1. Introduction to the Quality Assurance Handbook ................................................................. 1
  1.1 Rationale .............................................................................................................................. 1
  1.2 Background to the 2016 edition ....................................................................................... 2
  1.3 Approval ............................................................................................................................ 3
  1.4 Awards Standards, NFQ Levels and Credits ................................................................. 4
  1.5 Benchmark against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the ESG ... 6
  1.6 Background to DBS ........................................................................................................ 9
  2. Governance, Organisation and Administration .................................................................. 11
    2.1 Boards and Committees .................................................................................................. 12
    2.2 Academic Management and Administrative Structure ............................................. 30
  3 Design and Approval of New Programmes ........................................................................ 42
    3.1 Purpose of Policy ........................................................................................................... 42
    3.2 Policy Scope ................................................................................................................ 42
    3.3 Overarching Considerations ....................................................................................... 42
    3.4 Policy ............................................................................................................................ 43
    3.5 Design, Approval and Ongoing Monitoring and Review of Programmes (ENQA) ... 45
    3.6 Programme Validation Timeline ................................................................................ 45
    3.7 The Planning of Multiple Programme Validations .................................................... 46
    3.8 Proposal of a new Programme Concept ..................................................................... 46
    3.9 Procedures for the Development and Approval of New Programmes .................... 47
    3.10 Validation of Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards ........................... 56
    3.11 Requesting an Extension to a Period of Validation .................................................. 57
    3.12 Minor Modifications to Validated Programmes of Education and Training .......... 57
    3.13 Programme Development of Non-Framework Programmes and Professional Programmes .... 58
  4 Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and Quality Assurance ........................................... 60
    4.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 60
    4.10 Procedure for Securing Changes to a Validated Module through Board of Studies .... 63
    4.3 Procedures for Annual Institutional Reporting ........................................................... 64
    4.4 Institutional Review ...................................................................................................... 70
    4.5 Programme Review ....................................................................................................... 71
    4.6 Programme Review – Non-Framework Courses ......................................................... 77
  5 Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards ............................ 79
    5.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................... 79
    5.2 Feasibility Development and Validation Stages .......................................................... 86
    5.3 Due Diligence ............................................................................................................... 69
    5.4 Consortium Agreement (and Programme Agreement) and Joint Awarding Agreements .... 72
    5.5 Programme Validation ............................................................................................... 75
    5.6 Process for Management and Monitoring of Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards ................................................................. 79
    5.7 Student Care .................................................................................................................. 81
  Annex 5a: Template for Memorandum of Understanding .................................................. 84
  Annex 5b: Due Diligence Checklist ................................................................................... 86
  Annex 5c: Self-Assessment Report ..................................................................................... 93
  Annex 5d: Template for Consortium Agreement .............................................................. 95
1. Introduction to the Quality Assurance Handbook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Chapter provides an introduction to the Quality Assurance Handbook, its background and its structure. The chapter outlines how DBS obtains its approval from the awarding bodies to design, develop and deliver academic programmes. The DBS QAH is benchmarked against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Part 1: Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1 Rationale

The purpose of the DBS Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) is to provide guidance and information to all participants involved in quality assurance and enhancement across the college. Quality Assurance is the term used to describe all activities within the continuous improvement cycle, assurance and enhancement activities.

This handbook documents all approved DBS quality assurance policies and procedures where they can be easily accessed by DBS staff, learners, stakeholders and the public. The handbook does not document regulations or policies relating to the use of services such as the library, facilities or IT, these are referenced in the handbook and accessible via the relevant DBS web pages. The college approach to managing quality assurance and standards is through both the executive and committee structure in the college and all staff are involved in quality assurance and enhancement.

The academic governance, quality assurance policies and procedures of DBS are established under the laws of Ireland. In particular, the policies and procedures relating to the provision and assessment of academic programmes are subject to the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and to the implementation of the provisions of this act by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This handbook is designed to assist the administrative and academic staff of DBS in meeting their legal and academic obligations. QQI was established in November 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (the 2012 Act). The 2012
Act sets out the functions of QQI which includes issuing guidelines for the establishment of providers’ quality assurance (QA) procedures.

The handbook is comprised of 10 chapters including polices on: academic governance and management, design and approval of programmes, ongoing monitoring of review and development, collaborative, transnational provision and joint awards, admissions procedures, learning and teaching, assessment including assessment regulations, learner support and responsibilities and staff development including research and scholarship.

1.2 Background to the 2016 edition

The first DBS Quality Manual was published in 2005 for agreement by HETAC. Prior to this DBS operated under agreed QA policies with both LJMU, University of Wales and HETAC as appropriate. The second edition of the manual, now referred to as the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH), was published in 2009 in advance of the HETAC Institutional Review (IR) in 2010. In preparation for this, there was a complete review of all QA policies and procedures and all existing policies were drawn together into a comprehensive, unified QA infrastructure with a single set of regulations that applied to all programmes.

The Institutional Review found that:

- The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by DBS has been assessed and the arrangements have been found to be effective in accordance with the seven elements of Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance 2009, Helsinki, 3rd edition, and the HETAC Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education, 2004.

- DBS has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression, as determined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

The 2009 edition of the QAH reflected DBS’s position as a provider of HETAC programmes and Joint Awards as an accredited college of LJMU.
Between 2009 and 2015 individual policies were approved externally by QQI or LJMU or internally by the Schools Executive Board (SEB) as appropriate. See Chapter 2 for the Terms of Reference of the SEB. The 2012 edition reflected these changes and was held on the by the Registrar’s Office.

In 2013 Supplementary Quality Assurance Procedures for Collaborative and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards were agreed with QQI and formally included in the DBS QAH. The 2014 edition reflects these changes.

The 2015 edition followed a college wide review of key polices and an update reflecting the establishment of QQI following the amalgamation of HETAC along with other statutory bodies. The review of policies and procedures continued in academic year 2015 /16 in the context of revised policies from QQI, an amended organisational structure in DBS and the conclusion of offering joint awards with LJMU and University of Wales. A particular emphasis was placed upon providing greater transparency of procedures for stakeholders, especially students in the areas of learner management, support, responsibilities and assessment regulations and procedures. Extensive consultation was undertaken across the whole college and named personnel have been identified as owners of specified policies and procedures. This is intended as a means of further reinforcing a quality culture embraced institution-wide.

1.3 Approval

DBS is entirely responsible for the quality of provision and its assurance, referred to as provider-owned quality assurance. QA at DBS supports the development of a quality culture and takes into account the needs and expectations of learners, all other stakeholders and society. QQI Implementation Policy: Approved quality assurance procedures are fully implemented by providers.

DBS supports the externality principle: A provider-owned quality assurance system makes appropriate use of external persons who are independent of the provider and who are expertly qualified to make national and international comparisons. This principle is used in programme review, validation activity, Institutional Review and assessment processes reviewed by External Examiners.

DBS is responsible for the management of its own programme reviews subject to agreed Terms of Reference with QQI. All validation activity is managed and overseen by QQI. External evaluation of QA processes and procedures is undertaken by QQI by way of IR.
Changes to QA policies and procedures, where those changes can be made by DBS, are subject to the approval of the SEB and ratification by the Academic Board. Minor changes to programmes, where those changes do not impact on the Approved Programme Schedule, Programme Learning Outcomes, special regulations or entry requirements may be proposed at Boards of Studies and approved by the SEB. All other changes require the approval of the peer review process agreed with QQI. The Policies on Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards are subject to approval by QQI.

The 2015 edition of the DBS QAH is the result of a college wide review of all chapters. Changes to policies made since that last edition were approved by the SEB and ratified by the Academic Board. Most other changes were as a result of a general update and updated policies produced by QQI.

- The format and layout of the QAH has been revised to make it more accessible as a reference document.
- The document has been benchmarked against the ESG see below, and each quality standard has been explicitly referenced.
- Each chapter has a record of approval including date for review.
- Reference to Joint Awards has been removed from all chapters except Chapter 5. Currently approved assessment regulations for Joint Awards can be found on the Exams Office web pages and in all Joint Award Student Handbooks.
- A new section for each chapter has been added entitled supplemental policies. These are written as stand-alone polices added to the relevant chapter. Supplemental polices may be introduced or reviewed at any time and added to the QAH as a supplement. All approval dates are recorded in the relevant chapter.

1.3.1 Joint Awards
Since September 2013 DBS no longer validate or admit learners to QQI/LJMU or QQI/University of Wales Joint Award Programmes. All joint award programmes with LJMU and University of Wales have now concluded and have been replaced with programmes leading to QQI awards.

1.4 Awards Standards, NFQ Levels and Credits
All programmes at DBS are recognised within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) at Levels 6 to 9. The NFQ levels are described by general indicators of knowledge, skill and competence.
Learning Outcome Principle (QQI): Higher education and training exists principally for the purpose of enabling people to learn and accordingly, provision should be designed, implemented and evaluated with learning outcomes in mind.

DBS design programmes based on the QQI Higher Education (HE) Award Standards. QQI awards standards are based on the level indicators and award type descriptors of the NFQ. Standards for certain broad fields of learning were developed for awards at Level 6 to Level 9 on the NFQ. These standards represent an elaboration of the generic descriptors of the Framework. The HE Awards Standards support the programme development team to create the link between a programmes’ intended learning outcomes and the NFQ.

The credit volume of programmes leading to QQI awards at DBS is described by the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). ECTS credits are based on the workload or effort required to achieve stated intended learning outcomes for a programme. Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning. The learning outcomes relate to level descriptors in national and European qualifications frameworks. Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities, such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, self-study and examinations required to achieve the intended learning outcomes. 60 ECTS credits describe the typical workload of one academic year, i.e. September to June, on a fulltime academic programme and the associated learning outcomes. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, whereby one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. Reference ECTS Users’ Guide 2009. DBS defines one ECTS as 25 hours of effort.
1.5 Benchmark against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the ESG

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were endorsed by the Bologna follow-up group in September 2014 and adopted by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in May 2015. The DBS QAH is benchmarked against the ESG Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance.

S1.1 Policy for quality assurance

*Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.*

This document describes all agreed and approved policies for QA at DBS. The policy is accessible to the public and all stakeholders on the DBS Website. Links to relevant policies are also held on the Learner Web pages, Moodle and Programme Handbooks.

DBS implements a system of governance that protects the integrity of academic processes and standards. Academic decision-making reflects the interests of learners and the maintenance of standards. Academic Governance is the responsibility of the Director of Academic Affairs, refer to Chapter 2. In accordance with QQI policy, overall corporate decision makers within the institution, be they owners, shareholders or trustees, do not exercise exclusive authority or undue influence over academic decision making. Academic decision making is independent of commercial considerations. Academic decision makers are appropriately qualified and experienced.

S1.2 Design and approval of programmes

*Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.*

All academic programmes delivered by DBS leading to a QQI award are set at Level 6 to 9 on the NFQ using the QQI HET Awards Standards. The approval of new programmes is achieved through validation.
by QQI. The policies for the development and approval of new programmes can be found in Chapter 3. All information regarding the qualification and award is clearly articulated in the APS, Approved Programme Document and Learner Programme Handbook. Policy and procedures for the design and approval of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and Joint Awards can be found in Chapter 5.

S1.3 Student-centred Learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

DBS take a student centred approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Policies concerning learning and teaching can be found in Chapter 7 and policies regarding assessment including assessment regulation can be found in Chapter 8.

S1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle” e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

All entry requirements for access to DBS programmes are agreed at validation and prescribed in the Approved Programme Document and on the DBS web pages. Policies and procedures governing admission to academic programmes can be found in Chapter 6.

S1.5 Teaching Staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent process for the recruitment and development of the staff.

All staff proposed to teach on academic programmes are assessed for competence by the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the School Executive Board. Staff development including engagement with research and scholarship is managed within the school. Policy on staff development including academic staff appointments can be found in Chapter 10.
S1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided. DBS commits to appropriate funding for all programme activity. The policies surrounding learner support and responsibilities can be found in Chapter 9. All relevant information regarding accessing these supports is available to learners at induction, in programme handbooks, Moodle and via Student Services.

S1.7 Information Management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

The College have created the post of Data Analytics and Reporting Manager to provide and collate accurate data for the use of managing programmes and supporting good governance. This data feeds into the DBS reporting which underpins the DBS policy for ongoing monitoring of programmes and quality assurance (Chapter 4). In addition, DBS maintains a Student Information System which holds accurate and reliable learner records in a secure environment.

S1.8 Public Information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.

DBS publishes accurate and current information about programmes on the DBS website, Student Handbooks and Moodle. In addition, all policies and procedures are also published. The Institutional Review report and programme validation reports can be found on the QQI website. Procedures for the approval of marketing materials can be found in Chapter 6.

S1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.
All programmes are periodically reviewed on a five year cycle. DBS manage the process of programme review under agreed Terms of Reference with QQI. Additionally there are procedures for annual monitoring of all programmes and processes described in Chapter 4: Policy for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and Quality Assurance.

S1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

_Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis._

DBS QA policies and procedures are subject to review and agreement with QQI. This is managed via an external review process managed by QQI. External quality assurance recognises and supports institutional responsibility for quality assurance. DBS supports an ongoing process of reflective self-evaluation which feeds into a Quality Implementation Plan supporting quality enhancement. This is described in Chapter 4.

1.6 Background to DBS

DBS was established in 1975 and is now the largest independent third level college in Ireland with over 9,000 students. The College has established itself as a centre of excellence and is recognised as a high quality provider of third level education, with a record of distinction in student academic and career achievement. DBS provides a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Evening Degree, Evening Diploma, Professional Accountancy, English Language and Executive Education programmes.

With city centre campuses on Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street, Balfe Street and Dame Street, DBS has prime locations to accommodate flexibility in the delivery of our English language and undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

DBS graduates have progressed to successful careers and many occupy senior positions in professional and commercial institutions, both in Ireland and overseas. The College currently offers over 100 accredited programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Most programmes are offered on a full-time and part-time basis. Students are recruited from over 50 different countries to a range of undergraduate, postgraduate and study abroad programmes. There are currently over 1500 European and international students on DBS programmes in Dublin, while thousands of international students have completed programmes in DBS since the first international student was admitted in 1989.
DBS was acquired by Kaplan, Inc. the education division of Graham Holdings, in 2003. Kaplan, Inc. is a world leader in education, serving more than one million students 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 students and schools. In the area of professional education alone, Kaplan last year provided some 600,000 courses to individuals and firms in financial services and related fields around the globe. Kaplan, with 2013 revenues in excess of $2.2 billion, is a subsidiary of Graham Holdings Company (NYSE: GHC).
2. **Governance, Organisation and Administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Governance, Organisation and Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This Chapter of the QAH outlines the structures of the College which manage and oversee academic delivery and quality. It outlines the structure of the different oversight boards, such as the Academic Board and the Schools Executive Board. It outlines the different executive functions of the College, starting with the Chief Executive, through the academic executives and the leadership of academic delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment History</td>
<td>Revised September 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 Boards and Committees

In managing the delivery of programmes, executive management at DBS is supported by a number of Boards and Committees, as outlined in Figure 1. The Academic Board is the highest governing body of the academic affairs of DBS. All other Boards and Committees ultimately report to the Academic Board on academic matters, giving the Academic Board an oversight role. Each Committee or Board must add value to the work of the executive management team and must add value to the School in terms of academic quality, academic standing, academic management or academic development.

2.1.1 Operation of College Boards/Sub-Committees

All Boards and Committees, whether at College, School, Department or other level, have prescribed membership, meeting schedules, and clear terms of reference as to their responsibilities and authority. Each Board and Committee has a chairperson with primary responsibility for the efficient functioning of the Board or Committee, and for ensuring that the Board or Committee discharges its responsibilities in accordance with its terms of reference.

Minutes are prepared for all Board/Committee meetings in accordance with agreed procedures and these minutes are retained by the Board/Committee Secretary. The minutes of meetings record attendance, decisions made by the meeting, and actions required. The Master Copy of complete meeting documentation is held in the office of the Committee chairperson, and is posted on the shared drive. The schedules of meetings of all Boards and Committees are agreed at the beginning of the academic year and are included in the Academic Calendar which is updated throughout the year as required.
Figure 1: Academic Committee Structure
### 2.1.2 Academic Board

#### Terms of Reference of Academic Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>The Academic Board is the Governing Body of the academic affairs of Dublin Business School and has ultimate responsibility for academic quality and standards.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Operation | The main operations of the Academic Board include  
- Approval of academic policies, standards, processes and procedures in the following areas:  
  - Student admission and progression  
  - Teaching, learning and assessment  
  - Staff development and research  
  - Academic resources  
- Ratification of  
  - Academic quality and standards  
  - New programmes and amendments to programmes  
  - Academic regulations and amendments to regulations  
  - Academic staff appointments  
- Oversight of liaison arrangements with the validating bodies, including approval of relevant submissions and reports. The primary validating body is Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Other awarding bodies with whom DBS has a substantial accreditation relationship may be invited to be members of the board.  
- Oversight of liaison arrangements with professional bodies about matters concerning recognition of DBS programmes, including approval of relevant submissions and reports  
Some of the functions of the Academic Board may be delegated to sub-Committees appointed by and accountable to the Board. |
**Membership**

- Independent Chairperson
- Executive Dean
- Director of Academic Affairs
- Head of Academic Affairs
- Head of Academic Programmes
- Head of Faculty and School Operations
- Head of Library
- Head of Student Experience
- Head of Academic Enhancement
- President of the Student Union
- Vice President of the Student Union
- Three elected members of DBS staff*
- Up to two other members may be co-opted at the discretion of the Board.
- The School Executive Administrator acts as Secretary to the Board

*Elected representatives will be elected from both full-time and part-time permanent staff, the term of office will last two years and an elected representative may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

**Meetings**

Four meetings in each academic year: in September, December, March and June.
2.1.3 School Executive Board

Terms of Reference of School Executive Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>The Schools Executive Board ensures the effective delivery of all aspects of academic management and operations throughout DBS. An important function of the Schools Executive Board is the establishment of a shared culture, shared values and a shared understanding of roles throughout DBS to ensure the best academic delivery and experience for the student.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operation</td>
<td>The focus of the Schools Executive Board is on the following areas of academic and operational priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student Progression: The primary goal of students – gaining the qualification and outcomes for which they have registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Programmes: The quality and standard of programmes and the integrity of academic awards, including compliance with the standards, processes, procedures and general requirements of awarding bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staffing: Management and staffing of programmes, including monitoring staff performance and supporting the operation, retention and development of academic staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Appropriate strategies and standards for coordination of teaching, learning and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customer Service: Commitment to high standards of customer service across all areas of operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic Management and Support: The standards, structures, processes and procedures required to deliver effective coordination of all aspects of academic management and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The implementation of agreed quality assurance arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>• Executive Dean (Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Head of Academic Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Head of Faculty and School Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Head of Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Head of Student Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Other members selected from the Academic staff*

*Other members from the Academic staff will be selected by consultation with the Executive Dean, Director of Academic Affairs and Head of Academic Programmes. Their appointment is subject to ratification by the Academic Board.

The School Executive Administrator is Secretary to the Board

| Meetings | The Schools Executive Board meets at two-monthly intervals throughout the year, with additional meetings arranged as required to deal with particular issues as they may arise. The agenda is focused on the areas of academic and operational priority outlined above and include review of plans, priorities, on-going developments, issues, actions and outcomes.

The minutes of each meeting outline the action points agreed and identify responsibility for implementation. |
2.1.4 Board of Studies

Terms of Reference of Board of Studies

| Role | The School operates with a Board of Studies for each of the Arts and Business & Law groups of programmes. This is the main forum for annual routine programme monitoring and review within the School. The academic function of the School, such as teaching, design of new programmes, curriculum development and assessment is supported by the Board of Studies. All programmes and modules leading to an award within each School are assigned to a Board of Studies. Where a programme is taught by more than one department, representatives from all relevant departments are required to be present at the Board of Studies. |
| Operation | The Board of Studies is responsible for the conduct and development of the programmes within its remit. It has responsibility for:  
- development and review of programmes in terms of content and delivery  
- development of aims, objectives and learning outcomes in line with Programme Specifications  
- development and review of assessment methods  
- development and review of learning and teaching  
- review of student progress, ensuring mechanisms are in place for informed student progression.  
To facilitate consistent and comprehensive annual monitoring and reporting, the Boards of Studies use standard agenda items. These include:  
- admissions  
- responsiveness to students  
- responsiveness to External Examiners  
- programme reporting, including Module Review and Development Plans (MRDPs)  
- learner support  
- learning and teaching  
- student retention and progression.  
The Board of Studies also receives the minutes of:  
- Class Representatives Meetings |
### Membership
- Head of Academic Programmes or designate (Chair)
- All PLs for programmes reporting to the Board of Studies
- Head of Faculty and School Operations
- Teaching faculty on the programmes
- Learner Representative(s)
- Relevant School/Programme Administrators
- School representative on the Library Committee
- School representative on the Learning and Teaching Committee
- Student Services Officer*
- Library representative*
- IT representative*
- Marketing representative*.

* by invitation of the chair, as required by the agenda.

The School Executive Administrator is Secretary to the Boards of Studies

### Meetings
Scheduled consistent with the requirements of the academic processes within the academic year as follows:
- Post Awards Boards (Summer Board)
- Semester 1 (Autumn Board)
- Semester 2 (Spring Board).

The Head of Academic Programmes or designate chairs each Board, and is responsible for circulating the agenda, recording the minutes and collating the subsequent actions into a School Action Plan. The minutes are subsequently reported, by means of relevant reports, to the Academic Board.

Owing to the structure of the programmes operating through the Professional School, Boards of Studies are not held for these programmes. A formal Programme Team meeting is conducted with the academic staff for the professional accountancy programmes a minimum of once per year.
2.1.5 Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC)

**Terms of Reference of Academic Appointments Sub-Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>The AASC is a sub-committee of the School Executive Board and its purpose is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- To approve the academic suitability of proposed academic staff appointments on behalf of the Schools Executive Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- To approve the nomination of External Examiners on behalf of the Schools Executive Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- To review the implementation of conditions set and report to the Schools Executive Board and the Academic Board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>The AASC operates quickly when presented by the School with an application for a prospective staff member or an External Examiner. If a prospective staff member, the person will already have been deemed the preferred candidate following a recruitment process conducted in line with DBS HR policies and procedures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Appointment of Academic Staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All candidates for lecturing or tutor positions must be presented to the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee for consideration prior to a contract being issued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If endorsed by the sub-committee the Academic Appointments Record is updated and sent to the Schools Executive Board for approval and ultimately the Academic Board where staff are formally ratified. An AASC certificate is issued and sent to the Head of Faculty and School Operations; this must be received by HR before a formal appointment can be made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An endorsement may be made with conditions and will always note the level at which the new appointment is approved to teach or supervise projects or dissertations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditions may include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appointment of a teaching mentor to provide appropriate academic guidance and mentoring for one full academic year and evaluate if further mentoring is required thereafter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Appointment of an Assessment Mentor – as above for assessment, acts as a second marker and is in addition to the normal assessment moderation process
• Specific. This is a category for staff with specific qualifications and/or specific industrial experience to teach on modules where that particular expertise is required. Those appointed under this condition in some cases may not have an academic qualification equivalent to the course on which they are teaching.

A tutor is a practitioner who may not have the requisite formal qualifications at the appropriate level. A tutor may contribute to a module, deliver lectures, workshops, tutorials etc. but cannot be a Module Leader. The Module Leader works with the tutor to ensure teaching material is of the required academic standard. The Module Leader is ultimately responsible for the module.

Appointment of External Examiners
The formal appointment of External Examiners is made by the appropriate accreditor. The AASC approves the nomination of External Examiners on behalf of the Academic Board.
If the nomination is approved by the AASC the QA Officer updates the External Examiners Register. The External Examiners Register is sent to the School Executive for Information and the Academic Board for final ratification.

General
The AASC reviews information supplied on CV’s or Nomination Forms. Verification of this data, such as verification of qualifications via transcripts and/or parchments and verification of teaching experience via reference etc. is an executive function and remains the responsibility of the School.
Where a candidate’s qualification is not from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, England or Scotland, then a Comparability of Qualification ‘certificate’ should be appended to the CV. It can be found at the following link.

Membership
• Director of Academic Affairs (Chair)
• Head of Academic Enhancement
• Head of Academic Programmes
- QA Officer
- Quorate – 3 members.

*Support is provided as follows*
- Faculty Managers to support academic appointments
- Examinations Officer to support External Examiner Appointments
- QA Officer also acts as secretary and retains the External Examiner register.

| Meetings   | Meets as required but can also hold virtual meetings via email or other online means |
### 2.1.6 Admissions Committee

**Terms of Reference of the Admissions Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>The Admissions Committee has responsibility for reviewing admission standards, processes and procedures; for considering any/all amendments or modifications and for academic oversight of the administration of the admissions system.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Operation | The Admissions Committee is a sub-Committee of the Schools Executive Board with the following responsibilities in relation to the admission of learners to DBS:  
- advising the Schools Executive Board and the Academic Board on matters related to the admission of learners to undergraduate, post-graduate, professional and other courses.  
- monitoring and developing, as appropriate, the College’s admissions policy in relation to selection procedure.  
- monitoring the College’s advanced stage admissions and transfer policy and developing methods for otherwise facilitating learners from other institutions transferring onto undergraduate and post-graduate programmes at DBS, having regard to their academic standards and the maintenance of quality.  
- evaluating new or alternative qualifications as a basis for determining admission to DBS, while having regard to the College’s admissions policy and the standards and procedures in other institutions, while supporting the access, transfer and progression procedures as defined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.  
- monitoring the College’s admissions system and preparing such reports as may be considered appropriate or as requested by the Schools Executive Board in relation to its operations having regard to procedures in the other institutions, changes in the CAO system, requirements of accreditation/validation agencies, and/or other relevant developments.  
- carrying out such other functions as may be considered appropriate, subject to the approval of the Schools Executive Board. |

The Admissions Committee will provide three Admissions Reports, one each in March and November comprising the admissions data to the School Executive Board (SEB) and an annual report to the SEB and the Academic Board to provide confidence that
the admissions process is working effectively and all entrance criteria are properly adhered to and standards are being maintained.

The Director of Marketing and Admissions prepares an Admissions Report at the end of each admissions cycle. The report presents an overview of the admissions process and provides a statistical summary and analysis of admissions.

The report provides separate analysis of admissions, standard and non-standard, admissions with advanced standing, procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning and admission of mature learners. A detailed listing of learners in each of these categories is attached in separate appendices. The report is presented initially for review by the Admissions Committee and is then forwarded to the School Executive Board for approval and ultimately to the Academic Board.

Any issues identified or recommendations made are considered by the relevant department and overseen by the Admissions committee.

| **Membership** | Director of Academic Affairs (Chair) |
|               | Head of Academic Affairs            |
|               | Director of Marketing and Admissions|
|               | Head of Academic Programmes         |
|               | Admissions Tutors can be co-opted as required. |
|               | A quorum for this meeting includes all members or their nominees. |

| **Meetings** | The Admissions Committee meets three times per academic year; after each admissions cycle (November and March) and at the end of the academic year (June). |
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

2.1.7

Research Committee

Terms of Reference of the Research Committee
Role

The Research Committee is a sub-Committee of the Schools Executive Board. It
has responsibility for the promotion of research and a research culture in DBS as
well as managing the Research Scholarship budget. The Research Committee
takes responsibility for convening and overseeing the Ethics Committee.

Operation

The Research Committee has the following responsibilities:


To oversee the DBS Research Development Plan (RDP)



To monitor the effectiveness of the RDP in the School



To consider applications for staff development in relation to conference
attendance and short courses.



To oversee the allocation of the Research Scholarships. Senior management
of the College has provided a number of research scholarships to faculty
which provides the equivalent of 37.5 paid teaching hours specifically for the
purpose of research.



To organise and deliver the Annual DBS Research Day To identify and
disseminate information regarding funding opportunities



To monitor the Ethics Committee and ensure that the Procedures for Ethical
Approval are current.



To liaise and co-ordinate with the Library Research Support Office where
relevant (e.g. archival of financially supported research activity outputs and
conference attendance reports. Please see section 10.3.3, part 1 for further
information.)

Research Requiring Ethical Approval
Where a project requires ethical approval the ‘Ethical Guidelines for Research with
Human Participants and Procedures for Ethical Approval’ (Appendix 10.1) are
activated. To obtain ethical approval for a project the applicant familiarises
themselves with the guidelines and then completes a Research Ethics Application
Form (F10.8).
The Procedures for Ethical Approval are managed by the Research Committee, which
filters applications for ethical approval and convene the College Human Research
Ethics Committee, (Ethics Committee) to advise as required.
25


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Chair of the Committee as appointed from research active staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A representative from each School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One member of the Learning and Teaching Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research active academics co-opted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A library representative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Meetings                      | The Committee convenes on a bi-monthly basis.                 |
2.1.8 Learning and Teaching Committee

Terms of Reference of the Learning and Teaching Committee

| Role | Learning and Teaching support activities at DBS are co-ordinated by the College’s Learning and Teaching Committee, the Committee meets periodically to review the general progress of the various support mechanisms and to initiate improvements where appropriate. The Learning and Teaching Committee provides a valuable forum for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the learning support system - a system that is intended to make an important contribution to learner success and well-being in DBS.

A Member of the DBS Learning and Teaching Committee is the Associate of the National Forum on Enhancement for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NFETLHE) responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of the activities of that organisation and kept abreast of policy. A member of the committee is also a member of the HECA Teaching and Learning Committee. |
| Operation | The Committee is accountable to the School Executive Board and has the following responsibilities:

- To oversee the preparation, review and enhancement of academic support documents such as the DBS Generic Grade Criteria and various academic guidelines, in a response to a need identified by the academic teams
- To facilitate best practice in pedagogy at DBS by raising awareness of current learning initiatives
- To promote staff development in pedagogy
- To implement and monitor learning support activities in DBS.
- To organise four learning and teaching symposiums/workshops in the calendar year |
| Membership | The membership of this Committee comprises representatives from the School, the Library, Computer Services, Facilities, Careers and Student Services. There is a student representation on this committee also. The Committee is Chaired by the Head of Academic Enhancement. |
| Meetings | The Committee, meets monthly to consider teaching and learning matters including academic support issues and to respond to feedback from learners. |
2.1.9 Library Committee

Terms of Reference of the Library Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Library Committee is an integral element of quality assurance at Dublin Business School (DBS). The Committee is chaired by the Head of Library Services and comprises representatives from Library staff, faculty, students of the College and other College personnel as required. Minutes of Library Committee meetings are submitted to Boards of Studies and to the Academic Board. The Head of Library Services at DBS also sits on the Schools Executive and the Academic Board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Library Committee has three main aims:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Membership of the Committee is reviewed regularly by the Chairperson to ensure representativeness and changes as required shall be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Faculty Membership of the Committee is not restricted to a specific time period. The Committee favours committed membership. Faculty members are encouraged to solicit feedback from new as well as existing faculty in the College in relation to Library matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The agenda of Committee meetings is set by the Chairperson in consultation with Committee members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The Deputy Librarian is Secretary of the Committee. Minutes of Committee meetings are disseminated to attendees, the Director of Academic Affairs, the Boards of Studies and the Academic Board.

5. The agenda of the Committee is circulated a minimum of one week prior to the meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership of the committee comprises:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Head of Library Services (Chairperson)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deputy Librarian (Secretary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other Library personnel as required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Head of Student Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic representatives from the Schools of Business &amp; Law and the School of Arts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student representatives from the Schools of Business &amp; Law and the School of Arts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Membership of the Committee is voluntary. The Committee Chairperson invites faculty to join. The Head of Student Experience recruits student members.

The quorum for meetings is fifty percent of Committee members.

| Meetings | The Committee convenes three times a year prior to the Boards of Studies. |
2.2 Academic Management and Administrative Structure

The leadership of DBS (see Figure 2) is based on an executive management model designed to achieve the following:

- academic leadership, development and continuing enhancement
- staff management, motivation, development and retention
- high standards of teaching, learning and assessment
- effective development and implementation of academic policies, standards and procedures
- efficient and effective operational management of the College and its programme development, delivery and enhancement
- Effective commercial management of the institution.

Figure 2: DBS Leadership
The Executive Leadership and Academic Management structure (see Figure 3) is based on a functional model related to learning and ancillary services offered to learners in DBS.

Figure 3: Executive Leadership and Academic Management

2.2.1 Executive Dean

The Executive Dean, as the Head of Institution, has executive responsibility for all academic delivery and quality across the College and leads the strategic planning, growth and development of DBS as an academic institution. The post is assisted in carrying out these functions by the Director of Academic Affairs, the Head of Academic Programmes, and the Head of Faculty and School Operations. The Executive Dean is a part of the DBS Leadership Team, the Academic Board, and chairs the School Executive Board.
2.2.2 Registrar

The purpose of this role is to:

- provide academic leadership in safeguarding and promoting the academic integrity and academic standards of DBS
- formulate academic policies, standards, processes and procedures in accordance with best practice in third level education and coordinate their continuing review and enhancement
- ensure that the College is operating in accordance with academic regulations, in particular regulations governing student admission, progression & graduation, and teaching, learning & assessment; updating regulations as required and monitoring compliance with the requirements of accrediting bodies.

The Registrar has overall responsibility for:

- development and enhancement of the academic framework, infrastructure, standing, reputation and resource base of DBS
- academic quality and standards and the academic integrity of programmes
- management of the relationship with accrediting bodies, e.g. QQI.

The Director of Academic Affairs is a member of the DBS Leadership Team, the Academic Board, the Admissions Committee, and reports to the Executive Dean.

2.2.3 Head of Academic Affairs

The Head of Academic Affairs has responsibility for the Academic Affairs department which provides administrative support to the School. Specifically, the Head of Academic Affairs has overall responsibility for the creation and management of learner records, the learner registration process, learner attendance, timetabling of programmes and all programme coordination and administration. The department comprises the Academic Systems Team, the Exams Team and the Programme Coordination team. Collectively the department is responsible for the provision of an effective administration support service to facilitate student recruitment, management and support, programme development, validation, management and delivery, student registration, assessment, progression and graduation. The department also provides a first point of contact service to students for programme related matters.
2.2.4 Assessment and Regulations Manager

The Assessment and Regulations Manager, reporting to the Head of Academic Affairs and supported by the QA Officer, has responsibility for assessment and examinations, academic regulations, student discipline and conduct, academic records and liaison with accrediting bodies, which includes responsibility for coordinating Validation events, Programmatic Reviews, Institutional Reviews and reporting arrangements. The Assessment and Regulations Manager has responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of academic quality assurance and standards in the College.

The Assessment and Regulations Manager has ultimate responsibility for delivery and oversight of:

- coordination of student assessment; organisation of examinations and Examination Boards; recording, processing and communication of results; communication and liaison with collaborative partners and accrediting bodies
- academic regulations, in particular regulations governing student attainment, progression and graduation and teaching, learning and assessment; updating regulations as required and monitoring compliance with the requirements of accrediting bodies and the terms of programme approval
- academic records, including responsibility for maintenance of academic files and records and responsibility for the reliability and integrity of all academic records
- advising colleagues and collaborating as appropriate in relation to new academic developments, quality enhancement initiatives and continuing development of programmes, and promotion of academic standards.

2.2.5 Head of Academic Programmes

The Head of Academic Programmes is responsible for the leadership, development and management of all academic programmes. He/She is a key member of the senior academic management at DBS and its purpose is to

a. Ensure all programmes are taught in accordance with their validation
b. Set and monitor academic performance targets for each programme, including retention, progression and student satisfaction
c. Lead the establishment and periodic review of an assessment strategy for the School
d. Oversee the quality of delivery of teaching in the classroom
e. Manage the academic oversight, management and approval processes in accordance with the quality assurance and enhancement policies of the College and the requirements of accrediting and recognition bodies

f. Monitor and annually review all programmes and their modules, and prepare annual School reports

g. Review the viability of programmes, both educationally and commercially

h. Lead the development of new teaching methods, including methods of flexible and distributed learning, in line with strategic direction of the College

i. Lead the development of new academic propositions and programmes including liaising with Marketing on new programme initiatives

j. Strengthen links between education and research, enabling lecturers to pursue scholarly activities

- Enhance the reputation of DBS and promote it as an institution and its programmes.

2.2.6 Head of Faculty and School Operations

The Head of Faculty and School Operations is responsible for academic staff leadership, management and development in the School and on the professional programme delivery. It is a key member of the senior academic management team at DBS.

The main focus of the role is the effective management of all teaching Faculty such that the timetable for all student intakes in each academic year is fully staffed in a way that best meets the academic needs of students and maximises academic outcomes. The role will also ensure that DBS has and retains a well-qualified academic Faculty that is highly motivated by teaching, focused on student success and at ease working in a private education culture. The role also has responsibility for creating the annual budget for academic delivery and monitoring of monthly expenditure against budget. The specific purpose of the role is to

a. Create and retain an expert full time and part time Faculty that meets the education delivery needs of the College

b. Have all classes staffed by the appropriate Faculty member well in advance of the start of a programme
c. Ensure all academic faculty members are totally prepared and undertake all necessary actions to enable the uninterrupted delivery of the academic cycle for the student and the operations of the Schools

d. Create the annual School operations budget and monitor and report on expenditure against budget

e. Maximise utilisation of all resources of the School

f. Cultivate an esprit de corps amongst the academic Faculty and between Faculty and other staff such that the student experience is best delivered

g. Maximise the number of continuing students in the College

2.2.7 Head of Academic Enhancement

The Head of Academic Enhancement will lead the development and execution of initiatives that enhance both the programmes offered at DBS and the Faculty teaching on those programmes. Its specific purpose is to

- Lead and manage the process of programmatically reviewing programmes to ensure validation is maintained and programmes are enhanced
- Lead and manage the process of new programme validation
- Actively promote the development of teaching staff
- Enhance teaching in the classroom
- Lead the creation of a research culture amongst academic staff
- Introduce initiatives that will enhance the relationship between the student and teacher

2.2.8 Head of Student Experience

The Head of Student Experience has responsibility for leading and managing the Careers and Student Services Department which works to enhance the experience of students by providing a range of support services in a student-friendly, accessible way.

The Head of Student Experience is responsible for leading the development of the strategy and annual plan for the provision of a Careers and Student Services and also leads the overall operation of the
Department specifically relating to student experience, student wellbeing and welfare, College-life activities, learning supports, accommodation, work placement, careers advice and employability supports.

2.2.9 Head of Library Services

The Head of Library Services is a key member of the academic leadership in DBS. He / She has ultimate responsibility for the management and operation of the library service and the support services it provides to the Schools. The Head of Library Services plays a lead role in the development and enhancement of the academic programmes and research profile of DBS.

2.2.10 Head of Study Abroad

The Head of Study Abroad holds responsibility for the management of international students undertaking specific Study Abroad partnership programmes and international students undertaking English language learning. In addition, the Head of Study Abroad manages the academic relationship with the partners through which the students were recruited. The Head of Study Abroad is a member of the academic management at DBS.

2.2.11 Faculty Managers

The Faculty Managers (FM) are key members of the academic management team in DBS who assist the Head of Faculty & School Operations in the management of the academic full-time and part-time staff.

Each FM has direct line-management responsibility for a large number of staff, ensuring programmes are staffed correctly, staff performance is measured and reviewed, annual budgets are prepared, costs are controlled, and reporting on academic performance to internal governance and quality boards.

The role encompasses responsibility for:
- Staff planning of all modules and programmes across the full academic year, including summer courses and short modules
- On an ongoing basis, managing staffing issues and requirements arising from planned or unplanned absences
- Managing the recording and administration of academic staff absences, and taking action with individual staff members as necessary
- Working with Academic Operations on development of the annual academic timetable
- Planning and coordinating the recruitment, development and management of staff in line with HR policies and practices. This includes having academic staff applications processed by the internal AASC of the Academic Board
- Reviewing the performance, managing and developing academic staff, including performance improvement plans where appropriate
- Ensuring the application and implementation by academic staff of the QA and Compliance guidelines and policies
- Ensuring the implementation by academic staff of teaching and learning improvement initiatives
- Identifying actions and following through with academic staff on feedback from stakeholders, including staff, students, employers, funders and others
- Reporting to the appropriate internal Boards on all academic staffing related matters
- Preparation of the annual School budget
- Interfacing with the Marketing & Admissions Department to ensure full coordination of all activity between both areas. This includes ensuring
  - All marketing initiatives are supported the School
  - The School is prepared for new intakes, both within and outside the traditional academic calendar
  - Non-standard admission requests are processed effectively and in a timely manner by the School
- Coordinating Faculty staff meetings periodically.

While FMs have overall responsibility for academic staff management, operational responsibility for academic management and support of students at programme level is the responsibility of a PL, assigned by the Head(s) of School.

