpoint, and vis a vis relevant industry experience. It also notes as opportunities the fact that employers continue to be interested in graduates with business qualifications and Ireland's strong economy.

Among the weaknesses, Dublin Business School notes the relatively low exposure of learners to industry speakers, and among threats, the fact that non fee-paying institutions also offer very similar programmes.

The Panel also notes that the programme under consideration is very similar to a wide range of business programmes offered at both state and private institutions. It will be challenging, in such a crowded marketplace, to providing a truly unique offering, and indeed the relatively small numbers on this programme to date, as well as the relatively high attrition numbers, suggests that it is already struggling somewhat.

In the context of the online discussion that took place as part of the review, members of the Panel queried why Dublin Business School is continuing to offer a level 7 programme when the general tendency in Ireland is away from level 7 qualifications. Dublin Business School iterated its view – not entirely convincingly – that there is a strong and demonstrable requirement for level 7, and also stated that level 7 students are a significantly 'different' cohort to other groups.

Recommendations:

In order to ensure the ongoing viability of the programme, Dublin Business School will need to focus and build upon its strengths. As a small, inner city campus with a relatively small, dynamic teaching staff it has opportunities to engage with local businesses and industry leaders to provide learners with unique opportunities to grow their industry expertise and the Panel strongly recommends it focus on this.

Section G. Revision of the programme

In this section the Panel will respond to any proposals made by the provider in respect of changes to the programme arising from the review. The revised programme's readiness for validation will be reported on in more detail in the Independent Evaluation Report for Validation.

Commentary:

As declared by Dublin Business School, the main programme changes under consideration are as follows:

- Stage one: Business Environment (10 ECTS) to be renamed Business: Functions and Environment

- Stage two: Organisational Behaviour (10 ECTS) to be renamed Organisational Behaviour for the World of Work
- Award Stage: A new module, AI-Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship (new module, 5 ECTS) to replace Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Award Stage: Capstone Project (10 ECTS) to be renamed Strategic Management Project.

Recommendations:

The curriculum content, which notwithstanding the changes outlined above remains substantially the same as at the time of the 2020 revalidation requires revision to reflect a globalised and diverse changing world and management practices. The content and assessment of the capstone project must be updated to accurately reflect the new strategic management title. The business maths title must be updated to reflect an applied business focus. All assessment material, including case studies and in-class tests must be updated – currently *and* regularly – to reflect contemporary business practise. All rubrics must be standardised in line with best practice. The module titled ‘AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship’ must be changed. The word ‘entrepreneurship’ must be removed from the title and included in the module content alongside intrapreneurship, allowing the title to reflect the wider enterprising context of business.

Moreover, the Panel recommends that Dublin Business School consider introducing work placements or real industry projects to improve employability; that assessment be more integrated across modules, reducing assessment load; that the allocation of ECT credits for core modules and electives should be reconsidered and revised where appropriate; that a team-focused approach be established for all review processes to ensure the alignment of management and teaching staff are aligned; and that student experience be enhanced with diverse industry guest lectures for real-world learning.

Part 4. Overall Findings

In this section the Panel will give its overall feedback on the conduct of the review and the findings therein. This feedback will inform future provider review processes and will also contribute to the refinement of any programmes being proposed for revalidation following this review process.

Section A. Commentary on review process:

The Panel is satisfied that the review process undertaken was a genuine critical self-evaluation of the programme as it has run over the last validation period. This includes extensive consultation with staff, industry, learners, graduates, professional bodies and external examiners.

The Panel was pleased with the detailed, carefully-produced documentation provided by Dublin Business School, and with the response of Dublin Business School representatives to the Panel's queries and suggestions for change. It is clear that Dublin Business School has considered the programme, the changes it needs, and the learners' best interests.

However, the Panel feels that Dublin Business School, and the programme in question, would benefit from a deeper interrogation and from a more in-depth analyses of the various modules, their synchronicities or lack thereof, and their modes of assessment, as well as how to ensure the ongoing relevance and viability of the programme.

Section B. Recommendations on review process:

The Panel feels that the programme will benefit from further changes and has stipulated a series of conditions, as well as a number of recommendations, that it feels will strengthen the offering, providing greater academic rigour and more relevance to industry and to the broader world of work.

Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The Panel examined the proposed revisions carefully and notes that they have been carefully conceived and designed, and that the revisions will result in a strong programme better suited to the demands of today's challenging work and research environment.