2.2.12 Programme Leaders
The Programme Leader (PL) is responsible for the overall management and development of the relevant programme and the management and support of students on that programme (or programme-level, dependent on class size/level, e.g. first year undergraduate programme). The PL has an important role in mentoring students and providing them with guidance and support on both academic and non-academic matters related to student life. The Head of Faculty & School Operations, in consultation with the Head of Academic Programmes may delegate PL responsibilities to a senior member of academic staff.

The key responsibility of the PL is the management and operation of the Programme. The PL is the person with primary responsibility for co-ordination of the organisation and delivery of the Programme. This includes responsibility for:

- Management and development of a defined set of programmes
- Management and support of students on those programmes. The PL has an important role in mentoring students and providing them with guidance and support on both academic and non-academic matters related to student life. In some cases it will be appropriate for a PL to direct the student to a Level Manager, where one exists for new students to the college
- Co-ordinating the Programme Team to ensure the subjects are taught and assessed in accordance with the Approved Programme Schedule
- Review of programme documentation to ensure teaching schemes, module guides reading lists, assignments and exam papers, are relevant, current and appropriate to the level
- Along with staff in Academic Affairs, ensuring all students on the programme are enrolled on the appropriate modules, and all module related material is accessible to them
- Ensuring all exam papers for modules on their Programme(s) are written and moderated well in advance of the examination taking place
- Ensuring that continuous assessment is balanced across the academic year, by co-ordinating the continuous assessment of the relevant Module Leaders (MLs)
- Ensuring exam results for modules on their Programme(s) are inputted to the Student Information System (Agresso)
- Communicating with students on all programme-related matters, liaising with the Class Representatives and participating in the Class Representative Meetings (CRM)
- Reporting to the appropriate Board of Studies, or equivalent board, on all programme related matters such as student numbers, attendance and performance indicators
- Preparing and managing the programme action plan based on feedback from External Examiners, MRDPs, student feedback and ongoing review against the requirements of the QAH
• Leading the Programme Team in the continuous review and improvement of the programme
• Leading the periodic Programmatic Review process relating to their programmes, ensuring that all team members are fully briefed and able to assist in the PR process
• Developing and implementing transition plans for programmes upon completion of a Programmatic Review process
• Leading on the validation process for new programmes assigned to them by the Head of Faculty & School Operations in consultation with Head of Academic Programmes
• Working with students who fail assessment to enable them to take the next available sitting so as to maximise the opportunity the student has to successfully achieve a positive outcome
• Monitoring the market for equivalent or competitive programmes on offer at other colleges
• Working with FMs, Head of Academic Programmes and Executive Dean to assess the viability of programmes and to take the necessary decisions as a consequence
• Work with and support the Faculty managers in staff planning for their programmes.

2.2.13 Module Leader (Lecturer responsible for a module)

The primary function of a lecturer is to lecture and assess students on designated subjects or modules at undergraduate and post-graduate level.

Before Teaching Commences
• Prepare the Module Guide using the current Module Guide Template and submit to PL prior to start of semester
• Distribute a hardcopy of the Module Guide to class in the first teaching week, and post a copy of the guide on Moodle
• Ensure an up to date reading list is available with the Module Guide and has been sent to the appropriate librarian
• Prepare teaching material, and ensure that learning materials are made available to students

During Teaching
• Monitor attendance by checking the completeness of the class lists and ensuring that accurate attendance records are maintained on the Student Information System
• Attend and participate in the appropriate Programme Team meetings
• Attend and participate in the appropriate Board of Studies
• Attend and participate in the appropriate CRMs
• Support students in a pastoral role, where appropriate
• When requested by students, append comments to Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) Forms

Assessment
• Liaise with the PL regarding submission dates for assessments, so as to avoid periods of assessment overload for students
• Ensure that the delivery and assessment of the module are aligned to the learning outcomes of the programme
• Ensure the module descriptor details are up-to-date on the Student Information System and liaise with PL to verify that this is the case. Ensure the effective delivery of the module and where appropriate, support, advise and coordinate with others on the module teaching team
• Submit draft assignments and examination papers, including marking schemes of both the first sitting and the retake sitting to the Examinations Office by the published deadline

Post Assessment
• Ensure, via a moderation process, that the module team mark all assignments and examination scripts to a consistent standard
• Ensure all assessment marks are uploaded onto the Student Information System in good time
• Ensure all CA marks are posted on the appropriate student notice Board and/or Moodle
• Ensure all scripts and assignments are submitted to the Examinations Office in the required format, to meet School deadlines
• Attend the internal and external Examination Board where the module is considered, present the marks and be present throughout the Examination Board’s proceedings
• If essential duties prevent attendance at the Examination Board - report absence to the PL in advance and arrange for a fully-briefed representative to act as substitute at the Examination Board
• Be present to counsel students on release of results
• Respond to feedback from the External Examiner – action any minor changes, and make the PL aware of any major requirements.

On Completion of Module Assessment
• Complete the MRDP,
• Review module content to meet School, subject and professional body requirements.
3 Design and Approval of New Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Policy for Development and Approval of New Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>12/06/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018 or in response to updated QQI policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This chapter outlines the background to the development of new programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment History:</td>
<td>Revised March 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Purpose of Policy

This policy and stated procedures detail the process steps and responsibilities required of DBS when undertaking programme validation activities. The activities can be summarised across the headings of design, approval and modification of programmes leading to Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) awards.

3.2 Policy Scope

This policy applies to the design and approval of new programmes of a duration of one year or more for Minor, Special Purpose (SPAs) and all Major awards. In addition, this policy also states the procedure for making appropriate minor amendments to validated programmes.

3.3 Overarching Considerations

All DBS programmes currently validated by QQI and with an active enrolment, meet the requirements outlined by the applicable named award(s) as outlined in programme validation documentation. These requirements are determined by the statutory body tasked with the function of validating programmes of education and training namely QQI. Meeting these stringent standards is an overarching consideration in the ongoing process of validation of all new programmes.
In addition to meeting the needs of learners groups in a supported high quality academic environment, all proposed programmes and subsequent validation activities are consistent with DBS strategic aims and objectives and are in harmony with the overarching mission of our organisation.

DBS recognises and supports the need to design, develop and deliver programmes (in an efficient and flexible manner) that anticipate the changing needs of the economy, in line with national and international requirements, the NFQ, and stakeholder requirements. The college strives to cultivate initiatives, which support best practice in modern programme development, in order to keep DBS innovative, current and competitive.

3.4 Policy

The regulatory process of validation determines whether a particular programme may be offered by DBS. DBS is a provider of education and training programmes ranging from Levels 6 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Programmes on the NFQ are predominantly accredited by QQI, in accordance with section 84 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Programmes leading to Joint Awards are considered fully in Chapter 5. A programme is defined as a process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence through a time bounded course of study.

3.4.1 Regulatory Direction which Support the Programme Development Process

All programmes developed and delivered by DBS are up to date with the policies and criteria defined by QQI and are in the main described in the following documents:

- Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training, QQI 2016
- Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programmes of Education and Training, QQI 2016
- QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines
- Policy for Determining Award Standards
- HET General Programme Validation Manual (Template), Revised 2016
- Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers
These policies are provided on the QQI web pages, with associated template documents to facilitate submission documentation preparation.

In addition, DBS supporting documentation should be referred to such as:

- DBS Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH)
- And relevant Professional Body criteria, as appropriate.

The application of this policy and procedures should ensure that programmes offered by DBS have academic and intellectual currency and standards, appropriate to the level of the award, and comparable to similar awards offered nationally and internationally. Programmes developed should be of a high quality, be relevant in the marketplace and meet the diverse learning needs of DBS customers. All newly proposed DBS programmes will be designed and developed utilising a strict set of consistently applied and agreed procedures.

The application of academic quality principles at DBS requires that the College satisfies itself and its accrediting bodies that a learner may attain knowledge, skill and/or competence for the purpose of an award, which is consistent with the NFQ, and fulfils the requirements of QQI in relation to access, transfer and progression. The approval of new programmes is achieved through validation, the QA
procedure by which the awarding body satisfies itself that a learner may attain the knowledge skill or competence for the purpose of an award made by the awarding body.

3.5 Design, Approval and Ongoing Monitoring and Review of Programmes (ENQA)

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities; this also takes into account quality assurance considerations that must be adopted through robust validation activities. The College’s portfolio of academic programmes is constantly developing and expanding to include new programme offerings.

There is an extensive process involved in bringing a new programme from inception, through validation, to delivery and continual review. With this in mind, DBS adheres to the principals contained in the document: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area with regard to the design, approval, and ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes. Validation activities regarding proposed programmes are expected to include:

- Development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes
- Careful attention paid to curriculum and programme design and content
- Specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional)
- Availability of appropriate learning resources
- Formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme
- Monitoring of the progress and achievements of students
- Regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members)
- Regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations
- Participation of students in quality assurance activities.

3.6 Programme Validation Timeline

The timetable for completion of the development and approval process is normally one academic year, but in general it should be undertaken in good time to enable scheduling of all necessary meetings to
facilitate evaluation and approval (internally and externally), as appropriate, in advance of the proposed programme commencement date.

In reality, the scheduling of validation activities is a complex task, which requires input from across DBS. Consequently, it is vital that all stakeholders are aware of their applicable responsibilities with regard to validation processes. The validation process begins from the initial concept stage all the way through to formalised pre-proposal development and into specific interaction with QQI.

3.7 The Planning of Multiple Programme Validations

Individual programme validations do not happen in isolation within DBS. At any given point in time, DBS is engaged in validation activity, re-validation activity and various other interactions at an institutional level with QQI. Consequently, DBS is cognisant of the need to plan these separate tasks with sufficient lead times and to make available any human or financial resources required to fulfil our regulatory commitments. However, the complexity of new programme validation and the requirements to have fit programmes that are ready for enrolment, leads to consistent significant institutional focus on these activities. It is within the remit of the DBS Academic Board to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to manage all deliverables of programme validation activity across DBS stakeholders.

3.8 Proposal of a new Programme Concept

Any member of DBS staff including and individual or a group submission can bring forward an informal proposal for a new programme concept. This scoping activity is pro-actively promoted within DBS as we ensure our new programme development meets the needs of our future learners. Identification of opportunities for new programme development is a shared responsibility at DBS, and may happen through formal market research by the DBS Marketing Department, in response to tender for government-funded programmes or from the School through programme quality assurance and associated self-evaluation processes including institutional and Programmatic Reviews and feedback mechanisms. Alternatively, a proposal may also be submitted by a member of academic staff via an informal route. The stages of the informal and formal process involve both internal and external review and approval mechanisms, and include input from but not limited to:
The Academic Schools
Head of Academic Programmes
Executive Dean
Registrar and/or the Assessment and Regulations Manager
Quality Assurance Officer
Head of Academic Enhancement
Head of Faculty and School Operations
The Boards of Studies
The School Executive Board (SEB)
The Quality Enhancement and Development Group (QED)
Academic Board
QQI and other relevant stakeholders including competitor analysis.

Any proposed programme concept that is developed by a member of academic staff should be brought to the attention of the Head of Academic Programmes at the earliest opportunity. These concepts will be measured against a consistent set of measurables. This process is not exhaustive, but provides fair and balanced recommendations regarding specific criteria having been met or not, and allows DBS to instigate initial pre-proposal development of the communicated concept and plan associated market research activities.

Concept measurable includes:

- Is the concept in harmony with the mission and strategic aims and objectives of DBS?
- Has the concept identified a niche or viable market need?
- Is there capacity and infrastructure within the organisation for the proposed programme?
- Does the concept have the capacity to meet stakeholder requirements i.e. funding and awarding bodies?

3.9 Procedures for the Development and Approval of New Programmes

There are five clear phases to developing a programme leading to an award, incorporating both internal and external activity. Current programme validation activity takes account of new and updated regulatory direction from QQI as outlined in section 3.4.1. In addition, all current programme validations are completed utilising the QQI Programme Validation Manual 2016 (Template).
3.9.1 *Phase 1: Organisational Support (Pre-Proposal Development)*

This phase occurs within the school and is required for new programmes and significant re-developments or modifications of existing programmes leading to a revalidation and where there are significant resource implications. This phase does not apply to Programme Review.

The collation of the information gathered is coordinated in the appropriate School. The key criteria for driving academic programme development are:

- There are legitimate strategic and logistical reasons for doing so
- The proposed programme would fall within the known fields of competence of DBS
- There is an identifiable market demand (internal/external)
- There is a feasible requirement to provide a progression option for students on a current programme
- There are perceived employment opportunities for graduates
- Graduates of the proposed programme would be well positioned to progress to further study in the field
- The programme is considered feasible
- The College is requested by an external agency to develop/offer a specific programme
- The College is responding to a tender for government-funded programmes.

Formal market research is conducted involving a number of sources, including data generated by the Central Applications Office (CAO) system; review and analysis of courses offered by other colleges; and information garnered from industry, employers and third parties (e.g. economic and development agencies). The market research conducted is usually of both a primary and secondary nature. Secondary sources include application and enrolment data, educational reports, competitor analysis and recommendations from institutional review and Government skills reports. The preparation of this information is conducted in consultation between the marketing department and the academic school.

On completion of the relevant market research, a proposal for programme development, Programme Proposal Approval form (F3.1), is prepared by the proposed PL, appointed by the Head of Faculty and School Operations, to secure preliminary approval for overall programme development from a
feasibility and academic point of view. Alternatively, the Head of Academic Programmes may also inform the Head of Faculty and School Operations that a viable concept has been forwarded by a member of academic staff that meets the concept measurable as outlined in section 3.8. The Head of Faculty and School Operations will designate the appropriate resources to allow adequate investigation of the proposed concept. When this investigation is complete, the Head of School and Faculty Operations will notify the proposer if the concept will be formalised and detailed on a Programme Proposal Form and forwarded to the Board of Studies for further consideration.

This completed form is then submitted to the appropriate Board of Studies or School management team to review the document prior to its submission to the SEB.

If approved the programme is formally scheduled for development by the School. A Programme Team is appointed from the lecturing staff by the Head of Faculty and School Operations with responsibility for development of a formal submission document for progression through the internal and external approval phases and review by the validating body, QQI. This Programme Team must be fully informed of the procedure of completing this task, including the input requirements and template necessary for same. It is imperative that any Programme Team member has the required time available to complete all necessary tasks.

3.9.2 Phase 2: Programme Proposal Development

At this stage, the validating body is informed, by the Registrar or nominee of the intention to propose a new programme and be advised of the timescale involved. In respect of QQI programmes’, the timescale for validation and approval of Programmatic Reviews is set out in the HET Programme Validation Manual, which allows for twenty-five weeks from the date of acknowledgement to the completion of the validation process. However, DBS recognises the front-loaded workload necessary in advance of this submission; to have both a valid application and that will lead to a successful validation of a programme of education and training.

The development phase results in a complete Programme Document presenting the final programme proposal for validation. The Programme Document is prepared using the HET Programme Validation Template (2016) which includes:

- Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
- Profile of the Proposed Programme’s Target Learners
- Programme Assessment Strategy
● Module Assessment Strategies.

Any associated Minor awards should be clearly identified.

The document is accompanied by a critical Self-Assessment Report and any additional/specific quality assurance procedures required for the programme.

Guidelines for the preparation of these documents can be found in the HET General Programme Validation Manual, Revised 2016 Parts 1, 2 & 3.

The PL has primary responsibility for the academic development of the new programme and drives the programme’s documentation through the internal review and approval processes, supported by the Head of Academic Enhancement to ensure consistency across programmes.

This phase includes further discussion at Programme Team level, and consultation with key stakeholders such as: learners, graduates, employers and professional bodies, where appropriate, to ensure that all feedback mechanisms are explored.

The Programme Development Team, which is appointed by the Head of Faculty and School Operations, is comprised of representatives from the main academic disciplines involved. The objectives set for Programme Teams, under the direction of the PL, are to develop a formal programme proposal that satisfies validating body requirements and includes the following:

● rationale for the new programme
● aims and learning outcomes of the new programme
● graduate attributes
● programme structure and content (including specific module descriptors, appropriate to the level)
● teaching and learning strategy
● programme assessment strategy that aligns with and is appropriate to the programme learning outcomes
● required academic resources and support services.

The programme will be assessed against the following validation criteria:

● The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme
The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought.

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

The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory.

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

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

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned.

The learning environment is consistent the needs of the programme’s learners.

There are sound teaching and learning strategies.

There are sound assessment strategies.

Learners are well informed, guided and cared-for.

The programme is well managed.

Refer also to Policies and Criteria for the validation of Programmes of Education and Training, QQI 2016.

Development of programme proposals is normally an iterative process with proposals being prepared by the PL and reviewed by the Programme Team with wider consultation internally such as library, careers and industrial liaison and externally as required. The development timescale allows for such debate and iteration as a healthy and productive part of the overall process. The Academic Affairs department is consulted during the process and in particular prior to finalisation of the submission to ensure compliance with approved standards and validating body requirements.

In developing the programme proposal, the Programme Team draws upon a number of internal and external information sources, including:

- Previous institutional and Programmatic Reviews undertaken in DBS
- Market research already/previously conducted
- Information on similar programmes offered in other institutions
- Industry/employer requirements and relevant consultation
- DBS careers’ office reports
● DBS library
● School Annual Reports
● External Examiners reports and consultation
● Professional bodies requirements and correspondence, where relevant
● MRDPs from existing programmes
● Government reports
● Feedback from learners and recent graduates from comparable programmes at DBS or from potential candidates on feeder programmes.

The SEB is provided with updates in relation to the progress of the proposal development from the Schools’ report.

3.9.3 Phase 3: Internal Review and Approval Phase
There are a number of levels of review and internal approval to which programme proposals are subjected in DBS prior to their submission to the relevant accrediting body.

When the initial stages of programme development are completed by the School, the programme proposal document is reviewed to take cognisance of feedback received from the wider academic community and other stakeholders.

The completed submission including the Programme Document is submitted to the SEB for formal internal review and approval. In some instances the feedback may be sent directly to the Programme Team. Issues identified in this forum are considered by the Programme Team and addressed in advance of the SEB. Any issues arising from these discussions are documented and the proposal is amended if and as required.

Based on the annual schedule of meetings, the finalised proposal is noted to the Academic Board for formal ratification of the willingness of DBS to support the programme.

Once internally identified issues are resolved, the final submission is sent to the validating body from the Academic Affairs Office. An internal pre-validation event may be arranged at this stage; this should be managed by the school with the support of the Academic Affairs Office and external panel members should be included. In exceptional circumstances, this event may only take the composition of limited volumes of individuals.
Six hardcopies and one electronic copy of the Programme submission are sent to QQI:

1. Proposed Programme Schedule
2. Programme Document structured on the HET Programme Validation Template
3. Self-Assessment Report
4. Additional Quality Assurance arrangements if relevant
5. Consortium agreements if applicable; refer to Chapter 5 for collaborative, transnational or joint awards
6. Validation Fee.

### 3.9.4 Phase 4: External Review of Programme

This phase is coordinated externally through liaison with the Registrar and the QA Officer. The process applies for new programmes and significant re-developments of existing programmes that require a revalidation.

On receipt of the proposal, QQI will acknowledge the application and check that the submission includes all of the required elements outlined in the General Programme Validation Manual 2016. A desk review will be undertaken and a report will be provided with two possible outcomes:

- The submission may proceed to validation
- The submission does not adequately address the criteria, or is not adequately presented.

If the submission is inadequate then the School will be given eight weeks to resubmit. This process will be driven by the SEB.

**Note.** The College can withdraw from validation at any time prior to the QQI decision. No report will be published. The fees incurred will not be reimbursed if the application is withdrawn after the desk review.

Where the programme proceeds to validation the validating body organises a validation event (in consultation with DBS), determines the nature of the meeting, decides the date and agenda for the meeting, and organises the validation panel (a number of members of which may be nominated by DBS).
The expert panel will be selected on the basis of their subject expertise, particular expertise in pedagogy, assessment or quality assurance and prior experience of QQI or other panels. They will be independent of the college. Before the panel is agreed the College is consulted and any potential conflict of interest can be declared by the panel member or the college. The panel will comprise:

- A chair person
- A learner, graduate or student officer where feasible
- At least three ordinary members competent to make national and international comparisons.
- QQI observer.

The validation process may involve an onsite visit where the panel reviews the submission, meets with senior management, the Programme Team and in some cases learners, and conducts a review of the resources available to support the operation of the programme. The visit is conducted in accordance with the validating bodies’ procedures for programme validation. Professional body representatives may be part of the panel or may observe the process.

The purpose of the site visit is to:

- Establish if the programme meets the criteria and should be validated.
- Gives the expert panel an opportunity to interview the provider’s leadership and programme personnel about the programme and their self-assessment.
- Allows the panel to experience the learning environment.
- Allow the panel explore the quality assurance procedures.
- Assess the appropriateness of relevant facilities and resources to support provision of the programme.
- Provides an opportunity for the expert panel to discuss the proposed programme in situ with other relevant stakeholders, learners, industry representatives, professional bodies etc.

On conclusion of the site visit the expert panel will normally provide informal feedback to the senior management (this should not be taken as necessarily representing the final expert panel report which may set aside the informal feedback).

Within two weeks of the site visit the expert panel agrees a draft report of its findings, conclusions whether or not the programme as described should be validated, prerequisites for validation, conditions and recommendations.
The college is invited to respond in writing (within a specified time) on the expert panel report’s findings, conclusions, prerequisites for validation, conditions and recommendations. The final panel report will be considered by the School and the School will provide a written response. The schools draft response will be considered at the SEB and if approved the Director of Academic Affairs will arrange the submission of the college response to the Chair of the Expert Panel.

The college’s response should:

- Demonstrate how the proposed programme has been modified to meet any prerequisites for validation
- Explain how any special conditions have been met or will be met by referring to the implementation plan
- Provide an implementation plan to address the expert panel report’s recommendations and conditions with specific objectives, actions, times, targets/success-metrics.

3.9.5 Phase 5: Post-External Review and Approval of Programme

The main focus of this phase is the close-out of issues and the communication of all relevant information to both internal functional areas and external agencies, including the validating body, key stakeholders and liaison with professional bodies.

Once approved by the QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC), QQI will send a letter confirming validation. This is followed by a Certificate of Programme Accreditation and an Approved Programme Schedule. These documents are checked by the QA Officer and the accuracy confirmed with QQI. The programme may now be advertised as leading to a QQI award.

The following activities are carried out to facilitate effective implementation of the programme:

- The Directory of Programme Validation is updated
- A complete set of definitive documentation is made available internally on the S:Drive
- The Certificate of Programme Accreditation is held by the QA Officer and an electronic version made available on the S:Drive
- A programme administrator is appointed to liaise with the School and maintain all programme records
- All relevant committees and internal stakeholders are informed of the validation status, these include:
• Academic School
• Academic Operations
• Marketing and Admissions
• Registration
• Library, Careers and Student Services
• Finance and Facilities

• The School Leadership Team overseen by the Executive Dean ensures:
  • A PL is appointed
  • All conditions of validation have been met and any implementation plan is executed
  • The resources are in place prior to commencement of the programme.

This phase also includes feedback to stakeholders involved in the process following the completion of the event. The expert panel report is published on the QQI website.

A review of the validation event and outcomes is carried out by the Head of Academic Enhancement and Head of Academic Programmes. Recommendations from the process are included in the Quality Implementation Plan where they will inform future reviews and action plans. This process is managed by the Quality Enhancement and Development Group.

The duration of validation is normally five years. Throughout the lifetime of the programme the Board of Studies will review the programme annually and make necessary enhancements or adaptations to the programme over its lifetime. All such changes are proposed by the Board of Studies and subject to approval of SEB. Any proposed changes to learning outcomes, entry requirements or to the Approved Programme Schedule is subject to approval by QQI and may necessitate a peer review process. The programme is subject to DBS and QQI monitoring and review processes as described in Chapter 4.

3.10 Validation of Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards

DBS takes regulatory direction regarding the validation of Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental awards form QQI’s 2008 policy of the same name. Many DBS validations regarding the above,
encompass simultaneously making affiliated applications for government funded tenders. The process steps for validation of these awards are essentially the same. However, the timescales regarding the activity from concept/pre-proposal may be significantly shortened dependent upon the final intended period of enrolment.

3.11 Requesting an Extension to a Period of Validation

Applications by Programme Teams in DBS for an extension to a given validated programme for one year beyond the originally anticipated final date of enrolment will be agreed in all instances with consultation with QQI and in a suitable timeframe. Clear and concise rationale must be provided for same by the Programme Team and include evidence of the programmes continued currency and the circumstances of why an extension is sought.

3.12 Minor Modifications to Validated Programmes of Education and Training

It is anticipated that minor modification of validated programmes will occur throughout the active enrolment of a given programme. Section 4 of this document provides additional information relating to proposed changes. This is a normal part of the academic process and is consistent with the vibrant activities of an academic faculty. However, any amendment which leads to a change in a programme learning outcome is not permitted in any circumstance, without a full submission to the QQI Programme Evaluation Sub Committee (PEC) for approval. There can be significant ambiguity when detailing what a recommended change actually encompasses. This said, changes usually come under one of three headings: Major changes, Minor Changes or some form of proposed structural change.

Major changes will always encompass a significant input and will require significant academic faculty action and entail the participation of an external panel in the approval of the proposed change.

Minor changes will not affect any programme learning outcomes or the aims or objectives outlined in the approved validation document. However, some minor changes may encompass:

- Minute changes in contact hours
- Changes to the weightings of continuous assessment and examination
- Slight re-balancing of credits to given modules
Structural changes can encompass changes in delivery mode and format. Structural changes are usually managed through a differential validation process.

### 3.13 Programme Development of Non-Framework Programmes and Professional Programmes

DBS provides a significant level of professional and non-framework programmes i.e programmes that are not recognised on the NFQ. These programmes have aided participant labour market activation and have been a key aspect of DBS education and training provision. It is now DBS policy, that any review of these programmes will culminate with the application of quality assurance procedures which are consistent with our approach to our currently validated QQI programmes. By ensuring this consistency across DBS provision; it is likely that the process to validate these programmes and the subsequent placement of these awards on the NFQ can be accommodate in an efficient manner.

#### 3.13.1 Professional Accountancy Programmes

DBS has been offering professional accountancy programmes for over 30 years within an established market, to meet the needs of the changing economy, in line with national and international requirements. Content, format and examination periods for these programmes are prescribed by the relevant professional bodies. Operational and quality review systems, processes and procedures (e.g. learner feedback) for these programmes are implemented by the DBS in accordance with standard DBS practices.

#### 3.13.2 Institute Of Commercial Management (ICM) Programmes

With a strategic aim of supporting access, transfer and progression for learners, DBS offers a comprehensive suite of year-long programmes accredited by the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM). The range of programmes has developed over the years to reflect the changing needs of the economy, in line with national and international requirements, and to support lifelong learning.

DBS has been delegated authority from ICM to design and develop programmes and to also devise, set and moderate examinations. All resulting documentation is prepared within an ICM format. Students are registered with ICM for the purpose of sitting examinations and the production of parchments. Examination Boards are managed by DBS. The conferring of awards ceremony is organised by DBS, and attended by ICM.
Changes to programmes or development of new programmes must be approved by the Education Committee of ICM. Communication with ICM is coordinated through the Professional School.

DBS are currently developing more formal mechanisms for review and approval of these programmes as minor, supplemental and/or special purpose awards.

3.13.3 Dublin Business School (DBS) Professional Diploma Programmes
DBS offers a comprehensive suite of short professional diploma programmes (ranging in duration from 8 weeks to 1 year) and are administered by the Professional Diploma Manager. The range of programmes has developed over the years to reflect the changing needs of the economy in line with national and international requirements, and to support lifelong learning.

DBS design and develop these programmes and devise, set and moderate assessments/examinations. All documentation is prepared within the prescribed DBS format. Students are registered on the Student Information System for the purpose of capturing their assessment/examination results and generation of their transcripts and parchments. Examination meetings are held by the Programme Team to consider and review results. The conferring of awards ceremony is organised by DBS.

DBS Professional Diploma Programmes procured by third-party organisations, e.g. the project management diploma, are also governed by these processes.

Changes to programmes or development of new programmes are approved through the DBS SEB.
4 Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and Quality Assurance

### Policy Title
Policy for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes and Quality Assurance

### Date Approved
March 2015

### Effective From
September 2015

### Date for Review
September 2018 or in response to updated QQI policies

### Summary
This chapter outlines DBS policy on monitoring the quality of its own academic delivery. This includes the internal monitoring and review of programmes, which lead to the annual institutional report. As part of this, the chapter discusses the Module Review and Development Plan, student feedback, programmatic review and institutional review.

| Amendment History | 2016 |

#### 4.1 Introduction

DBS has primary responsibility for the quality of its programme provision; the implementation and evaluation of DBS QA procedures; and on-going enhancement. This principle is laid down in Irish law and in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). This is supported by routine monitoring by QQI, defined as an external QA process that involves both routine and once-off evaluations, analysis, observations and recording of provider activities. Routine monitoring by QQI is designed to assist DBS in demonstrating the effective implementation of QA procedures, supporting public confidence and providing a source of public information through the publication of the conclusions of monitoring engagements.

Monitoring in this context includes:

- Self-monitoring activities
- Periodic evaluation of programmes by way of Programmatic Review
- Periodic evaluation of the Colleges Governance and Quality Assurance infrastructure by way of Institutional Review
Institutional QA activities and review within DBS are undertaken with regard to section 28 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999. Transition to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 are being managed through a re-engagement process with QQI as outlined in the publication: Re-engagement with QQI Policy and Criteria for Renewed Access to QQI Validation for Voluntary Providers of Higher Education and Training QQI 2014. The procedures in this chapter are based on the current policies:

- Provider Monitoring Policy and Procedures - HETAC October 2010

DBS has established quality assurance procedures, systems and processes for obtaining feedback from internal and external sources for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training which it provides, organises and/or procures. These structures enable DBS to monitor, review, develop and verify the quality of current and proposed courses of study and to appreciate the need to phase-out/withdraw certain courses.

4.9.1 Internal Review of Programmes and Quality Assurance

Programmes are routinely monitored throughout the academic year and at the end of the academic year to ensure that:

- programmes are progressing satisfactorily both operationally and academically
- teaching schemes are appropriate to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes of the module and programme
- assessment methods are appropriate to determine the achievement of learning outcomes for the different modules and are distributed appropriately throughout the academic year
- academic staff remain current and relevant and engaged in scholarly activity and/or research as appropriate
- academic procedures are being followed
- the suitability of existing programmes to meet the current and future needs of students is assessed
- the programmes remain current and relevant to employers
- future requirements for programmes, and hence future programme development, to allow the institution to continue to meet the needs of the student, to encourage student progression and to appeal to prospective students in the future are identified
Data and feedback is collected and reviewed at the academic operations level on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year this includes:

- External reports such as validation and review
- External Examiner Reports refer to Section 8.9.4.
- Academic staff feedback
- Student feedback
- Alumni surveys
- Industrial liaison and employer feedback
- Professional body reviews
- Academic feedback through MRDPs

Formal reports are considered annually. A PLs report is submitted to the Board of Studies annually comprising data and a consideration of:

- Admissions Data
- Student registration status, withdrawals,
- External Examiner Reports
- Assessment trends and analysis
- MRDPs
- Programme progression statistics
- Student Feedback

This contributes to the School Annual Report and the development of the school action plan. It is also an opportunity to raise institutional issues to the School Executive Board.

Formal reports are collated and submitted annually to the Academic Board to provide academic oversight:

- Directory of Validated Programmes
- Admissions Report
- Exams and Assessment Report
- Report on Retention and Progression
- School Annual Report
- Academic Appointments
- Academic Resources including: library, careers and student services
The templates for these reports are agreed by the School Executive Board. This data feeds into a number of formal mechanisms and processes to support the evaluation and monitoring of academic quality within DBS, notably:

Internal mechanisms:
- Boards of Studies
- School Executive Board
- Academic Board

External mechanisms
- Programmatic Review
- Institutional Review

Responsibility for the implementation of on-going review of programmes through these mechanisms rests primarily with the designated PL, appointed by the Head of Faculty and School Operations. Information obtained and gathered through the monitoring activities may ultimately result in modifications or improvements to delivery and assessment of programme modules during the academic period. In some instances, the information is used to enhance the programme academic quality and the student experience in subsequent years, within the boundaries of the formal programme structure.

4.10 Procedure for Securing Changes to a Validated Module through Board of Studies

Following the validation of a programme it is reasonably expected that ongoing review activity will identify the requirement for changes to programme and module content, delivery and assessment methodology. Changes which do not impact the Programme Learning Outcomes or the Approved Programme Schedule may be proposed by the Programme Team and approved by the Board of Studies.

Any proposed changes are expected to be evidence-based. The lecturer should present the proposal for change to the Programme Leader for consideration by the Programme Team. This should be presented using the “Module Change Approval” form and must include the rationale for change and any expected impact or enhancements. A copy of the current module descriptor and the proposed module descriptor must also be provided.
If the Programme Team are happy to support the proposal and in particular, the Programme Leader if satisfied with the rationale and anticipated beneficial impact, the PL should submit the proposal to the Secretary of the Board of Studies with a copy to the Head of Academic Programmes, for consideration at the next meeting.

The Board of Studies will consider all proposals. A member of the Programme Team is required to attend the Board meeting to answer any questions from the Board. The Board will ensure any decisions reached are within the validated parameters of the programme, comply with DBS regulations, do not compromise academic standards or integrity and are fit for purpose. The Board will give consideration to all programmes that may be impacted by the proposed module change.

The Board will make a decision to approve or not approve the proposed change. Conditions or limitations may be attached to the recommendation where necessary.

Any proposals that are approved are subsequently reported to the School’s Executive Board for noting.

The Secretary of the Board of Studies will notify the Academic Systems Manager, the Assessment and Regulations Manager and the Head of Academic Affairs of all approved changes and will provide copies of the revised module descriptors.

The Academic Systems Manager will make arrangements for the necessary changes to be implemented in the management information system so they are correctly reflected in Moodle.

The QA Officer will update the programme documentation record to reflect the revised module descriptor and ensure its ongoing availability.

Where changes are approved, it is expected that the lecturer and programme team will undertake appropriate monitoring and review activities to evaluate the effectiveness of the change implementation.

4.3 Procedures for Annual Institutional Reporting

The annual reporting process within DBS is a valuable exercise that fosters self-reflection and self-evaluation, across a range of important academic areas and is seen as fundamental to DBS’s mission for continuous and visible quality improvement.
An Annual Report for the academic school is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Programmes, for submission to the relevant Awarding Body. The Annual Report Template can be found in Appendix 4.1.

The report provides a review of academic activity within the School utilising information gathered across the academic year and provides a reflection on programme development; admissions; teaching, learning and assessment; staffing and staff development; academic support services and learning resources; facilities and general academic developments. The following documentation inter alia is considered by the School in drafting the report:

• Action Plan
• previous year’s report (and issues forward)
• Programmatic Review/Development Reports since the last report
• Admissions Report/Admission Committee minutes
• Examination Board minutes and Chairs Actions
• Internal/External Moderators Reports
• reports from External Examiners and written responses to the reports
• Examinations and Assessment Report
• CRMs
• issues identified in student feedback process and written responses to these
• Module Review and Development Plans (MRDPs)
• minutes of the Board of Studies
• minutes of the School Executive Board and Academic Board
• staffing lists and staff recruited since previous report
• staff development, research and scholarly activity.

Relevant statistical summaries are attached to the Annual Report. A draft of the report is forwarded in the first instance to School Executive Board for approval and then to the Academic Board for note.

The School Annual Report is forwarded to the relevant accreditation agency where required. Matters of a programme-specific nature are referred to the relevant PL (for consultation with the Programme Team, if appropriate). A formal College response to the issue is prepared within the School and agreed by the School Executive Board. The response is then referred to the Academic Board for approval before being returned to the accrediting body.
4.3.1 Module Review and Development Plan
After completion of each module in each academic year (at the end of semester 1 or 2, or the academic year, as appropriate), a MRDP is produced by the ML for that module. The MRDP form (F4.1) should be used. This document summarises the modules progress during the academic semester/year and documents any major issues that may have emerged, with recommendations as appropriate. The completed MRDP is forwarded to the Head of Academic Programmes. The PL also prepares a summary of the MRDP’s for inclusion in the PLs report for consideration at the Board of Studies.

Recommendations concerning academic, operational or resource issues, that impact on the quality/standard of the module, are presented for consideration to the Board of Studies and to the School Executive Board and are captured in the Annual Report.

4.3.2 Student Feedback
The opinions of stakeholders, and in particular the students, are important to DBS consistent with Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

The acquisition of feedback from current, graduating and recently graduated students is conducted by a number of different functions within the College. Feedback is collected from a variety of sources systematically through Class Representative Meetings (CRMs) and student surveys and informally through meetings with students or class representatives.

Meetings with Students

The Head of Academic Programmes, PL or Lecturer, as appropriate, are available for one-to-one discussions with students, when possible. This is an on-going evaluation method and support mechanism held in either a formal or informal capacity. These meetings can cover issues relevant to the particular student e.g. attendance, examination/assessment progress and results, personal and/or academic problems, programme work, programme workload, etc. The agenda for such meetings is very informal and is flexible to the needs/requirements of the student.

The meeting are requested either by:

1. the Head of Academic Programmes, PL or Lecturer, to discuss the individual’s performance with respect to the programme, or
2. the individual student who may feel that none of the other channels of communication available are suited to their individual needs at that particular time.

The discussions at the meeting are noted by the staff member in a way that maintains the personal confidentiality of the student. Minutes/brief overview on the discussion of programme quality specific issues are included on the agenda of the next Board of Studies meeting, allowing for the sensitivities involved and maintaining confidentiality where necessary and as appropriate.

The Class Representative System

A Class Representative is an enrolled learner elected to assist communication between staff and students in relation to programme matters and academic support and to provide a point of contact for students. At the beginning of each academic year, class representatives for each level of each programme are elected by the class members under the supervision of the relevant PL. There should be at least one Class Representative per stage of a programme. Once elected Class Representatives are trained and supported by Student Services.

Class Representatives sit on various Committees at both School and College level, refer to Chapter 2. They represent the student body ensuring that the College takes into account the needs of students in any decision that is made and ensuring transparency of College processes.

Each School or group of programmes by stage should arrange two formal CRMs a year. These should be arranged to ensure maximum attendance from the Class Representatives and the availability of part-time learners should be considered.

The role of the CRMs is to facilitate communication between students and staff within the School; to facilitate student participation in periodic reviews of the School provision of academic programmes, with a view to improving quality; to provide a forum in which students may raise any concerns they may have about teaching or related matters within the School; to provide feedback on issues addressed; to identify and disseminate examples of good practice; to provide documentary evidence of the participation of students in the quality assurance and development of programmes delivered by the School.
CRMs take place at least twice per academic year. A call for agenda items is issued by the School in advance of the meetings and students are required to feed issues back through their PLs. The agenda for the meeting is posted on the course notice boards and intranet prior to the meeting, and emailed to all attendees.

A short report on current school activities is delivered at the CRM, including new programmes and Programmatic Reviews, and how students can and have engaged with these events, this facilitates student input to school policy decisions. After the meeting the minutes are published in the same manner, with copies sent to all members of the CRM.

Issues raised at the CRM are recorded on the student feedback action template and fed into the School action plan. The minutes are to be considered at the appropriate Board of Studies.

The agenda of the CRMs include these standard agenda items:

- Membership
- Head of Academic Programmes Report
- Student Services update
- Issues invited from each course by year
  - Academic issues
  - Support Issues (library, IT etc.)
  - Other issues
- Positive initiatives / good practice
- Institutional Review, if appropriate
- Programmatic Review
- Any Other Business

Student Surveys/Feedback

Formal student surveys are carried out for all programmes at least once per academic year. The Student Feedback Survey F4.2 is reviewed annually by the School Executive Board.

For each academic programme, the surveys seek to determine students’ perception of the following issues:

- Learners understanding of the material
- Academic delivery and effectiveness of the module teaching strategy
● Module’s relevance and currency
● Organisation and structure
● Resources for the module
● Clarity of assessment strategy
● Effectiveness of class representative system
● Learners own commitment in terms of effort
● Overall satisfaction as measured by a reference score

The aim of these surveys is to assess student satisfaction with individual modules and with the overall programme. Specific issues emerging from student surveys are given serious attention within the School, and the larger issues are communicated to the School Executive Board. The issues identified are also fed into the School Action Plan, on its preparation and review within the School. Every effort is made to address and rectify matters giving cause for student concern or grievance.

The timing and frequency of student surveys differs depending on the nature of the programme. In semesterised programmes the surveys are held once per semester, at approximately week six. Programmes delivered over a full academic year are also surveyed in week six and again in the second semester where appropriate. For Professional School programmes surveys are implemented in week six, with feedback by week nine.

The process for implementation of the student survey is as follows:
(i) The content of the Student Feedback Survey Form is reviewed annually and agreed by the School Executive Board.
(ii) The schedule for implementation is prepared by the Data and Reporting Manager and sent to the Head of Faculty and School Operations to notify academic staff.
(iii) The survey is distributed to students by the appropriate medium, e.g. online or paper
(iv) The completed surveys are available for review by the Head of Faculty and School Operations or PLs to ensure any urgent issues are dealt with quickly.
(v) Programme administrators analyse the surveys and provide both qualitative and quantitative summary reports to the Head of Academic Programmes, Head of Faculty and School Operations and PLs, as appropriate.
(vi) The reports are made available for PLs and MLs to review qualitative comments.
(vii) The Head of Faculty and School Operations or appropriate academic manager discusses the individual specific reports with the appropriate academic staff member within the academic
schools. The programme administrator forwards the reports to the academic staff member within the Professional School.

(viii) Where necessary to resolve the issue, the Head of Faculty and School Operations, managers or PLs meet with the students involved to attempt to resolve any problem identified through the interview process.

(ix) Subsequent feedback is provided to students and staff member concerned, as necessary, to demonstrate and confirm the close-out of actions. The Student Feedback Template T4.3 is used.

(x) A large-scale overview of actions addressing identified issues is provided to the School Executive Board.

(xi) Where module specific issues are identified, lecturers are requested by the Head of Faculty and School Operations or PLs to provide a formal written response, indicating the intended short term and long terms actions that are required to address the issues.

(xii) Formal reports are produced by each PL to document issues raised and actions taken to remedy the issues in the short and long term. These formal reports form part of the Head of Academic Programmes report to the School Executive Board.

4.4 Institutional Review

DBS as a provider of QQI awards is subject to external quality assurance review, normally on a five year cycle. The review is conducted under agreed terms of reference for institutional reviews and will normally incorporate prescribed statutory review functions, particularly those provided for in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. DBS underwent Institutional Review in 2010 under ‘Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training - Terms of Reference: Dublin Business School’.

The current policy: Policy on Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training –2007 is under review and DBS’s next Institutional Review will be conducted under the new QQI polices.

The DBS philosophy is that Institutional Review is a periodic process which reviews but does not replace or substitute for an institutional philosophy of critical self-awareness and a culture of quality and academic enhancement. DBS are informed by the current objectives of Institutional Review from the 2007 policy which are:

- to enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the institution and the standards of the awards made;
● to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by the institution;
● to confirm the extent that the institution has implemented the NFQ and procedures for access, transfer and progression;
● to evaluate the operation and management of delegated authority where it has been granted;
● to provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the institution;
● to contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the institution.

4.5 Programme Review

DBS manages its own process of programme review under agreed Terms of Reference with QQI. The process is managed in accordance with ‘Provider Monitoring Policy and Procedures - HETAC October 2010’.

The objective of a Programmatic Review is to review the development of programmes over the previous five years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality. The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes’ responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria (Section 3 of QQI’s Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010) and relevant awards standards. Programme Review is a peer review process.

The Objectives of Programme Review are to:

- Analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of each validated programme, including detail of learner numbers, retention rates and success rates
- Review the development of the programmes in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments
- Evaluate the response of the provider/school/department to market requirements and educational developments
- Evaluate the feedback mechanisms for learners and the processes for acting on this feedback
- Evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme(s)
- Evaluate the formal links which have been established with industry, business and the wider community in order to maintain the relevance of its programmes
- Evaluate feedback from employers of the programmes’ graduates and from those graduates
- Review any research activities in the field of learning under review and their impact on teaching and learning
● Evaluate projections for the following five years in the programme(s)/field of learning under review
● Make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules; proposals in relation to the discontinuation of programmes and the development of new programmes.

DBS has the opportunity to have other initiatives taken into consideration at review:

● The introduction of a new programme structures
● The revision of credit weightings
● Approval for a new minor award
● Approval of new centres for delivery (Locations, resources, proposed intakes, etc.)
● The addition of new delivery modes

Programmatic review is ultimately a structured self-evaluation undertaken by the School, whereby the school conducts a critical evaluation of its own activities at programme level and produces a self-evaluation report. Programmatic review normally takes place every five years, but may be undertaken more frequently if circumstances require.

4.5.1 Procedures for Programme Review

Programmes are monitored continuously but the process of Programme Review starts with the agreement of Terms of Reference with QQI. This includes agreement of Peer Review Panel membership, a timeline for the review process and the date of the panel visit.

Self-Evaluation Process

The DBS approach to Programmatic Review includes a wide-ranging consultative process, reflection and a series of approval procedures involving all stakeholders. The self-evaluation process is designed to:

● Provide opportunities for reflection on the operation of programme boards and meetings
● Provide opportunities for consultation with learners, employers, staff and external stakeholders
● Contribute to the strategic plan of the provider and strategic management
● Provide information on strengths and weaknesses, in respect of all aspects of programme provision
● Identify the future direction for the programmes/fields of learning and/or the profession under review
● Identify future challenges
● Identify and eliminate inefficiencies and overlaps between programmes
● Include a review of external examiner reports and actions taken on same
● Provide for an analysis of recruitment statistics, attrition rates, pass rates etc.
● Include the review of all programmes and benchmarking these against best practice
● Identify and address resource issues, both physical and human
● Incorporate a review of the operation and effectiveness of current quality assurance procedures.

To ensure that:
● programmes remain relevant to learner needs, including academic and labour market needs
● quality improvements are made to programmes in a timely and effective manner

The self-evaluation process is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Academic Enhancement and appropriate PL. The PL is responsible for progression of the review process and for bringing detailed review proposals forward for approval by the relevant school. The PL chairs meetings of the Programme Team, i.e. all of the lecturers/examiners involved in delivery/assessment of modules under the currently approved structure, to consider the outcomes of the consultative processes described below and over a series of meetings, develop draft proposals for consideration by the various parties involved in the approval process.

The self-evaluation report should include the following:
● A statement of its strategic objectives
● A review and critical analysis of the quality systems and processes which are in place to enable the achievement of its objectives
● The views of teaching staff, past and current learners, administrative staff servicing the programme, views of other staff that have any association with the programme or those involved with/on the programme
● An analysis of its strengths and weaknesses
● The identification of potential opportunities and threats, together with the possible actions to be taken
● An analysis of the success of the programme to date, including access statistics, performance of learners at each stage (including grade profiles and trends), completion rates by stage, graduate performance, etc.
● The identification of resources required for the delivery of its programmes
● A review of reports from programme boards and student feedback forms
● A review of employment/advancement opportunities for learners
● A review of the teaching, assessment and learning strategy of the provider in the relevant field
● A review of the assessment strategies for each programme
● An analysis of all research activity within the unit and future plans in that regard
● A review of its links with employers, industry, professions, the business and wider community
● Detail of programme changes proposed and the rationale for same
● A review of all modules included in the programmes under review
● Proposed Programme Schedules, incorporating the proposed changes.

The resulting Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is reviewed and approved by:

● The School Executive Board
● The Academic Board

Following completion of the internal review and approval process, the responsibility for the co-ordination of the engagement with the external validating body becomes the responsibility of the Director of Academic Affairs supported by the Assessment and Regulations Manager and the QA Officer. The activities include:

● ensuring appropriate programme review documentation has been prepared and gone through the appropriate approval mechanisms
● organising an internal evaluation by a panel of assessors
● liaising with the panel members to arrange the Panel visit
● liaising with validating body

4.5.2 External Programme Review Evaluation for QQI Accredited Programmes

The QA Officer supports the programme team in coordinating the formal evaluation process which is conducted by an independent Peer Review Group (PRG) and is held in DBS. Membership of the PRG
should comprise experts from relevant fields of learning, who are capable of making national and international comparisons with regard to the specific suite of programmes.

At a minimum it should comprise the following:

- Chairperson – experienced in higher education and training; preferably with knowledge of Programmatic Review
- Secretary
- Academics (minimum 2), experts in relevant field of learning
- Representatives from industry/relevant profession
- Learner representative
- QQI representative if appropriate
- A member of a relevant professional body if appropriate and by agreement with QQI

Other factors to be considered include, gender balance and international input, in particular the possibility of an academic from another jurisdiction.

PLs provide nominees for the peer review panel to the QA Officer. These are reviewed and endorsed internally by the Head of Academic Programmes and Director of Academic Affairs and subsequently agreed with the QQI in the Terms of Reference. Each panel member returns a conflict of interest form to the QA Officer to ensure their independence of the evaluation.

The PRG are provided with the following documentation prior to the visit:

- Agreed Terms of Reference
- Programme Self Evaluation Document
- Provider Monitoring Policy and Procedures - HETAC 2010
- Covering letter- including local arrangements maps etc.
- Participating in an Evaluation Panel as an Expert Assessor: Guidelines - HETAC 2009
- Conflict of interest form to be signed and posted
- Expenses Claim Form

The role of the Peer Review Group is to evaluate the extent to which the programme review objectives have been fulfilled in the internal process. The specific responsibilities of the PRG are to:

- Study the self-evaluation report
- Visit the provider and meet with teaching staff, learners (past and present if possible), administrative staff, employers and any other category of internal and external stakeholders
• Clarify and verify details in the SER
• Consider how well the identified aims and objectives of the provider are being met
• Consider programme changes proposed in the context of all other information provided and recommend acceptance or otherwise of the proposals
• Consider the quality assurance arrangements which affect the programmes under review
• Present its findings at the end of the visit
• Prepare a report on the findings of the PRG, to include recommendations for the provider in respect of the suite of programmes under review

On completion of the external evaluation, the panel submits a draft Programmatic Review report to the programme development team for comment. The report should address the quality of the provision and make recommendations for improvement, and/or change, based on a combination of the SER and findings during the site visit and meeting with relevant stakeholders. The report should also make recommendations in respect of the continuing validation of the programme(s) which are the subject of the review:

• Recommendation for approval without conditions
• Recommendation for approval with conditions
• Referral for resubmission

The maximum period of validation and re-approval in line with QQI regulations is usually five years. The Programme Team is given an opportunity to review and comment on the Programmatic Review report, to amend inaccuracies, and to identify and take action where necessary. All internal feedback and intended actions are formally documented by the Programme Team, and communicated to the PRG.

The chair of the PRG then produces a final Programmatic Review report and documents the consensus of the PRG. This report is forwarded to QQI, together with the Programme Team response to the report, the Proposed Programme Schedule (T4.1) and the Programme Document.

QQI may make further recommendations in light of the documentation received from DBS. The Director of Academic Affairs in DBS is responsible for ensuring all required actions are implemented in a timeframe agreed with QQI.

Once approved by the QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC), QQI will send a letter confirming re-validation. This is followed by a Certificate of Programme Accreditation and an
Approved Programme Schedule. These documents are checked by the QA Officer and the accuracy confirmed with QQI.

The following activities are carried out to facilitate effective implementation of the revised programme:

- The Directory of Programme Validation is updated.
- A complete set of definitive documentation is made available internally on the S:Drive.
- The Certificate of Programme Accreditation is held by the QA Officer and an electronic version made available on the S:Drive.

4.6 Programme Review – Non-Framework Courses

The approach to Programmatic Review within the Professional School is governed by the same overarching principles as those applied for the programmes offered within the academic schools. The periodic review of programmes is undertaken to ensure that

a) programmes remain relevant to learner needs, including academic and labour market needs and,
b) quality improvements are made to programmes in a timely and effective manner.

Formal Programmatic Reviews usually take place not less than five years after the commencement of the programme, and are the responsibility of the Head of Academic Enhancement and PL. The approval mechanism for documentation is School Executive Board and the Academic Board. The process undertaken is specific to the individual programme type as follows:

**Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) Diplomas:** DBS has been delegated authority by ICM to design and develop the ICM programmes offered at DBS. All necessary programme modification documentation is prepared within the prescribed ICM format ([http://www.icm.ac.uk/icm-qualifications/professional-courses/](http://www.icm.ac.uk/icm-qualifications/professional-courses/)). Changes to programmes or development of new programmes must be approved by the Education Committee, ICM. Communication with ICM is coordinated through the Professional School.

**Professional Accountancy programmes:** The Professional Accountancy programmes are delivered to appropriate professional body guidelines, using the prescribed academic material. Routine audits are
conducted within the Professional School/DBS by the relevant professional accountancy bodies to ensure on-going compliance with their requirements.

**DBS Diplomas:** In general DBS Diplomas are developed in response to a specific market demand. The maintenance of the programme on the list is linked very specifically to an available market. The content of the programme is reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant lecturer. Where a DBS Diploma is equivalent to a module offered within the relevant academic school, this material is reviewed as part of the linked major award by the appropriate PL.

Programmes which are provided as a leisure or recreational activity and which are not intended to lead to an award are excluded from the College requirements for Programmatic Review [in accordance with Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012].
5 Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018, as requested by Academic Board or by revision of QQI policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This chapter describes the process for designing delivering and approving Consortium Agreements for collaborative national and transnational provision and Joint Awards. As a separate document it has been approved recently by QQI. Note, each case of a collaborative, transnational or joint award agreement will have an additional Consortium Agreement, including a Programme Agreement, incorporating agreed quality assurance procedures for that programme. Those procedures are binding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Preamble

The policies, standards and procedures outlined in this chapter of the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) govern the development, approval, management and delivery of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and Joint Awards.

This chapter is consistent with, and supplements, the policies, standards and procedures that apply to all programmes of study offered by Dublin Business School (hereinafter ‘DBS’ or ‘the College’). It should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the other chapters of the DBS Quality Assurance Handbook. It is also consistent with the policies, standards and procedures outlined in the policy document ‘Policy for collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and Joint Awards’ revised by HETAC in 2012\(^1\). These policies are also informed by the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-

---

\(^1\) Higher Education and Training Awards Council, Ireland (2012). *Policy for collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and Joint Awards*

5.1.2 Definitions

**Collaborative provision** means two or more providers being involved by formal agreement in provision of a programme of higher education and training.

**Transnational education** is the provision or partial provision of a programme of education in one country by a provider which is based in another country.

**A joint award** should be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly also in co-operation with other institutions.

The **provider** is defined in the context of these procedures as ‘a body that, provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training’. A full glossary of terms is included in Annex 5f.

5.1.3 Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles govern all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards involving DBS:

a. DBS will enter into collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards where there is a clear academic or commercial benefit to such arrangements.

b. All collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards equate to the core vision of DBS, which is the achievement of Excellence through Learning.

i. In all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards, DBS will fulfil its statutory obligations and protect its academic standing. DBS has programmes of education validated by HETAC/QQI. DBS has agreed quality assurance procedures with QQI, and remains in good standing with QQI following any institutional review organised by QQI.

ii. All elements of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards must comply with the policies, standards and procedures set out in this section of the QAH which
are informed by the policies, standards and procedures outlined in QQI’s policy for ‘collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards’.2

iii. DBS provides programmes of study that lead to QQI awards. These awards are placed on the NFQ at the appropriate level as set out by programme validation. The learning outcomes of the programmes of study are informed by the appropriate QQI award standards.

c. All collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards must comply with national and international legislative requirements.

d. DBS will only consider collaborative programmes with partners who are found to be of good academic reputation and sound financial standing.

e. All collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards, while operating within the framework of formal and legally binding agreements, shall be based on close working relationships with collaborative partners and accrediting bodies, in an environment of openness, transparency, trust and mutual respect.

f. The interests of the learner will be paramount in all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint award activity.

g. All agreements will have clearly articulated and binding arrangements to ensure adequate provision for the protection of learners.

2 Ibid
5.1.4 Strategic Context

DBS’s stated mission is to help individuals achieve their educational and career goals. The mission and strategy of DBS are based on the following core values:

- Opportunity
- Results
- Support
- Knowledge
- Integrity

The key strategic objectives relate to student experience, staff engagement, programme enhancement, internationalisation, learning environment and contribution to the national development. In association with these strategic objectives, the development of the DBS internationalisation strategy is as outlined by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) ‘Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2010-2015’.

Collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards have been key elements of the development strategy of DBS over the past 20 years. DBS has a long history of collaboration and partnerships with educational institutions, professional, cultural and other bodies both in an Irish and a global context, and seeks to build on this expertise in the interests of students and staff.

As part of its internationalisation strategy, DBS will focus on attracting greater number of international students through:

- The expansion of its strategic institutional partnership network which currently stands at over 100
- The development of offshore educational partnerships
- The continuous development of its international student recruitment and admission process in association with Government and National Agencies which will assist in meeting the international student targets as set out in the National Plan for Internationalisation of Irish Higher Education.

The College provides opportunities for international students to access DBS programmes across all faculties and has developed processes and competencies in recognising the educational systems and curricula of other countries, to ensure international students receive a high-quality education,
promote opportunities to interact with Irish students and provide support services of the highest quality.

The DBS internationalisation strategy sets out to contribute to learners’ cognitive, social and personal development, developing an expression of their personal world view and encouraging beneficial engagement within a diverse community of learners. This is aligned with the DBS employability strategy to develop mobile graduates benefitting from an internationally relevant curriculum.

5.1.5 Scope
This policy covers the development and operation of all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards between DBS and other national and transnational providers of higher education and training programmes whether existing or planned.

In all such arrangements described in this policy DBS will be responsible for the validation arrangements and the quality assurance of the programmes. Where a collaborative arrangement is entered into with another QQI registered provider, quality assurance arrangements will be compatible and clear responsibilities will be laid out in the Consortium Agreement (see Section 5.4. below).

5.1.6 Arrangements Covered

Collaborative Programmes
DBS may enter into one or more of the undernoted collaborative arrangements:

- The delivery of a current validated programme in association with another organisation
- The development of a new programme of learning with another organisation.

Transnational Programmes
DBS may enter into one or more of the undernoted transnational arrangements:

- The delivery of a currently validated programme at an overseas centre
- The delivery of part of a validated programme at an overseas centre
- The development of a programme specifically for delivery at an overseas centre

Joint Awards
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

DBS may enter into the undernoted joint award arrangements:

- The issue of a single joint diploma issued by a group (two or more) of awarding bodies

All programmes provided by DBS, including all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards are delivered and assessed through English.

5.1.7 Governance and Management

Within the Kaplan organisation, DBS is a division of Kaplan UK and Ireland which is headquartered in the UK. The Executive Dean of DBS reports directly to the Chief Executive of Kaplan UK and Ireland. DBS remains a separate and distinct organisation within Kaplan. The senior academic management provide academic leadership and direction and have responsibility for academic management, including coordination of the management and development of the Schools, development and enhancement of academic structures, systems and processes, and coordination of liaison arrangements with accrediting bodies and collaborative partners.

The Academic Board is the Governing Body of the academic affairs of DBS and is ultimately responsible for quality and standards at DBS. The functions of the Board include approval and oversight of academic policies, standards, processes and procedures, ratification of academic regulations, programmes and appointments, and oversight of liaison arrangements with accrediting bodies. The Academic Board has an independent chairperson.

See Figure 1.1 for the academic committee structure from Boards of Studies to Academic Board. See also Chapter 2 of the QAH.

The operational management of the College rests with the Management Team. Membership of the SMG is as set out in Figure 1.2.
5.1.8 Quality Assurance Framework

The quality assurance of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards, and the integrity of academic processes and standards, is based on:

- approved quality assurance policies, standards and procedures
- clearly defined roles, responsibilities and levels of authority for decision making, as set out in the relevant chapters of the QAH
- arrangements for effective monitoring and oversight of programme provision.

Policies, Standards and Procedures

Collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards offered by DBS are subject to the quality assurance policies, standards and procedures that apply to all accredited programmes offered by the Institution, supplemented by the provisions in this chapter of the Handbook.

In addition all of these provisions take into account:

- requirements defined in the HETAC’s ‘Guidelines and criteria for quality assurance procedures’ (2011)³
- The policies, standards and procedures outlined in HETAC’s Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012)
- HETAC ‘Core validation policy and criteria’ 2010

Roles and Responsibilities and Levels of Authority

Compliance with academic policies, standards and procedures is the responsibility of every staff member and is monitored by the Boards of Study, the Schools Executive Board and the Academic Board. Responsibility for admissions lies with the Admissions Committee.

---


Monitoring and Oversight of Programmes

Compliance with policies, standards and procedures is evaluated and supported by having effective arrangements in place for monitoring and oversight of programme provision. General arrangements for on-going monitoring and evaluation of programmes in DBS are outlined in Chapter 4 of the QAH. More specific provisions governing the monitoring and oversight of collaborative, transnational and joint award programmes are included in Section 6 of this Chapter and are amplified in the Consortium Agreement.

5.2 Feasibility Development and Validation Stages

5.2.1 Overview

The development of a collaborative, transnational or joint award programme is a comprehensive process, from initial contact, through the various stages of development, approval, and validation, to ultimate delivery of the programme(s). See Figure 2 for an overview of the process.

5.2.2 Project Initiation

The potential opportunity for any new collaborative, transnational or joint award programme may be identified from within DBS or from an external third party. All potential opportunities are referred in the first instance to the Senior Management Group (SMG). All decisions to proceed with collaborative, transnational and joint award proposals will be taken by the SMG, and approved by the Academic Board. Subject to approval as above, and following agreement from the relevant awarding body (QQI), the proposal proceeds to the next stage, appointment of the Project Team.

Following approval by the SMG and Academic Board and agreement of the awarding body, the SMG appoints a Project Team who will:

- prepare the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- carry out due diligence and prepare a report for the SMG
- draft the Consortium Agreement and Programme Agreement.
The membership of the Project Team will depend on the nature of the proposed arrangement but will normally include the following (or their nominees):

- Head of Academic Programmes
- Executive Dean
- Director of Finance
- Director of Academic Affairs
- Director of Marketing & Admissions.

The MoU is a formal non-binding document setting out the broad parameters of the proposed collaboration between the parties. The MoU will contain a legally binding non-disclosure agreement and will usually provide a brief outline of:

- the shared values and interests of the parties to the MoU
- the purpose and potential benefits of the proposed collaboration
- the nature of the proposed relationship between the parties
- intended collaborative arrangements
- the expected timeframe for development and implementation.

and will identify the proposed strategic benefits associated with the proposed partnership. The MoU is signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or his nominee, on behalf of DBS, and by the nominee of the project partner. A template for a Memorandum of Understanding is set out in Annex 5a.
5.3 Due Diligence

5.3.1 Purpose and Scope
The purpose of due diligence is to establish the basis for a reliable evaluation of the legal, commercial and academic feasibility of the proposed collaboration, of the compatibility of the prospective partners, and of the potential risks and benefits. In addition, the due diligence process is expected to identify any matters which may need to be specifically addressed in the Consortium Agreement.

There are two major aspects to the due diligence process, institutional due diligence and academic due diligence. The institutional due diligence will address legal, financial, commercial, regulatory and general organisational matters, including vision, mission, strategy, corporate governance and capacity. The academic due diligence will focus on academic policies, quality assurance, structures, standards and procedures, on academic governance and management, staffing including quality of staff and resources, and on the programme provision and academic standing of the prospective partner. In the case of proposed transnational provision, the due diligence will be extended to address factors specific to the proposed locations, including relevant environmental and logistical factors.

5.3.2 Due Diligence Process
In order to facilitate rigorous due diligence in an open and timely manner, the College will enter into a legally binding non-disclosure agreement with its potential partner(s), covering all information exchanged and acquired through the due diligence process. Full disclosure will be mandatory.

The Project Team appointed by the SMG will be guided by the checklist included in Annex 5b and will include an evaluation of the potential benefits and risks of the proposed collaboration. A representative(s) of the Project Team will visit the prospective partner institution(s) and meet with key personnel, and will also consult other organisations as required, including relevant regulatory bodies and validating/accrediting agencies. While the process will be rigorous, it will also be conducted in a manner that would facilitate close co-operation and a good working relationship in the event that the collaborative partnership is approved.

In the case of transnational provision the due diligence process will have regard to the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education (2005).
Executive responsibility for the conduct of due diligence enquiries into financial and legal risks will normally lie with the Director of Finance. Executive responsibility for the due diligence enquiries into academic risk will normally lie with the Director of Academic Affairs.

The due diligence process checklist sets out the information that must be received and assessed prior to commencement of any proposed partnership or collaborative provision. All matters set out in the checklist in Annex 5b must be fully addressed.

DBS may require that the prospective partner drafts and submits to DBS a self-assessment report that will commence the due-diligence process. If the prospective partner is a public higher education institution in Ireland, then a recent institutional review report or equivalent documentation, along with peer review reports, accompanying a description of the proposed collaboration, will suffice. The information required in a self-assessment report is outlined in Annex 5c.

In the interests of full disclosure and transparency, and with the aim of facilitating mutual trust, DBS will, as an element of the due diligence process, offer certain documents to a prospective partner organisation on the basis of reciprocity, including:

- A document that sets out the legal standing of the College and its relationship with awarding bodies
- Latest Financial Statement or Annual Accounts
- The College Prospectus
- A copy of the most recent Institutional Review Report
- A copy of DBS’ professional indemnity insurance.

Where there is any change to a partners status or situation that could be material to the original Due Diligence Report, the partner is expected, as part of the full-disclosure arrangements, to up-date their self-assessment document and notify DBS of the change and any anticipated consequence of that change.

5.3.3 Due Diligence Outcomes

At the conclusion of the due diligence process, the Project Team will prepare a comprehensive report. The report will include a detailed review of the due diligence process, of the matters addressed, of the
documentation and people consulted, of any issues arising, and of the findings in each case. The report will also include more general findings about the legal, commercial and academic feasibility of the proposed collaboration, and about the compatibility of the prospective partners, and will put forward a recommendation as to whether or not the collaboration should proceed.

The differing nature and scope of each proposed collaboration will bring different risk factors. Thus, the due diligence process will assess the risk and benefits to DBS that flow from entering into a collaborative relationship, and will carefully review the nature of the relationship that will exist between the provider and DBS following the establishment of a proposed collaboration, and the effect on DBS’s normal operations.

Different levels of risk will relate to transnational provision compared to national provision. Similarly, different levels and types of risk will exist where the proposed partner is a private organisation, as opposed to a public or state body.

The due diligence report is forwarded to the SEB and the SMG for their review and approval.

The SEB reviews the due diligence report for academic viability and the merits of the proposed collaboration and makes its recommendations to the SMG. The SMG reviews the commercial viability and merits of the proposed collaboration and documents its conclusion. The SMG may recommend that the development of the arrangements should be progressed or abandoned or that the parameters of the arrangements should be modified. In this last case, the SMG would instruct the Project Team of what further/additional information is required to enable a final decision.

Where the SMG has recommended that the collaboration should be further developed, the Project Team in conjunction with the proposed partner shall commence preparation of a detailed Consortium Agreement (and the Programme Agreement). Where the SMG has recommended that a proposed collaboration should not be pursued it would normally fall to the CEO or nominee to communicate this decision to the proposed partner.
5.4 Consortium Agreement (and Programme Agreement) and Joint Awarding Agreements

Following a successful outcome of the due diligence process and final approval by the SMG, the Project Team will draw up the Consortium Agreement (incorporating the Programme Agreement) in line with the guidelines on drafting Consortium Agreements as set out in the Appendix of HETACs Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (January 2012).

The Consortium Agreement is the formal legal agreement between the collaborative partners. It provides a legal framework for the proposed collaborative provision and is designed to ensure that obligations and responsibilities are clearly defined, that policies standards and procedures of the awarding body(ies) are complied with, that programme provision and associated services are provided in a streamlined manner, and that the interests of learners are protected. The Consortium Agreement will incorporate, or have appended to it, a Programme Agreement, which will provide relevant information about the programme(s) to be provided under the Consortium Agreement and define the arrangements for quality assurance, delivery and management. A template for the Consortium Agreement is included in Annex 5d and a template for the Programme Agreement is included in Annex 5e.

The Consortium Agreement requires the approval of the Schools Executive Board and the Academic Board after which it is submitted to the relevant awarding body and any other relevant accreditation body(ies) for approval. After approval by the relevant accreditation body(ies), the agreement is signed on behalf of DBS by the CEO or his nominee.

This document will include the following.

5.4.1 General Arrangements

a) Set out the parties (partner providers) to the Agreement including legal names and addresses

b) Set out the rights and obligations of all partner parties and outline the scope of the agreement and the relevant programme(s) and the award(s) that each will lead to

c) Outline the responsibilities of each party

d) Establish the period of the agreement, including terms for review and amendments

e) Outline the financial arrangements, including:

i. the distribution of any income arising from services provided by each of the partner providers;
ii. ensuring that each partner provider can account for income and expenditure involving the consortium;

f) Establish the entity (normally the consortium) that learners can hold legally liable for any deficiencies in the provision of education and training

g) Outline any limitations on liability and provide for mutual indemnification

h) Establish a methodology for the resolution of disputes arising between the parties in respect of the agreement

i) Provide for the termination or suspension of the agreement (setting out the conditions under which this can be done) having regard for learners concerned;

j) Make appropriate arrangements for the protection of learners as stipulated in Section 64 and 65 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and in all cases for residual obligations to learners on termination of the agreement;

k) Name the jurisdiction within which the agreement is enacted and should be interpreted

l) Establish a process for addressing disputes in respect of the agreement including any perceived breaches of the agreement and grievances by learners and involved employees;

m) Ensuring that all legal requirements are met in all of the involved jurisdictions.

5.4.2 Programme Agreement

The Programme Agreement governs the operation of the programme and will include at a minimum the following:

i. Admission requirements

ii. Awards standards

iii. Intended learning outcomes

iv. The awarding body/ies

v. Programme delivery and assessment strategy

vi. Membership and responsibilities of the Programme Management Board

vii. Details of the quality assurance procedures for the collaborative programme (including requirements for the partner providers to cooperate and participate in each other’s quality assurance procedures)

viii. Arrangements and provisions of the relevant awarding bodies regarding the monitoring of the quality and standards of the programme

ix. Detail the responsibilities of the parties regarding the provision of the programme including:

- Access, transfer and progression
Learning supports
Programme delivery and assessment
Recruitment
Learner protection
Intellectual property rights
x. Issue of awards including Diploma Supplements

In all of the above, DBS will ensure that it has maintained an appropriate level of control to exercise its responsibilities.

5.4.3 Transnational Provision

In the case of transnational provision, the Programme Agreement will incorporate 4.1 and 4.2 above and will also comply with Chapter 3 of the HETAC Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012).

5.4.4 Joint Awards

The authority to establish and make awards arising from joint awarding arrangements between DBS and other providers both national and transnational resides with QQI. QQI is therefore a requisite party to the establishment and formal agreement of any new joint award arising from a collaboration involving DBS.

The provisions governing the establishment, operation, quality assurance and termination of a programme leading to a joint award shall, as a rule, be formally established and set out in two separate but complementary agreements: a Joint Awarding Agreement and a Consortium Agreement. The Joint Awarding Agreement will be signed by the awarding bodies and DBS. The Joint Awarding Agreement will include:

- Provider details and locations of delivery
- Award types
- Award standards
- Agreed joint validating processes
- Agreed joint programme review process
- Agreed processes for the QA of the joint award
5.5 Programme Validation

5.5.1 Overview
Development and validation of collaborative, transnational and joint award programmes is governed by the policies and procedures outlined in Chapter 3 of the QAH, supplemented by the provisions outlined in this Chapter. If a programme being proposed for collaborative, transnational or joint award has already been validated by QQI for delivery by DBS on its main campus, the programme documentation will be submitted to QQI, with the MoU and Consortium Agreement. The extent of validation or revalidation will be determined by QQI, as deemed appropriate.

All collaborative programmes must be validated. Existing validation (where, for instance, a pre-existing programme forms the basis for collaborative activity) does not suffice as validation for a collaborative programme. In cases where a validated programme forms the basis for collaborative activity, it must be revalidated in its new context.

5.5.2 Validation of Collaborative, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards
Validation of Collaborative Programmes Leading to Single Awards
For the validation of collaborative programmes leading to single awards within Ireland, Section 2.5 of HETAC’s Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (January 2012) applies. The HETAC document: ‘Core Validation Policy and Criteria (October 2010- Revised 2013) sets out the processes involved.

Validation of Transnational Programmes
Where a transnational programme is proposed, the establishment of quality assurance should involve the relevant national quality assurance agencies both in the provider countries and in each of the receiver countries. QQI will normally seek to establish appropriate agreements concerning external quality procedures (validation/accreditation and quality assurance) with any relevant external quality assurance agencies in the receiver countries.

Where the arrangement is with countries within or recognised within the European Higher Education Area or agencies with which QQI has established a formal legally binding memorandum of understanding may, by agreement, be accepted by QQI as fulfilling its own requirements wholly or partially.
In respect of an application for validation of a transnational collaborative programme that involves Dublin Business School, Section 3.5 of HETAC’s *Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (January 2012)* applies.

**Validation of Joint Awards**

Where there is a proposal for a programme of study leading to joint awards that involves Dublin Business School, a Joint Awarding Agreement between QQI and the relevant awarding institutions and bodies should be in place prior to application of the provider or consortium of providers for validation of the programme leading to the joint award. In respect of any application for the validation of a joint award, Section 4.5 of *Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (January 2012)* applies.

For example:

- where the collaboration, transnational or joint award arrangement involves the provision of an existing validated DBS programme, without any change to the programme or to the arrangements and location for its delivery, the currently validated programme documentation with the MoU and Consortium Agreement / Programme Agreement is submitted to the relevant validation body(ies) for approval.

- If the collaboration, transnational or joint award arrangement involves the provision of an existing validated DBS programme, but with some variations to the programme or to the arrangements and location for its delivery, the submission documentation will reflect these variations with the MoU and Consortium Agreement / Programme Agreement and will be submitted for revalidation, as deemed appropriate by the validation body(ies).

- If the collaboration or transnational arrangement involves the provision of an existing validated DBS programme that requires substantive amendments, new programme documentation will be prepared and submitted for a validation process, along with the MoU and Collaboration Agreement / Programme Agreement.

- If the collaboration or transnational arrangement involves the provision of a new programme, new programme documentation will be prepared and submitted for a validation process, along with the MoU and Collaboration Agreement / Programme Agreement.
In all cases the list of documentation that shall be submitted to the validation body(ies) will consist of the following:

- Consortium Agreement
- Programme Agreement
- Currently validated or Revised Programme Document, or Programme Document that has been subject to a Programmatic Review under DBS QA arrangements and QQI’s Provider Monitoring Policies
- Quality Assurance Handbook
- Proposed Programme Schedule.

### 5.5.3 Organisation

Irrespective of the nature and extent of the validation process, the Head of Faculty and School Operations will nominate a PL to work with the Project Team to bring the programme to the validation stage. Depending on the nature of the collaboration, and the terms of the Programme Agreement, the Project Team may be revised to include representatives from the collaborative partner(s).

The process of preparation and submission of documentation for validation, and the validation process itself, must comply with the policies, standards and procedures outlined in Chapter 3 of the QAH. This means that prior to submission to the accrediting bodies the documentation will go to the Schools Executive Board (SEB) for approval and to Academic Board for ratification. If either of these Boards rejects the proposed programme, the SMG will make a decision as to whether the proposal should be abandoned or revised and resubmitted. Irrespective of the specific circumstances in each case, in all programmes to be delivered with a collaborative partner(s) particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring requirements for admission and assessment are complied with. These requirements are set out in Chapter 6 (Admissions), and Chapter 8 (Assessment of Learners). In addition, the assessment regulations are published on the DBS website and reviewed annually. The admissions requirements are overseen by the DBS Admissions Committee. The role and membership of the Admissions Committee is set out in Chapter 6 of the QAH.
5.5.4 The Learning Environment

The learning environment for all collaborative, transnational and joint award programmes, in terms of resources and staffing will be equivalent to the learning environment for all DBS programmes and the staff will be subject to equivalent quality assurance and performance management processes.

Depending on the circumstances in each case, there will be particular emphasis on ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements in place for:

1. appointment of the Programme Management Board (see Section 6.3)
2. advertising, recruitment and admission of learners
3. assessment of learners, including the appointment of External Examiners, in compliance with DBS regulations and the requirements of validating bodies
4. the staffing and resourcing of programmes in another campus or overseas location
5. management, monitoring and oversight of programmes that will be delivered at another campus or overseas
6. learner access, transfer and progression
7. accommodation of the requirements of collaborative partners while ensuring compliance with DBS policies, standards and procedures.

The Programme Agreement will act as the main source of reference in any collaborative submission to external accrediting agencies and professional bodies. The Agreement will contain a detailed description of the strategy for assessment, aligning assessment instruments with learning outcomes, both at module and programme level. The Programme Agreement will be explicit in detailing arrangements for programme delivery and for the assessment of students, including alternative or additional assessment modes, localised assessment, where relevant, and re-assessment opportunities.

Where off-site delivery is involved this will be stated and the operational arrangements will be fully described. The general approach to teaching, learning and assessment will also be described, particularly the approach to dealing with mixed cohorts of students, such as where there are a significant number of international students on a programme, or where there are DBS students and non-DBS (for example, collaborative partner) students on the same programme. All learners will be subject to agreed programme admissions criteria. Further detail about the Programme Agreement is provided in Section 5.4.2 and Annex 5e.
5.5.5 Validation
Once the collaborative programme, transnational programme or joint award proposals have been subjected to the required internal review processes, and have received the necessary approvals, the programme submission documentation is forwarded to the relevant accreditation body (ies) for validation.

5.6 Process for Management and Monitoring of Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards

5.6.1 Overview
Following approval of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes or joint awards by the relevant accreditation body(ies), the College may proceed with arrangements for recruitment of students and delivery of the programme(s).

5.6.2 Principles
The management, monitoring and review of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes or joint awards must comply with the policies, standards and procedures outlined in Chapter 4 of the QAH and the terms of the Programme Agreement.

In keeping with the foregoing, and recognising that due regard is given to possible variances in the monitoring requirements of different instances of programme delivery, if any, any procedures agreed for the on-going monitoring of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards between DBS and a partner provider shall conform to a number of common principles as undernoted.

5.6.3 Programme Management
Collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards are managed by the Programme Management Board (PMB). The PMB will be appointed by the Head of Faculty and School Operations in conjunction with the Head of Academic Programmes and will be responsible for the management and delivery of the programme under the Consortium and Programme Agreements. The PMB will report to the relevant Board of Study(ies).
The membership will comprise:

- Programme Manager (responsible for managing the Agreement)
- PL (responsible for managing the Programme
- Member of the programme delivery team
- Representatives of the collaborative partner(s) as appropriate.

The PMB is also responsible for periodic reviews of the Consortium Agreement.

5.6.4 Programme Feedback Mechanism

Any procedures established between the partner providers for the on-going monitoring of collaborative, transnational or joint award programmes shall include an appropriate and formal mechanism for gathering feedback on the operation and quality of the programme from learners, graduates and industry representatives, as well as from external examiners. The feedback will include appropriate feedback on academic quality and standards as well as on learning resources and student supports.

5.6.5 Programme Monitoring Report

At agreed intervals the PMB shall prepare a report on the status and operation of the programme.

This report shall comment on:

- Key performance indicators of the programme, including enrolments, learner achievement and graduate destinations.
- Programme feedback sought and received, including mode of capture
- Operational issues arising
- Any other arising circumstances with a significant effect on the operation, quality and standards of the programme.

The report should also contain a record of relevant Programme Board or operational meetings.

A summary of findings shall be notified to the relevant Board of Studies, Schools Executive Board and Academic Board.
5.6.6 Periodic Review of Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Award Programmes

DBS has in place formal mechanisms for the periodic review and monitoring of its programmes and awards. Programmes will normally be revalidated by QQI following recommendations arising from Programmatic Reviews conducted in accordance with agreed quality assurance procedures and applying the validation criteria as set out in HETAC’s *Core Validation Policy and Procedure, October 2010 (revised 2013)*

Periodic review is the process by which all relevant parties aim to satisfy themselves that the collaborative programme, transnational programme or programme leading to joint awards retain a sufficiently high quality academic standard, professional and academic relevance, and alignment with current legislation and awarding/quality assurance body requirements.

Normally, every collaborative programme, transnational programme and programme leading to a joint award shall undergo Programmatic Review at set intervals of no more than five years from the previous validation or review.