The Panel is satisfied that the proposed revisions to the programme have been informed by sound and considered stakeholder feedback, and are current and responsive to the needs of industry.

However, the Panel feels that the proposed revisions are insufficient and suggests a series of further changes to enhance the programme and improve the educational outcome and experience of the learners.

Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:

Following their review of the information provided and their extensive engagement with representatives of Dublin Business School, the Panel has identified eight **conditions** that must be met **before the programme is revalidated**, and six **recommendations** that it strongly urges Dublin Business School to **carefully consider and implement**.

These are as follows:

CONDITIONS

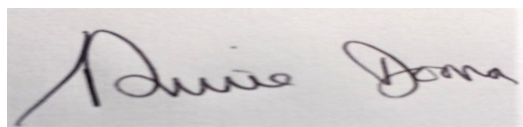
1. Dublin Business School must provide clearer, more explicit communication of Dublin Business School's inclusive policies across assessment strategies, including the 10% mark for

participation in modules, making it clearer how neurodivergent students are accommodated.

2. Dublin Business School must revisit the assessment schedule to reduce bunching and improve students' opportunities to receive formative feedback to enhance outcomes.
3. Curriculum content must be revised to reflect a globalised and diverse changing world and management practice.
4. Regarding the capstone project, the content and assessment of the module must be updated to accurately reflect the new strategic management title.
5. The business maths title must be updated to reflect an applied business focus.
6. All assessment material, including case studies and in-class tests must be updated – currently *and* regularly – to reflect contemporary business practice.
7. All rubrics must be standardised in line with best practice.
8. The module titled 'AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship' must be changed. The word 'entrepreneurship' must be removed from the title and included in the module content alongside intrapreneurship, allowing the title to reflect the wider enterprising context of business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Dublin Business School should consider the introduction of work placements or real industry projects in the programme to improve employability.
2. Assessment should be more integrated across modules, reducing assessment load.
3. Dublin Business School should provide additional group work space, especially at particular points of the year.
4. Dublin Business School should reconsider the allocation of ECT credits for core modules and electives.
5. Dublin Business School should establish a team-focused approach for all review processes to ensure that management and teaching staff are aligned.
6. Dublin Business School should enhance the student experience with diverse industry guest lectures for real-world learning.



Signed:

_____ Dr Annie

Doona _____

Panel Chairperson:

Date: 16 June 2025



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

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

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	2 nd May 2025 (Zoom)
Date of report	16 th May 2025

Section E. Overall recommendations

Bachelor of Business	Title	Bachelor of Business
	Award	NFQ Level 7
	Credit	180 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Higher Certificate in Business	Title	Higher Certificate in Business (exit only award)
	Award	NFQ Level 6
	Credit	120 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions

Section F. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr Annie Doona	Chair	Private consultant
Dr. Timothy McNichols	Subject Matter Expert	Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Dr. Valerie McTaggart	Subject Matter Expert	Atlantic Technological University
Dr Deirdre Nuttall	Secretary	Adverbage Ltd
Airdas Kacenas	Learner Representative	Technological University of the Shannon
Gillian Saeva	Industry Representative	Bennett and Bell

Section G. Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)
Dublin Business School	125	125

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e. learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	September 2025	3 years	2	7	125
Part-Time	September 2025	4 years	2	7	125
Intake Schedule e.g. January September		September and January			

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The Panel is confident that Dublin Business School has sufficient facilities, qualified staff, and experience to offer the programme as proposed to the numbers listed above. However, it notes that previous experience suggests a relatively low uptake of this programme, which is one among many in a crowded marketplace.

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 Bachelor of Business is available as a three-year full-time or four-year part-time programme (NFQ Level 7, 180 ECTS). It was developed in accordance with the QQI Award Standards for Business. There is one embedded exit award, the Higher Certificate in Business (120 ECTS), located at NFQ Level 6.

The Bachelor of Business programme is aimed at learners wishing to undertake a Level 7 undergraduate degree programme in business with a view to entering industry, progressing professionally, or undertaking Level 8 studies in a related field.

The Higher Certificate in Business is a two-year full-time or three-year part-time programme (120 ECTS) and is an exit award only from the Bachelor of Business award. The Higher Certificate in

Business programme is aimed at learners who cannot progress in their studies towards a Level 7 undergraduate degree programme in business.