The procedures for the periodic review of a collaborative programme, transnational programme or programme leading to a joint award shall include self-evaluation by the consortium of partner providers and independent peer review by a panel of reviewers jointly appointed by all validating bodies, where appropriate, based the procedures set out HETAC’s *Core Validation Policy and Procedure*, and General Programme Validation Manual, July 2010, and further informed by Chapter 3 of the QAH.

5.7 Student Care

5.7.1 Overview

The rights and responsibilities of learners on collaborative programmes, transnational programmes or joint awards must be consistent with the provisions of Chapter 9 of the QAH and learner support services must be equivalent to the services outlined in Chapter 10 of the QAH. Additional considerations that may apply in the case of learners on collaborative programmes, transnational programmes or joint awards are outlined below.
5.7.2 Communication and Consultation
Prospective learners should be clearly communicated to about the nature of the programme for which they are applying, the entry requirements, the identity of the consortium partners, the name of the awarding body(ies), and the programme’s validation status and the award’s recognition status. The DBS Marketing and Admissions department will ensure that such information is provided in all promotional material and that prospective students are fully informed about all of these matters before their applications are processed.

Learners on collaborative, transnational and joint award programmes will have access to the full range of communication and consultation channels that are available to all students in DBS. Specifically these learners will be provided with a student handbook detailing any special arrangements for those programmes, all DBS contact details and normal programme details.

5.7.3 Access, Transfer and Progression
The policies, actions and procedures for access, transfer and progression of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland apply in the case of all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and/or joint awards offered by DBS.

5.7.4 Protection of Learners
All collaborative, transnational and joint award arrangements entered into by DBS will have appropriate PEL arrangements in place. In this regard, Sections 64-67 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012 will apply to all such programmes.

5.7.5 Other Considerations
All details regarding collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards shall be included on the main DBS website. These details will include the identity of awarding bodies, the validation status of the programme, the award type and its placement on relevant frameworks, admission requirements, programme structure, etc.

DBS and its partner provider(s) will ensure that all media presentations about the relevant programmes are factual, fair and accurate.
Support services for learners on collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards will be comparable, insofar as possible, to those provided to learners on programmes based in Ireland.

*There are a number of annexes specific to this chapter which are included in the pages immediately following, instead of as appendices at the end of the overall document.*
Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Dublin Business School

And

xxxxxxxxxx

A Memorandum of Understanding made in Dublin on [date], between Dublin Business School (hereinafter DBS or the College) and ........., of ..........

It is hereby agreed between the parties as follows:-

1. Dublin Business School and ......... agree to collaborate with each other to form a strategic and beneficial relationship to establish educational programmes which may include one or more of the following:

   i. collaborative provision of programme
   ii. curriculum development projects
   iii. joint award programmes
   iv. transnational programmes.

2. It is understood that both parties have legal authority to enter into discussions and reach agreement regarding collaboration in the areas set out above.

3. The College and its potential partners will enter into a legally binding non – disclosure agreement that will cover all information exchanged and acquired through the due diligence process.
4. Following the due diligence, the parties enter into a separate and detailed Consortium Agreement which shall specify the terms and conditions of any collaboration.

5. The parties hereto shall appoint representatives to carry out studies of academic, financial and administrative feasibility of entering into the Consortium Agreement contemplated herein and the parties further provide that each party will be liable for their own costs and expenses during the feasibility study process.

6. It is hereby acknowledged that this Memorandum does not legally bind the parties in any way.

Signed on this day, xxxxx of xxxxx 2012

Signed ................................................................. Chief Executive, Dublin Business School

Signed ................................................................. Chief Executive / President, ......................................
Annex 5b: Due Diligence Checklist

This form is to be completed by a nominee or nominees of Dublin Business School in order that a determination can be made in respect of whether to advance a proposal for a collaborative programme, transnational programme or joint award with a partner Institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reviewed</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Awaiting further information / clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Matters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and development of the potential partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission of the potential partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The educational values and ethos of the potential partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature and extent of its portfolio of provision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student enrolment, progression and retention data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the learning environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching staff, including staff development arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature and extent of its existing relationships or connections with other institutions or bodies and the views these bodies hold of the institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relevant matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The potential partner's standing with national and other regulators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative analysis of the quality assurance environment in the country of the potential partner with the quality assurance environment in Ireland with a view to identifying any potential difficulties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The potential partner's performance in external evaluations including relevant external evaluations conducted by transnational, national regional and professional and regulatory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Awaiting further information / clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility of the quality assurance of the potential partner with the quality assurance procedures of Dublin Business School, including a comparative analysis of the potential partner's quality manual and procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether there are linguistic/cultural issues that might impact on the quality of the programme delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The academic and administrative structures in place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability and use of resources including staff accommodation, computer facilities, laboratories, library facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curriculum currently on offer, including the intended minimum learning outcomes of the programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent of student representation and involvement in the quality assurance process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent of student support services and student complaints and appeals procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relevant matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The legal standing of the potential partner institution, including confirmation that the potential partner is in good public and legal standing in its own jurisdiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether the potential partner(s) may legally enter into a collaborative arrangement to deliver a programme of education and/or training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether there exist any recent or potential legal actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of any formal relationship that the potential partner institution has with another institution through ownership or other commercial relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether there are any legal or statutory requirements extant that could impact on the collaborative arrangement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether there are any differences in the legal standing of learners in the potential partner that could impact on the collaborative arrangement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Awaiting further information / clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Matters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The financial worthiness of the potential partner institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An analysis of the organisation’s balance sheet and published accounts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information from banking authorities and credit control agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability of the potential partner to honour indemnities and guarantees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation that relevant insurance indemnity is in place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent accounts (under the terms of the non-disclosure agreement)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the financial performance generally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An analysis of the local financial environment in the potential partner’s country, particularly in relation to taxation, currency transfer and/or payment issues that might arise due to local regulations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relevant Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transnational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of the location proposed for the branch campus, if relevant; refer, also to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Awaiting further information / clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources including staff accommodation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer facilities, laboratories, library facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local laws and byelaws that apply to the provision of higher education,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including planning laws and regulations and any restrictions on use of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the proposed location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expectations of potential learners for the programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether the proposed award is recognised by regional and state bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the country; where professional accreditation or recognition exists,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the relevant professional body will need to confirm the accreditation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or recognition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of support services for learners comparable to those</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>available to learners in the home campus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A statement on how these arrangements will be established and operated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and their proposed cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of relevant national quality authority, and/or accreditation or licensing body for higher education (or their equivalents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transnational (cont.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A statement on the likely external quality assurance requirements likely to be imposed, and whether there are reciprocal agreements with QQI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whether there is a realistic prospect of the national authority concluding an arrangement with QQI under which the former will accept QQI's quality assurance checks on the potential partner in place of its own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether the programme that leads to a joint award is authorised for that purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 5c: Self-Assessment Report

The Self-Assessment Report will provide information on the undernoted, although the requirements of the report may vary, depending on the nature and function of both the prospective partner and the proposed collaboration:

**Background:**
The prospective partner’s history and development, mission, strategy, ethos and values.

**Range of Activities:**
The nature and extent of its portfolio of provision or of its range of activities, including non-programme-related activities; its mission and strategy in relation to programmes; its student enrolment, progression and retention data, where appropriate; the nature and extent of its existing relationships with other institutions; a list of the partner’s current and past collaborations with other bodies; and, where available, an assessment of each collaboration.

**Regulatory Environment:**
The prospective partner’s standing with national and other regulators, and its performance in external evaluations, including relevant external evaluations conducted by transnational, national, regional and professional and regulatory bodies (external reports will be included as part of the overall report); its quality assurance arrangements, including the quality handbook or manual and the outcomes of recent external and internal QA review reports; specific information on the role of external examiners and other peer reviewers in these arrangements, with particular attention to the mechanisms by which reviewers are appointed; specific information on derogations from the partner’s quality assurance arrangements relating to collaborative provision.

**Awarding Body or Authority:**
The nature of awarding authority held by the partner, if relevant; the nature and standing of that awarding body; the relationship of the partner to any awarding body where relevant; the relationship of the partner to any professional body; specific information on the recognition of any collaborative award by the partner’s awarding body or other issues relating to the specific programme; specific information on the recognition of credit by the partner’s awarding body; a declaration of support from the awarding authority for the collaboration and a declaration that the proposed signatory to the collaboration on behalf of the partner has authority to do so.
Staff:
The profile of the partner’s staff, including detailed information on staff associated with the proposed programme.

Financial Information:
The prospective partner’s recent accounts (under the terms of the non-disclosure agreement); published accounts; information about its financial performance generally. Further information may be gathered from rating and credit control agencies as well as banks and banking authorities.
Annex 5d: Template for Consortium Agreement

This agreement is made on the ..... day of ....... 2012

between: ................................, whose registered office is at .........................

and ...................................., whose registered office is at .........................

and ...................................., whose registered office is at .........................

(Hereinafter referred to individually as ‘the Consortium’ and collectively as ‘the Parties’)

Whereas the Parties wish to cooperate in the matter(s) of............

Whereas this Consortium Agreement sets out the relationship between the Parties and the organisation of the work.

It is hereby agreed as follows:

1. Definitions

1.1 Headings contained in this Consortium Agreement (‘the Agreement’) are for reference purposes only and shall not be deemed to be an indication of the meaning of the clause to which they relate.

1.2 Where the context so implies, words importing the singular number shall include the plural and vice versa and words importing the masculine shall include the feminine and vice versa.

2. Purpose of the Consortium

2.1 The purpose of the Consortium is:

- To specify the organisation of the work between the Parties in carrying out the Agreement and to set out the rights and obligations of the Parties
- Carry out the Agreement

2.2 Entire Agreement
This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties (or otherwise, if appropriate).

3. **Commencement and Duration**

This Agreement shall commence on .......... (the Effective Date) and shall continue until the completion of the Agreement on ..........., or on a date agreed by the Parties.

4. **Overriding Conditions**

In all instances, until the completion of the Agreement, conditions laid down for the Agreement by the QQI or its successor will override any agreement between the Parties concerning the Agreement, including any terms contained in this Agreement.

5. **Agreement Management**

5.1 **Programme Management Board**

The Parties shall establish, within .......... days after the Effective Date, a Programme Management Board, which shall be composed of one or more duly authorised representatives of each Party. After having informed the others in writing, each Party shall have the right to replace its representative(s) and/or to appoint a proxy, although it shall use all reasonable endeavours to maintain the continuity of its representation. The composition of the Programme Management Board is set out in .......... The Programme Management Board shall appoint a Chair from amongst its members. There shall also be a Programme Manager, who shall be Secretary to the Programme Management Board.

5.2 **Responsibilities of the Programme Management Board**

5.2.1 **Agreement Oversight**

The Programme Management Board shall be responsible for the delivery of the outcomes of the Agreement and to this end will keep the Agreement plan, and progress towards meeting it, under review.

5.2.2 **Appointment of Programme Manager**

The Programme Management Board shall be responsible for appointing a Programme Manager. The Programme Manager will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Agreement and will report to the Programme Management Board.
5.2.3 Financial Management
The Programme Management Board shall be responsible for the financial management of the Agreement, and will manage the Agreement in accordance with appropriate management techniques. The Programme Management Board may choose to take advice from third parties as required.

5.2.4 Publications and Press Releases
The Programme Management Board shall decide procedures for dissemination of publications and press releases relating to the Agreement. In all cases due cognisance of the requirements of HETAC will be taken into account.

5.2.5 Exit Strategy
The Programme Management Board shall plan for the future development of the Agreement. The Programme Management Board shall hold two Special Meetings, the first twelve months prior to the end of the Agreement, and the second at the end of the Agreement, whose business shall be exclusively to develop a suitable strategy or strategies for future development of the Agreement or otherwise.

5.2.6 Division of Income
The Programme Management Board will decide the division of income derived from the Outcomes of the Agreement. The sharing of revenue applies to those Parties remaining at the end of the Agreement. If a Party withdraws or is expelled prior to the completion of the Agreement their entitlement to a share in the income derived shall be determined by the Programme Management Board and will take account of the proportion of the total Agreement undertaken by that Party.

5.3 Programme Management Board Meetings
The Programme Management Board shall determine the frequency of its meetings, but shall meet at least twice per calendar year. Additional meetings may be called by one or more Parties or at the request of the Programme Manager. Meetings will operate under the following rules:
5.3.1 At each meeting, the Programme Management Board will agree on a date for the next meeting. Otherwise the Secretary, in consultation with the Chair or his nominee, shall call meetings, giving notice that is reasonable in the circumstances.

5.3.2 The Secretary shall circulate an agenda before the meeting.

5.3.3 Each Programme Management Board member (including the co-opted members, but not the Secretary) will have one vote, except the Chair who has a casting vote. A member may not vote on matters concerning a dispute with the Consortium where the member is the subject of the dispute.

5.3.4 The quorum for a meeting will be ..... voting members.

5.3.5 With the approval of the Chair, Programme Management Board members may nominate a representative to attend meetings and vote on their behalf. This representative is a member of the quorum.

5.3.6 Votes, with the exception of a vote to terminate a Party’s membership of the Consortium, will be decided on the basis of a majority vote of those attending and eligible to vote.

5.4 Responsibilities of the Individual Members of the Programme Management Board
In addition to the Programme Management Board’s collective responsibility, individual members of the Programme Management Board will have specific responsibilities as determined by the Programme Management Board from time to time.

6. Agreement in respect of Resources
6.1 Allocation
The total funding to be paid, subject to progress against Agreement milestones is as follows:

   Financial Year 1 €xxxx
   Financial Year 2 €xxxx
   Financial Year 3 €xxxx
   Financial Year 4 €xxxx
6.2 Distribution
Dublin Business School shall apportion the budget between the Parties on the basis of financial plans approved from time to time by the Programme Management Board.

6.3 Invoicing/Claims
Where claimable costs and expenses (that is, approved by the Programme Manager or Programme Management Board) are incurred, claims are passed to the Programme Manager as soon as they have been paid with supporting evidence of the expenditure attached. The Programme Manager will be required to make financial reports to the Programme Management Board from time to time.

7. Responsibilities of the Parties
7.1 Performance
7.1.1 Each Party undertakes to each other Party to perform and fulfill on time the tasks assigned to it by the Programme Management Board and all other of its obligations under this Agreement.

7.1.2 Each Party hereby undertakes to supply promptly to the Programme Manager all such information or documents as the Programme Manager and/or the Programme Management Board need to fulfill obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

7.1.3 Each Party undertakes to notify each of the other Parties as a Party becomes aware of any significant delay in performance.

7.1.4 Each Party undertakes to inform other Parties of relevant communications it receives from third parties in relation to the Agreement.

7.1.5 Each Party shall use all best efforts to ensure the accuracy of any information or materials it supplies hereunder and promptly to correct any error therein of which it is notified.

7.1.6 Each Party agrees not to issue any press releases or other such publicity materials relating to the work of the Consortium without obtaining prior approval from the other Parties, and, as in 6.2.4 (above), in all cases due cognisance of the requirements of HETAC will be taken into account.

7.2 Warranties and Undertakings
7.2.1 Each Party warrants that under its contractual relationships with each of its Personnel, any Intellectual Property Rights arising out of or relating to work done by the Personnel for the Party will vest in such Party and that the Personnel will have no right, title or interest, whether legal or beneficial, in any such Intellectual Property Rights. A Party shall, if so required by the Programme Management Board, produce written evidence of this to the Programme Management Board signed by its Personnel.

7.2.2 Each Party acknowledges that it is and shall remain liable for the consequences of any failure on its part or on the part of its Personnel to fulfill the tasks and work assigned to it under this Agreement and shall accordingly:

(i) Procure and maintain its own insurance, with insurers of good repute, to cover its own liabilities and those on behalf of its Personnel.
(ii) Keep true and accurate records of all things done by its Personnel in relation to the tasks assigned to it under this Agreement.
(iii) Comply and assist the Consortium, the Programme Management Board and the Programme Manager in complying with all relevant statutes, laws, regulations and codes of practice relating to its tasks and work packages from time to time in force.
(iv) Comply with all recommendations and requirements of its insurers.
(v) Indemnify, keep indemnified and hold harmless the other Parties from and against all costs (including the costs of enforcement), expenses, liabilities, injuries, direct, indirect or consequential loss (all three of which terms include, without limitation, pure economic loss, loss of profits, loss of business, depletion of goodwill and like loss), damages, claims, demands, proceedings or legal costs (on a full indemnity basis) and judgments which they incur or suffer as a result of a breach of this Agreement or negligent acts or omissions or willful misconduct of the Party and/or its Personnel including without limitation any resulting liability the Consortium has to any third party.

7.2.3 Each Party shall be responsible for providing all appropriate facilities and services as shall be necessary in the proper performance of the tasks, which will be entirely at the Party’s own expense.
7.2.4 Each Party agrees and undertakes at its own expense to make the Personnel available to attend a working group meeting with the Programme Manager to review progress at such times and locations as the Programme Management Board shall reasonably specify.

7.2.5 Each Party shall provide the Programme Management Board with:

(i) Quarterly statements of expenditure incurred in relation to the provision of the tasks and work packages assigned to it, together with copies of staff timesheets, invoices and other relevant documentation for audit purposes.

(ii) A declaration that confirms that expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

(iii) A final statement of expenditure within 4 weeks of the termination of this Agreement.

8. Addition of Parties to the Consortium

Institutions may be invited to join the Consortium only by the unanimous decision of the Programme Management Board Group and on the condition that the new institution becomes a party to this Agreement.

9. Removal or Withdrawal of Parties from the Consortium

9.1 Removal of Parties

Without prejudice to any other rights or remedies open to the Consortium, the Programme Management Board may, after a two-thirds majority vote of the full Programme Management Board in favour of termination, and via a written notice served on the Party, terminate a Party’s membership of the Consortium, if the Party:

9.1.1 Is in material breach of any of the terms of this Agreement and, where the breach is capable of remedy, the Party fails to remedy such breach within 30 days’ service of a written notice specifying the breach and requiring it to be remedied or

9.1.2 In the opinion of a majority of the Programme Management Board, is incompetent, commits any act of gross or persistent misconduct and/or neglects or omits to perform any of its duties or obligations under this Agreement or
9.1.3 Fails or refuses after written warning from the Programme Management Board to carry out
the duties or obligations reasonably and properly required of it under this Agreement or

9.1.4 Being a company, summon a meeting of its creditors, makes a proposal for a voluntary
arrangement, becomes subject to any voluntary arrangement, is unable to pay its debts within
the meaning of the Company Law Enforcement Act 2001, has a receiver, or administrative
receiver appointed over any of its assets, undertaking or income, has passed a resolution for
its winding-up (save for the purpose of a voluntary reconstruction or amalgamation), is subject
to a petition presented to any court for its winding-up (save for the purpose of a voluntary
reconstruction or amalgamation), has a provisional liquidator appointed, has a proposal made
for a scheme of arrangement under the Company Law Enforcement Act 2001, has an
administrator appointed in respect of it or is the subject of an application for administration
filed at any court or a notice of appointment of an administrator filed at any court or a notice
of intention to appoint an administrator given by any person or is the subject of a notice to
strike off the Register of Companies.

9.1.5 Ceases to operate its business or undertaking

9.1.6 Provides the Programme Management Board with any false or misleading information with
regard to its ability to perform its duties or obligations under this Agreement or

9.1.7 Has done anything which brings or might reasonably be expected to bring the Parties or the
Agreement or the QQI into disrepute or otherwise damage other contractors, employees,
agents, customers, other business associates or the general public including, but not limited
to, committing an act of fraud or dishonesty, whether or not connected with the Agreement.

9.2 Withdrawal of Parties
A Party may withdraw from the Consortium only with the unanimous agreement of the remaining
Parties.

9.3 Conditions Consequent on Removal or Withdrawal
In the event of withdrawal or expulsion of a Party, the Consortium will be liable to meet only the cost
of any work undertaken up to the point at which a Party ceases to be a member of the Consortium.
The balance of any payments made to the Party will be returned to the nominated representative of
DBS within 30 days of withdrawal or expulsion. In all cases, the Consortium reserves the right of access to any work produced in the course of the Party’s work as part of the Consortium.

9.3.1 Revised Consortium Agreement

In the event of withdrawal or removal of a Party, the remaining Parties to the Consortium will agree a revised Consortium Agreement that sets out the variances resulting from the modification of the Parties to the Consortium.

10. Data Management

10.1 Data Collection

In the course of the Agreement, each Party is involved in the production and collection of data. The data are to be sent to the Programme Manager and stored in an archive at DBS. Each Party agrees to ensure that all data submitted to the Programme Manager are accompanied by documentation detailing the origin of the data, together with any necessary consents.

10.2 Data Maintenance

DBS hereby undertakes to maintain the data in Archive for the duration of the Agreement and for a period of at least three (3) years after the end of the Agreement. This period is subject to extension if the Programme Management Board so decides.

10.3 Data Protection

As a member of the Consortium, each Party will be processing personal data for the purpose of the Agreement, and must sign a Data Processing Agreement with DBS, prior to processing personal data for the purposes of the Agreement.

11. Confidentiality

Each Party hereby undertakes to the other Parties that it shall procure that its employees, agents and subcontractors shall:

11.1 Keep confidential all information of a confidential nature (whether written or oral) concerning this Agreement and the business affairs of another Party that it shall have obtained or received as a result of the discussions leading up to or entering into or performance of this agreement.
11.2 Not without the prior written consent of the relevant other Party disclose the Information either in whole or in part to any other person save those of its employees, agents and subcontractors involved in the implementation or evaluation of the Agreement who have a need to know the same for the performance of their duties.

11.3 Use the Information solely in connection with the implementation of the Agreement and not otherwise for its own benefit or the benefit of any third party.

11.4 These provisions above shall not apply to the whole or any part of the Information to the extent that it can be shown by the receiving Party to be:

(i) Known to the receiving Party prior to the date of this Agreement and not obtained directly or indirectly from any other party, or

(ii) Obtained from a third party who lawfully possesses such Information which has not been obtained in breach of a duty of confidence owed to any party by any person, or

(iii) In the public domain in the form in which it is possessed by any other party other than as a result of a breach of a duty of confidence owed to such other party by any person, or

(iv) Required to be disclosed by legal process, law or regulatory authority.

11.5 Each Party hereby undertakes to the other Parties to make all relevant employees, agents and subcontractors aware of the confidentiality of the Information and provisions of this clause and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing to ensure compliance by such employees, agents and subcontractors with the provisions of this clause.

12. Intellectual Property

12.1 Intellectual Property Rights Warranties

Each Party shall obtain the necessary assignments of Intellectual Property Rights or licences from all staff, agents, or subcontractors involved in the development and production of the Outcomes on its behalf. Each Party warrants to the other Parties that it is the owner of the Intellectual Property Rights in the Outcomes, or that it is duly licensed to use the Outcomes, and that the use of the content of the Outcomes as contemplated in this Agreement does not infringe any Intellectual Property Rights or other proprietary or rights of any natural or legal person.

12.2 Background IPR
All Background IPR used in connection with this Agreement shall remain the property of the Party introducing the same or any other third parties. Each Party shall take responsibility for ensuring that all necessary permissions have been sought to use Background IPR.

12.3 Foreground Rights
All Foreground IPR arising from this Agreement shall belong to the Party generating the same.

12.4 Accuracy
Each Party shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy of any information or materials that it supplies to the other Parties under this clause and shall promptly correct any error therein of which it is notified. The donating Party will provide no warranties to recipient Parties in respect of the information and materials, and the recipient Parties shall be entirely responsible for the use to which they put such information and materials.

12.5 Access Rights
12.5.1 Each Party hereby grants to the other a royalty-free, non-exclusive, worldwide, irrevocable, assignable, perpetual licence to use its (and third parties) Background IPR and Foreground IPR for the purpose of performing their part of the Agreement.

12.5.2 Each Party hereby indemnifies the other Parties against any liabilities, loss, claims or expenses brought against or incurred as a result of its use of and/or sale of products containing the other Parties’ Background IPR and/or Foreground IPR.

12.5.3 After completion of the Agreement all Parties shall continue to have the right to use their Foreground IPR at no cost for the purposes of exploiting the materials in the carrying out of their usual educational activities.

12.5.4 Use of Background IPR and/or Foreground IPR by third parties other than Parties, and by educational institutions for commercial purposes, shall be at the discretion of the Parties owning such Background IPR and/or Foreground IPR.

12.5.5 Each Party hereby grants to the Lead Institution a royalty-free, non-exclusive, worldwide, irrevocable, assignable, perpetual licence to use all Background IPR and Foreground IPR of the Parties for the purpose of performing its obligations under Clause 2 and in order to licence to
[insert name of the funding body] the rights as set out in the [insert reference to the funding body agreement].

12.6 Funding Agreements
The provisions of this clause shall at all times be subject to any conflicting provisions in the funding letter, and in the event of any conflict, the content of the funding letter shall prevail.

13. Termination
13.1 Termination of Funding (where relevant)
This Agreement shall terminate immediately with no liability between the Parties should the Funding Agreement terminate for any reason whatsoever, unless the Parties, by means of written agreement, decide to continue it.

13.2 Termination by Mutual Agreement
This Agreement may be terminated at any time by the unanimous written agreement of the Parties.

13.3 Rights of Parties
The termination of this Agreement, howsoever arising, is without prejudice to the rights, duties and liabilities of the Parties accrued due prior to termination. The provisions in this Agreement which expressly or impliedly have effect after termination shall continue to be enforceable notwithstanding termination.

14. Governing Law and Dispute Resolution
14.1 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Irish law and the parties irrevocably agree that any dispute arising out of or in connection with this Agreement will be subject to and within the jurisdiction of the Irish courts.

14.2 The Parties agree to use best efforts to resolve disputes in an informal manner. Where the Parties agree that a dispute arising out or in connection with this Agreement would best be resolved by the decision of an expert, they will agree upon the nature of the expert required and together appoint a suitable expert by agreement.

14.3 Any person to whom a reference is made under Clause 15.2 shall act as expert and not as an arbitrator and his decision (which shall be given by him in writing and shall state the reasons
for his decision) shall be final and binding on the Parties except in the case of manifest error or fraud.

14.4 Each Party shall provide the expert with such information and documentation as he may reasonably require for the purposes of his decision.

14.5 The costs of the expert shall be borne by the Parties in such proportions as the expert may determine to be fair and reasonable in all circumstances or, if no determination is made by the expert, by the Parties in equal proportions.

15. General Provisions

15.1 Sole Agreement
Subject to Clause 5 (above) this Agreement contains all the terms that the Parties have agreed in relation to the subject matter of this Agreement and supersedes any prior written or oral agreements, representations or understandings between the Parties relating to such subject matters. No Party to this Agreement has been induced to enter into this Agreement by a statement or promise which it does not contain save that this clause shall not exclude any liability which one Party would otherwise have to the other in respect of any statements made fraudulently by that Party.

15.2 Appendices
The Appendices shall have the same force and effect as if expressly set in the body of this Agreement and any reference to this Agreement shall include the Appendices.

15.3 Waiver
No failure or delay by any Party to exercise any right, power or remedy will operate as a waiver of it nor will any partial exercise preclude any further exercise of the same, or of some other right, power or remedy.

15.4 Severability
If any clause or part of this Agreement is found by any court, tribunal, administrative body or authority of competent jurisdiction to be illegal, invalid or unenforceable then that provision shall, to the extent required, be severed from this Agreement and shall be ineffective without, as far as is possible, modifying any other clause or part of this Agreement and this shall not affect any other provisions of this Agreement, which shall remain in full force and effect.
15.5 Force Majeure

No Party will be deemed to be in breach of this Agreement, nor otherwise liable to the other for any failure or delay in performance of this Agreement if it is due to any event beyond its reasonable control other than strike, lock-out or industrial disputes but including, without limitation, acts of God, war, fire, flood, tempest and national emergencies and a Party so delayed shall be entitled to a reasonable extension of time for performing such obligations.

15.6 Assignment

Save as permitted for under this Agreement, neither this Agreement nor any of the rights and obligations under it may be subcontracted or assigned by any Party without obtaining the prior written consent of the other Parties. In any permitted assignment, the assignor shall procure and ensure that the assignee shall assume all rights and obligations of the assignor under this Agreement and agrees to be bound to all the terms of this Agreement.

15.7 Variation

This Agreement may be amended at any time by written agreement of the Parties. No variation to this Agreement shall be effective unless in writing signed by a duly authorised officer of each of the written Parties. Any variation during the term of the Agreement shall be subject to the approval of the Funder.

15.8 Notice

Any notice in connection with this Agreement shall be in writing and may be delivered by hand, pre-paid first class post, Special Delivery post, or facsimile (but not by email), addressed to the recipient at its registered office or its address or facsimile number as the case may be (or such other address, or facsimile number as may be notified in writing from time to time).

- The notice shall be deemed to have been delivered by hand, when left at the proper address for service
- If given or made by pre-paid first class post or Registered Post, 48 hours after being posted or in the case of Airmail 14 days after being posted (excluding days other than Business Days)
- If given or made by facsimile, at the time of transmission, provided that a confirming copy is sent by pre-paid first class post to the other party within 24 hours after transmission provided that, where in the case of delivery by hand or transmission by facsimile, such delivery or transmission occurs either after 4.00 pm on a Business Day, or on a day other than a Business
Day, service shall be deemed to occur at 9.00 am on the next following Business Day (such times being local time at the address of the recipient).

### Table 1: Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background IPR</strong></td>
<td>Means all patents, designs, copyright (including copyright in software), database rights, and any other Intellectual Property Rights excluding Foreground IPR, owned by any of the Parties, in the field and which are necessary for the exploitation of Foreground IPR in accordance with this Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Day</strong></td>
<td>Any day other than a Saturday or Sunday or a public or bank holiday in the Republic of Ireland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidential Information</strong></td>
<td>Means all information that is marked as Confidential and that is disclosed by one Party to the others for the purpose of conducting the Agreement, including, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, any ideas; finance; financial, marketing, development or manpower plans; computer systems and software; products or services, including but not limited to know-how and information concerning relationships with other parties and all records, reports, documents, papers and other materials whatsoever originated pursuant to this Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consortium</strong></td>
<td>The Parties collectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective Date</strong></td>
<td>The date when all Parties have signed this Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreground IPR</strong></td>
<td>Means all patents, designs, copyright (including copyright in software), database rights and any other Intellectual Property Rights arising as a direct result of and in the performance of this Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Property Rights</strong></td>
<td>Patents, Trade Marks, trade names, design rights, copyright (including rights in computer software and moral rights), database rights, rights in know-how and other Intellectual Property Rights, in each case whether registered or unregistered and including applications for the grant of any of the foregoing and all rights or forms of protection having equivalent or similar effect to any of the foregoing which may subsist anywhere in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Management Board</strong></td>
<td>The group of persons established to manage the Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td>Any employee, director, agent, subcontractor or other person engaged by a Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Manager</strong></td>
<td>The Programme Manager will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Agreement and will report to the Programme Management Board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annex 5e: Programme Agreement**

1. The Programme Agreement is intended to act as the main source of reference in any collaborative, transnational or joint award submission to external accrediting agencies and professional bodies.
Thus, this agreement will reference all the relevant agreement documents and will set out any arrangements that arise specifically as a result of the collaborative nature of the provision.

2. The Programme Agreement shall be a comprehensive document that consists of clear, transparent and detailed information for partners, learners and accreditation agencies on each of the following:
   - An introduction setting out the aims of the Programme Agreement
   - The name(s) and status of the Awarding Body or Bodies
   - Overall structure of the programme
   - Possible awards that can be attained by learners, and whether these awards are placed on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications
   - Academic and other regulations governing the awards
   - Resource implications, including ongoing oversight of relevant resources
   - Programme management
   - Learning aims and objectives; content of curricula and assessment criteria.

3. The Programme Agreement will be constructed in order to address the principles of the specific collaborative provision set out in the Collaborative Agreement, such as:
   - Resource requirements for locations with the College’s existing locations, such as physical and personnel requirements, and the management of these resources.
   - The obligation on the parties to the Agreement to establish quality assurance procedures for the collaborative programme, as well as specific quality assurance procedures governing the management and delivery of the proposed programme across different locations, e.g. staff selection, scheduling, learner resources, support for learners, assessment.
   - Special arrangements for complaints and/or appeals
   - The obligation on the parties to the Agreement to participate in any review, accreditation or validation process required by the relevant awarding body (ies), and to achieve the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).  

---

4. Where a number of differences are proposed in respect of the programme, such as in assessment modes or modules containing local or jurisdictional instruction, these differences would be addressed through either a new programme document or a differential submission document. The particular submission would be dependent upon the extent of the proposed changes required to address the differences.

5. In determining other issues for inclusion in the programme agreement, DBS shall be guided by its own Quality Assurances policies and procedures and informed by the guidelines in HETAC’s Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (Revised 2012), Assessment and Standards 2009, General Programme Validation Manual 2010, Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2010 and the Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures 2011.
Annex 5f: Glossary of Terms

**Academic Board**
The Academic Board has responsibility for academic quality and standards and is the Governing Body of the academic affairs of DBS.

**Access**
The process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence required.\(^6\)

**Admissions Committee**
The Admissions Committee has responsibility for reviewing admission standards, processes and procedures; for considering any/all amendments or modifications and for academic oversight of the administration of the admissions system. The Admissions Committee is a sub-Committee of the Schools Executive Board.

**Board of Studies**
Each Academic School operates with a Board of Study which is the main forum for routine programme monitoring and review within the School. The academic function of the school, such as teaching, design of new programmes, curriculum development and assessment is supported by the Board of Studies.

**Branch campus**
A campus of DBS established at a location other than in the main campus and wholly managed by DBS to enable the design of programmes leading to QQI awards.

**Collaborative provision**
Collaborative provision means two or more providers being involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

\(^6\) *Policies, actions and procedures for access, transfer and progression for learners*, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Dublin, 2003
Consortium
A Consortium is a group of two or more providers that enter into a collaborative agreement to provide a programme or programmes of higher education and training. QQI refers to members of a consortium as ‘partner-providers’. At least one of the participating bodies must be a registered provider if the programme of education is to lead to a QQI award.

Consortium Agreement
The Consortium Agreement is the formal legal agreement between the collaborative partners. HETAC’s Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012) Section 6.1 sets out the guidelines for a consortium agreement. The agreement is formal and legally binding, and must be approved by QQI prior to the commencement of a collaborative programme.

QQI registered provider
A QQI Registered Provider is a body that provides, organises or procures programmes of higher education and training that has had one or more such programmes validated by QQI, that has agreed quality assurance procedures with QQI, and that remains in good standing with QQI following any institutional review organised by QQI.

Joint Award
A higher education qualification issued jointly by two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly also in cooperation with other institutions.7

Joint Awarding Agreement
The formal agreement or memorandum between two or more awarding bodies setting out the terms under which they agree to jointly validate a programme of higher education and training that leads to a joint award.

---

7 Based on the definition adopted (9 June 2004) by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region
Partner Provider
In the context of this document a ‘partner provider’ is any institution participating in a consortium that delivers a programme under QQI’s auspices (that is, directly validated by QQI or validated on behalf of QQI by an institution to which QQI has delegated the necessary authority).

Project Team
The team appointed by the SMG to bring the agreement through the various processes involved in setting up a collaborative, transnational or joint award programme. It is headed by the Project Leader.

Programme Management Board
The Board established to manage the Consortium Agreement. It will have responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the management and delivery of the programme(s) provided under the terms of the Consortium Agreement. The Programme Management Board will hold regular meetings and will monitor all aspects of programme provision incorporating the Programme Agreement. The Programme Management Board reports to the relevant Board of Study.

Programme Team
The team involved in the delivery of a programme, led by a PL.

Programme Agreement
A formal agreement that governs the operation of a programme of education and training. It will include the detailed programme description that forms the basis for the validation of the programme.

Programme Leader
The academic manager of a programme. The PL is responsible for the overall management and development of the relevant programme and the management and support of students on that programme. In the case of collaborative, transnational and joint awards, the PL will be a member of the Programme Management Board.

Schools Executive Board
The role of the DBS Schools Executive Board (SEB) is to ensure effective coordination of all aspects of academic management and operations throughout DBS.

Senior Management Group

---

8 General Programme Validation Manual, Higher Education and Training Awards Council, 2010
The Senior Management Group (SMG) is the senior executive group in the College with overall responsibility for academic and commercial aspects of the institution.

**Service provider**
A body, including a higher education institution that provides services to support the provision of a programme. These might include premises, reprographics and other services but not tuition, learning support or quality assurance.

**Transnational provision**
The provision or partial provision of a programme of education in one country, state or jurisdiction by a provider which is based in another country.

**Validation**
The process by which an awarding body shall satisfy itself that a learner may attain knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award made by that awarding body.
6 Policies and Procedures Governing Admission to Academic Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Policies and Procedures Governing Admission to Academic Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018 or as requested by Academic Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This chapter considers all polices relating to Admissions of Learners including procedures for the recognition of prior learning and procedures governing recruitment and marketing materials. All programmes have specified entry requirements agreed at validation and recorded in the Approved Programme Handbook. These requirements are binding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Introduction

DBS welcomes all applicants and operates a fair and transparent admissions process in accordance with the Equal Status Act 2000 as amended by the Equality Act 2004. Applicants are selected on the basis of merit, ability and potential. The admissions procedures ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all applicants without exception.

DBS implements the NFQ and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression, as determined by QQI (formerly National Qualifications Authority of Ireland).

The Admissions Procedures cover all elements of admission including all activities to attract, select, admit and register learners to DBS programmes. The fair and consistent implementation of these policies and procedures is the responsibility of the Director of Marketing ad Admissions, overseen by the Admissions Committee.
6.2 Admissions Policy

The DBS admissions policy supports the philosophy that admission is focused on the outcome of the programme – the achievement of the award by the learner. All applicants who can demonstrate that they have attained a basis for successful participation should be eligible to enter a programme.

DBS is committed to:

- fair and equal treatment of all applicants
- reducing barriers to access or progression
- fair, transparent, timely, and appropriate admissions procedures, implemented consistently
- supporting access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners to facilitate educational opportunity
- a policy that accommodates a variety of access and entry arrangements
- timely notification of the outcome of an application
- supporting applicants with disabilities or special needs as set out in the Disability Policy
- responsible marketing of its courses, with accurate, reliable, transparent and complete Learner information.

Admission to DBS is governed by the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 to promote and facilitate access, transfer and progression.

Access: access is gaining entry to and participation in education and training institutions or programmes.

Transfer: the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.

Progression: the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another where each programme is of a higher academic level than the preceding programme.

6.2.1 Quality Assurance

The quality of the admissions policy and procedures is assured by the Admissions Committee which reports to the School Executive Board. The Admissions Committee also issues a report annually to the Academic Board.
6.2.2 Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee has responsibility for reviewing admission standards, processes and procedures; for considering any/all amendments or modifications and for academic oversight of the administration of the admissions system.

6.2.2.1 Terms of Reference

The Admissions Committee is a sub-Committee of the Schools Executive Board with the following responsibilities in relation to the admission of learners to DBS:

- advising the Schools Executive Board and the Academic Board on matters related to the admission of learners to undergraduate, post-graduate, professional and other courses.
- monitoring and developing, as appropriate, the College’s admissions policy in relation to selection procedure.
- monitoring the College’s advanced stage admissions and transfer policy and developing methods for otherwise facilitating learners from other institutions transferring onto undergraduate and post-graduate programmes at DBS, having regard to their academic standards and the maintenance of quality.
- evaluating new or alternative qualifications as a basis for determining admission to DBS, while having regard to the College’s admissions policy and the standards and procedures in other institutions, while supporting the access, transfer and progression procedures as defined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.
- monitoring the College’s admissions system and preparing such reports as may be considered appropriate or as requested by the Schools Executive Board in relation to its operations having regard to procedures in the other institutions, changes in the CAO system, requirements of accreditation/validation agencies, and/or other relevant developments.
- carrying out such other functions as may be considered appropriate, subject to the approval of the Schools Executive Board

The Admissions Committee will provide three Admissions Reports, one each in March and November comprising the admissions data to the School Executive Board (SEB) and an annual report to the SEB and the Academic Board to provide confidence that the admissions process is working effectively and all entrance criteria are properly adhered to and standards are being maintained.
6.2.2.2 Membership

Membership of the Admissions Committee is documented in chapter 2 of the QAH.

6.2.2.3 Monitoring and Reporting

As part of the academic governance all quality assurance policies and procedures are routinely monitored for effectiveness. This role is undertaken by the Registrar supported by the Admissions Committee. The Director of Marketing and Admissions prepares an Admissions Report at the end of each admissions cycle. The report presents an overview of the admissions process and provides a statistical summary and analysis of admissions.