The Bachelor of Business programme provides a solid understanding of general business theory and practice, equipping learners with the tools to critically analyse business organisations, functions, processes, and management techniques. Organised around five key learning pillars, the programme focuses on developing knowledge, skills, and competencies in Management, Finance and Accounting, Marketing, Information Technology, and Learning.

Throughout the programme, learners will acquire vital skills such as effective leadership, communication, human resource management, economics, innovation, and entrepreneurship. They will also develop transversal skills, including communication, presentation, and written abilities, alongside numerical and digital literacy. These competencies are not confined to specific business areas but are essential across a range of disciplines. In this iteration of the programme, learners will also explore the growing significance of AI-powered innovation and entrepreneurship, gaining insights into how artificial intelligence is transforming business models and decision-making processes. In addition, the programme addresses the critical areas of ethical business decision-making and sustainability, ensuring that students understand the importance of responsible leadership in today's dynamic business environment.

The programme aims to produce graduates who will be well equipped with the requisite skills required in the variety of occupations now available, and to address future skills shortages by filling critical positions. Graduates will be well-equipped for junior roles in business and administration. Upon successful completion of the Bachelor of Business, learners may be eligible to transfer to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business programme (Level 8) or related Level 8 undergraduate programmes. Graduates may also be eligible to pursue further qualifications such as a Higher Diploma or other Level 8 conversion programmes

Target learner groups

The Bachelor of Business programme is aimed at learners wishing to undertake a Level 7 undergraduate degree programme in business with a view to entering industry, progressing professionally or to undertaking Level 8 studies in a related field.

The programme is targeted at the following learners:

- Recent school-leavers who wish to gain an undergraduate education in business studies.
- Learners who are seeking career advancement by obtaining a business education, including both those currently seeking employment and those working wishing to upskill in the area of business.
- To be eligible to apply for a place on this programme applicants must meet the minimum entry requirements of 5 O6/H7s, to include Maths, English or another language, or full Level 5 FETAC Award (i.e. 8 modules) or equivalent.
- Applications without this will be considered on the basis of the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Such applicants are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please see Section 4 for further detail on entry, admissions, access and progression arrangements.

Approved countries for provision

Ireland

Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time

Full-time and part-time

The teaching and learning modalities

On-site face-to-face, synchronous online

Summary of specifications for teaching staff

Role	Profile	WTE
Lecturing staff	<p>Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Level 8 Honours undergraduate degree or a Level 8 Higher Diploma in a relevant business discipline such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business ● Human Resource Management ● Law ● Accounting and/or Finance ● Management ● Marketing ● Digital Marketing ● Economics ● ICT <p>Lecturing staff may also have a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma of master's qualifications in the above disciplines.</p> <p>Holders of Level 7 Bachelor's degrees in the above disciplines who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant industry experience may also be considered.</p>	

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Classroom sessions	1:50
Workshops	1:25
Practical Lab Sessions	1.35
Online Tutorial (live, interactive)	1.25
Online Class (live, broadcast	1.50

Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:

The Panel is of the view that Dublin Business School has satisfactory arrangements for the provision of teaching staff and teaching modalities as outlined above.

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

Section H. Other noteworthy features of the application

N/A

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)

The Panel is of the view that Dublin Business School has all of the necessary facilities, resources, and staff to deliver the revised programme in a satisfactory manner, subject to the various conditions attached being met.

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

This includes QQI's 12 validation core criteria. When making a judgement on achievement of a core criterion, the Panel should use the sub-criteria as guidance. Non-achievement of relevant and significant sub-criteria will mean non-achievement of the core criterion. The Panel will apply its expertise and experience in determining 'relevance' and 'significance' of sub-criteria to a particular programme.

The Panel should complete this section with commentary against each criterion to support the recommendation given in the 'Satisfactory?' column i.e. Yes, No, or Partially.

If 'Yes', there should be a comment citing the evidence for this finding. Likewise, there should be an explanation as to why the Panel have concluded that the criterion has either not been met or only partially so.

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.		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	The Panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School has met all the prerequisites and has provided an application and declaration in full compliance with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.
Higher Certificate in Business	Yes	As above

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

<p>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</p> <p>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</p> <p>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</p> <p>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards.</p> <p>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are consistent with the relevant QQI awards standards.</p> <p>h) Where applicable, the minimum intended module learning outcomes are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</p> <p>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</p> <p>j) For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	The Panel is satisfied that the programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought. They are clearly stated in the supporting documentation, and representatives of Dublin Business School defended the proposed changes in an informed and informative manner
Higher Certificate in Business	Yes	As above

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

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Partially	Curriculum content must be revised to reflect a globalised and diverse changing world and management practice. Dublin Business School should consider the introduction of work placements or real industry projects in the programme to improve employability, establish a team-focused approach for all review processes to ensure that management and teaching staff are aligned, and enhance the student experience with diverse industry guest lectures for real-world learning.
Higher Certificate in Business	Partially	As above.

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

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 (CEFR¹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, 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. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	The Panel is satisfied that the programme's access, transfer, and progression arrangements are satisfactory. Dublin Business School has clearly explained what the programme expects of learners, and what they are expected to achieve. The programme title is legitimate and Dublin Business School is compliant with the requirements as outlined above. Clearer communication from Dublin Business School about pathways and academic supports for students considering further study might improve the numbers progressing from level 7 to level 8.
Higher Certificate in Business		As above.

¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

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.
- 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.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Partially	<p>The representatives of Dublin Business School explained and robustly defended their curriculum. However, the Panel feels that while much of the curriculum is of excellent value and extremely relevant to the goals of the programme, significant improvements could be made. There is a lack consistency and opportunities to create a more unified programme with more synergy between modules, and more attention could be paid to ensuring the programme’s relevance in the rapidly-developing business environment of today.</p> <p>The Panel feels that the curriculum content needs to be revised to better reflect a globalised and diverse changing world and contemporary management practice.</p> <p>The Panel also feels that the content and assessment of the capstone project should be updated to accurately reflect the new strategic management title.</p> <p>Furthermore, all rubrics must be standardised in line with best practice, and the module titled ‘AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship’ must be changed. The word ‘entrepreneurship’ must be removed from the title and included in the module content alongside intrapreneurship, allowing the title to reflect the wider enterprising context of business.</p> <p>The Panel would also like to see Dublin Business School invite a substantial number, and greater variety, of guest lectures from industry backgrounds. This is particularly</p>

		important given the programme's lack of a work placement option.
Higher Certificate in Business	Partially	As above

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

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners’ achievements as required.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development opportunities.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School has suitably qualified staff who are dedicated and passionate about their subjects. It notes that some provision is in place to support staff with an interest in pursuing research, attending conferences, and furthering their academic and teaching careers, and is confident that Dublin Business School will continue to support lecturing staff in this manner.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the Panel would also like to see a system in place to ensure the learners have good access to guest lectures.</p>
Higher Certificate in Business	Yes	As above

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.

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	<p>The Panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School has excellent physical and digital resources and provides an admirable learning environment for full-time and part-time learners. The Panel is satisfied with Dublin Business School’s ability to implement the programme as planned.</p> <p>The Panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School has suitable physical premises, and technological equipment and expertise, to offer its programmes in a combination of classroom-based and online modalities.</p> <p>While Dublin Business School does have occasional periods during the academic year when the library and other physical resources are stretched, and they have taken reasonable steps to address it in terms of providing additional study and work space for individuals and groups.</p>
Higher Certificate in Business	Yes	As above

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

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	The Panel is satisfied that DBS has provided a positive physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment.
Higher Certificate in Business	Yes	As above.

Criterion 9. There are sound teaching and learning strategies

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Partially	<p>The Panel feels that Dublin Business School needs to provide clearer, more explicit communication of Dublin Business School's inclusive policies across assessment strategies, including the 10% mark for participation in modules, making it clearer how neurodivergent students are accommodated.</p> <p>The Panel would also like to see Dublin Business School introduce work placements or real industry projects in the programme to improve the employability of its graduates.</p>
Higher Certificate in Business		As above.

Criterion 10. There are sound assessment strategies

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently</p> <p>b) The programme’s assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Partially	<p>The Panel feels that Dublin Business School could improve its approach to assessment in several important ways.</p> <p>As mentioned above, Dublin Business School must provide clearer, more explicit communication of its inclusive policies across assessment strategies, including the 10% mark for participation in modules, making it clearer how neurodivergent students are accommodated.</p> <p>It must also revisit the assessment schedule to reduce bunching and improve students’ opportunities to receive formative feedback to enhance outcomes.</p> <p>All assessment material, including case studies and in-class tests must be updated – currently <i>and</i> regularly – to reflect contemporary business practice.</p> <p>The Panel would also like to see Dublin Business School provide assessment that is more integrated across modules, reducing assessment load and reconsider the allocation of ECT credits for core modules and electives.</p>
Higher Certificate in Business	As above	As above.