The report provides separate analysis of admissions, standard and non-standard, admissions with advanced standing, procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning and admission of mature learners. A detailed listing of learners in each of these categories is attached in separate appendices. The report is presented initially for review by the Admissions Committee and is then forwarded to the School Executive Board for approval and ultimately to the Academic Board.

Any issues identified or recommendations made are considered by the relevant department and overseen by the Admissions committee.

6.3 Admission Procedures

The admissions procedures in DBS fall under the remit of the Director of Marketing and Admissions.

The Director of Academic Affairs is Chair of the Admissions Committee, which provides academic oversight and review of the admissions procedures and processes.

6.3.1 Admissions Department

The Admissions Department incorporates all domestic and international admissions and is overseen by the Director of Marketing and Admissions.

The role of the Admissions Department is to manage the admissions process, to ensure that all applications are properly assessed and in accordance with the admissions procedures. The Admissions Department hold all relevant admissions data and are responsible for supplying current and accurate information regarding admissions and policies or legislation relevant to the admissions process.
6.3.2 Admissions Tutors
Admissions tutors are academic staff, with authority to evaluate applications for the purposes of admitting candidates to academic programmes. Admissions Tutor’s training is overseen by the Admissions Committee. Admission Tutors are required to ensure they are up to date with all DBS processes and procedures regarding admissions.

6.3.3 Director of Academic Affairs
The Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for assuring the Academic Board that all learners admitted to DBS are admitted in accordance with DBS admissions procedures and that all have attained the required standard for entry to their programmes. This is achieved by monitoring the process, making recommendations to the Admissions Committee and preparing an Annual Report to the Academic Board.

6.4 Entry Requirements

6.4.1 Programme Entry Requirements
The entry requirements for admission to an academic programme are set out and agreed at validation. The requirements define a minimum admission standard and also a standard for English Language where applicable. See section 6.4.4.

6.4.2 Standard Entry Requirements
Applicants presenting standard entry requirements include:

- All applicants who achieve the minimum entry requirements as set out at validation.
- Applicants who satisfy the minimum admission requirements by virtue of having achieved the required level of performance in a second-level qualification such as the Leaving Certificate or QQI (FETAC) qualifications in Ireland, A-level equivalent in the UK, or other European equivalent qualification which has been approved as meeting the minimum entry requirements for the relevant programme and is listed in the Institutes of Technology Central Evaluation Forum (IOTCEF) document, such as the French Baccalaureate or the Abitur from Germany (Appendix 6.1).
- Applicants who have qualifications that have been assessed for entry and formally approved as meeting the minimum entry requirements for the relevant programme by the Admissions Committee and listed in the Standard Entry Requirements Handbook (Appendix 6.2).
All applicants with standard entry requirements are processed and approved for admission by the Admissions Department. A standard admissions decision is defined by the Admissions Committee as a decision that can be made by the admissions team without reference to the School.

6.4.3 Non-Standard Entry Requirements

In some cases an applicant will not have achieved the standard entry requirements. Those applicants are deemed ‘non-standard’ and their application must be assessed by the academic school for suitability for admission to the relevant programme.

To assess eligibility of applicants from Europe, DBS makes use of Central Evaluation Process Document compiled by the Institutes of Technology Central Evaluation Forum (IOTCEF) and widely used by institutions within the CAO system. The purpose of the IOTCEF is to provide a central scoring system for applicants presenting school leaving qualifications other than Irish Leaving Certificate and QQI (FETAC) Level 5/6 examinations. Qualifications from Europe and overseas can also be evaluated through QQI National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. The NQAI or UK NARIC system is initially used to assess the eligibility of applicants with qualifications from non-EU institutions. NQAI is the Irish centre for the recognition of international qualifications, known as Qualifications Recognition – Ireland, and its decisions on awards take precedence over those from other jurisdictions such as UK NARIC.

Non-standard applicants are considered on a case-by-case basis. The process is implemented within the school, by an appropriate academic staff member such as an Admissions Tutor or PL. The process is overseen by the Admissions Committee. The admission of a non-standard applicant is determined through a considered review of the candidates’ qualification and experience and other relevant admission data by the appointed assessor or nominee, or where additional academic scrutiny is deemed necessary by the PL who is competent to make the required judgements, subject to:

- the DBS policy on admissions
- a reasonable expectation that the applicant is able to fulfil the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award
- meeting the requirements for the award to which the particular programme leads (based on minimum entry requirements)
- fulfilling the specified entry requirements for the programme of study.
A non-standard admission is defined and recorded by the Admissions Committee as an admission without precedent where the school have been asked to assess the candidate for entry using a defined process. All non-standard admissions are subject to scrutiny after 12 months and based on criteria agreed by the Admissions Committee may be formally recognised as standard admissions decisions.

6.4.4 English Language Entry Requirements

Regardless of the mode of entry all English language requirements agreed at programme validation must be verified and adhered to. Where applicants do not have a formal English language qualification, they must provide evidence of equivalent competence through other examinations, or achievement of a minimum standard in recognised tests of English.

International applicants satisfy the DBS English language requirements by meeting one of the following criteria:

- holds relevant IELTS score* taken within the last two years
- holds relevant Cambridge certificate* taken within the last two years
- passes DBS English assessment at the relevant band*
- the applicant has been educated through English on an internationally recognised, accredited programme of at least one year in duration, with a credit volume equivalent to 60 ECTS credits, in an English speaking country.

*The ‘relevant’ score, certificate or band is defined in the entry requirements for that course agreed at validation.

Note: proof of English Language proficiency can apply to all categories of learners including domestic where appropriate.

6.5 Admission to Stage One

The majority of applicants to academic programmes are applying for access to stage one. These applicants are assessed for access to stage one based on their achievement of the entry requirements or equivalent.
6.5.1 The Central Applications Office (CAO)

All applicants seeking admission to the first stage of a QQI accredited undergraduate programme must apply directly to the CAO as outlined in the CAO handbook for the year of admission (reference www.cao.ie for details/information). The CAO processes applicants to the first stage of an undergraduate programme only. The CAO Admissions Officer is responsible for managing the admissions process for these programmes and follows procedures according to the CAO handbook. Points’ requirements for the different programmes are based on supply and demand. The cut-off points threshold is equal to, or above, those points accruing to the minimum entry requirements for the programme.

6.5.2 Direct Applicants

All applicants other than those seeking admission to a first stage of a QQI accredited undergraduate programme must apply directly to DBS. They must firstly satisfy the minimum entry requirements for the relevant programme, and must use the appropriate DBS Application Form (F6.1) or online at www.dbs.ie/ApplyOnline

Applications to Professional programmes or programmes not on the National Framework of Qualification should use the Professional School Application Form (F6.2) or link as above. All applicants are required to supply original copies of any supporting documentation such as academic transcripts, identification and evidence of attainment in the English language (see section 6.4.4), a Curriculum Vitae and/or an appropriate reference. Direct applicants may also be subject to interview.

Applicants to Spring Board programmes or the ICT Conversion Programme should apply online via the Springboard portal www.springboardcourses.ie. Momentum students are referred by the Department of Social Protection subject to meeting requirements.

Admission to all programmes is subject to availability and capacity.

6.5.3 Mature Applicants

Mature applicants are defined as those applicants applying under the mature learner’s entrance criteria. They are applicants over the age of 23 years on the 1st January of the proposed year of entry.
Mature applicants are not subject to the standard entry requirements. Such applicants are required to supply an appropriate proof of age such as driver’s licence or passport. Suitability for admission is assessed on the basis of age, motivation and commitment to the proposed programme of study, and work experience. Mature applicants are also required to supply original copies of supporting documentation, which form part of their applications, such as relevant academic transcripts and up-to-date curriculum vitae, if necessary. Mature applicants may also be subject to interview.

The application pack and supporting documentation is referred to the Head of Academic Programmes, PL or admissions tutor for decision. The Admissions Officer may make a recommendation to the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee. The Head of Academic Programmes reviews the application and, where additional academic scrutiny is deemed necessary, consults with the relevant PL.

The Head of Academic Programmes makes a provisional decision, stating the basis for it, on the Admission Form and signs the form accordingly.

### 6.5.4 International Applicants

Learners are classified as Domestic, EU or Non EU based on residency rather than nationality. This is an admissions classification. For Admissions Reports, domestic and EU are both reported as EU. The marketing of programmes to non-EU countries and the admission of learners from such countries is the responsibility of the Admissions Office. The equivalence of qualifications is based on information determined by QQI (formerly the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI); the Irish centre for the recognition of international qualifications (Qualifications Recognition – Ireland)). The UK based National Recognition Information Centre for the UK (UK NARIC) recommendations may be used as guidelines, particularly if the qualification is not listed by QQI. If there is an inconsistency between these agencies on equivalence, then the NQAI determination supersedes UK NARIC.

In addition to satisfying academic requirements, applicants who are non-EU nationals are required to produce proof of residency in the Republic of Ireland, such as a GNIB (Garda National Immigration Bureau) card and letters that are issued from the Department of Justice outlining their reasons to remain in the state. Non-EU nationals who hold work permits are eligible for admission to part-time programmes.
For applicants from certain countries other admissions guidelines have been used, based on the industry standards of other reputable higher education institutions and on DBS’s own experience and history in dealing with educational qualifications from a particular country. If a student from a country not listed in the International Admissions Document (Appendix 6.3) applies, the case is considered a non-standard admission and goes through the non-standard application procedures.

Procedures relating to all activities in this area are described in the International Admissions Document.

Note: the Irish Government Visa Guidelines must also be taken into consideration for visa requiring learners.


6.5.4.1 International Student Visa Requirements
Under the immigration rules a person is permitted to come to Ireland as a student on the understanding that they are engaged in full time study or, in other words, that their chief daytime occupation is study.

For the purposes of this rule, daytime is defined as between 8 am and 6 pm Monday to Friday. A person cannot be registered with the immigration service as a student if they are a night student, engaged in distance education or part time study. Full time study is defined as 15 hours per week for 26 weeks per year.

The maximum time a student may stay in Ireland for the purpose of attending courses at degree level is limited to seven years and learners are responsible for managing their studies to ensure compliance with this time limit.

6.5.5 Applicants with Specific Needs
Applicants with specific needs such as special requirements for applicants with disabilities can enter DBS via the standard procedures used by all learners. Learners with disabilities applying for admission to DBS via the CAO are encouraged to disclose their disability by writing “Medical Condition/Disability” on their CAO application form. Learners who indicate a disability in this way receive a supplementary form, which is returned to DBS to alert the College to the particular needs of the student, so that
appropriate preparations can be made to provide the necessary supports and arrangements, where this is operationally possible. In conjunction with this, the Admissions Officer writes individually to each applicant inviting them to visit the College and view the facilities first hand.

In the case of direct applications, candidates with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to disclose any such needs on the direct application form. They are subsequently sent a disability disclosure form again to alert the particular needs of the student. Such disclosure is, however, entirely discretionary. As with CAO applications, these applicants are then invited to the College to view the facilities.

For candidates who choose not to reveal a disability on the application form, difficulties may arise subsequent to their enrolment in the College. During the induction process, learners are made aware of the role of the Learner Support Co-ordinator, for whom contact details are published in the relevant Programme Handbook and on the website, who will advise and liaise with other relevant personnel should there be any issues or difficulties.

Any other specific needs should be addressed with the Admissions Department at the application stage.

6.6 Admission with Advanced Standing

DBS admissions procedures facilitate a variety access and entry arrangements, in addition applicants transferring from similar programmes will also be considered under these arrangements for access, transfer and progression.

There are two categories of access with advanced standing,

1. partial exemption where a learner is considered for exemption from a module or part of a stage and
2. direct entry where a learner is exempt from one or more a complete stages.

Exempted modules are recognised for the purposes of access or transfer. Credit will not be awarded for exempted modules or stages, such modules will be denoted with EXE on the learner’s transcript and Diploma Supplement.

- Partial exemptions are only considered for learners on part-time undergraduate programmes.
- All exemptions are agreed in prior to admission to the College, retrospective admissions are very rare and can only be sought on a formal appeal with appropriate grounds.
• No exemptions will be granted at the Award Stage.
• No exemptions are granted for Minor or Special Purpose Awards.
• Where a programme includes a work placement module or stage, applicants cannot transfer directly to that stage, but must take preparatory academic modules first.

6.6.1 Procedures for Assessing Exemptions

Applicants holding recognised academic qualifications and applying for either partial exemptions or direct entry to stage two or three of an academic programme are assessed for exemptions based on the achievement of equivalent learning outcomes, at an equivalent volume (measured by ECTS) and level on the NFQ, or recognised equivalent (EQF etc.), to the stages or modules, from which they are seeking exemption, on that programme. The applicant is required to provide original documentary evidence of prior academic achievement.

6.6.1.1 Assessing Standard Qualifications for Direct Entry

Qualifications are either standard, that is having been assessed by DBS for recognition as a standard qualifications for direct entry to a particular programme or non-standard which are either qualifications not already assessed for exemptions, or those which have been assessed but not yet eligible to be classified as standard.

Standard qualifications for a programme are recognised academic qualifications which are common in the Irish higher education sector, for example, holders of Higher Certificate (Stage 6) qualifications awarded by QQI. The standard category also includes less common Irish qualifications, and qualifications from EU and non-EU institutions, for which there are precedents in DBS admissions’ history.

For a qualification to be classified as standard for a particular programme, the learning outcomes for that qualification are examined and mapped to the learning outcomes for the relevant DBS programme(s). This process is undertaken within the academic school, by the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee and is overseen by the Admissions Committee. If sufficient comparability and equivalence is established, and after monitoring the progress of learners admitted with those exemptions for one year, the qualification is added to the standard qualifications list. All such additions must be approved by the Admissions Committee.
All standard qualifications for a particular programme are listed in the DBS Exemptions Handbook (Appendix 6.5) or the DBS International Exemptions Handbook (Appendix 6.6) with the appropriate level of exemption indicated. In the case of both EU and non-EU learners where the qualification is not listed as standard, the application is treated as non-standard.

The approval of exemptions based on standard qualifications is the responsibility of the DBS Admissions Officer. The appropriate Admissions Officer signs the relevant Credit Exemption Application Form (F6.3), stating clearly the basis on which the exemption is awarded.

6.6.1.2 Assessing Non-Standard Qualifications for Direct Entry

Non-standard applicants are considered on a case-by-case basis. The process is undertaken within the academic school, by the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee and is overseen by the Admissions Committee. As a non-standard application is based on a qualification that is not listed in the DBS Exemption Handbook or the DBS International Exemptions handbook, the application is referred to the Head of Academic Programmes for decision. The Admissions Officer may make a preliminary recommendation.

The Head of Academic Programmes reviews the application and, where additional academic scrutiny is deemed necessary, consults with the relevant Admissions Tutor or PL. The applicant may at this stage be required to provide additional academic evidence, such as course syllabi and/or examination papers.

The Head of Academic Programmes records the decision and the basis for it on the Exemption Application Form and signs the form accordingly. The decision is then communicated to the applicant by the Admissions Officer.

6.6.1.3 Assessing Applicants for Partial Exemption

Partial exemptions, exemptions from one or more modules within a stage, are only considered for part-time learners. Applicants seeking a partial exemption are required to provide original documentary evidence of their prior academic achievement on which their application is based. The Admissions Department compiles a complete file for review by Head of Academic Programmes or nominee, the file is accompanied by an Exemption Application Form (F5.3) and all supporting
documentation such as academic transcripts, a recommendation on the equivalence of the qualification and proof of the awarding institutions recognition etc.

The date the exemption request is received is noted on the Exemption Application Form by Admissions and an exemption due date is stated (2 days after the date of receipt). This is the date by which the completed Exemption Application Form must be returned to the Admissions Department. The file is sent to the relevant Head of Academic Programmes or nominated personnel for review. The Head of Academic Programmes or nominee reviews the application and where additional academic scrutiny is deemed necessary, consults with the relevant Admissions Tutor or PL. The applicant may at this stage be required to provide additional academic evidence, such as course syllabi and/or examination papers.

The Head of Academic Programmes or nominee will record the decision and provide a rationale for the decision on the Exemption Application Form. The Exemption Application Form is then signed and dated by the Head of Academic Programmes. The file is then returned to Admissions where the student is informed of the outcome of their application.

6.6.1.4 Articulation Agreements with Partner Colleges

DBS has extensive and productive relationships with a series of European and International partner colleges. Formal arrangements are in place to facilitate access, transfer and progression with the partner colleges. The process is described in an articulation agreement which lays down the criteria for admission to DBS programmes by applicants with qualifications from those colleges. When a new arrangement is being set up the programmes are mapped in terms of learning outcomes, credit volume and level on the NFQ. Once complete and documented the qualification is recognised as a standard admissions decision. These articulation agreements are monitored by reviewing learner success and they are formally reviewed when either programme undergoes Programmatic Review. It is the responsibility of the Admissions Department to notify the school when a standard qualification is due for review.

6.7 Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that allows learners to gain admission to a programme of study or to gain exemptions from modules or stages of a programme, based on demonstrated learning achieved prior to admission. Recognition is a process by which prior learning is given a value.
DBS recognise that knowledge, skills and competencies can be acquired from a range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal and informal learning. This is in line with the aims of the NFQ to recognise all learning achievements by supporting the development of alternative pathways to qualifications (or awards) and by facilitating the recognition of prior learning.

Irrespective of a candidate’s entry qualifications, DBS must be satisfied that they are of the required academic standard to complete the scheme of study proposed.

Recognition of Prior Learning concerns learning that has taken place, but has not necessarily been assessed or measured. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal routes. RPL can also be used for access to a programme.

6.7.1 Formal Learning
Formal learning takes place through programmes of education or training that are delivered by education and training providers and recognised on the framework. It is assessed and can lead to awards.

6.7.2 Non-formal Learning
Learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning are: learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector or trade union and community-based learning etc.

6.7.3 Informal Learning
Learning that takes place through life and work experience, which may also be referred to as experiential learning. Often it is learning that is unintentional and the learner may not recognise at the time of the experience that it contributed to his or her knowledge, skills and competence. Formerly referred to as Approved Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

6.7.4 Applicants with Prior Experiential Learning (RPL Informal)
Prior Experiential Learning can be defined as ‘knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience and study, not formally attested through formal certification’.
6.7.5 Credit for Prior Experiential Learning

Credit for Prior Experiential Learning is intended for mature learners who may not have had structured formal education but who have learned from their involvement in employment, community activities, home duties, sport etc. This learning when evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively might entitle them to credits or exemptions from a course of study. Such individuals might be in employment (including self-employed), unemployed or currently retired from employment. As a general principle, credit is given for learning, not for experience per se.

Applications for exemption based on RPL Informal are normally considered only for part-time learners:

- with a minimum of five year’s work experience
- in relation to specific stage 1 modules

Applicants seeking RPL Informal exemptions from modules are required to demonstrate prior achievement of the majority of the learning outcomes of each module. To this end, they are provided with an outline of the module content and learning outcomes and are required to indicate on paper how their prior experiential learning can be deemed to provide equivalence.

The Application pack and supporting documentation is referred to the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee for a decision. The Admissions Officer may make a recommendation to the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee. The Head of Academic Programmes reviews the application and, where additional academic scrutiny is deemed necessary, consults with the relevant Admissions Tutor or PL.

The Head of Academic Programmes makes a provisional decision, recording the basis for the decision on the Admission Form and signs the form accordingly. The process is overseen by the Admissions Committee.

6.7.6 Admission with Prior Experiential Learning

Applicants to Springboard programmes may be assessed for entry on an assessment of prior experiential learning. As with the recognition for experiential learning for exemption, the applicant is required to demonstrate that they are suitable for entry to the programme and have the requisite skills and experience to successfully complete the programme. The application pack and supporting documentation is referred to the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee for a decision.
The Head of Academic Programmes makes a provisional decision, recording the basis for the decision on the Admission Form and signs the form accordingly. The process is overseen by the Admissions Committee.

6.8 Applicant Information

Information for prospective learners should be honest, transparent and facilitate comparison.

*QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria HET*

This policy includes all DBS marketing material and the marketing material relating to any collaborative arrangement for which DBS is responsible. See Section 5.

6.8.1 Marketing Material

DBS is committed to promoting a clear and consistent message. These procedures advise on the production of publicity and promotional materials, which enables the College to manage the messages communicated to the public, prospective applicants, enrolled learners and other stakeholders. The Guidelines for Publicity and Promotional Materials relating to DBS are set out in Appendix 6.8.

6.8.2 Marketing Material Policy

The implementation of the DBS policy on Marketing Material ensures that

- the consistency of marketing and publicity materials using the College’s name is maintained
- the message communicated is consistent
- the College’s corporate image is maintained
- marketing and publicity materials do not compromise, but rather enhance the image of the College
- messages are complementary and not contradictory

6.8.3 Procedure for the Approval of Marketing Materials

All marketing materials are sent (in hard or electronic copy) to the Director of Marketing and Admissions, for review and approval on behalf of DBS. The Marketing Manager may be delegated to approve material in the absence of the Director of Marketing and Admissions.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Faculty and School Operations or designate to ensure that all academic information contained in Marketing Material is accurate at the time of going to print.
The Head of Academic Faculty and School Operations approves the Marketing Material by completing a Prospectus Sign-Off form (F6.4).

**6.8.4 Arrangements with Accrediting Bodies and Collaborative Partners**

Any marketing or publicity material that uses the name or logo of QQI must be approved, in accordance with their publicity guidelines.

Any marketing materials used to promote any DBS award, including transnational, collaborative or Joint Awards is subject to the approval of the Director of Marketing and Admissions. DBS is responsible for all learner information supplied on its behalf by any collaborative partner. Personnel within the Marketing and Admissions Department at DBS liaise with relevant staff within the collaborative organisation, as appropriate, to secure this approval.

**6.9 Applicant’s Responsibilities**

Applicants have responsibility to provide all relevant supporting documentation they wish to be considered at the admission stage.

Applicants should declare any special needs that they wish to be considered by DBS. Refer to section 6.5.5.

Applicants need to declare any personal information that may affect their performance or the performance of others at DBS.

Such information is subject to the rulings of the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

**6.9.1 Supporting Documentation**

All applicants must produce the original or notarised copies of supporting documentation, such as identification, transcripts and degree parchments at the admissions stage. Copies retained on file must be signed by a member of the Admissions Office or delegated to verify that they had sight of the original or notarised documents.

**6.9.2 Fraudulent Applications**

DBS reserves the right to refuse admission or cancel registration or terminate the enrolment of any applicant or learner whose application details are found to be false. This may be enacted at any time during the learner’s enrolment at DBS.
6.10 Registration and Learner Status

DBS reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to refuse to register a CAO or direct entry applicant where to do so might either (a) impact on the college's obligation to maintain a positive learning environment and/or (b) on the college's duty of care to others.

To be recognised as a DBS learner an applicant must be formally enrolled onto a programme of study by going through the registration process at a time and place agreed by DBS. A non-enrolled applicant is not entitled to use DBS facilities or sit examinations.

6.11 Deferred Enrolment

An applicant may hold an offer for a period not exceeding two years subject to the programme being available.

An enrolled learner who is not in a position to embark on a programme may apply for a deferred entry on an annual basis for up to two academic years subject to the programme being available and a fees agreement. Full details of the procedure for seeking a deferral are included in Chapter 9.

6.12 Appeals and Complaints

Appeals and complaints regarding the admissions procedures should be addressed to the Director of Admissions in the first instance.
7 Teaching and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018 or as requested by Academic Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This chapter summarises the approach to learning and teaching at DBS and includes: Learning activities and Moodle, Academic Support, Learning and Teaching Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Policies</td>
<td>7.10.1 Policy on Lecturer Absence - Approved March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.10.1 Policy on Academic Mentors – Approved March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1 Introduction

This chapter of the QAH describes the DBS approach to learning and teaching and accords with the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG), Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance.

Standard 1.3 Student-centred Learning, teaching and assessment:

“Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.”

The college understands that higher education supports social cohesion, economic growth and economic competitiveness and that good governance is instrumental for quality education. The DBS Teaching and Learning Policy is informed by documents such as the ESG standards, the QQI Award Standards, the NFQ, the Report of the Strategy Group, January 2011 on the ‘National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030’ (Hunt Report) and stakeholder engagement such as employers and staff engagement with best practice in pedagogy.
The Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Higher Education – Governance and Quality Education 2013 recalls the four main purposes of Higher Education:

- Preparation for sustainable employment
- Preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies
- Personal Development
- The development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad advanced knowledge base.

The DBS Learning and Teaching Strategy continues to evolve according to institutional, Irish and international developments in higher education. DBS seeks to differentiate the College from other tertiary level institutions by placing our focus on student-centred learning supported through excellence in teaching. Our mission is ‘to provide an excellent student-centred learning experience, with teaching of the highest quality that produces graduates who are equipped to lead successful lives and to contribute effectively to society’.

The DBS Educational Philosophy covers:

- The development and delivery of high quality programmes
- Learner success
- Learner centred approach to all activities
- Key employability skills embedded in programmes
- Professional recognition of programmes

The DBS Learning and Teaching Strategy seeks to ensure that the approach:

- is aligned with other DBS policies and strategies
- impacts positively on the student learning experience
- allows for diversity in methodology across schools and programmes.

7.2 Learning

Learning in DBS involves a multi-faceted approach using a repertoire of effective learning strategies in a way that assists learners in functioning as self-directed individuals. This is recognised as a supported life-long activity integrated into programmes, modules, curricula and assessments across all levels of the NFQ. The strong focus is on enabling and empowering students to achieve the learning outcomes
of their programmes and modules while recognising diversity in learning styles. Essentially, learning at DBS promotes active and meaningful student engagement.

A key aspiration is the exploitation of the outcomes of research in learning science and principles of instructional design to enhance the learning environment, to this end DBS staff are part of the wider Kaplan Learning Architects community which arrange regular events to promote its research outcomes to support learning.

7.3 Teaching and Learning Strategy

In essence, the DBS Teaching and Learning Strategy is based on a set of key principles and sets out specific goals and objectives for learning, teaching and assessment. Among the main goals of the DBS strategy are the following:

• Learning as a skill
• Student achievement and progression
• Assessment to support learning
• Readiness for Employability
• Competency-based learning
• Flexible approaches to learning
• Holistic curriculum design
• Inclusive and accessible curriculum
• Internationally relevant curriculum
• Research informed curriculum
• Academic and Pastoral learner support
• Staff development in pedagogy and learning science
• Professional development, scholarship and research.

The DBS strategy has also taken into account external reference points on knowledge, skill and competence standards as expressed in the QQI Awards Standards and described within the NQAI National Framework of Qualifications and other academic quality assurance bodies, as the QAA subject benchmark statements and Tuning project.
7.4 Approaches and Methods

In DBS, teaching is seen as a multi-dimensional activity that seeks to promote quality learning through a student-centred interaction between the teacher, learner and the curriculum. The teaching methods employed support learners and learning through helping the learner to understand how to use learning resources, especially the experience of others, to facilitate their educational experience and through dedicated timetabled modules around the learning skills. Teaching in DBS is strongly focused on enabling students to achieve the learning outcomes of their programmes and modules. The format of teaching at DBS is primarily face to face as expressed by contact hours on approved programme schedules and supported by a virtual learning environment (Moodle) as described in chapter 9.

Teaching and learning methods employed by DBS are intended to facilitate students taking ownership of, and responsibility for, their own learning in partnership with the academic faculty. DBS programme teaching strategies are based on a combination of structured tuition and student-centered learning. Methods adopted attempt to provide students with varied learning opportunities and experiences, and include but are not limited to:

- Classroom based delivery
- Guest lectures
- Formative assessment
- Problem-based learning
- Problem solving
- Inquiry-based learning
- Personal development portfolio
- Skills development
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Student observation
- Group work
- Case Study Analysis
- Research supervision and project work
- Active experimentation
- Laboratory/practical sessions
- Simulation activities (e.g. I.C.T. based Business Situation simulations)
• Use of other ICT based interaction with students – e.g. Portfolio building activity, use of Blogs and WIKI, Moodle based Self-Test Quizzes, etc.
• Video role play and feedback
• E-learning
• Field trips (including in company visits)
• Work-based learning

The DBS Teaching Strategy is a student-centered learning approach under which lecturers introduce students to subject areas and act as guides and facilitators to students in their study of the subject. As students progress through the various stages, the subject matter of their studies becomes increasingly complex and challenging. The focus of learning moves from acquisition of knowledge and understanding to critical analysis and application of conceptual knowledge to practical situations. In the final stages, in particular, students learn to critically evaluate and apply knowledge and skills they have developed through earlier years of the programme. Ultimately, students are brought to a position where they can demonstrate, through a variety of assessment processes, that they have achieved the learning outcomes of their programmes.

7.5 Creating Blended learning through Technology

DBS is committed to using technology where it adds value to the learning environment and engages in active evaluation of new technologies on an ongoing basis. The adoption of the E-learning platform, Moodle, has provided lecturers and students with a virtual learning environment to complement, enrich and support the more traditional learning environment. This has made it possible for lecturers to create new learning opportunities for students and has allowed use of many innovative learning techniques. Adapting this technology as an integral part of teaching methodology has enabled lecturers to provide course material through a ‘rich media presentation environment’, and to accommodate learning activity outside the classroom and outside timetabled class times, thus enhancing effective self-directed learning.

7.6 Personal and Skills Development for Employability

In DBS, skills development has always been viewed as a critical aspect of student learning. Having conducted extensive research with employers, and confirmed what skills are sought by employers and employer representatives today, DBS has developed a set of credit bearing modules and integrated
them into all undergraduate degree and many other programmes, which are aimed at developing these identified personal skills and abilities in learners, to enhance their self-development and to give them a competitive edge in employability. This suite of skill development modules is referred to internally as the ‘Employability Pillar’ in undergraduate programmes, and usually involves a set of six modules integrated throughout all stages of the programme of study. Themes within this pillar include, communications for personal development, learning to learn, employability skills, innovation and entrepreneurship, etc. These are designed at all levels within the programme to facilitate progression, for example, from learning to learn to lifelong learning. DBS sees this as an advantage to its learners, to help them ensure the development of marketable skills. The employer research has defined graduate skills as comprising of transferable skills which may include:

- Analysing and Solving Problems
- Team Work and Interpersonal Skills
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Personal Planning and Organising
- Initiative and Creativity
- Numerical Reasoning
- Information and Communication Technology
- Critical thinking

The Employability Pillar has been designed to provide further opportunities for skills development with tangible evidence in the form of written certification of skill achievement. The specific objectives of the Employability Pillar are:

(i) to provide an opportunity for students to develop, apply and assess their personal skills using appropriate methods.
(ii) to enable students to develop a personal set of evidence which demonstrates development and achievement.
(iii) to establish a foundation for continuing personal development and application of learning within a future workplace.

The skills are further developed within the programme through the use of selected appropriate teaching, learning and assessment methodologies.

7.7 Academic Support
A unique feature of learning at DBS is the level of personal interaction, academic and other support which can be accessed while at the college. The primary purpose of Academic Support is to provide implementable methodological assistance to students in relation to programme-specific continuous assessment and examination tasks. Thus Academic Support is a ‘how to’ of academic practice and one of the ways DBS helps students acquire and develop important third-level skills.

### 7.7.1 Aims of Academic Learning Support

The general Aims of Academic Learning Support are to:

- familiarise students with standard academic research methods and conventions
- develop students’ ability to critically evaluate secondary data
- familiarise students with the structure templates of required academic documents on undergraduate and post-graduate programmes
- encourage students to develop a critical perspective
- minimize instances of plagiarism on undergraduate and post-graduate programmes
- assist students in answering examination questions effectively.

Academic Support is embedded in all programmes and specifically timetable in some. For example, in masters programmes it is delivered as a module focussing on the inter-dependent dynamics of research, argument, and expression and how these need to be successfully managed in order to produce high-quality scholarly work. In addition to introducing students to the mechanics of research and writing (quoting, citation, constructing bibliographies, etc.), students are guided in appropriating the conventions of academia in order to persuade their readers of the legitimacy of their perspective.

In addition, the Library in DBS provides a wide array of Academic Support for learners, refer to chapter 9.

### Information Skills Classes from the Library

- The Library delivers a programme of information skills classes on a standalone and integrated (at the invitation of the lecturer) basis. The Library’s information skills classes are also formally accredited embedded and assessed in a wide variety of academic programmes via the Learning to Learn and Personal and Professional Development modules. Classes are delivered by a dedicated Information Skills Librarian, who is approved as a lecturer at DBS.

### Assignment Planning Software/Library Guides

### Library Software to Promote Information Seeking/Academic Integrity
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

- The Library’s Pedagogical Approach to Information Skills Teaching
- Research Support Sessions
  - The Postgraduate Library offers one to one research support sessions for postgraduate students doing dissertations. The focus of the sessions is on information seeking to inform the literature review, methodology etc.
- Drop in Sessions for International Students
- Library Services for Students with Disabilities.

### 7.7.2 Pre Delivery Information

At the commencement of the academic year, learners receive a Student Handbook describing their programme, its aims objectives and learning outcomes and links to important information and regulations. In addition the following module information is issued to students via Moodle in relation to each module being studied:

- module guide
- assessment schedule
- each assignment specification that forms part of the continuous assessment
- reference to the DBS Plagiarism policy
- past examination papers
- current reading list

Throughout the programme it is required that academic staff provide module content as lecture notes on Moodle in advance of the lecture. Providing case studies, worked examples and other supportive material is encouraged.

Students are actively encouraged to utilise the learning resources indicated to enhance the depth and breadth of their knowledge and to enrich their assessment contributions.

### 7.7.3 Induction / Learner Orientation

At the beginning of the academic year, academic, library, computer services, and student services staff members participate in the induction/orientation of new students, providing access to an array of information, encouragement and support which helps the student to acclimatize, socialize and start to learn. This process continues into the academic year particularly at stage one of a programme or where there are direct entrants to later stages of programme.
7.7.4 Personalised Learning Support

It is acknowledged that learners have different learning styles and rates, learners may be referred for academic support for a variety of reasons. For example learners may be referred by individual lecturers to an assigned Academic Writing Tutor. The objective of this service is to diagnose individual student writing difficulties as they relate to assignments and dissertations and provide feedback and guidance to students in meeting academic performance gaps.

7.8 Learning and Teaching Committee

Learning and Teaching support activities at DBS are co-ordinated by the College’s Learning and Teaching Committee, the Committee meets periodically to review the general progress of the various support mechanisms and to initiate improvements where appropriate. The Learning and Teaching Committee provides a valuable forum for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the learning support system - a system that is intended to make an important contribution to student success and well-being in DBS.

The Committee also oversees the preparation of supportive documents such as the DBS Generic Grade Criteria and various academic guidelines, in a response to a need identified by the academic teams.

The membership of this Committee comprises representatives from the School, the Library, Computer Services, Facilities, Careers and Student Services. There is a student representative from each of the Schools on this committee also. Minutes are prepared and provided to Boards of Studies and the School Executive Board for review and action, as appropriate. A Member of the DBS Learning and Teaching Committee is the designated contact for the National Forum on Enhancement for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NFETLHE) responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of the activities of that organisation and kept abreast of policy. A member of the committee is also a member of the HECA Teaching and Learning Committee.

The objectives of the Learning and Teaching Committee are:

• To facilitate best practice in pedagogy at DBS by raising awareness of current learning initiatives
• To promote staff development in pedagogy
• To implement and monitor learning support activities in DBS.
• To organise four learning and teaching symposiums/workshops in the calendar year
7.9 Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning

The DBS Teaching and Learning Strategy is underpinned by a number of quality assurance and improvement initiatives and mechanisms:

• Annual School review activities
• Programmatic Review activities
• Module review activities (MRDP)
• External Examiner reports
• Annual student surveys
• Class representative system
• Staff development initiatives and requirements
• Staff Appointment standards and regulations (refer to AASC chapter 2).

These are expanded on in other chapters.

7.10 Supplemental Policies

7.10.1 Policy on Lecturer Absence

In the event of an unplanned lecturer absence the policy is to provide an alternative; postponement or cancellation is only used as a last resort. The appropriate Faculty Manager and PL identify one of the following responses:

1. Substitute Lecturers – in cases where the module is delivered by more than one lecturer.
2. Substitute Class - by locally adapting the timetable with regard to cross listed modules.
3. Pre-Specified Work - all staff are required to supply academic operations with one hour of pre-prepared learning or assignments updated as the module progresses. This is then set or supervised by a lecturer from the same subject area.
4. Class Postponement – the class is rescheduled within one month.
5. Class Cancellation – by agreement with the Head of Faculty and School Operations, there should be no more than 4% of any module cancelled and only when it can be demonstrated that there is no impact on the achievement of learning outcomes.
Learners are made aware of any of the above interventions by web text in advance of the class where possible. This policy is overseen by the school management team, and incidences recorded by Academic Operations.

7.10.2 Policy on Staff Mentors

When a lecturer has been approved by the AASC they are deemed competent to deliver academic programmes at DBS and/or supervise projects or dissertations. In each case the subjects and levels are defined and held by the Faculty Manager’s Office and HR. An academic contract cannot be issued without AASC Certification.

In some cases there are conditions associated with the AASC approval. These are:

- Approved with a Teaching Mentor
- Approved with an Assessment Mentor
- Limited to a level
- Specific to a subject area, for example key skills for professional programmes.

Where a teaching and/or assessment mentor is prescribed this function is taken up by an experienced member of the academic team. They are responsible for ensuring that newly approved staff members are familiar with the modules they are teaching and their integration into the programme, with all DBS polices and regulations, with the Principles of Assessment and other academic guidelines. They provide support in setting assignments, writing examination papers and grading. The academic is supported for at least one academic year and this is in addition to the normal process of moderation etc. Further information is held with the AASC, coordinated by the QA Officer.
8 Assessment Policy, Procedures and Regulations

8.1 Assessment Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Assessment Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Faculty Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Faculty and School Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for</td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consideration to:</td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The DBS assessment policy is informed by good practice across the international higher education sector and supports the principles for assessment as outlined in QQI Assessments and Standards, Revised 2013.

Assessment within DBS is learning outcomes orientated and ensures the consistent application of this approach. Assessment is integrated into teaching and learning and DBS operates assessment on the basis of assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment in learning. Specific assessment activities are designed to determine a learner’s progress, to inform additional learning requirements, and / or to assess a learner’s attainment against clearly defined learning outcomes.

All learners are fully informed about how they are assessed and the specific role and purpose of each assessment in the context of their learning journey and intended award outcome.

Learning outcomes are clear statements of what a learner is expected to know and do on completion of a specified period of learning. The level and standard of knowledge and ability reflected in a learning outcome varies according to the level of the award. Learning outcomes articulated as part of a DBS programme of study leading to a QQI award are aligned with the applicable award standards as published by QQI.

Minimum Intended Learning Outcomes:

- inform the development of a relevant assessment tool
- enable a moderator, reviewer or external examiner to determine the suitability of the assessment tool
- notify learners what an examiner is seeking to establish
- act as a threshold standard i.e. that which is required to secure a pass mark, for examiners marking assessment
- inform feedback to learners in identifying where learning outcomes were not met, were satisfied and were exceeded
- inform the review of effectiveness and suitability of assessment
- provide fairness and consistency to the assessment process
- provide transparency to the assessment process.

The responsibility for demonstrating attainment of learning outcomes remains with the learner. In order to fulfil this responsibility, learners are required to engage in the relevant assessment activities
and it remains their responsibility to be familiar with the associated expectations and requirements including submission dates, attendance and location arrangements for examinations etc. Lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of such requirements which have been clearly communicated is not considered reasonable justification for non-completion of assessment requirements.

Learners have a limited number of opportunities to satisfy assessment requirements. Whilst there is a standard QQI practice of a maximum of 3 repeat opportunities per assessment, special regulations apply to individual programmes which may result in fewer opportunities being available. Full details are included in the programme validation document and programme handbook. Where a learner fails to satisfy these requirements either through not taking up the assessment opportunity or through failure to meet the required standard, they will be deemed to have failed and will be withdrawn from their programme. Any exception to this will only be in the context of standard procedures for mitigating circumstances.

DBS provides learners with relevant and appropriate assessment opportunities that enable learners to demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes. In assessing learners DBS will ensure learners are fully informed of the learning outcomes against which they are being assessed.

Appropriate review, moderation, monitoring and external examining arrangements are in place to ensure assessment methods and decisions are reliable, credible and valid and that they provide an appropriate and effective means of attaining the specified learning outcomes.

### 8.1.1 Underpinning Principles of Assessment in DBS

DBS has endorsed and implemented the following underpinning principles for the assessment process:

(i) Assessment is an integral part of the programme design process and is constructively aligned with the programme/module minimum intended learning outcomes.