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


<p>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.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i> 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.</p> <p>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).</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Partially	<p>Overall, the Panel is satisfied that there are very good support systems in place for learners. The Quality Assurance Handbook provided by Dublin Business School is detailed, thorough and professional and clearly explains complaints and appeals processes. Students with special learning needs, including students for whom English is a second language, are supported. The Panel encourages Dublin Business School to ensure that learners are aware of the available supports, as learner feedback suggests that some currently are not. The Panel also notes additional provisions for students with disability, such as Dublin Business School's recent adoption of the 'sunflower scheme', which makes it easier for students with hidden disability to highlight their additional needs with the use of a lanyard.</p> <p>However, the Panel feels – as already mentioned in other contexts – that it is essential for Dublin Business School to provide clearer, more explicit communication of Dublin Business School's inclusive policies across assessment strategies, including the 10% mark for participation in modules, making it clearer how neurodivergent students are accommodated.</p>
Higher Certificate in Business	Partially	As above.

Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

<p>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.</p> <p>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-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>		
Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Bachelor of Business	Yes	The Panel is satisfied that Dublin Business School clearly has robust and sound procedures in place to support governance, quality assurance, assessment, and so forth, as well as having all necessary documentation and assurances relating to the QQI’s statutory guidelines. It was very clear from the Panel review that Dublin Business School takes all of these matters very seriously, and works hard to remain in compliance at all times.
Higher Certificate in Business	Yes	As above.

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 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;
	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. Dublin Business School is a highly regarded institution of learning with a profound sense of duty of care to its students. It has established expertise in the provision of education across a wide range of subjects, including business.
2. While the Bachelor of Business has much to recommend it, the Panel feels that Dublin Business School has missed a number of opportunities to make it as good as it can possibly be, and therefore highlights a number of Special Conditions of Validation that must be met prior to the first intake of learners in September 2025.

Commendations


1. N/A

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

1. Dublin Business School must provide clearer, more explicit communication of Dublin Business School's inclusive policies across assessment strategies, including the 10% mark for participation in modules, making it clearer how neurodivergent students are accommodated.
2. Dublin Business School must revisit the assessment schedule to reduce bunching and improve students' opportunities to receive formative feedback to enhance outcomes.
3. Curriculum content must be revised to reflect a globalised and diverse changing world and management practice.
4. Regarding the capstone project, the content and assessment of the module must be updated to accurately reflect the new strategic management title.
5. The business maths title must be updated to reflect an applied business focus.
6. All assessment material, including case studies and in-class tests must be updated – currently and regularly – to reflect contemporary business practice.
7. All rubrics must be standardised in line with best practice.
8. The module titled 'AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship' must be changed. The word 'entrepreneurship' must be removed from the title and included in the module content alongside intrapreneurship

All of the Special Conditions of Validation must be met prior to the first intake of learners in September 2025.

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;
	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. As above

Commendations

1. N/A

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

1. As above

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

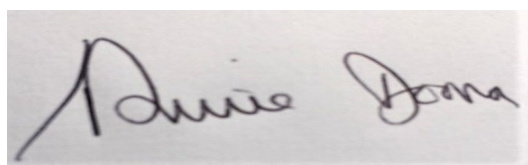
1. Dublin Business School must provide clearer, more explicit communication of Dublin Business School's inclusive policies across assessment strategies, including the 10% mark for participation in modules, making it clearer how neurodivergent students are accommodated.
2. Dublin Business School must revisit the assessment schedule to reduce bunching and improve students' opportunities to receive formative feedback to enhance outcomes.
3. Curriculum content must be revised to reflect a globalised and diverse changing world and management practice.
4. Regarding the capstone project, the content and assessment of the module must be updated to accurately reflect the new strategic management title.
5. The business maths title must be updated to reflect an applied business focus.
6. All assessment material, including case studies and in-class tests must be updated – currently and regularly – to reflect contemporary business practice.
7. All rubrics must be standardised in line with best practice.
8. The module titled 'AI Powered Innovation and Entrepreneurship' must be changed. The word 'entrepreneurship' must be removed from the title and included in the module content alongside intrapreneurship.