(ii) There are clear and consistent assessment criteria prepared by the examiner and these are provided to the learner at the time of assignment.

(iii) Assessment is transparent, valid, reliable and free from bias.

(iv) The assessment framework facilitates learning and informs and supports learner progression, particularly in the early stages of programmes.
(v) Learners are provided with feedback on assessment that is timely and promotes learning and facilitates improvement.

(vi) The management of assessment is efficient, especially regarding the amount and timing of assessment, staff and learner workloads; and to allow time for learner reflection.

(vii) All staff involved in the assessment of learners are competent to undertake their responsibilities.

(viii) Assessment is reviewed regularly and learners are involved in this review process to determine the suitability, effectiveness and fitness for purpose of the assessment tools, procedures, and overall strategy.

8.1.2 Assessment Responsibilities

8.1.2.1 Role of Examiners

A member of DBS faculty allocated responsibility for assessing learners shall be deemed to be an Examiner. The role of an Examiner is to:

- Prepare assessments in consultation with the Moderator, in accordance with the approved module descriptor
- Submit examination papers, solutions and marking schemes, in consultation with the Moderator, to the Examinations Office where they are forwarded to the External Examiner(s)
- Alongside the Programme Leader, take account of suggestions, deletions, additions or amendments proposed by the External Examiner(s) and implement as recommended or provide a rationale for non-implementation
- Mark the assessments and arrange for moderation
- Submit marks to the Examinations Team via the means specified (Moodle upload or through SIS)
- Prepare a sample of marked continuous assessment, in conjunction with the moderator, for the External Examiner and return to Examinations Team
- Return scripts and any associated forms to the Academic Affairs Office
- Receive feedback from the External Examiner(s) and, in conjunction with the PL if necessary, agree the marks proposed to be awarded to each candidate (prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners) and
• Attend meetings of the Examination Board, to verify marks and contribute to the deliberation of grades and awards.

8.1.2.2 Role of Moderator

A Moderator is appointed for each module by the Head of Faculty and School Operations or designated PL. The appointment is made on the basis of experience as an educator in the particular subject or a related area, normally including at least 2 years teaching and assessment or other curriculum-related experience within the last 5 years at the same level on the framework as the subject which is being moderated. The moderation process can be defined as:

’a process undertaken within DBS in which assessment practices and decisions are regularly sampled and evaluated, and findings are acted upon to ensure consistency and fairness’.

The Moderator works closely with the Examiner in a monitoring/advisory role to ensure:

• Assessment is appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any learner;
• Assessment has been set in line with learning outcomes of the module
• An assessment has been marked in line with the expressed aims and learning outcomes of the assignment/examination, and in terms of marking criteria
• Fairness of marking and the equality of treatment of each learner
• Internal consistency of assessment within a module
• Comparability of standards across modules within a subject area
• Assessment is appropriate to the level at which it is taught.

A detailed moderation guidance document is available for all lecturing staff and training is also made available.

8.1.2.3 Role of External Examiner
External Examiners are appointed to a particular programme, subject or module. In some cases, a programme may have a team of external examiners where specialist subject expertise required is too broad for any one external examiner. In such cases a chief external examiner should be identified. Their role is to provide independent quality assurance for the assessment process. Their function is to provide externality to quality assuring the assessment process and the marking of learner work. The External Examiner process assists in assuring standards appropriate to the award level are maintained and that standards at DBS are consistent with national standards and are comparable to other institutions. **Full details on the appointment and role of external examiners is available in**

8.1.3 Assessment Purpose

Best practice highlights that in order for learner assessment to be most effective it should be a process that includes diagnostic, formative and summative assessment over a period of time.

Diagnostic assessment assists in determining a learner’s preparedness for a programme or stage in a programme and identifying any possible learning needs. In itself it doesn’t normally attract a grade or contribute to the overall award. In some instances, it is used as a measure of a start point and can inform or contribute to a summative assessment task at a later stage.

Formal assessment tasks can be formative or summative. Those that are summative will have their grades reported to the Board of Examiners.

Formative assessments are designed to give learners an opportunity to practise unfamiliar skills or demonstrate their understanding in a new area of learning and receive guidance on how to further improve.

Formative assessments can be graded as this is useful information for the learner as to how well they are progressing or achieving, but they should not be confused with summative assessments and do not contribute to the overall summative result.

Learners are advised that whilst there is no formal penalty for not completing formative assessment tasks, the potential to succeed and to achieve higher marks is notably enhanced as a result of participating in all assessment activities.

It is expected that the formative assessment tasks used support the learners in their subsequent summative assessments and enhance their understanding of modules on the programme of study.
Summative assessments are for the purpose of determining a learner’s performance against specified learning outcomes. A mark is awarded and this forms a part of their formal learner record, is reported to the Examination Board and may contribute to their overall award and classification.

DBS requires that, where feasible, assessments should include a formative element. Detailed feedback should be provided to learners outlining areas of strength and areas for further development. Feedback may include expansion of subject knowledge and skills as well as development of academic skills. Such feedback is to be automatically provided apart from where exceptions apply. Exceptions include, but are not restricted to, terminal examinations.

In cases such as examinations, where feedback is not automatically provided, feedback can be requested or arrangements made to discuss the assessment with a relevant examiner as per the Discussion of Examination Scripts policy.

8.1.4 Assessment Methodologies

DBS programmes leading to a QQI award are assessed by continuous assessment, practical, placement, project/thesis, written exam, or a combination of these.

Learners are notified from the outset of the academic year how they will be assessed in the modules they are undertaking.

The Programme Leader is responsible for the overall management of assessment on the programme they lead. This includes working closely with the School Management Team, the Programme Team and the Examinations Team to assure themselves that appropriate arrangements are in place and implemented in respect of:

- clearly communicating responsibilities and expectations to all stakeholders
- appropriate assessment timing, weighting and scheduling across the programme
- the inclusion of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment as applicable
- the moderation and external examining of assessments
- the ongoing review of suitability and effectiveness of assessments
- adherence to and consistent application of the academic regulations, policies and procedure in conducting assessments
- full and accurate assessment data being available for Examination Board decisions to be reached
The responsibility for management and coordination of all continuous assessments within a module is deferred to the module lecturer. This should be satisfied in conjunction with the relevant Programme Leader to ensure a programme level approach to assessment.

The coordination of terminal examinations is the responsibility of the Assessment and Regulations Manager. This is undertaken in conjunction with the relevant Programme Leader to ensure a programme level approach to assessment.

Continuous assessments are normally issued through the VLE (Moodle) and learners are required to submit their assessments via the VLE also. Exceptions to this relate to practical areas that cannot be submitted online; for example, class presentation, work placement observation, posters, exhibitions, moot courts etc.

DBS requires each module lecturer that is responsible for a module to provide all assessment material, final exams and continuous assessments for an entire academic year to cover original attempts and re-take situations. A copy of this should be submitted securely to the Assessment Team in Academic Affairs in accordance with the agreed procedure.

All assessments must have been approved through the DBS moderation process and those that require external examiner review must be agreed by the External Examiner as appropriate prior to being issued to learners.

8.1.4.1 Continuous Assessment

The majority of academic programmes offered by DBS feature some element of continuous assessment (CA). Continuous assessment is used to provide insight into the learners’ knowledge, skills and competences in areas that are not normally assessed in written examinations.

Examiners are required to ensure that they are fully aware of the weightings attached to the continuous assessment elements in each module or subject they teach. The definitive source of the weighting allocated to continuous assessment in any given module is the current Approved Programme Schedule and module descriptor which can be obtained from the QA Officer. This will remain consistent throughout the validated period of the programme unless approval for change is secured from QQI. This would normally involve the consideration of a proposal by a peer review panel.

The module descriptor also provides the necessary information on the indicative nature/type and breakdown of continuous assessment proposed and approved at the point of first validation /
revalidation. This is subject to change as a result of ongoing review and enhancement. The most recent breakdowns of CA weightings are recorded in Agresso and reflected on Moodle for the module concerned. Examiners must adhere to the current breakdown or request an amendment through the Board of Studies approval process. Where an examiner wishes to propose a change to the continuous assessment type or the weightings within the overall continuous assessment weighting the correct procedure for approval through the Board of Studies must be applied.

Additional or alternative assessments created in Moodle will not correlate with Agresso and therefore will not populate the learner record. The option to add additional or alternative assessments to the relevant Moodle page is for the purpose of including diagnostic and formative assessments.

There are many possible formats for continuous assessment and they should remain consistent with the requirements of the approved module descriptor, except where Board of Studies approval has been granted. Examiners are encouraged to be flexible when deciding what format to use. Some typical examples are as follows:

- an essay in response to an exam-type question
- an essay in response to a question or statement not normally seen in examinations
- a critical review of a text (e.g. a newspaper article or book) or a case study
- a summary of a text (e.g. a book chapter)
- an in-class test, similar in scope to an end-of-stage examination
- an in-class Short-Answer Question (SAQ) examination
- an in-class Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) examination
- an oral presentation based on a prescribed topic
- literature review
- case studies
- a group-oriented task, requiring the production of a document or oral presentation by a small group of learners
- the completion of a short work-package relevant to the academic discipline (e.g. the writing of a computer program or the designing of a website, etc.).

When selecting and developing the type of continuous assessment to use, Examiners are required to align the task to the intended learning outcomes of the module. These in turn have been aligned to the programme level and stage. An assessment may address only some or all module learning
outcomes. The learning outcomes being assessed through the assignment task in question must be communicated to the learner.

All items of continuous assessment drafted by each Examiner are reviewed by the Moderator to ensure they are appropriate to the programme level and that they relate to identifiable learning outcomes of the relevant module. The Moderator must also be satisfied that the learner workload involved is commensurate with the assessment weighting, and is not excessive at any particular time within the academic year (through reference to the assessment schedule for the programme).

8.1.4.2 Examinations

DBS utilises terminal examinations at the end of a module, semester or programme stage. These may take the format of a lab based examination for ICT related subjects or a written examination paper. The standard requirements for ensuring the fitness for purpose of assessment applies to examinations. In that regard examiners are reminded of the requirement to give due consideration to:

- Learning outcomes to be assessed
- The timing and weighting of the assessment
- The module assessment strategy overall
- The assessment workload and specifically the appropriate duration of the examination based on its credit value
- The requirement for moderation and external examining of examination papers
- Arrangements for repeat assessment
- Security, reliability and validity of the examination process

8.1.5 Authoring Assessments

Best practice in assessment looks to remove the over-assessment of learners and to incorporate a variety of assessment types – diagnostic, formative and summative, and assessment tools to suit the needs of the assessment, the learner group, level and type of award.

The development of assessments should be informed by the programme and module assessment strategy as outlined in the relevant programme validation document. The assessment strategy for each module should reasonably include diagnostic (establishing the learner’s start point and pre-existing knowledge and ability), formative (monitoring the learner’s progress and informing additional learning and development required), and summative (providing learners with the
opportunity to demonstrate the attainment of learning outcomes and grading them accordingly against agreed, published criteria.

Depending on whether the assessment is formative or summative, the author of an assessment is reminded that when designing an assessment, they should ensure that the activity will enable the learner to demonstrate their achievement of or progress towards the learning outcomes. In all assessments learning outcomes being assessed should be communicated to the learner as part of the assessment brief.

The length and complexity of the assessments should reflect the purpose of the assessment, the level of the award, the stage the learner is at within the programme, and the weighting of the assessment in relation to the overall module or programme. It is important that parameters are agreed at programme level in order to ensure parity of assessment demands across a programme.

The number of summative assessments within a module should ensure that a learner is able to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge appropriate to the level of the programme. It is therefore reasonably expected that modules at levels 8 and 9 are likely to include fewer summative assessments than those at levels 6 and 7, although there are exceptions to this. In using multiple summative assessment tools within a module, assessment authors are required to give consideration to the possibility of learners securing higher marks as a result of accumulation of marks from smaller assessments which may only enable superficial demonstration of knowledge and skills. This type of practice has the potential to cause grade inflation and should be avoided, particularly where a module requires a learner to demonstrate detailed subject knowledge, more in-depth thinking, critical analysis, reflective practice or evaluative skills. Lecturers are also encouraged to be mindful of the overall programme assessment load and to avoid over-assessment.

DBS does not dictate prescribed assessment methods. Programme teams are encouraged to be creative and innovative in the design and implementation of assessment techniques that are reliable and valid and also reflect the nature of the field of study. DBS also encourages the use of assessment techniques that are reflective of real life employment activities and requirements in the subject area being assessed.

An important role of assessment is the support and reinforcement of learning. Hence, consistent and systematic feedback to learners is important. DBS requires that all learners are provided with informative feedback which outlines areas of success and areas for further development.

8.1.5.1 Implementation of the Continuous Assessment Process
For each element of continuous assessment, each learner must be given a clear and unambiguous written assessment specification. This specification should normally include the following:

- The module name, code and details of examiner
- The nature of the coursework in detail
- The learning outcomes being assessed
- The specific deliverable(s) required from learners, including format required (e.g. type written) and word-count, if specified
- The percentage of marks allocated for that assignment and for each component deliverable, where there is more than one
- The dates on which the assignment brief is given to learners
- Penalty accruing for late or non-submission
- The maximum number of repeat opportunities
- The submission date for the assignment (or for each deliverable element where appropriate).
- The date feedback and assignment results will be available
- The DBS Policy on Academic Impropriety (or a relevant link to facilitate learners familiarising themselves with the contents of the policy).

8.1.5.2 Implementation of the Examination Paper Production Process

A template for all examination question papers will be prepared by the Examinations Officer following consultation with the School. The agreed template will be sent to the Faculty Managers for distribution by an agreed date in September. The Faculty Manager will advise the lecturer if the module is also taught in another mode or on another programme and confirm the module leader details. The template comprises four documents – one for each examination question paper and one for the solutions for each of the two sittings in the academic year.

The Faculty Managers are responsible for distributing the template to the relevant Lecturers with full instructions on requirements and submission dates, as agreed with the Assessment and Regulations Manager.
The lecturer(s) will set the exam question papers for all exam sessions as per the template and submit the papers to the Assessment and Regulations team in accordance with the instructions by the following dates;

- **Not later than November 15th for January exams**
- **Not later than February 14th for all end of semester 2 exams**

Where a programme does not follow the traditional semester. The Programme Leader is required to agree the assessment schedule, and all key dates, in advance with the Assessment and Regulations Manager. This will then be communicated to the programme team.

Where unforeseen circumstances prevent submission by the stated deadline, written communication of this must be submitted to the relevant Faculty Manager in advance of the submission date. Normally, a maximum extension of two calendar weeks may be agreed. Where submission cannot be satisfied in this period, the Faculty Manager will seek agreement from the Head of Faculty and School Operations for an alternative examination paper author to be appointed.

Only the approved programme name and module name as per the Approved Course Schedule agreed with QQI may be used on the exam question paper.

It is imperative that the agreed final exam question paper is checked for errors **prior to submission**. Checking should include:

- Completion in the correct template format
- Spelling / grammar
- Correct duration
- Correct module title
- Correct name of all examiners including the external examiner
- Correct exam session
- Typing errors
- Pages numbered sequentially
- Correct number of questions specified
- Clear instruction on any compulsory questions
- Questions numbered sequentially
- Instructions and number of questions tally (e.g. answer 3 out of 5 questions)
- Correct allocation of marks and a total mark of 100. If all questions carry equal marks please specify.
- Ensuring that the exam question paper is complete including any tables / graphs etc.
• Ensuring that any photocopied / scanned tables or attachments are legible.

The above check must be undertaken by the authoring lecturer and should be further checked as part of the moderation process.

Only one set of examination papers and solutions must be submitted per module, regardless of whether or not the module is delivered in different modes by different lecturers or on different programmes.

Where multiple sets of examination papers and solutions are submitted for one module, the Assessment and Regulations Manager will highlight this with the relevant Faculty Manager for resolution.

Responsibility for the accuracy and proofing of exam question papers rests with the Lecturers. The Academic Affairs Department is not responsible for proof reading examination papers.

The duration of the examination must be clearly stated on the front of the examination paper. Whilst recognising the nature of the subject and examination activity may influence examinations duration, the following applies as a general guideline:

• Examinations worth up to and including 5 credits are normally 2 hours in duration
• Examinations worth greater than 5 credits and up to 10 credits are normally 3 hours in duration

For example, an examination that is worth 50% of a 10 credit module will normally be 2 hours in duration. An examination that is worth 60% of a 10 credit module will normally be 3 hours in duration.

Note: Examinations worth less than or equal to 50% of a 5 credit module should normally be conducted as an in class test.

The examination papers, marking scheme and grading criteria are drafted by the Examiner responsible for the module. Where the module is taught by more than one lecturer, the module leader (as identified by the Faculty Manager) is the examiner and responsible for the assessment tools on the module. Where lecturers make alternative arrangements on a local level, the agreed exam author must be communicated to the Assessment and Regulations Manager.
Whilst ownership of the paper remains with the examiner, where more than one lecturer is involved in the delivery of the module to the same group or to different groups of learners, they should also be consulted on the development of the examination paper and solutions.

The examiner is required to provide the initial examination paper and marking scheme and a repeat examination paper and marking scheme.

In instances of a module running for the final time i.e. due to programme closure or programmatic review changes, an examiner may be asked to provide an additional examination paper and marking scheme to accommodate any deferred learners. This will be managed by the Head of Faculty and School Operations. An alternative date for the submission of the additional paper and marking scheme can be agreed with the Assessment and Regulations Manager.

All draft examination papers must be in the standard DBS house style and should normally be consistent with previous examination papers in the same module where the module has been assessed by examination previously. Details of the DBS house style are available from Academic Affairs.

The examiner is required to store the examination paper securely throughout the development stage. This includes the requirement to password protect the document at all stages in the development process.

In order to minimise potential for security breaches, printing of draft examination papers by examiners or moderators should be avoided.

Circulation of draft examination papers to other members of the module lecturing team or the moderator should be done through the specified electronic means only and should include the sending or sharing of the password separately to the examination paper.

The final draft of the paper is reviewed by the designated moderator. The moderator should establish that the paper is:

- presented in the required DBS house style
- appropriate for the learning outcomes it seeks to assess
- set at the appropriate level as per DBS Guide to Levels 6-9 Grade Descriptors (Appendix 8.4)
- suitable in terms of content and presentation, and
- typographical or grammatical errors are identified and eliminated.
Any changes considered desirable by the moderator are discussed with the examiner. Differences of opinion should be resolved by the PL. It is expected that such differences of opinion will be the exception rather than the rule.

When the papers and marking schemes are agreed, the Moderator completes and signs Part A of the Internal Moderation Form (F8.4) this is retained by the lecturer/module leader in the first instance as it may be required for audit purposes, evidence in a programmatic or institutional review or in the case of a learner appeal.

The examiner then forwards the approved drafts of the examination papers, the marking schemes and confirmation of moderation, to the Examinations Team in Academic Affairs, where receipt is formally recorded.

When submitting the paper, the authoring lecturer is required to confirm the full check has been completed and they are satisfied with the accuracy of the examination paper.

Academic Affairs cannot accept exam question papers from lecturers that are not in the correct template format and have not been signed off as having satisfied the requirements.

Submissions must be made by the agreed dates. This ensures that the external examining process, any subsequent amendments and then the final printing and collation of papers can be accommodated in a reasonable timeframe.

Submission of papers without password protection or to an alternative email address than that specified may be considered a potential security breach and new papers and marking schemes may be requested as a result.

8.1.5.3 Marking Scheme and Grade Criteria

The author of an assessment is also required to produce a marking scheme that indicates the key areas to be addressed within the task and how the marks will be distributed within each section. It is important that marking schemes are as detailed as possible to ensure consistency when used by a team of examiners.

For example, where a marking scheme lists a number of points that may be addressed within a question, it should indicate what degree of detail, analysis, evaluation and application is required in relation to the number of points – thus preventing learners being awarded marks for merely providing a list.
A marking scheme should clearly outline which learning outcomes are expected to be addressed and the format in which it may be presented. Ideally, further detail should be provided to indicate what an examiner may award higher marks for.

It is important to note that the achievement of learning outcomes is the threshold standard — i.e. that required to achieve a Pass. Learners awarded a higher mark should have exceeded the learning outcomes to a varying degree, depending on the grade. This is reflected in the grade descriptors provided to all examiners and learners.

8.1.5.4 Online Submission of Continuous Assessment

Where possible, continuous assessments are submitted through the online portal Moodle. The following steps are completed in order to submit online.

(i) Learners complete a cover sheet which is available on the Moodle home page.

(ii) The learner then continues to the assignment submission area of the individual module page.

(iii) The learner uploads the file which contains their assignment.

(iv) Once the file has been uploaded the learner clicks the ‘send for marking’ button.

(v) A message appears instantly which states the following: ‘By clicking on this button I am aware of the DBS policy regarding cheating, plagiarism and all other forms of academic impropriety. The coursework submitted is my own or my group’s work and all other sources consulted have been appropriately acknowledged. I am aware that in the case of doubt, an investigation will be held.’

(vi) When the learner agrees to the above, there is a final option to submit the assignment they have uploaded. They are also asked to check that they have completed the assignment cover sheet.

(vii) The learner will then see that their assignment has been submitted with the date and time displaying at the top of the page.

Where submission of an assessment is through Moodle, lecturers should not accept submission through an alternative means except with explicit approval from the Assessment and Regulations Manager. This is to prevent unfair practice and ensure parity of assessment requirements for all learners.
8.1.6 Assessing Learner Attainment

Assessment of learner attainment is measured against the applicable learning outcomes and informed by the published grade descriptors. Marks awarded will be reflective of the extent to which learning outcomes have been met or exceeded.

There will be a clear demonstrable relationship between assessment and learning outcomes, the standards required for different levels of performance and the grades awarded.

All assessment will be criterion referenced against clearly published requirements, and marks will be awarded according to the standards defined in published grade descriptors. Assessment decisions will not be made based on the comparison of learners’ work against one another nor by the requirement for specified percentages to be awarded particular grades.

Generic grade descriptors are in use across DBS but programme teams are encouraged to design and implement module-specific ones. In such instances, these should also be approved by the External Examiner along with the assessment tasks for the programme.

A basic “Pass” mark (normally 40%) for an assessment task indicates threshold attainment of the learning outcomes that are being assessed.

A mark above Pass level is an indication of the extent to which the threshold has been exceeded. Contextualising grade descriptors is a useful way of outlining what is required to achieve higher grades.

Examiners must utilise the marking schemes and grading descriptors to ensure that the work to which the mark is awarded reflects the standard that correlates with it.

Assessment of learner performance is greater than the mathematical computation of marks for subsections. Having totalled marks of subsections the examiner is required to review the final overall mark against the correlating grade descriptor and satisfy themselves that the appropriate mark is awarded. The examiner is entitled to add or deduct marks to reflect more accurately the standard of the overall piece of work assessed.

Wherever possible, examiners should avoid the issuing of borderline marks – i.e. 1% below the next grade band – because this may be perceived as uncertainty in allocating one of two grade bands.

The full range of marks from 0% to 100% should be used by examiners.
Examiners are advised that the awarding of a mark below 40% indicates work of an unsatisfactory standard and demonstrates only a superficial understanding of the subject matter.

Work that is considered a marginal Fail in that it demonstrates achievement of some of the learning outcomes, albeit limited or with evident gaps, should fall into the grade band of 35–39% where the opportunity for compensation may apply depending on programme and award regulations.

The awarding of a mark over 70% indicates work of an excellent standard and over 90% would be considered outstanding or exceptional, possibly of a publishable standard.

**8.1.7 Assessment Feedback**

Except where approved otherwise, feedback to learners should be provided and the terminology utilised should correlate with the grade awarded and the relevant section of the grade descriptor. Feedback should be recorded on the relevant mark sheet.

Examiners are required to provide learners with evaluative comments and constructive, developmental feedback that corresponds to the specific marking criteria employed and reflects the grade given.

All feedback should relate to the learning outcomes being measured. Action points for further development should be noted. This feedback needs to be fit for purpose and of value to the learner in planning their progression through a programme of study.

Details of the allocation of marks, in line with the marking scheme, must be clearly apparent to second markers, external examiners and learners, as appropriate.

As a guide, assessment feedback should be:

- Specific and relevant to the assessment and its learning outcomes and the individual piece of work
- Constructive, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment including guidance as to how the learner can improve
- Focused and not attempt to address too many different aspects at the same time
- Unambiguous
In contrast, it is necessary to ensure that feedback:

- Is not too general, vague or brief
- Is not subjective – ‘I don’t like the way that you...’
- Does not criticise or penalise a learner for failing to include aspects that the task did not direct them to include either implicitly or explicitly
- Does not criticise or penalise a learner for a particular style or structure if no preferred style or structure was specified

Feedback must be based on fact and description, not personal opinion. Acknowledging that assessment is an informed, professional judgement, it is a judgement of the completion of a task against set learning outcomes and it is therefore both the task and the learning outcomes that should inform and direct the feedback. Feedback should enable a learner to build on success and identify actions for improvement.

Except where specified otherwise, assignments are required to be marked and moderated and returned to the learners within a period of not more than four weeks from the submission deadline. Some larger modules may require a longer time, by agreement with the Head of Faculty and School Operations in conjunction with the Assessment and Regulations Manager. In such cases the lecturer will communicate the expected feedback date to the learners. Marks awarded by the examiner are subject to verification by the Moderator, who reviews a sample of learner scripts for the purpose of assessing the marking standards applied by the examiner. Any issues noted are referred back to the examiner for consideration and action as deemed appropriate.

Following the marking and moderation process, provisional results are communicated to learners by posting them on Moodle. These results, are provisional as they are still subject to ratification by the relevant Examination Board. Results should be communicated to learners in a timely fashion to facilitate learners having a clear understanding of their progress in the module.

Where two or more learners present a joint assignment, then each learner in the group is required to submit and retain a copy of the entire assignment. Each member of the group will receive an individual grade for a group assignment. Refer to DBS Academic Guidelines on Assessing Group Work (Appendix 8.2)

The examiner is responsible for the safe-handling, storage and security of assignments or scripts. Examiners are required to take appropriate precautions to ensure that scripts/assignments should
not be unnecessarily exposed to risk of access, loss, theft or destruction; for example, scripts should never be left unattended in a public area or in a vehicle. Refer to DBS Academic Guidelines on Good Practice in the Handling and Annotation of Examination Scripts/Assignments (Appendix 8.3).

To provide formative feedback to learners, the marked assignments should be made available to learners to allow them to review the marks awarded together with the comments of the examiner. This will normally be available on the original submission in Moodle. However, for those assessments such as presentation, exhibitions and events, that aren’t uploaded to Moodle, feedback should be made available either in class on by way of a feedback report uploaded to Moodle. This is for learners to better understand the academic requirements in question, to improve their subsequent performance and to make them aware of any shortcomings so they understand why they received the grade they received. It is good practice to include a section on how the grade could have been improved.

8.1.8 Assessment Review

Assessment tasks, marking schemes and grade descriptors should be reviewed regularly as should the assessment strategies of modules and programmes along with the assessment procedures and regulations associated with them.

Within DBS, assessment is reviewed annually as part of the programme monitoring process and a more detailed review of assessment strategies is undertaken as part of the programmatic review process. In all instances of review, learner feedback is sought and utilised to inform decisions relating to assessment.

The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring the programme team undertakes the necessary assessment review for their module. A programme level approach should be taken to ensure learners are not over assessed or subjected to an over emphasis on a narrow range of assessment tools.

Changes to an assessment strategy should be proposed to the Programme Leader who will review it, along with the rationale for the change, in the context of the overall programme and the proposed impact on learners. Where the Programme Leader supports the proposal, he / she will present it for approval to the Board of Studies.
DBS encourages the ongoing review and enhancement of assessment practice. Learner performance and/or feedback is expected to inform proposals for changes to assessment. In some cases this may originate from a recommendation of the Examination Board when module performance has been highlighted in comparison with other modules.

A part of the ongoing monitoring and review of effectiveness, post changes to assessment, the Programme Report for the subsequent year is expected to note the impact of the change and draw comparisons with the previous years’ assessment performance.
8.2 Word Count Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Word Count Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Lecturers, Moderators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for consideration to:</td>
<td>Programme Leaders, Head of School, Assessment and Regulations Manager, Head of Academic Enhancement, Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.1 Word Count in Assessments

As part of undertaking an accredited programme of study in DBS learners are developing subject knowledge and related skills but are also expected to develop academic skills. This includes the skill of academic writing. The ability to present a case or argument, to justify a position, to write within a clear framework that includes an introduction and a conclusion and uses primary and secondary research appropriately and correctly to support a position put forward are key attributes of effective academic writing. In demonstrating the ability to display these attributes learners are expected to satisfy the requirements of specified word count limits.

The purpose of a word count limit is to give learners clear guidance of the maximum length of a piece of assessed written work, the amount of effort expected and therefore the level of detail they should go into and how they should allocate time to one assignment in relation to others. Writing to set word count limits is a skill required within some professions, as well as an academic skill. Word limits are set appropriate to the learning outcomes, the credit weighting of the assessment and the framework level of the module.

I. An assessment specification is published for each assignment clearly specifying a maximum word count. In some instances, a minimum word count may also be outlined.

II. Learners will not be penalised for an assessment that goes under or over the word count by 10%.

III. If an executive summary or abstract is required then a separate word count for this should normally be specified.

IV. The penalty for exceeding the word count should also be stated to clearly to learners.

V. There is no mandatory penalty other than that after the word limit has been reached no more of the submission will be marked/graded. Likewise, a failure to meet the maximum word limit may result in lower marks based on the quality of the work because the learner may not have included the necessary information required for the assessment to meet the learning outcomes.

VI. Lecturers may, at their discretion, provide feedback on the additional but unmarked material.

VII. The word count includes everything in the main body of the text from the introduction to the conclusion including headings, tables, citations, quotes, lists and footnotes.

VIII. The word count does not include the cover page, table of contents, executive summary, list of references and appendices, unless it is clearly stated in the assessment specification that this assignment is an exception to the rule.
IX. Appendices should be kept to a minimum and only contain reference materials illustrating and supporting arguments fully made in the main body of the work. Any other material included in appendices, except where specifically requested in the coursework instructions, will not be marked.

X. Learners should avoid attempts to work around the policy by excessive use of diagrams, hyphenation or the use of screen shots, except where specifically allowed such as IT programmes for example.

XI. The actual word count should be clearly and correctly stated on the title page of the title page of the assignment submission by the learner.

XII. Where the word limit is exceeded a line should be drawn in the submission by the examiner indicating the point at which the word limit has been reached.
### 8.3 Late Submission Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Late Submission of Assessment Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implemented by:</strong></td>
<td>Lecturers, Moderators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Updated by:</strong></td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulated for consideration to:</strong></td>
<td>Programme Leaders, Head of School, Assessment and Regulations Manager, Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version number:</strong></td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review date:</strong></td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3.1 Penalties for Late Submission

DBS applies penalties for the unauthorised late submission of assessments through Moodle. This is applied consistently across all modules and programmes leading to a QQI award and ensures fairness in the treatment of learners and prevents learners from securing an unfair advantage over other learners.

The late submission penalty applies to first attempt submissions only. Repeat attempts that are not submitted by the deadline, except where an agreed extension is authorised, will be awarded a mark of 0%. It is the learner’s responsibility to ensure assessment submissions are received by the lecturer by the submission date and through the specified means of submission.

This is the default policy of all DBS programmes awarded by QQI, unless indicated otherwise within the student handbook following alternative arrangements agreed as part of the programme validation.

This policy shall apply to all first-attempt items of continuous assessment submitted through the specified means. Any item of continuous assessment to be submitted through Moodle should not normally be submitted through any other means. An examiner has the right to refuse the assessment if the specified submission mode is not adhered to.

Immediately after the submission deadline for an item of continuous assessment, a penalty will be applied per day or part thereof.

For the purposes of these penalties, a day is defined as any day of the week, including weekends and public holidays when the College may be closed.

The minimum possible mark for late submission is 0%.

The number of marks deducted depends on the lateness of the submission and will be deducted according to the following scale:

- Where an assessment is submitted between 1 and 14 days late 2 marks per day are deducted
- An assessment submitted after the deadline but within 24 hours of the original deadline will attract the first day penalty, i.e. deduction of 2 marks
• Where an assessment is more than 14 days late it is annotated at the discretion of the lecturer but no marks can be awarded.

Where an assessment is undertaken in a group, the piece of work should be submitted in its entirety, and any penalty for late submission incurred applies to all group members. Any learner who becomes aware that a group deadline will not be achieved through a lack of participation of another group member; should make this clearly known to the examiner in advance of the deadline.

A learner may opt to submit a late assessment more than 14 days after the deadline, but it will be graded at 0% and deemed as an attempt for the purpose of calculating a final award and entitlement to honours. The learner may subsequently re-submit that submission as a repeat attempt, at the scheduled repeat submission point and the examiner will mark the submission as a repeat attempt.

Standard exclusions of agreed extensions or personal mitigating circumstances as recognised by the College will apply where these have been agreed in line with the appropriate policy and supported by the necessary independent evidence as applicable. This evidence must be provided to the applicable programme coordinator in a timely fashion and include all appropriate documentation the learner wishes to have taken into account.

Learners are advised that late submission resulting in a fail grade may also impact on the entitlement to an honours award where first attempt marks are considered for award calculation. In such cases the first attempt mark will be recorded as 0%.

8.3.2 Implementing the Late Submission Penalty Process

The late submission penalty applies to all learners on all modules contributing to a DBS programme leading to a QQI award.

The procedure applies to learners submitting summative first-attempt continuous assessments i.e. assessments submitted for grading purposes that contribute to the pass mark for the module, across all programmes.

Learners are to be notified of the penalty policy and a copy of the full policy should be made available to them.
Each lecturer with assessment responsibilities is responsible for the consistent and accurate application of the policy. In addition, lecturers should ensure they alert their learners to the existence of this policy. Programme Leaders are responsible for assuring themselves the lecturing team for the programme is aware of the penalty policy and procedure.

This policy does not overrule the entitlement of all learners to seek an authorised extension where personal mitigating circumstances prevent completion and submission by the specified deadline. In such cases, no penalty shall be applied except where the agreed revised submission deadline is not met. Programme coordinators in consultation with lecturers, must ensure that revised submission deadlines are clearly recorded in the applicable student record.

Learners must be advised of the submission date and time of their assessments at the point of the assessment being issued.

A formal policy and procedure for considering requests for extensions to continuous assessment deadlines is in place (see personal mitigating circumstances policy). Learners are required to familiarise themselves with the policy and take the correct steps specified in order to avail of an extension.

All assessments must be submitted electronically through Moodle, except where an alternative arrangement has been agreed, on or before the specified deadline. Electronic submissions are identified as final submission for grading, are date and time stamped and may not be amended or changed after being submitted.

Learners are required to retain a copy of the assessment work/project submitted.

The internal examiner will note the date and time of assessment submission and will apply appropriate penalties as detailed within the DBS policy.

Learners must be notified, by the examiner, of any late submission penalties that have been applied.

Retrospective claims for PMCs are only accepted in exceptional circumstances and will be decided on by the Assessment and Regulations Manager.
8.4 Repeat Assessment Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Repeat Assessment Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Implemented by: | Lecturers  
Moderators |
| Updated by: | Director of Academic Affairs |
| Circulated for consideration to: | Programme Leaders  
Head of School  
Assessment and Regulations Manager  
Head of Academic Enhancement  
Schools Executive Board |
| Date approved by Academic Board | |
| Version number: | 2016/1 |
| Review date: | 2019 |
8.4.1 Entitlement to Repeat Assessment

DBS recognises that learners may find themselves in a position of failing to meet the assessment requirements of a module or programme. In line with QQI requirements, DBS affords learners a limited number of repeat assessment opportunities to recover failure in a module or module component as applicable.

Repeat opportunities are limited per assessment rather than per programme. In the first instance DBS will provide learner support to assist learners to recover failure. Such supports include access to lecture material and a subject lecturer as well as academic writing study skills support provided by the DBS Library Service. However, where repeated and consistent failure is apparent DBS will counsel learners to reconsider their study intentions.

Students are advised to consult their student handbook to confirm the specific requirements for their programme. Please note, the provision of repeat opportunities may not be automatic and the College reserves the right not to provide a repeat opportunity in circumstances where it is deemed in the best interest of the College, the student or other parties impacted by the undertaking of any such assessment. Programme-specific policies on entitlement and access to repeat opportunities will be communicated to learners by the programme team and via the programme assessment schedule.

Learners are advised that failure to pass at the first attempt a module which contributes to an award calculation will result in the loss of entitlement to an honours award (or other such classification higher than a pass). This is in line with QQI Sectoral Convention number 3 - no repeat for honours.

Learners wishing to avail of a repeat assessment opportunity are required to pay the associated fee in order to be registered for the assessment. Non-payment of the fee will result in the assessment not being arranged (where for example placement or lab facilities are required) or marked.

Learners who do not avail of assessment opportunities offered to them at the time they are offered, except where authorised exceptions have been agreed, will be deemed to have foregone the assessment opportunity and a mark of 0% will be recorded.

A learner that exhausts all assessment opportunities as a result of failure or non-participation including due to non-communication with DBS regarding intentions or circumstances will be
presented to the Examination Board as such with a recommendation they are academically withdrawn due to programme failure.

### 8.4.1.1 Undergraduate Programmes

Learners on undergraduate programmes are normally provided with a maximum of three repeat opportunities following an initial non-submission or fail of an assessment, except where the programme validation document specifies any deviation from this.

Repeat opportunities are normally offered in the format of repeat assessment without attendance (also known as retake) for repeat attempts one and two, and repeat assessment with attendance (also known as resit) for the final repeat opportunity.

Specific requirements of individual programmes are outlined in the student handbook.

### 8.4.1.2 Postgraduate Programmes

Learners on postgraduate programmes are normally provided with a maximum of three repeat opportunities following an initial non-submission or fail of an assessment of a taught module, except where the programme validation document specifies any deviation from this.

Learners on a postgraduate programme are normally only provided with one repeat assessment opportunity for a research project / dissertation / thesis module. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring the learners are aware of limitations and implications of repeat attempts for all modules as part of the assessment schedule, communicated at the outset of the programme or stage.

Repeat opportunities are normally offered in the format of repeat assessment without attendance (also known as retake) for repeat attempts.

Specific requirements of individual programmes are outlined in the student handbook.

### 8.4.2 Management of Failed Assessments, Non-Submissions and Issuing of Repeat Opportunities

Learners are reasonably expected to attempt all programme assessment components. Failure to do so may have implications for their status on the programme or their final award.
Any learner failing to successfully pass an assessment within the repeat opportunities offered will be deemed to have failed the programme and, therefore, be withdrawn from the programme. Standard exceptions apply to this where pass by compensation applies or where the learner has recognised personal mitigating circumstances accepted by the College in line with the relevant policy.

Failure to complete a required assessment component, or failure to achieve an overall Pass grade in a module within the maximum number of repeat opportunities provided, may disqualify a learner from passing the programme or progressing to the next stage.

Failure to complete or submit assessment requirements by the appropriate submission deadline may impact a learner’s timetable of programme completion i.e. the timeframe for completing the programme or stage may be extended and progression prevented until such a time as the failure has been recovered. Consequently, this may impede a learner graduating with their class group.

Learners who achieve a fail grade, fail to submit a continuous assessment or sit an examination will receive a grade of 0% for non-submission.

Repeat assessment opportunities will be determined by the Examination Board depending on the specific regulations of the module and programme concerned.

Learners who achieve a Fail grade in an assessment component of a module that has multiple assessment components may be required to repeat the failed component if the combined overall module grade falls below 40% or Pass by Compensation cannot be applied.

Repeat-attempt marks will be considered for the calculation of the overall module mark and final award where Pass by Compensation cannot be applied.

Module marks for repeat attempts will be capped at 40%.

Repeat attempts for modules that do contribute to the final award calculation will be capped at 40% and repeat attempt marks will be considered in the award calculation thus removing the learners entitlement to an honours award (or other such classification above a pass), in line with QQI sectoral convention number 3. Learners who fail an award calculation module at the first attempt will be entitled to the maximum of a pass award.
Where a learner fails to submit a continuous assessment component and subsequent repeat attempts, they will be academically withdrawn from the programme.

It is the learner’s responsibility to be fully aware of the impact on their marks and subsequent award of failing to submit or failing to pass assessment components at the first attempt. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure the assessment schedule including information pertaining to regulations and awards is communicated to the learner or that they are directed to its location.

8.4.3 Implementing the Repeat Assessment Opportunities Policy

This procedure applies to all learners undertaking summative assessments, with a clearly communicated submission deadline, on all DBS programmes leading to a QQI award.

The repeat opportunities policy promotes the principles of fairness and consistency in the assessment process and ensures the application of the QQI sectoral convention of no repeat for honours.

Learners should be advised of the assessment regulations, repeat opportunities and implications of failing to comply with same as part of their induction. It is clearly documented in writing within the student handbook and a copy made available at all times on the College website.

For clarity, non-submission refers to a learner not sitting an examination at the scheduled date and time or not completing and putting forward for marking an assessment task by the scheduled date. In the event of non-submission, a mark of 0% will be applied and an assessment attempt recorded.

In the event of failure of an assessment or examination, the examiner will normally include the assessment in the sample for moderation.

All learner marks, including 0% for non-submission are recorded on the learner record in Agresso.

DBS is obliged to keep a record of all assessment attempts and grades awarded for each learner.

It is the learner’s responsibility to be fully aware of the impact on their final award of failing to submit continuous assessment components or failing to pass assessments and modules at the first attempt.
It is the responsibility of the Assessment and Regulations Manager to ensure this information is made available to learners.

All assessments submitted electronically through Moodle on or before the specified deadline are confirmed as being put forward for grading, are date and time stamped and may not be amended or changed after they are submitted.

Repeat opportunities are only authorised where a learner needs to recover failed module(s). Repeat opportunities to improve performance from an existing pass standard are not authorised in any circumstances.

Where a learner achieves an overall module mark of 35 – 39% pass by compensation may be applied subject to the specific requirements of this as outlined in QQI HET Assessment and Standards 2013 and any special regulations of the programme concerned.

Pass by Compensation can only be applied to first-attempt grades and cannot be applied to a module within a programme where an overall Fail grade has been recorded against any module on that stage.

Learners who fail to pass an award contributing module using first attempt grades (including through Pass by Compensation where this is permitted) but achieve a Pass using repeat attempt grades will only be entitled to a Pass award.

Learners who demonstrate a pattern of poor performance or a significant drop in performance are brought to the attention of the Programme Leader or Level Manager to arrange for a meeting with the learner concerned to establish any circumstances that may be impacting performance and to advise of supports available.

It is the learner’s responsibility to avail of any supports provided.

Any learner is entitled to appeal a fail grade in accordance with the DBS Academic Appeals Policy.
### 8.5 Academic Impropriety Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Academic Impropriety Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implemented by:</strong></td>
<td>Lecturers, Programme Leaders, Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Updated by:</strong></td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulated for consideration to:</strong></td>
<td>Programme Leaders, Head of Academic Affairs, Head of School, Assessment and Regulations Manager, Head of Academic Enhancement, Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version number:</strong></td>
<td>2016/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review date:</strong></td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.5.1 Promoting Academic Integrity

DBS promotes academic integrity and is proactive in encouraging correct academic writing and research skills. All learners are advised of the expectations in relation to academic work submitted for assessment and are provided with access to services to support the development of appropriate academic skills. In addition, DBS uses plagiarism detection software (see appendix 8.7 for full details of the plagiarism detection software policy).

Learners are advised that DBS takes cases of academic impropriety very seriously and will apply penalties up to and including expulsion from the College with no right to return or entitlement to a refund.

DBS reserves the right to protect its reputation as an academic institution and will defend any legal challenge to its implementation of this policy and the outcomes of deliberations relating to academic impropriety.

Examiners are reminded that poor academic conduct or academic impoverishment is not to be confused with impropriety. Instances of academic impoverishment should be addressed through marking accordingly and providing the appropriate feedback to assist academic development. Cases of suspected academic impropriety i.e. the intention to secure an unfair advantage through dishonest academic practice in the assessment process, should be addressed through the Academic Impropriety procedure.

DBS encourages communities of learning, the creation of learning partnerships, and authorised collaboration in assessment. However, all assessment tasks are to be entirely the work of the individual submitting it unless stated otherwise. Any assessments found to contain work the same as, or similar to, that of another learner, past or present, will also be considered academic impropriety and the appropriate procedure will be applied and penalties determined as appropriate.

In order to deter learners from considering academic impropriety as a low risk option in cases where they feel failure is likely, in considering the penalty to be imposed the Committee should normally ensure that any penalty is more significant than having made an honest attempt at assessment and failed.

DBS reserves the right to carry out a “viva voce” examination for Masters Dissertations or any assessment of a significant ECTS weighting. A viva voce is an opportunity for you to orally defend the
assessment piece that you have submitted. DBS may institute a viva examination in the case where clarification is required regarding some element or elements of the written piece of work.

The scope of a viva examination can include:

- confirming to the satisfaction of the panel that your submission is your own original work,
- verify the authenticity of the research,
- establish that you are aware of the wider research field of your chosen topic,
- demonstrate that you understand in detail the content of your written submission.

In the case where a panel deems that a student cannot sufficiently recount their work, the panel has the authority to either pass or fail the student based upon the strength of their oral defence.

In cases where a large disparity between a strong written submission and a poor oral defence occurs, the panel may refer the case to the disciplinary committee with an accompanying report; the report will also be provided to the student in advance of the disciplinary committee hearing. The disciplinary committee will impose a penalty based on the severity of the case as detailed in the report provided by the panel. The disciplinary committee will not revisit the case itself, the remit of the committee is to impose a minor or major penalty and provide that outcome to the student in a timely fashion.

8.5.1.1 Definitions

Cheating:

Examples of cheating include but are not restricted to:

1. Any form of communication with or copying from any other source during an examination/assessment
2. Use of a third party for the completion or partial completion of an assessment e.g. friend, family member or essay writing service
3. Introducing any form of written or other material into an examination (including that stored electronically) other than that specified on an examination paper
4. Use of mobile phone during an assessment or examination
5. Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records or identity cards
6. Submission of false claims of prior qualification, research or experience in order to gain credit for prior learning.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is defined as: the presentation of work, written or otherwise, of any other person, including another learner, or institution, as the candidate’s own. Plagiarism includes but is not restricted to:

1. Verbatim copying of another’s work without clear identification and acknowledgement
2. Close paraphrasing of another’s work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without clear identification and acknowledgement
3. Unidentified/unacknowledged presentation of another’s concept as one’s own
4. Reuse of a learner’s own content previously submitted for assessment or publication elsewhere.

**Collusion:**

Collusion is defined as the conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more learners in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a learner and another person in the preparation and production of work, which is presented as the learner’s own.

**Over-Quoting:**

It is important that any body of work comprises significant analysis by the learner. Therefore it is not appropriate for an essay to consist of large numbers of referenced quotations from other sources without suitable discussion and analysis.

**Paraphrasing/Re-wording:**

It is not sufficient to merely reword/paraphrase content (either from an external source or your own work). Ideas and concepts must be reframed and insights provided. Deliberate plagiarism, including changing words to disguise a source, is a serious offence.

**Self-Plagiarism:**

Academic Impropriety also includes self-plagiarism, where a student uses work previously submitted for another assessment or publication and re-purposes it in another assignment. While it is
legitimate to draw on and develop ideas that may be covered elsewhere, it is not acceptable to resubmit a piece of work for assessment twice, and this includes blocks of text within a piece of work.

**Essay Mills:**
Purchasing assignments from online ‘essay mills’ is an intentional attempt by the student to submit work that is not their own and will be dealt with severely.
It should be noted that there is a draft law in train to make essay mills illegal in Ireland.

**8.5.2 Implementation of the Academic Impropriety Policy**
DBS operates on the basis of fairness and transparency, promotes academic integrity and seeks to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment process. As a result, the Academic Impropriety policy will be applied in a consistent manner and all instances of suspected academic impropriety will be managed through this procedure.

DBS will not condone or facilitate academic conduct that seeks to intentionally compromise the reputation of DBS as an academic institution and the standards of the programmes it offers.
All learners will be notified of the action to be taken in any instance of academic impropriety being suspected and the potential penalties that may be applied.

The academic impropriety policy applies to all learners on all DBS programmes regardless of location, mode of study or target award. Exceptions apply where an alternative policy has been agreed as part of a formal collaboration.

The Assessment and Regulations Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy in respect of all cases brought to his / her attention and is also responsible for ensuring all lecturing staff are aware of the policy, of their obligations within it and how to act in cases of suspected academic impropriety.

The Assessment and Regulations Manager is responsible for determining whether an identified case of suspected impropriety warrants further investigation.

Where a suspicion of impropriety is identified the policy must be applied in a timely manner to ensure the interests of the learner concerned and consideration of examination board requirements.
A learner must be of any suspicion and of any proceedings where a matter is being investigated. Notification should be in writing and should normally be by email. The learner should be notified of their rights and provided with a link to or copy of the policy and procedure along with any source material identified in cases of suspected plagiarism.

Each learner has a right to attend a formal deliberating committee in respect of a case brought against them. Should they choose not to attend or participate the committee is authorised to proceed regardless. DBS strongly encourages the attendance of learners at applicable meetings of the AI committee. Learners are permitted to ask a member of student services or the class representative to attend the meeting with them.

Learners are advised that the deliberating committee is required to determine if, on the balance of probability, impropriety occurred or not. In that regard DBS believes there is no justification for impropriety and claims of stress, financial pressure, ill health or other such instances will not be accepted as justification for academic impropriety. Equally, lack of knowledge is not considered a suitable defence. DBS provides extensive information to all learners on the regulations and their responsibilities within them.

Dishonest conduct in assessment will not be tolerated and learners should look to alternative options in times of high pressure or uncertainty. Any learner who believes they are subject to pressure that is impacting their studies and their ability to satisfy assessment requirements is advised to consult Student Services, the Programme Leader or module lecturer and request appropriate supports or information on the options available to them.

DBS will retain a written record of each stage of proceedings. In the event that it is found on the balance of probabilities that no offence has occurred, all records of the allegation will be removed and deleted from the learner record.

8.5.3 Initial Action in Instances of Suspected Academic Impropriety

8.5.3.1 During the Examination Sitting

Any member of staff who suspects academic impropriety during assessment under examination conditions must report such suspicions immediately to the Chief Invigilator/Examinations Officer or representative from Academic Affairs.
The Chief Invigilator/Examinations Officer is required to approach the learner concerned and ask them to step outside the examination hall. A second invigilator or staff member should be present for this. The chief invigilator or Examinations Officer is required to:

- Confirm the identity of the learner and confiscate the learner’s I.D card temporarily
- Explain the suspicions and reason for suspicion
- Note the response of the learner
- Remove any unauthorised material
- Advise the learner of the entitlement to complete the examination and
- Confirm the requirement for the learner to report to the Academic Affairs Office immediately after the examination concludes.

On returning to the hall, the invigilator is required to annotate the script clearly at that point. The learner is then permitted to finish the examination.

The Chief Invigilator is required to submit a full, written report on the incident to the Assessment and Regulations Manager.

At the end of the examination, the learner concerned must present himself/herself immediately to the Academic Affairs Office where he / she will be advised on the next steps in the case of suspected academic impropriety. The learner will have their I.D card returned at this juncture, along with any personal items not deemed relevant to the investigation.

The relevant script is corrected as normal.

8.5.3.2 Suspected Academic Impropriety during Grading of Learner Assessment

Any Examiner who suspects academic impropriety must report such suspicions immediately to the Assessment and Regulations Manager. In making such a report the examiner is required to provide:

- A copy of the learner submission
- The mark sheet and feedback for the learner based on being marked as normal
- Copies of all relevant evidence/documentation, supporting this suspicion
- A completed copy of the DBS Academic Impropriety form
This should be done as soon as the Academic Impropriety is suspected, to allow for appropriate investigatory action and possible disciplinary proceedings in advance of the examinations and/or Examination Boards.

Each learner is entitled to the presumption of innocence and therefore the assessment must be marked as normal. The grade and feedback will not be released until such a time as the allegation has been investigated and an outcome determined on the balance of probability.

Where suspicion arises due to a report from plagiarism detection software, the lecturer must first have reviewed and interpreted the report and made an informed judgement on whether or not it appears academic impropriety may have occurred. Information produced by the plagiarism detection software does not automatically equate to confirmation or evidence of plagiarism. Further guidance can be obtained from the Assessment and Regulations Manager, The Head of Academic Programmes or the Research Librarian.

8.5.4 Procedures in Cases of Suspected Academic Impropriety

The Assessment and Regulations Manager or nominee reviews the Invigilator’s report or the examiner’s report and evidence to determine if there is a case of potential academic impropriety or whether it is academic impoverishment. If it is decided that there is insufficient basis for a charge of academic impropriety, no further action is taken in the matter. If it is decided that there is a case to answer, the Assessment and Regulations Manager will arrange for the learner to be advised of the allegation and requested to provide a response to the evidence and allegation put forward.

8.5.4.1 Investigatory Stage

Each learner is entitled to the presumption of innocence and must also be afforded the right of response to any allegations.

The learner must be contacted and provided with the following:

- Confirmation that an allegation of suspected impropriety has been received
- The origin of the allegation including the role of the individual making the allegation and the assessment concerned
- The report and evidence presented to support the allegation
- A copy of the Academic Impropriety Policy or link to it
- The right to respond
- The availability of Student Services to provide assistance
• The deadline by which a response must be received in writing
• Notification that failure to respond will result in the case proceeding in absence of a response
• A warning that failure to admit any wrong doing in the investigatory stage may result in more severe penalties should the allegation be proven at a later stage in proceeding.
• Notification that penalties for academic impropriety are applied up to and including expulsion from the college with no right to return or entitlement to a refund.

A learner should be provided with a minimum of 5 working days to provide their response before any subsequent action is taken.

8.5.4.2 Potential Outcomes of the Investigatory Stage

On completion of the investigatory stage, the Assessment and Regulations Manager is required to determine one of the following outcomes on the balance of probability:

1. No offence has occurred
2. Admission of the offence by the learner
3. Unresolved i.e. the evidence suggests there may be a case to answer but the learner has not admitted to any offence, intentional or otherwise.

The learner must be notified of the outcome of the investigatory stage, and any associated actions, at the earliest opportunity and not normally more than 10 working days after the response deadline provided to the learner.

Where the Assessment and Regulations Manager finds that no offence has occurred. The matter will be considered concluded and the results will be authorised for release to the learner.

Where the Assessment and Regulations Manager is dealing with admission of the offence by the learner the following options apply:

Undergraduate:
For a first offence in an undergraduate non-award bearing module a mark of 0% and requirement to repeat the assessment, and the module capped at 40% will be imposed. The learner will also be obliged to attend and complete the DBS Library Service course on Academic Writing and present their confirmation of completion to the Assessment and Regulations Manager with 4 weeks.
For a first offence in an undergraduate award-bearing module a mark of 0%, requirement to repeat the assessment, capping the module mark at 40% and capping of the award as a pass award will apply. The learner will also be obliged to attend and complete the DBS Library Service course on Academic Writing and present their confirmation of completion to the Assessment and Regulations Manager with 4 weeks.

**Postgraduate:**
For a first offence in any taught module a mark of 0%, requirement to repeat the assessment, capping of the module at 40% and capping of the award as a pass award shall be applied. The learner will also be obliged to attend and complete the DBS Library Service course on Academic Writing and present their confirmation of completion to the Assessment and Regulations Manager with 4 weeks.

Any instances of a second or subsequent offence regardless of programme framework level will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

Learners found to have committed multiple offences of academic impropriety will be subject to serious penalties up to and including withdrawal from the programme, with no entitlement to refund or readmission.

**In order to deter learners from considering academic impropriety as a low risk option in cases where they feel failure is likely, in considering the penalty to be imposed the Assessment and Regulations Manager should normally ensure that any penalty is more significant than having made an honest attempt at assessment and failed.**

Where the matter is unresolved, the case is referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee convenes once per academic term and prior to the meeting of the Examination Board or as required in respect of cases of Academic Impropriety. The Disciplinary Committee can be convened at the request of the Assessment and Regulations Manager outside of the regular schedule as required.

For full details on the proceedings of the Disciplinary Committee and potential outcomes please see DBS Learner Disciplinary Policy, Chapter 9.
8.6 Examination Boards

Examination Boards are responsible for the monitoring and moderation of the assessment process, for determining student progression and for recommending the conferment of the relevant awards of the awarding body to the Academic Board. These guidelines consolidate current regulations and examples of good practice relating to the conduct of Examination Boards. They set out practices by which Boards can safeguard the probity, consistency and hence the authority of their decisions.

1. An Examination Board is associated with each stage of a programme.
2. Academic staff members who are Internal Examiners and teach and examine on a relevant module, the marks of which are before a Board, are *ex officio* members of the corresponding Board.
3. External Examiners, as approved by the Academic Board, are members of Examination Boards.
4. An Examination Board makes recommendations to the Academic Board for the ratification of the results for each stage of a programme, including the final award classification.

8.6.1 Composition of Examination Boards

An Examination Board shall be established by the Examinations Office for each programme for which DBS has responsibility for the examination of students. The composition of the Examination Board shall be in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body and DBS procedures. Current regulations of validating bodies shall be used in conjunction with these procedures where appropriate.

The number and composition of individual Examination Boards varies depending on the nature of the academic programme. The generic *ex officio* composition for an Examination Board for taught academic programmes is:

- Chair as appointed by the Assessment and Regulations Manager
- Head of Academic Programmes or nominee
- Inter-Board Representative (observer to ensure consistency between Examination Boards)
- PLs
- External Examiners relevant to the programmes (as approved by the Academic Board).
- Internal examiners contributing marks to the Board
- Placement Co-ordinators (where appropriate)
- Secretary to the Board
The number and remit of Examination Boards is overseen by Academic Board. The Chair and Secretary of each Board is appointed by the Assessment and Regulations Manager.

The quorum for a Board normally consists of the Chair, the Head of Academic Programmes, the Secretary, at least one External Examiner and a sufficient number of Internal Examiners to competently deliberate on the assessment, (i.e. 50% of Internal Examiners as agreed by the Chair), all of whom must sign the presented Exam Board Reports, which are generated by the Examinations Office.

No student may be a member of a Board or attend any other Examiners' meetings, other than as a candidate for assessment (in the case of a viva), except where a member of academic staff or approved External Examiner is registered as a student on another programme, within the College, and not considered at that board. In that instance he/she is not to be disqualified from membership.

The Chair is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that at least one member of academic staff representing every module on the programme is present at an Examination Board, such that the interests of all students are properly addressed. At meetings to determine student progression on the programme only, at least one External Examiner is normally present. At meetings to determine or recommend academic awards, all External Examiners appointed to the relevant programmes are normally present.

Examiners are required to;

- attend any internal review meeting convened for the purpose of internal review of examination activity to check paperwork
- attend the relevant Examination Board at which the results of candidates are formally decided.
- defend their marking and are expected to be prepared accordingly.

Each Examination Board shall meet at times throughout the year when needed to fulfil its duties under the scheme of assessment defined in the Approved Programme Schedule e.g. spring, summer, or autumn.

8.6.2 Knowledge of Programme Regulations
In order to contribute to the Examination Board’s decisions, all members of the Board must have a thorough understanding of the assessment regulations.

- The Examination Office will make available, copies of the current programme assessment regulations to all members of the Board. Members of the Board should be made aware of any changes to the regulations, in advance of the Board. A current set of regulations should be maintained on the Examinations Office web pages.
- Academic staff members of the Board should be encouraged to raise any questions concerning programme assessment regulations at programme board meetings or Boards of Studies.
- Where necessary, the Chair of the Examination Board should give a short verbal overview of the key regulations at the start of each Board meeting.

8.6.3  Preparation for the Board
Examination Boards can conduct their business effectively if all the necessary information is clearly presented. The following procedures should therefore be observed:

- Where necessary, the Chair of the Examination Board should give a short verbal overview of the key regulations at the start of each Board meeting.
- Marks should be presented to the Examination Board using the DBS Assessment Broadsheets from Agresso.
- In exceptional circumstances, it may be deemed necessary to make global changes to marks. Although not part of the guidelines or regulations, this may only be done in consultation with the Assessment and Regulations Manager and with the specific approval of the External Examiner(s) and of the Examination Board. In such circumstances, it is necessary to present both the raw and ‘normalised’ marks to the Examination Board.
- Claims of failure due to personal mitigating circumstances (PMC’s) should normally only be considered if the procedures for dealing with PMC’s have been applied.
- An Internal Module Board should be held in advance of the Examination Board. This meeting is held to test the veracity of data to be presented to the Examination Board, to identify possible problems or gaps in the available information, and to identify required supplementary information e.g. PMC supporting documentation, to facilitate the efficient running of the planned Examination Board.
This meeting is the responsibility of the School and chaired by the Head of Academic Programmes. The pre-meeting involves all internal examiners. Its aim is to:

- ensure that the marks to be presented to the Examination Board are complete and accurate;
- formulate recommendations to the Examination Board and to identify particular areas where the advice of externals is needed;
- identify any further information needed by the Examination Board e.g. evidence of PMC’s, or outcomes of Academic Impropriety, including invigilators reports; and
- collate reports of supervised work experience (where appropriate).

The Internal Module Board cannot compel an assessor to review their assessment findings or change a mark. Minutes are recorded at the meeting but are not presented to the Examination Board. The results of the meeting ensures complete and accurate information for presentation to the Examination Board.

### 8.6.4 Conduct of Examination Boards

I. The responsibility of an Examination Board is to review the marks presented to the Board and make recommendations as to the overall result for each candidate.

II. The proceedings and deliberations of the Examination Boards are strictly confidential.

III. The External Examiners are appointed in accordance with section 8.9.

IV. The Examinations Officer, following consultation with the Assessment and Regulations Manager and liaison with the Schools Executive Board, advises the Board members and appropriate accreditation agencies of the preferred dates for Examination Board meetings.

V. The Examination’s Office staff make all of the arrangements for the accommodation of the Board with the DBS Facilities Department.

VI. The Examination Board should agree the marks for each module for each student, including the breakdown of examination and continuous assessment, and have due regard to award classifications in considering the overall result for a student. In discharging this responsibility the Examination Board may exercise discretion in marginal cases by minor modification of marks.

VII. Individual student marks should not normally be changed without consulting the Examiner(s) who awarded the original mark. It follows that the Board does not normally change a mark without the relevant Internal Examiner being present. However, if a relevant Internal Examiner’s other obligations prevent him/her from attending the Board, he/she may be
consulted in advance about the potential for moderating the mark. Pre-meetings are a useful vehicle for such consultation.

VIII. Changes to marks by an Examination Board otherwise should only be permitted if:

   a. a clerical or administrative error in transmission of marks has occurred
   b. a late change to a mark is recommended by an External Examiner

IX. In both instances the change should be submitted with explanation in writing to the Examination Board. The resulting adjustment of marks should be made before the results are otherwise considered by the Board.

X. To confirm the result/award being made by the Examination Board, the Chair reads out the decision that the Board has adopted immediately after and in respect of each individual case. The Secretary may also be required to read back to the Board the recorded decision.

XI. A hard copy of the agreed mark sheets is signed by the Chair of the Examination Board, the Head of Academic Programmes, the Internal Examiner(s) and, when present, by the External Examiner(s).

XII. Where in special circumstances, an Examination Board recommends a change in marks outside its normal discretion, the original marks should stand pending a decision of Academic Board. The same should apply where any Examiner present dissents from a recommendation.

XIII. Where the Examination Board is unable to reach a consensus regarding an individual’s, mark, progression or award, the Chair of the Board, with the agreement of the External Examiners, may wish to decide the result. If any member of the Board wishes to dissent from the decision of the Board, it should be recorded in the minutes.

XIV. The minutes of the Examination Board Meeting should be concise. Discussion relating to the individual students should be recorded only in ‘borderline’ cases, PMCs should be recorded for future reference, and then in a summary form. There should be no recording of any discussion relating to individuals clearly passing, failing or being referred. The results list should be regarded as the primary record of the meeting. Any general comments made by the External Examiner(s) about the examinations should be recorded, but the External Examiner’s written report should be regarded as the definitive document.

XV. In order to ensure that the recorded decisions of the Board are unambiguous, the minutes should follow the terminology conventions set out by the relevant awarding body.

XVI. An attendance sheet is provided by the Examinations Office to record attendances/apologies at an Examination Board Meeting.
8.6.5 Action Following the Examination Board

I. In addition to maintaining formal records, consisting of minutes of Examination Boards and the results lists, the Examinations Office arranges for any agreed changes of marks arising from the External Examinations Board, to be inputted onto Agresso. These final marks or grades are available to the individual student, as a transcript and on request under the Data Protection Acts. The marks in individual papers or sections are not be released to a third party except, on the written request of a student (e.g. applying for exemption from further professional examinations or seeking to enter another educational establishment).

II. The Examinations Office produces a results list (pass, fail, refer, etc). This result list is signed by the Chair of the Examination Board and at least one External Examiner. Results are then released online on a specified date, which is decided and notified by the Examinations Office and confirmed with the School.

III. The Examinations Office files the original results list, signed by the Chair, as the official record in the Examinations Office archive in accordance with the College’s Record Management Policy.

IV. Transcripts of Award Stage results are sent to learners by post within seven days of the release of results on the DBS website.

V. Following the meeting of the Examination Board, the Examinations Office produces minutes of the meeting for review and agreement by the Chair of the Examination Board, are circulated to all members of the Examination Board and the Assessment and Regulations Manager. The master is filed as the official record in the Examinations Office. These minutes are presented to the next meeting of the Examination Board for review and approval.

VI. After each examination session, a summary report to include Chairs Actions is prepared and reviewed initially by the Examination Office. The summary report is distributed to Head of Academic Programmes, the Head of Faculty and School Operations and PLs for review by the Boards of Studies, and submitted to the School Executive Board. The report includes a statistical analysis of student performance, including progression statistics for each programme. The report also includes a reflective commentary on any general teaching,
learning or assessment issues that have surfaced at the Examination Boards (or through the External Examiner comments).

8.6.6 Examination Board Process for ICM/DBS Diploma Programmes in the Professional School

The Examiner is required to collect the scripts and other relevant material, from the Professional School Examination Office including

- The examination scripts
- a copy of the examination paper
- a copy of the approved marking scheme
- a copy of the exam attendance register
- a ‘Returned Examinations Check-list’ (F8.6) to ensure the Examiner has completed all required tasks
- forms for the Examiner’s Report and Internal Moderator’s Report,

The Examiner must pass all the examination material for review to the designated Internal Moderator by the appointed deadline. The Internal Moderator reviews:

- The Examiner’s Report
- Overall student performance as indicated in the breakdown of marks as on report
- A sample of scripts to confirm appropriateness of first marking

1. Following reflection on the assessment material, the Internal Moderator completes a formal Internal Moderator’s Report (F8.4) in which he/she may recommend:
   - Full adoption of the Examiner’s marks and report
   - Adjustment of marks for individual scripts
   - A global adjustment of marks

Any such adjustments should be discussed and agreed with the Examiner. Differences of opinion should be resolved by the Head of Department. The Internal Moderator returns the examination material to the Professional School Examinations Office.
8.7 External Examiners

Please refer to the QQI policies on external examiners as outlined in Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining, HETAC March 2010 (Appendix 8.5).

8.7.1 Appointment of External Examiners

External Examiner reports are considered an indispensable element of peer judgement in monitoring the quality and standard of each programme in DBS. The appointment and approval of External Examiners varies with the Awarding Body.

External Examiners for QQI programmes are appointed by DBS under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. Proposals for QQI External Examiners are nominated by the PL and such nominations are endorsed by the relevant Head of Faculty and School Operations based on the criteria as indicated in section 8.9.2 below. The nominating School complete the “Application for Appointment of New External Examiner”, which is accompanied by the candidate’s curriculum vitae. This is approved by the Academic Appoints Sub-Committee on behalf of the Academic Board. Where required, it is forwarded to QQI by the QA Officer. When approved, the candidate is then formally invited to become an External Examiner for modules/subjects within their field of expertise.

The External Examiners are supplied with an External Examiners’ Induction Pack and invited to an induction process where details are provided of the relevant programmes such as module descriptors, assessment criteria and assessment regulations. Examiners will be notified of dates for terms, semesters and academic years, and the customary timing of External Examiner activities in the DBS context, as well as the terms and conditions of appointment, a formal contract of appointment is issued and completed by the candidate.

Conditions imposed by professional bodies, such as The Honorable Society of King’s Inns, must also be met where required.

8.7.2 Criteria for the Appointment of an External Examiner

The following criteria are adopted by the Academic Board for consideration during the appointment of proposed external examiners:
Each External Examiner’s academic/professional qualifications should be appropriate in level and subject for examining the programme(s). Both the level and the subject of the examiner’s qualifications should generally be in a cognate discipline to what is to be examined in the programme.

Each External Examiner’s standing, expertise and experience should be such as to enable fulfilment of his/her responsibility in the maintenance of the academic standards of the programme(s) in the context of higher education both nationally and internationally.

External Examiners should be drawn from academic life and where appropriate, from business, industry and professional practice. Standing, expertise and breadth of experience may be indicated by:

- the present (or last, if retired) post and place of work;
- the range and scope of experience across higher education/professions; and
- the current and recent active involvement in research/scholarly/professional activities in a relevant field of study.

There must be an appropriate balance and expertise in the team of External Examiners. The proposed External Examiner should complement the external examining team in terms of expertise and examining experience. Where possible, a balance between academic and professional practitioners should be employed.

Where possible, each External Examiner should have had significant recent examining experience as an Internal Examiner or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area.

If the proposed examiner has no previous external examiner experience at the appropriate level, their nomination can be supported by either:

- other external examining experience;
- extensive internal examining experience; and
- other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role.

However, consideration is given in those exceptional situations where the pool of potential External Examiners is especially limited. This is most likely where provision of the subject is particularly limited within the sector. Every effort is made to mentor proposed External Examiners without prior
experience. Where possible, they would join an experienced team of External Examiners or, where there is only one Examiner, they should initially work alongside an experienced currently appointed External, on a related programme.

External Examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional/professional contexts and traditions in order that the programme benefits from a wide range of external scrutiny.

There should not be current reciprocal external examining between departments (i.e. nominees should not normally be members of a department in an institution where a member of the nominating department is serving as an External Examiner). For any one programme, External Examiners should not be appointed consecutively from the same institution - the College should seek to draw nominations from a variety of institutions, and should avoid multiple nominations from the same institution within a single discipline.

External Examiners should not be over-extended in their external examining duties. As a norm, an External Examiner should not hold more than two concurrent external examining appointments for taught programmes. This policy can only be waived in exceptional circumstances, with the approval of Academic Board, and with cognisance of the Awarding Body’s policies in this regard.

Former members of College staff should not be invited to become External Examiners before a lapse of at least three years.

Those registered for an award of the College or the awarding body are ineligible for appointment as External Examiners in any part of the College.

It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to declare an interest if placed in a position of making a judgement about any student with whom there has been direct contact e.g.:

- as a sponsor, relative or friend
- as a close professional colleague
- having been involved with the supervision of the student on placement or professional training.

The College takes due cognisance of the desirability of gender balance when nominating teams of External Examiners. The AASC is responsible for resolving conflicts of interest in the appointment of External Examiners.
8.7.3 Communication with External Examiners

Communication with External Examiners takes place in a number of contexts throughout each academic year. The principal points of contact with the External Examiners through the year are:

1. External moderation of examination papers and marking schemes are supplied to the External Examiner by the Examinations Office.
2. Review of coursework and examination scripts, marks and examiners reports (the material is supplied to the External Examiner by the Examinations Office).
3. Attendance and participation in Examination Boards (the invitation to attend is conveyed to the External Examiner from the Examinations Office).
4. Input to programme design, development and review, on request of the PL.
5. End-of-year report (through the generation and submission of the report by the External Examiner).

Briefing sessions for External Examiners are held annually. These sessions cover the relevant procedures and documentation and seek to ensure that there is common understanding of requirements and responsibilities between DBS and the External Examiners. In addition to their role as external moderators of module assessments, External Examiners are seen as a most valuable resource in the context of academic development of the College. It is DBS policy and practice to invite External Examiners to provide input to the design and development of new programmes as well as the periodic review of existing programmes.

8.7.4 External Examiner’s Report

The end of year report by each External Examiner is an important document in the broad context of academic quality management. Each External Examiner is asked to comment on a number of academic matters including:

- Academic standards
- Assessment processes and documentation
- Effectiveness of approaches to teaching and learning
- Operation of Examination Boards
- Distinctive strengths and innovative features
- Institutional issues.

A copy of the standard External Examiner’s Report Form (F8.9) is available on the shared drive.
The External Examiner reports are reviewed by the Head of Academic Programmes and Head of Faculty and School Operations in conjunction with the relevant Examiners. Any issues raised by the External Examiner are carefully considered and, where appropriate, acted upon. Any cross-departmental issues are progressed through the Head of Academic Programmes and a summary of issues raised with good practice commended is presented at the appropriate Board of Studies and where appropriate, the Schools Executive Board.

A formal response to each External Examiner’s report is prepared by the PL and approved and sent by the Head of Academic Programmes, within four weeks of receipt of the final report.

It is the responsibility of the Assessment and Regulations Manager to ensure that all External Examiner reports are received and duly responded to. Issues highlighted and appropriate actions are detailed in the relevant Board of Studies and Annual Reports. This information also feeds into the programme development and review process.
### 8.8 Progression and Classification of Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Progression and Award Classification Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implemented by:</strong></td>
<td>Board of Examiners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Updated by:</strong></td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulated for consideration to:</strong></td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version number:</strong></td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review date:</strong></td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learners must complete all modules on a programme in accordance with the validated programme schedule and timeframe approved for full time or part time as applicable.

The validated programme timeframe for a level 8 honours degree is normally 3 years full time or 4 years part time. Some honours degree programmes are delivered over 4 years full time.

The validated timeframe for a taught Masters degree is normally 1 year full time and 2 years part time. The programme timeframes for all DBS programmes leading to a QQI award are communicated to potential learners in advance of application and again at the outset of their studies.

DBS recognises that circumstances may arise that prevent a learner from completing in the specified timeframe. Such circumstances include assessment failure and repeat assessment requirements, PMCs preventing completion of assessments, or circumstances warranting deferral. In each of the situations there are time-limited arrangements for a learner to satisfy their responsibilities and requirements.

Where a learner is unable to satisfy the completion of the programme within communicated time-limited parameters associated with deferrals or repeat opportunities, the appropriate action will be taken to withdraw the learner and issue a transcript of results for all successfully completed modules.

Where a learner who has previously been withdrawn wishes to return to DBS to complete their programme of study they are required to apply through the standard admissions process and seek exemptions for successfully completed modules that are still valid for the programme they wish to undertake. Exemptions will only be granted in accordance with the DBS exemptions policy.

Where a learner has been withdrawn as a result of failure within the maximum permitted assessment opportunities, they will not normally be permitted to return to the programme or a programme of equivalent or higher NFQ level unless evidence of potential to succeed can be provided to the satisfaction of DBS.
8.8.1 Undergraduate Programmes

Progression

A pass in a module is a positive statement of achievement, and a demonstration that the minimum intended learning outcomes have been met. A learner cannot repeat a module that has already been passed.

To progress from stage 1 to stage 2, or stage 2 to stage 3, (or in the cases where this applies, stage 3 to stage 4) the learner is normally required to pass all mandatory modules, and the prescribed number of elective modules as outlined in the Approved Programme Schedule for the preceding stage.

The minimum mark required to pass a module is 40%. The mark for a module is the total, or average of, marks awarded for the individual assessment components. No individual component needs to be passed unless it is prescribed in the Approved Programme Schedule as a special regulation such as the requirement for a Professional Body.

No individual component that has been passed can be retaken for the purpose of improving the overall performance in the module.

Recovering Failed Modules

A learner who fails to achieve a pass mark in a module may be awarded a pass by compensation, provided that a pass by compensation is not precluded in the Approved Programme Schedule and that:

I. the mark falls within the 35-39% band for that module,
II. the learner has attained marks in excess of 40% in at least one other subject equivalent to double the deficiency in the subject which is being compensated,
III. all modules at the stage are passed as first attempts,
IV. no module at the stage has been failed outright (<35%).

Pass by compensation can be applied to a maximum of one third of the stage, 20 credits of a 60 credit stage or 10 credits of a 30 credit stage, and then only where a student has taken all modules at that stage.
When pass by compensation has been awarded, the numeric result obtained will remain on the transcript and Diploma Supplement for award calculations, but the transcript, and Diploma Supplement, will indicate a ‘pass by compensation’.

Where all of the modules in a stage are not taken at one sitting, the learner may be counselled to resit the failed module or component of that module.

A learner is exempt from further examination in each module in which a pass has been awarded.

Notwithstanding, a learner who with the agreement of the Examination Board, is to re-sit a full year of study, other than the final year, may do so for the actual marks attained provided that at the outset s/he agrees formally to relinquish his/her previous marks in full.

Where a learner fails a module they have the option to:

- resit the failed component,
- retake the module with attendance or
- substitute an alternative module, where the failed module is an elective on the programme.

Resit
The Examination Board will allow a maximum of three resit opportunities to recover a failed module, subject to the validated regulations of the programme.

Failure to avail of an assessment opportunity is considered an attempt for the purpose of entitlement to resists.

The nature of the reassessment, either examination or continuous assessment, or both, should be agreed at the Examination Board.

Where both the examination and any applicable individual continuous assessment elements are failed, all failed elements should be offered to the learner for reassessment. A learner has the right to choose not to avail of all re-assessment opportunities and attempt to pass the module utilising a combination of re-assessment and original attempts even where the original attempt was a fail grade e.g. where a module has 3 assessment components worth 50% 25% and 25% and the learner achieves 40 for the first 30 for the second and 0 for the third, giving a module mark of 35%, they reserve the
right to only attempt the 3rd assessment again in order to achieve an overall module pass. However, they are considered to have been offered a repeat for the second component also.

The mark/grades for any components passed, will be carried forward for the purposes of calculating the overall mark/grade for a module where the learner failed to meet the minimum standard in the initial attempt. Where a combination of passed components and fail components result in an overall pass for the module, the failed components will also be carried forward. Essentially those components that have been passed will not be permitted to be repeated and a learner is only required to pass a module overall, unless explicitly stated otherwise in programme documentation.

Where the assessment was an unseen assessment (e.g. a written examination) the resit paper should not be the same as the original.

Any failed examination must be attempted at the next scheduled repeat sitting for that examination, except where the learner has an approved deferral.

The resit mark for the module will be presented to the Board of Examiners as a second or subsequent attempt.

If the resit mark is not at the award stage, or does not contributes to the award calculation, then a capped mark of 40% will be applied.

If the resit mark contributes to the award calculation then a capped module mark of 40% will be applied and the learner will be restricted to a pass award in line with QQI sectoral convention number 3 which outlines no repeat for honours.

**Retake**

In some instances a retake of the module may be more appropriate, for example if the performance was very poor across all assessments or where significant practical work was involved.

In the case where a module is retaken with attendance no marks from the previous attempt are carried forward.

A requirement to retake is at the discretion of the Examination Board.
The retake mark for the module will be presented to the Board of Examiners as a second or subsequent attempt.

If the retake mark is not at the award stage, and does not contribute to the award calculation, then a capped mark of 40% will be applied.

If the retake mark contributes to the award calculation, then a capped module mark of 40% will be applied and the learner will be restricted to a pass award in line with QQI sectoral convention number 3 which outlines no repeat for honours.

In the case of a retake leading to a minor award, special purpose award or other award where no classification of award is issued, the retake mark will be capped at 40%.

**Substitute**

Where a learner has failed an elective module, they will be required to resit the module and if they fail to pass at the resit they have the option for two further resit attempts or to substitute it for another elective on the programme.

The selection of an alternative elective will depend on it being offered on the programme and the candidate has satisfied any pre-requisites.

The substitute module must be taken in its entirety.

The marks for the substituted module will be recorded as a first attempt but will be treated as a retake attempt for the purpose of award calculation i.e. sectoral convention number 3, no repeat for honours, will still apply if the result contributes towards the award calculation.

Deferral of examinations can only be considered if professional or medical documentation is presented to the relevant Programme Coordinator within ten working days of the commencement of the examination in question, and accepted by the Assessment and Regulations Manager. For the policy on Personal Mitigating Circumstance’s (PMC) see Chapter 9.
8.8.2 Postgraduate Programmes
Learner must complete all modules in accordance with the validated programme schedule and approved timeline for completion, except where deferrals have been approved based upon mitigating circumstances which prevent this.

Higher Diploma and Post Graduate Diploma programmes are considered to be award stage only programmes.

A taught Masters Programmes normally consist of two stages, the taught component and a dissertation, both of which contribute to the final award.

Progression
A pass in a module is a positive statement of achievement, and a demonstration that the minimum intended learning outcomes have been met.

To progress from the taught stage of a Masters’ programme to the dissertation stage a candidate is required to pass all mandatory modules and the prescribed number of elective modules as outlined in the Approved Programme Schedule.