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. Consider the introduction of work placements or real industry projects in the programme to improve employability.
2. Further integrate assessment to be more integrated across modules, reducing assessment load.
3. Provide additional group work space, especially at particular points of the year.
4. Reconsider the allocation of ECT credits for core modules and electives.
5. Establish a team-focused approach for all review processes to ensure that management and teaching staff are aligned.
6. Enhance the student experience with diverse industry guest lectures for real-world learning.

Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Annie Doona".

Panel chairperson: Dr Annie Doona

Date: 16 June 2025

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.

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

Part 4. Proposed programme schedules *(post Panel feedback and consequent amendments, if any)*

Bachelor of Business - Full-time Stage One																
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School														
Programme Title <i>(Principal)</i>		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title		Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180		
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title <i>(if relevant)</i>			N/A						Stage ECTS		60		
Programme Delivery Mode - <i>✓ one as appropriate.</i>		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning				
		✓														
Teaching and Learning Modalities – <i>✓ one or more as appropriate.</i>		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based			
		✓														
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – <i>✓ one or more as appropriate.</i>		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based			
		✓				✓										
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)																
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuou s Assessment %	Proctor ed Exam – in person %	Proctore d Exam – online %	Proj ect %	Practical Skills Demonstr ation %	Work Based %	
Business: Functions and Environment	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						
ICT Skills for Business	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						

Fundamentals of Accounting	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		40%		60%			
Fundamentals of Marketing	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
Applied Business Maths	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
Academic Skills	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Bronze Award</i>	2	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

**Exams may be in person or online, to be decided each academic year, but in every instance will be proctored.*

Bachelor of Business Full-time Stage Two																
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School														
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title			Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		2	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			Higher Certificate in Business						Stage ECTS		60		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate		On-site Face-to-Face				Blended				Online			Workplace Learning			
		✓														
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face				Synchronous Hybrid			Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based	
		✓														
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment			Invigilated Exam – in person			Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based	
		✓						✓								
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)																
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %	
Organisational Behaviour for the World of Work	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						
Applied ICT Skills for Business	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						
Introduction to Cost Accounting	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		30%		70%				
Contemporary Marketing Communications	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						
Business Economics	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						

Critical Thinking Skills	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
Graduate Work Readiness - Silver Award	3	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					
Graduate Work Readiness - Gold Award	4	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

**Exams may be in person or online, to be decided each academic year, but in every instance will be proctored.*

Bachelor of Business Full-time Stage Three															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title			Bachelor of Business				ECTS	180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		3	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A						Stage ECTS	60		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning			
					✓										
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based		
		✓					✓								
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment			Invigilated Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based	
		✓					✓								
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Business Financial Management	5 and 6	M	10	250	48	16		186		40%		60%			
Digital Technologies for Business	5 and 6	M	10	250	48	16		186		100%					

Business Ethics and Research Practice	5	M	5	125	24	8		93		100%					
AI-Powered Innovation	6	M	5	125	24	8		93		100%					
Management Practice Project	5 and 6	M	10	250	48	16		186		100%					
Financial Accounting	5 and 6	E	10	250	48	16		186		30%	70%				
Cost Accounting	5 and 6	E	10	250	48	16		186		40%	60%				
Digital Marketing Planning and Management	5 and 6	E	10	250	48	16		186		100%					
International Marketing Practice	5 and 6	E	10	250	48	16		186		100%					

**Exams may be in person or online, to be decided each academic year, but in every instance will be proctored.*

Bachelor of Business Part-time Stage One															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title		Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A						Stage ECTS		60	
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning			
					✓										
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face		Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous		Work Based				
		✓				✓									
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based		
		✓				✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Business: Functions and Environment	1 and 2	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
ICT Skills for Business	1 and 2	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
Fundamentals of Accounting	1 and 2	M	10	250	36	0		214		40%		60%			

Fundamentals of Marketing ▾	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
Applied Business Maths	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
Academic Skills	1 and 2	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Bronze Award</i>	2	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

**Exams may be in person or online, to be decided each academic year, but in every instance will be proctored.*

Bachelor of Business Part-time Stage Two																
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School														
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title			Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		2	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			Higher Certificate in Business						Stage ECTS		60		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning				
					✓											
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based			
		✓					✓									
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person			Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based		
		✓					✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)																
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %	
Organisational Behaviour for the World of Work	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%						
Applied ICT Skills for Business	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%						

Introduction to Cost Accounting	3 and 4	M	10	250	36	0		214		30%		70%			
Contemporary Marketing Communications	5 and 6	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
Business Economics	5 and 6	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
Critical Thinking Skills	5 and 6	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Silver Award</i>	4	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Gold Award</i>	6	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

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Bachelor of Business Part-time Stage Three															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQJ Award Title		Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		3	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A						Stage ECTS		60	
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended			Online			Workplace Learning				
					✓										
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based		
		✓					✓								
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online*		Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based			
		✓				✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Business Financial Management	5 and 6	M	10	250	32	0		218		40%		60%			
Digital Technologies for Business	7 and 8	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					

Business Ethics and Research Practice	7	M	5	125	18	0		107		100%					
AI-Powered Innovation	8	M	5	125	0	18		107		100%					
Management Practice Project	7 and 8	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
Financial Accounting	7 and 8	E	10	250	22	10		218		30%	70%				
Cost Accounting	7 and 8	E	10	250	22	10		218		40%	60%				
Digital Marketing Planning and Management	7 and 8	E	10	250	32	0		218		100%					
International Marketing Practice	7 and 8	E	10	250	0	32		218		100%					

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Higher Certificate in Business Full-time Stage One															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title		Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A						Stage ECTS		60	
Programme Delivery Mode - <i>✓ one as appropriate.</i>		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning			
		✓													
Teaching and Learning Modalities - <i>✓ one or more as appropriate.</i>		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous		Work Based			
		✓													
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage - <i>✓ one or more as appropriate.</i>		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based		
		✓				✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Business: Functions and Environment	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
ICT Skills for Business	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
Fundamentals of Accounting	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		40%		60%			

Fundamentals of Marketing	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%				
Applied Business Maths	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%				
Academic Skills	1 and 2	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%				
Graduate Work Readiness - Bronze Award	2	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A				

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Higher Certificate in Business Full-time Stage Two																
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School														
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title			Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		2	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			Higher Certificate in Business						Stage ECTS		60		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning				
		✓														
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based			
		✓														
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Invigilated Exam – in person			Proctored Exam – online*			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based		
		✓					✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)																
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %	
Organisational Behaviour for the World of Work	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						
Applied ICT Skills for Business	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%						

Introduction to Cost Accounting	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		30%		70%			
Contemporary Marketing Communications	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
Business Economics	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
Critical Thinking Skills	3 and 4	M	10	250	72	0		178		100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Silver Award</i>	3	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Gold Award</i>	4	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

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Higher Certificate in Business Part-time Stage One																
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School														
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title		Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180		
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			N/A						Stage ECTS		60		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning				
					✓											
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based			
		✓					✓									
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment			Invigilated Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online*			Project			Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based	
		✓					✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)																
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %	
Business: Functions and Environment	1 and 2	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%						
ICT Skills for Business	1 and 2	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%						
Fundamentals of Accounting	1 and 2	M	10	250	36	0		214		40%		60%				

Fundamentals of Marketing	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
Applied Business Maths	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
Academic Skills	1 and 2	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Bronze Award</i>	2	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

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Higher Certificate in Business Part-time Stage Two																	
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School															
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Business				QQI Award Title			Bachelor of Business				ECTS		180		
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		2	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			Higher Certificate in Business						Stage ECTS		60			
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓ one as appropriate		On-site Face-to-Face				Blended				Online			Workplace Learning				
						✓											
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓ one or more appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face				Synchronous Hybrid			Synchronous Online			Asynchronous			Work Based		
		✓							✓								
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓ one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment			Invigilated Exam – in person			Proctored Exam – online*			Project			Practical Skills Demonstration		Work Based	
		✓						✓									
Modules in this stage (add rows as required)																	
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>							
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Independent Learning (Directed E-learning, Other)	Work Based	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %		
Organisational Behaviour for the World of Work	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%							

Applied ICT Skills for Business	3 and 4	M	10	250	0	36		214		100%					
Introduction to Cost Accounting	3 and 4	M	10	250	36	0		214		30%		70%			
Contemporary Marketing Communications	5 and 6	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
Business Economics	5 and 6	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
Critical Thinking Skills	5 and 6	M	10	250	0	32		218		100%					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Silver Award</i>	4	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					
<i>Graduate Work Readiness - Gold Award</i>	6	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		9		N/A					

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