The minimum mark required to a pass a module is 40%.

The mark for a module is the total, or average of, marks awarded for the individual assessment components.

No individual component needs to be passed, unless explicitly stated in programme documentation and is prescribed in the Approved Programme Schedule.

Pass by Compensation
Pass by compensation applies on Higher Diploma programmes in accordance with the QQI sectoral convention, except where explicitly stated otherwise in programme documentation.

Pass by compensation is not permitted on Post Graduate Diplomas and Masters’ Programmes unless the practice of compensation is explicitly stated in programme documentation.
Recovery of Failed Modules

Where a learner fails a module they have the option to resit the failed component(s).

The Examination Board will allow a maximum of three resit opportunities to recover a failed module, subject to the validated regulations of the programme.

Failure to avail of an assessment opportunity is considered an attempt for the purpose of entitlement to resits.

The nature of the reassessment, either examination or continuous assessment, or both, should be in line with the validated programme schedule.

Where both the examination and any applicable individual continuous assessment elements are failed, all failed elements should be offered to the learner for reassessment. A learner has the right to choose not to avail of all re-assessment opportunities and attempt to pass the module utilising a combination of re-assessment and original attempts even where the original attempt was a fail grade e.g. where a module has 3 assessment components worth 50% 25% and 25% and the learner achieves 40 for the first 30 for the second and 0 for the third, giving a module mark of 35%, they reserve the right to only attempt the 3rd assessment again in order to achieve an overall module pass. However, they are considered to have been offered a repeat for the second component also.

The mark/grades for any components passed, will be carried forward for the purposes of calculating the overall mark/grade for a module where the learner failed to meet the minimum standard in the initial attempt. Where a combination of passed components and fail components result in an overall pass for the module, the failed components will also be carried forward. Essentially those components that have been passed will not be permitted to be repeated and a learner is only required to pass a module overall, unless explicitly stated otherwise in programme documentation.

Where the assessment was an unseen assessment (e.g. a written examination) the resit paper should not be the same as the original.

Any failed examination must be attempted at the next scheduled repeat sitting for that examination, except where the learner has an approved deferral.
The resit mark for the module will be presented to the Board of Examiners as a second or subsequent attempt.

If the resit mark is not at the award stage, or does not contribute to the award calculation, then a capped mark of 40% will be applied.

If the resit mark contributes to the award calculation, then a capped module mark of 40% will be applied and the learner will be restricted to a pass award in line with QQI sectoral convention number 3 which outlines no repeat for honours (or other such classification above a pass).

Learners may only resubmit a master’s dissertation once.

Deferral of examinations can only be considered if state, professional or medical documentation is forwarded directly to the relevant Programme Coordinator, within ten days of the commencement of the examination in question, and accepted by the PMC Committee. For the policy on Personal Mitigating Circumstance’s (PMC) policy see Chapter 9.
8.8.3 Award Calculations

Classification of Awards and where exit awards are approved as part of the Approved Programme Schedule

The award class of the degree is calculated on the credit-weighted mean value of the grades that contribute to the award. DBS applies a percentage grading system. Learners are enrolled for the target award but may be awarded an associated minor, special purpose or alternative exit award, where available, when assessment opportunities have been exhausted or the Examination Board makes a recommendation in this regard.

Exit awards are only available where validated and where the learner has satisfied the specified requirements of that award.

Learners who join programmes with advanced standing are not eligible for an exit award on the grounds of accumulation of credits from Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL).

Full details on the National Framework of Qualifications is available at http://www.nfq-qqi.com/index.html

Except where explicitly stated otherwise in programme documentation award classifications are calculated as follows:

Higher Certificate (NFQ level 6)

The award classification will be calculated using a credit weighted average of the eligible module (%) marks at the first attempt. This will be calculated as 100% of the Award Stage.

Honours Degree (NFQ level 7) and Bachelors Degree (NFQ level 8)

The award classification will be calculated using a credit weighted average of the eligible module (%) marks at the first attempt. This will be calculated in the majority of cases as follows:

- Award Stage modules - 80% weighting
- Penultimate Stage* - 20% weighting

*The weighted mean of the penultimate stage modules should be taken from the best modules worth 50 ECTS or 80% of the stage, i.e. one or two modules, up to a total of 10 ECTS are not included in the calculation of the stage average.

If exemptions exceed 10 ECTS at the penultimate stage then the award is to be calculated at 100% of the Award Stage.
Where a learner is being classified on the basis of the modules taken at the Award Stage only, as in the cases of direct entrants to the final year, then the award classification is based on 100% of the final year credits.

For award purposes, a candidate must satisfy all of the examination and other requirements set for the programme.

The learner must complete their award within the registration period for that award.
Learners should not be offered a repeat for honours where classifications of awards apply.

**Special Purpose Awards (varying NFQ level)**
Special purpose awards which have at least 60 ECTS and are comparable to a major award (at the same NFQ level), will be classified in the same manner as the relevant major award. Special purpose awards which have a volume of less than 60 ECTS shall be unclassified i.e. Pass/Fail.
Where classifications apply, the rules governing retake and resist of assessment will apply i.e. no repeat for honours.

**Higher Diploma (NFQ level 8)**
To be eligible for consideration for the award of Higher Diploma at Honours classification, a learner must pass all modules and satisfy the other requirements set for the programme. An Award with Honours may only be considered if the candidate has passed the final examination at:

- the first attempt,
- without exemption,
- and in one sitting for full time candidates, except where PMCs have been applied.

**Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters’ Degree (NFQ Level 9)**
To be considered for an Honours Award (or any classification above pass) the candidate must pass all modules at the first attempt.
8.8.4 Table of Degree Classification Thresholds for all Programmes Leading to A QQI Award

The following tables, taken from QQI Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013, describe the classifications available for major awards (made by QQI or by recognised institutions under delegated authority) in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). They also specify the required boundary values for grade point average (GPA) and percentage point average (PPA). DBS applies the PPA grading model only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Higher Certificates (Level 6) and Ordinary Bachelor’s Degrees (Level 7)</th>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009-2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit Grade 1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit Grade 2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in some respects is significantly beyond this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Classification of Honours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor’s degrees (Level 8) and Higher Diplomas (Level 8)</th>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009 - 2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-class honours</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-class honours Grade 1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-class honours Grade 2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in some respects is significantly beyond this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Classification of Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009 - 2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009 - 2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Classification of Taught Master’s degrees (Level 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009 - 2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009 - 2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA boundary values</th>
<th>PPA boundary values</th>
<th>Description 2009 - 2010 and following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

The threshold should be interpreted by the Examination Board in general, rather than in absolute, terms. The Board may make an award at a grade above the threshold specified in the table in cases where the Board feels that the learner’s circumstances merit such action.

Learners may be considered by the Board for an award higher than that indicated by their mark, where:

- The final award grade is within 1%, of the higher classification boundary,
- Where at least 50% of the credit-weighted modules are in the higher class bracket (preponderance),
- Other such evidence of extenuating circumstances is considered at the discretion of the Examination Board to be appropriate.

Where an award classification recommended by an Examination Board is higher than that indicated by a credit weighted average of the eligible module (%), then the mark should be recorded to reflect the recommended award i.e. a 69.89 should become a 70. In no circumstance should an individual module mark be amended for the purpose of allowing a learner to achieve a higher award classification.

Should it be established that a learner’s failure to submit work, or poor performance in the assessment process was due to illness or personal mitigating circumstances (which were brought to the attention of the college, and accepted for the purpose of PMC approval) the Examination Board may exercise discretion in a manner appropriate to the individual case.

8.8.5 Other Awards

Aegrotat Awards

Where there is insufficient evidence to determine the recommendation of an award but the Examination Board is nevertheless satisfied that the learner would have qualified for the award for which s/he was a registered had it not been for illness or other valid cause, an Aegrotat award may be recommended.

Aegrotat awards do not carry a classification, they are unclassified degrees.

An Aegrotat award does not necessarily entitle the holder to registration with a professional body, or to exemption from the requirements of any professional qualification which might otherwise be associated with the programme.
Aegrotat awards are not available to learners registered for the following awards: Postgraduate Diploma, Higher Diploma, Masters programme and, all research awards.

The award of an Aegrotat removes the right of any further assessment opportunity for the registered final award. The learner must have signified that s/he is willing to accept the award under this condition.

Posthumous Awards
Where the normal conditions of any award of the College have been met, or where the College is satisfied based on learning completed to date that the learner now deceased would have otherwise met the conditions of the award, a request for a posthumous award may be made to QQI.

A posthumous award may be accepted on the learner’s behalf by a parent, partner or other nominated individual(s) as identified by the next of kin or immediate family member.

The opportunity should normally be offered for acceptance of a posthumous major award to take place as part of the conferring ceremony of the class which the learner was a part of. Alternatively, the family may wish for the award to be issued directly to them via collection or post.

8.8.6 European Diploma Supplement
On successful completion of their studies, learners are entitled to receive a Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement facilitates the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.).

This Diploma Supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international ‘transparency’ and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.).

The Diploma Supplement provides additional information regarding the learner’s award which is not available on QQI parchments such as the skills and competencies acquired and entry requirements and access opportunities to the next stage of education.
It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should be given as to the reason why. This is provided by the Academic Affairs Department on request. DBS Diploma Supplement may be found in Appendix 8.6.
8.9 Discussion of Examination Scripts Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Discussion of Examination Scripts Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for</td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consideration to:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike in the case of continuous assessments and project work, DBS does not automatically provide feedback to learners on their performance in an examination. Where a learner wishes to avail of the opportunity to secure feedback on examination performance they are entitled to view their examination scripts and discuss them with the examiner or the Assessment and Regulations Manager where the examiner is not available.

This policy applies to all formal, written examinations undertaken by learners on programmes leading to QQI awards. In that regard all examiners of said programmes are reasonably expected to be available to meet with learners to discuss their examination script. This policy does not apply to continuous assessments, projects or other assessment work including in-class tests. In such cases feedback is provided automatically as part of the assessment process and where a learner requires further feedback they are required to contact the examiner directly to arrange this.

Viewing examination scripts is intended as a means of enabling a learner to secure assessment feedback to contribute to their academic progress and development. This is particularly important for those learners who are required to repeat an examination due to failure. The viewing of examination scripts under this policy does not form or inform any verification or appeal process where a learner wishes to question the accuracy of a mark or the outcome of the assessment process.

In order to play an effective role in contributing to the academic development of the learner DBS will seek to ensure that all requests to view examination scripts are processed in a timely manner. Learners should not wait longer than one calendar month following submission of their request, with the exception of cases where the learner script may have been forwarded off site to an appointed External Examiner.

DBS will endeavor for the examiner who marked the script to be available to discuss the examination script and result with the learner in question. However, DBS reserves the right to arrange for an alternative examiner, moderator or the Programme Leader to host the discussion. Where examinations take place remotely or the learner is located remotely to where the script is stored (due to returning to their home town or country, or due to undertaking a programme of online learning if applicable) alternative arrangements may be made for a telephone discussion or additional written feedback to be provided with the learner having the right to raise further questions for clarification.
The feedback provided by the examiner or nominee to the learner is intended to facilitate a more detailed understanding of the mark awarded and assist in identifying areas for further improvement. This should include the examiner, or nominee, identifying where the learning outcomes were satisfied, where they were exceeded and where they were not addressed or not fully addressed.

**8.9.1 Procedures for Viewing Examination Scripts**

All learners are entitled to view their corrected examination scripts. Applications to view corrected examination scripts must be submitted to Exams@dbs.ie not later than seven working days after the date of the publication of results or in the case of an unsuccessful appeal, not later than seven working days after the date of the publication of the result of the appeal.

The application must be made in writing using the relevant “Application to View Scripts” form (F8.10) which is available on the “Current Students” page of the DBS website.

The learner will receive acknowledgement of receipt of their application within 5 working days. Arrangements will be made for the learner to meet with the examiner and discuss the examination script and result within not more than one calendar month of the date of application. Where a physical meeting is not feasible, arrangements will be made for a telephone or email exchange to provide the additional feedback required.

The learner can reasonably expect a minimum of 3 working days’ notice of the examination script discussion meeting.

Where a learner requires the meeting to be rescheduled this will be arranged on request once. Any subsequent re-arrangement is at the discretion of the College and the examiner concerned. The College is not obliged to provide subsequent opportunities.

Inability to attend a rescheduled meeting will result in additional feedback being issued in writing from the examiner to the learner and the process will be terminated at that point.

The discussion meeting will take place in DBS premises, or other location as specified by the College. This will usually be the normal place of delivery for the programme concerned. Discussion
arrangements can be organised by telephone or by email but will not include sharing of the examination script or images of same.

In the case of discussions taking place by e-mail, the examiner will provide initial feedback on each aspect of the examination paper. The learner will then have a window of 5 working days to identify any further points of clarification for the examiner to respond to. Communications within the 5 working days should not be excessive but are not explicitly limited. An examiner may wait until the end of the 5 day period to respond to all clarification requests together. In such cases, the response should be provided in the subsequent 5 working days.

Only the registered learner may view the examination script and only on production of a valid DBS student card.

Learners may view their scripts in the presence of the examiner or nominee.

Learners may not be accompanied except in the case of those learners who have been identified as requiring additional support to assist with communication e.g. sign language interpreter

Learners may not annotate, take an image of, or remove any examination material. Learners are not permitted to take notes or to record the meeting in any format. If written clarification of the feedback provided is required this should be requested from the examiner who is reasonably expected to oblige.
### 8.10 Verification of an Assessment Result Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Verification of an Assessment Result Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Assessment And Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implemented by:</strong></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Updated by:</strong></td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulated for consideration to:</strong></td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version number:</strong></td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review date:</strong></td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This policy is implemented to satisfy the QQI requirement that providers must determine the procedures for dealing with requests for a recheck of an assessment and the recording of component scores for a module.

DBS offers all learners undertaking programmes leading to a QQI award entitlement to seek verification of an assessment result and the accurate recording of all component marks and the overall mark.

A verification request may be submitted in respect of any assessment tool e.g. continuous assessment, examination, project etc.

A verification is the re-checking of the accuracy of the calculation and recording of marks throughout the assessment process in respect of the assessment in question.

Learners are advised that a verification is an administrative rechecking process and is not an appeal of an assessment result.

Learners are advised that an assessment result may remain unchanged, go up as well as go down as a result of a verification application.

It is the learner’s responsibility to be aware of the correct procedure, timeframe and communication means for requesting a verification of an assessment result.

The Assessment and Regulations Manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate checks are carried out in response to a verification request and, where applicable, corrective action taken to accurately record a result that has been incorrectly recorded.

8.10.1 Procedures for Applying for a Verification

A request for verification must be submitted within 7 days of the formal publication of results.

A request for verification must be submitted in writing using the correct form (F8.11) available from the DBS student website and may only be submitted by the learner concerned.

All requests must be submitted to the Exams Office and must be accompanied by proof of payment of the appropriate per module fee.
Any application does not comply with the requirements outlined within this policy will not be accepted and may result in the entitlement to a verification considered expired.

Upon receipt of the verification request, the Assessment and Regulations Manager will arrange for the appropriate rechecking of the assessments concerned.

The learner will be notified of the outcome of the verification process normally in not more than 5 working days following the deadline for submission of applications. Where a learner requests multiple verifications this may impact on the ability to respond within the proposed timeframe.

All verifications will be carried out in a timely manner and responded to as a priority.

Where the outcome of the verification process identifies an inaccuracy of greater than 1% (or less if it impacts on a borderline) the verification fee for the assessment in question will be reimbursed in full.

The learner will be notified in writing of the outcome of the verification process. The outcome of the recheck is the final grade recorded. No further recheck opportunity will be granted.
8.11 Appeals Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Appeals Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Lecturers, Programme Leaders, Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for consideration to:</td>
<td>Programme Leaders, Head of Academic Affairs, Head of School, Assessment and Regulations Manager, QA Officer, Head of Academic Enhancement, Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.11.1 Introduction

DBS recognises that learners are entitled to the right of appeal against a decision of a lower-level decision-making authority by making a request to a higher one. In respect of academic appeals and decisions of any subcommittee of Academic Board, appeals are the responsibility of the Academic Board. This is the final decision-making authority and there is no further right of appeal against an appeal decision.

The purpose of this policy is to afford learners the opportunity to appeal the decision of a decision-making committee.

This applies to all learners on programmes leading to QQI awards and relates to the decisions of any committee or Board with academic decision making authority.

The Academic Appeals Policy does not apply to appeals against a Complaint Committee finding.

The appeals policy is based upon transparency and fairness and recognises a learner’s right to question a decision-making authority within DBS.

Appeals will not be considered based upon hearsay. All appeals and decisions must be evidence based.

8.11.2 Membership

The Academic Board retains responsibility for hearing academic appeals. However, this does not require full membership of the Board. The Academic Board responsibility for appeals is delegated to the Assessment and Regulations Manager and the QA Officer in respect of considering grounds for appeal, and to the Appeals Committee, made up of Academic Board members, for the hearing of an appeal.

The Executive Dean is usually appointed as Chair of the Appeals Committee and is authorised by the Academic Board to appoint an Appeals Committee, from the Board membership, to facilitate timely and appropriate consideration of appeals. Where necessary and appropriate, non-Board members may be invited to join this committee where it is deemed necessary and appropriate the decision-making process to be effective and transparent. A minimum of three Board members must be appointed to the Committee for a case to be considered.

No member of the Appeals Committee can have had any previous involvement in the case being considered.
8.11.3 Submitting an Appeal: Timeframe and Requirements

A learner who wishes to appeal

- their published results
- a decision of the Board of Examiners
- a decision of any other decision committee of the Academic Board

must submit a formal appeal to the Appeals Committee, through the QA Officer.

The appeal must be submitted in writing and received by the QA Officer not later than seven working days after the date of the publication of the relevant assessment result from the Examination Board or, in relation to appealing a decision of a sub-committee other than an Examination Board, the specified appeal date provided by a decision making committee.

The appeal form must be accompanied by a detailed written submission together with supporting documentation (if appropriate). Appeals submitted without a written submission or for which the fee has not been paid, will be rejected. It is the learner’s responsibility to ensure an appeal is lodged fully and correctly. Additional appeal opportunities or extension of appeal deadlines will not be made available.

Appeals against assessment results must also include evidence of payment of the relevant fee per module. Payments can be made online, by telephone or at reception. Learners are reminded to include the payment reference number on all documentation.

8.11.4 Grounds for Appeal

An appeal submission must specify the grounds on which the appeal is requested, and it must contain all information that the learner wishes to have taken into account.

Learners are advised that a request for a rehearing is not valid grounds for appeal.

The only permissible grounds for an appeal are:

- the learner believes there was a substantive irregularity in the College’s procedures and/or in the manner in which those procedures were executed
- the learner believes there was a substantive irregularity in the Assignment brief or Examination Paper or the assessment process
• the learner believes that there were circumstances known to the College that the decision making committee was not aware of when its decision was taken.

Disagreement with a decision, including an assessment decision is not considered grounds for appeal. Appeals which question the academic judgement of examiners shall not be admissible; disagreement with the judgement of the Examination Board does not constitute grounds for review.

The Quality Assurance Officer will receive all appeal applications and ensure they have complied with submission requirements in order to be forwarded to the Appeals Committee. The Assessment and Regulations Manager in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Officer will consider the appeal and the grounds on which it is sought.

8.11.5 Appeal of Assessment Results
In all cases of appeal of an assessment result a verification process is undertaken. The Academic Affairs Office will verify the learner’s result by way of an administrative operation of checking the recording and the addition of marks for the assessment. The verification ensures that the assessment published by the College is free of arithmetical or other administrative errors of fact.

Learners are advised that an appeal of an assessment decision may result in confirmation, upgrading or downgrading of the initial result/decision.

8.11.6 New Evidence
Where the learner wishes to present new evidence this must be identified at the point of applying for an appeal. Beyond this point, new evidence not identified will not be considered by the Appeals Committee unless exceptional circumstances are identified and these are accepted at the Chair’s discretion.

Learners are reminded that evidence of PMCs is reasonably expected to have been presented in advance or at the time of the original decision.
The Appeals Committee will only consider late declaration as grounds for appeal where there are valid reasons for non-disclosure at an earlier stage and must be accompanied with:

- Evidence that confirms the circumstances were present during the period under consideration
  And
- Evidence to show why the learner was unable to disclose these at the time or the valid reasons why this could not be disclosed at the time

Medical or professional certification must confirm the learner attended the relevant professional during the period of consideration for the circumstances outlined.

Post-dated certification will not normally be considered. The dates of attendance must be stated by the professional along with verification of the circumstances claimed.

For a claim of valid reasons for non-disclosure to be accepted, it is normally expected that the circumstances themselves were exceptionally serious, or had an exceptionally serious impact on the learner, and there were substantial and grave reasons why the learner was unwilling to disclose them at the time.

An unwillingness to disclose, lack of appreciation/awareness of potential impact of personal circumstances, or lack of knowledge of the regulations is not considered justification for non-submission of evidence at the time of the event and will not result in the acceptance of late submission of PMCs.

8.11.7 Acceptance or Rejection of Appeal

The QA Officer in conjunction with the Assessment and Regulations Manager will consider each application to determine whether there are grounds for appeal.

An application for appeal will be dismissed without hearing where it is considered there are no identifiable grounds apparent or where the appeal deadline was not adhered to.

In the case of an application for appeal being denied, the QA Officer will notify the learner of this outcome and the fact that there is no further right of appeal. In such cases the process concludes at this point.
Where the Chairs believes there are grounds for appeal, an independent party will be appointed to investigate the grounds and evidence provided and a meeting of the Appeals Committee will be convened.

Due to the wider implications of appeal decisions it is reasonably expected that an investigation will be concluded and an appeal committee held within 10 working days of the appeal grounds being accepted.

In the case of grounds being accepted, an investigation into the grounds will be conducted by an independent party and an appeal hearing will be convened.

**8.11.8 Responsibility for Convening the Board**

Where a learner has been found to have valid grounds for appeal, the Appeals Committee will be convened either virtually or physically.

The QA Officer will notify the learner in writing of the date of the Appeal Committee meeting.

Where a learner requests the right to attend an appeal hearing, such a request will only be authorised where the Chair deems it relevant, appropriate and necessary. This is based on the understanding that any input from the learner should have been provided at the point of appeal or through the further submission opportunity.

The investigating officer will present the evidence in respect of the appeal to the Appeals Committee.

The learner will be notified of the role of the Committee and any potential outcomes.

**8.11.9 Membership**

The Executive Dean or nominee undertakes the role of Chair.

Any member of the Academic Board can request to be included in an Appeals Committee but must not have had previous involvement in the case.

The Chair of the Board will determine the membership of the Appeal Committee. Board members can
request to be included in the Appeals Committee.

The learner representative members of the Board should be encouraged to be involved in the Appeals Committee process except where there may be a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

All members are required to declare any interest. The QA Officer acts as secretary to the Committee.

The investigating Officer is required to present the appeal but is not present for any Committee discussion or decision making.

8.11.10 Remit of the Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee will consider the case based on the grounds for appeal as set out by the learner in his/her notification of appeal.

The Committee is not authorised to re-hear the case of a previous decision making committee but moreover determine if the grounds for appeal are evidenced in the case put forward.

The Chair will inform the Committee and any attending learner or investigating officer of the role of the committee, the possible outcomes and subsequent action.

8.11.11 Potential Outcomes

The Committee is required to determine an outcome in respect of the grounds put forward based on the evidence presented. The potential outcomes are:

- The outcome of the investigation confirms there is sufficient evidence to uphold the appeal: appeal upheld.
- The outcome of the investigation confirms there is insufficient evidence to uphold the appeal: appeal denied.

8.11.12 Decision-Making

The decision of the Committee should be a majority one. Where there is an even number of votes cast for both sides the Chair will invoke the right to a final casting vote. This is in addition to the Chair’s vote as a member.
In determining a decision, where the appeal is upheld, the Committee is required to agree on the subsequent action or options to be afforded to the learner.

8.11.13 Notification of Decision

The QA Officer will notify the learner in writing of the decision of the Appeal Committee and, where applicable, any subsequent action required.

Where an appeal is upheld, the Chair, through the QA Officer, will notify the relevant Committee and Departments of the outcome along with any recommendations and the requirement to update records.

Where the appeal relates to an award and certification has been requested from QQI the Assessment and Regulations Manager will take responsibility for updating that request.

8.11.14 Conclusion of Process

The decision of the Appeals Committee of the Academic Board is final and the process is concluded at this point.

Learners are advised as per QQI Assessments and Standards, Revised 2013, QQI does not have a role to play in a learner’s appeal of the provider’s assessment decisions.

Where an appeal fee has been paid and the appeal outcome results in a learner’s mark being increased, the fee for that specific appeal will be refunded. Where multiple marks are appealed at any one time, only those resulting in an upgrade will be refunded.

DBS is committed to ensuring that all decisions pertaining to assessment are fair and that learners have access to clear consistent and comprehensible appeals procedures.

8.11.15 Complaints about the Appeal Process
If a learner is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeals processes and believes that the procedures have been conducted improperly then she/he has a right to make a complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs within 15 working days of the announcement of the decision. The learner must be advised that this is not a re-opening of the appeal and that she/he must provide reasonable evidence of procedural impropriety. The Director of Academic Affairs will undertake a review to establish the validity of the claim. Following a decision from DBS, the learner must be formally notified that s/he has exhausted all procedures of the College and that the matter is now closed. Complaints Form (F9.3) may be obtained from Academic Affairs.

Learners must ensure that the completed complaint form (which should include full details of the complaint) is submitted by the published deadline. If any relevant supporting documentation is not available at this time, this should be indicated on the form and supplied within a maximum of 10 working days. Learners should be aware that after this time their complaint will be considered without reference to outstanding supplementary evidence.
9 Learner Support and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Learner Support and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018 or as requested by Academic Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This chapter describes the supports provided by DBS in respect of learners and academic delivery. These include, but are not limited to, Library, IT facilities, Careers and Student Services including International Student Services. The chapter also describes policies and procedures in respect of: personal mitigating circumstances, learner’s grievances and complaints, Learner Complaints Board, code of conduct, disciplinary procedures and procedures for dealing with suspected academic impropriety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplemental Policies

| Amendment History | 9.2 DBS Library – amended 08/12/16 |

9.1 Introduction

Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), in Part 1, **Standard 1.6**, states that “Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and learner support are provided.”

Learning and support services for the purpose of quality assurance are defined as the physical services and resources provided by, or on behalf of, DBS to enhance the learner’s learning experience. Learner resources include:

- Library and study facilities
- on-line learning support
- information technology facilities
- Career Development Office & DBS Student Experience
- Student Services
- academic support services
The range of learning and support services is broad and each such service has its own aims, objectives and work practices. Each is therefore considered separately in relation to quality assurance practices.

9.2 DBS Library

9.2.1 Role of DBS Library

The mission of the Library in DBS is to provide efficient, appropriate and effective information services to facilitate the learning, teaching and research objectives of the College.

The Library is located in the Aungier Street building. The Library also maintains two more informal study spaces in Bow Lane; Connect@TheHub and Study@TheHub.

9.2.2 Opening Hours

Library opening hours are extensive, with late opening five evenings per week during the academic year, and four evenings per week during the summer. The Library is open every Saturday throughout the year and is open seven days per week including bank holidays in the run up to exams. Hub opening hours are also extended before exam times.

9.2.3 Library Staffing and Staff Development

The majority of library staff members have a postgraduate library qualification and are members of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI). To ensure that staff members remain up to date, the College finances their attendance at professional development events such as those organised by the LAI, the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) and the Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANLTC). The Library subscribes to the Library and Information Science Source database.

The Library hosts the DBS Annual Library Seminar each June to which library professionals and learners from Ireland and beyond are invited. DBS Library staff present on a wide range of library topics at the seminar alongside a number of external speaker from the professional library community.

The Library is a member of the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) Library Committee which fosters discussion and training around professional library issues as well as the advancement if
private higher education college libraries. The Library also holds institutional membership of the LAI and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK (CILIP).

9.2.4 Library Collection

The Library has extensive print and audio-visual resources, with 50,000 items listed on the Library catalogue, (http://koha.dbs.ie), across the subjects of Arts, Business and Law. The Library also subscribes to a number of print journal titles.

In addition to its print holdings, the Library has a highly developed e-library which can be accessed via the Library website (http://library.dbs.ie). The e-library comprises e-books, e-journals and an extensive portfolio of academic databases. The Library website also provides information on Library services as well as access to a range of Library guides. The Library has an Institutional Repository, eSource (http://esource.dbs.ie/), which provides full-text access to learner these and continuous assessment of grades ≥2.1 as well as to the scholarly publications of academic staff.

The Library has been equipped with RFID technology and has three self-issue stations which enable learners to independently issue books to their own accounts. Ninety-five percent of borrowing is performed independently by learners. This has freed up Library staff time to assist learners with their more complex queries.

9.2.5 Relevancy and Currency of the Library Collection

The Library’s Collection Development Policy is published on the Library website, (http://library.dbs.ie/docs/default-source/default-document-library/collection-development-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=0). Reading lists are updated on an annual basis by the Acquisitions Librarian. Prior to the commencement of academic programmes, faculty supply reading lists and details of class sizes to the Acquisitions Librarian, who then ensures that the latest editions of titles are sourced. Out of print material considered seminal to a subject is also acquired.

The Library has introduced the Loughborough Online Reading List Software (LORLS), www.lorls.dbs.ie, which provides learners with online access to their reading lists with real time availability. Staff can also upload and edit their reading lists via LORLS.

9.2.6 Equitable Access to Library Resources
The Library acquires one core text to every ten learners to ensure that learners can fully access the materials that they require. Texts are made available on a 3 day, one week and two week lending period. An e-copy of core text books is also routinely purchased when available. Up to 100 concurrent learners can access an electronic copy of a text book via Dawsonera, for example. A copy of a core text is available for reference use only in the Library. Learners with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties are entitled to an extended loan period and borrowing allowance.

9.2.7 Remote and Mobile Access to Collections
The Library’s electronic holdings can be accessed off campus 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world via the Athens authentication platform. The Library Catalogue and the online databases can also be accessed on handheld devices.

9.2.8 Staff Inductions and Staff Research
The Library holds an annual staff open day to showcase pertinent Library developments of interest to faculty. The Information Skills Librarian also delivers one-to-one training with new and existing staff members on Library resources. Additionally, the Research Librarian provides one-to-one support to academics wishing to publish in the academic literature. S/he also delivers a programme of classes to faculty on getting published, measuring citation impact, etc. Please refer to the Policy on Staff Development for more detailed information on the Library’s services to support researchers.

9.2.9 Student Induction
The Library delivers a Library induction to all new and returning learners in the classroom setting. Tours of the Library are also run at the request of faculty or groups of students.

9.2.10 Information Skills Classes
The Library delivers a programme of information skills classes on a standalone and integrated (at the invitation of the lecturer) basis. The Library’s information skills classes are also formally accredited, embedded and accessed in a wide variety of academic programmes via the Learning to Learn and Personal and Professional Development modules. Classes are delivered by the dedicated Information Skills Librarian.

Information skills classes cover planning, writing and referencing assignments (including APA, Harvard and OSCOLA), avoiding plagiarism and the effective use of electronic resources and
referencing software. More recently, the Library has introduced classes on information skills for job seeking and success in the workplace.

For more details on the Library’s programme of information skills classes, please refer to the following link: http://libcal.dbs.ie/calendar/classes/?cid=5257&t=d&d=0000-00-00&cal%5B%5D=5257

9.2.11 Alumni and External Reader Services
The Library offers a variety of Alumni Membership packages which enable DBS alumni to access the Library and to borrow Library materials. Similar services are also offered to external readers. Both services offer access to Business Source Complete, Alumni Edition and Academic Search Complete, Alumni Edition, both on campus and remotely.

9.2.12 Quality Assurance
Library users at DBS are not a homogenous group but rather have very different needs and preferences. They range from undergraduates and postgraduates to academic staff. The needs and circumstances of both full-time and part-time students are catered for. Resource usage levels are constantly monitored and tracked through the Library Management System Koha and the statistical modules of library databases. These reports provide vital statistics on user requirements of each group.

Feedback from students is seen as a vital input to quality assurance of Library services. This is primarily gathered through two channels:

1. The Library Committee
   The Library Committee meets twice yearly to consider the general performance of the Library service. This committee includes student and staff representatives from a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Student representatives are encouraged to comment on service quality and any issues raised are discussed and recorded. Matters emerging from this meeting are addressed, where possible, by Library Management.
   Members of this committee provide feedback to the Boards of Studies meetings in the Schools. Issues requiring higher-level decisions are referred to the Schools Executive Board. The Head Librarian sits on the Academic Board and the Schools Executive.
2. Annual Library Survey

The Library conducts an annual online survey via Survey Monkey. The survey is also posted to the Library Website and Moodle. Feedback is addressed firstly at Library management level and actions documented. Issues requiring higher-level decisions are referred to the Schools Executive Board.

Information gathered by these means is used to effect quality improvements and is an important input to strategic and operational plans for the development of learning resources.

As part of the Kaplan management procedures, the Library reports on a number of key performance indicators each year. These are informed by institutional imperatives, professional body standards, and recent developments in the academic library literature. Performance indicators are updated annually to reflect the introduction of new services and resources.

**DBS Library: a Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Number of Staff</strong></th>
<th>13 (9 full-time and 4 part-time). All full-time staff have a professional library qualifications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional and Personal Memberships</strong></td>
<td>Library Association of Ireland (LAI), Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, UK (CILIP), The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) The Irish Film Institute (IFI), Acquisitions Group of Ireland (AGI), TCD Information Service, Irish Institute of Taxation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seating</strong></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Rooms</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computers</strong></td>
<td>27 PCs. PCs are equipped with Microsoft Office, research software, SPSS and QSRNvivo7, virtual laboratory software, the Virtual Rat and accounting software; Sage and TASbook2. The Library and the Hub are Wi-Fi enabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books</strong></td>
<td>49,152 print titles, e-books via Dawsonera, e-books from Amazon via the Kindle lending scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journals</strong></td>
<td>25 print journals and in excess of 60,000 e-journals via A-Z software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspapers (print &amp; electronic)</strong></td>
<td>5 print titles and online access to 350 newspapers from around the world via Lexis Nexis database</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Electronic Resources

ABI Inform, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Computer and Applied Sciences Complete, Emerald Insight, Film and Television Literature Index, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, JSTOR, JustCite, Justis, Lexis Nexis, Library & Information Science Source, Mintel Reports, Passport, PEP Archive, PsychArticles, SocIndex, WARC, Westlaw IE, Westlaw UK

### Inter-Library Loan Services

British Library, Trinity College Information Service & the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland

### Photocopiers

5 networked colour photocopiers for copying, scanning and printing

### Printing Software

Papercut (including wireless printing)

### Library catalogue

http://koha.dbs.ie/

### Library Website

http://library.dbs.ie/

### Institutional Repository

http://esource.dbs.ie/

### Online Reading Lists

http://lorls.dbs.ie/
## 9.3 Learner Support Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Learner Support Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Learner Support Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner Support Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for consideration to:</td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner Support Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Admissions and Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3.1 Learning Support in DBS

In line with good practice DBS adopts an inclusive approach to teaching, learning and assessment to enable all learners to fully participate in its education programmes as far as reasonably practicable and subject to reasonable accommodations being made where necessary. DBS adopts the AHEAD Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning and reflects this in the teaching, learning and assessment practices of the College and the support services provided.

The following policy takes into consideration the legal requirement for providers of services to make reasonable adjustment for those with a disability. It is important to note the term “reasonable” here. DBS commits to providing the resources and accommodations it deems to be reasonable. Any excessive cost or adaptations will be deemed unreasonable.

DBS is committed to promoting inclusion in all aspects of College life. The College supports all learners and specifically enables the participation of learners with additional or specific needs that can have an impact on day-to-day activities. Supports are provided to enable engagement in and successful completion of programmes of study, as far as is reasonably practicable and within any constraints laid down by QQI or relevant professional bodies.

In promoting inclusion, DBS:

- Encourages applications from people with additional needs
- Seeks to provide information in suitable formats to accommodate individual needs, where possible
- Assesses applications from those who disclose disabilities or specific needs, solely on the basis of their academic potential
- Provides a dedicated learner support service and invites all applicants and learners with additional needs to contact the service to discuss how their requirements may be accommodated
- Provides additional support or resources at the application stage to enable the applicant to complete the application process including attending interview where applicable
- Works towards the earliest possible assessment of needs and offer of reasonable accommodations where required
- Makes reasonable accommodations in assessment where applicable and without impacting the learning outcomes to be assessed
- Provides learning support services for all learners
• Takes steps to encourage students with progressive conditions, or who become disabled during their programme of study, to continue their studies
• Promotes an inclusive environment and attitude amongst the wider College community and endeavours to provide appropriate training to staff and faculty where required

Any assessment of additional support needs will be based upon an appropriate report from a relevant expert such as a medical consultant or educational psychologist. All such reports must:
• Be original
• Be provided on headed paper
• Be not more than five years old
• Include recommendations of the accommodations required

DBS is not qualified to determine the impact of a disability or learning need on any individual learner and therefore requires the above information.

The provision of additional supports or reasonable accommodations to learners who do not provide an expert opinion may be deemed as providing an unfair advantage and therefore is not normally permitted.

The Learner Supports Coordinator is the relevant contact for all learners wishing to discuss learner support needs. The Learner Supports Coordinator is located in the Library of Dublin Business School. Any learner who wishes to avail of additional supports, is strongly encouraged to speak in confidence with the Learning Supports Coordinator, by appointment at the earliest opportunity.

In addition to personalised specific learner supports and reasonable accommodations, DBS Library Service provides a range of services to assist all learners in the development of study skills and examination preparation. Further information can be obtained from the Library Service or on the Library Website at http://library.dbs.ie/

9.3.2 Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to:
• Provide assurance to potential applicants and learners with additional or specific needs that DBS will seek to provide reasonable accommodations to support them in their application
and their studies, where this is possible.

- Provide learners with a disability or specific learning need with the information required to enable them to seek assistance and arrange for reasonable accommodations where required and appropriate, including in assessment.

9.3.3 Scope
This policy applies to learners with permanent or long-term disabilities or health conditions or specific learning needs requiring facilities and/or arrangements that would enable them to participate in a programme of study and or demonstrate their ability in assessment.

This policy does not apply to learners with illness, temporary disabilities, or low levels of literacy or language competence.

Many of the arrangements required for the assessment of disabled learners or those with a specific learning need can and should also be applied to programme delivery where required. Arrangements will be provided where it is reasonable for the College to provide same and at no additional cost to the learner.

9.3.4 Principles
This procedure is based on the principles of inclusion, accessibility and the promotion of equality along with the College commitment to compliance with legal and professional requirements. Where necessary, the College will seek additional professional advice.

9.3.5 Procedure for Promoting Learner Support: Access and Inclusion
If required, DBS may discuss specific access and inclusion matters with a third party in order to secure appropriate professional expertise. Discussions will not include disclosing the identity of the individual applicant or learner unless express written consent has been secured from the applicant or learner in question.

Any information relating to the specific needs, disability or health of an individual applicant or learner will be retained and shared in accordance with the consent provided and in line with Data Protection legislation.
9.3.6 Information to Learners

DBS encourages the provision of information to learners that ensures complete and equitable access to all aspects of College life as is reasonably possible. Where materials cannot be provided in an accessible format, alternatives will be provided where possible.

9.3.7 Inclusive Practice in Admissions

All applicants are advised to disclose a disability or specific learning need at the point of application. This will not inform the admissions decision but will assist in ensuring appropriate supports can be made available.

Applicants or potential applicants are advised to contact the admissions office to discuss their specific requirements, with a view to the Admissions Office making the required accommodations to facilitate an application to the chosen programme of study.

Applicants or potential applicants may be requested to provide independent, expert reports to support their request for reasonable accommodations and to further assist DBS in identifying the appropriate accommodations to be implemented.

The applicant will be kept informed throughout the assessment of need being completed and advised of the accommodations implemented. Applicants are reminded that admission to DBS programmes will remain as an academic judgement only. However, where the accommodations required are not considered reasonable for DBS to implement, the applicant will be advised of this. Attempts will be made to ensure suitable reasonable accommodations can be implemented.

9.3.8 Communication of Request for Additional Learning Support

Each individual learner is responsible for communicating their request for additional support or reasonable accommodations in assessment.

Normally a learner should outline their additional requirements at the admissions stage so DBS can make an early and informed decision as to whether or not the additional support requirements can reasonably be provided.

It is the responsibility of each learner to disclose any condition or circumstance that may require
reasonable accommodation arrangements to be made.

DBS will not discriminate against any learner who makes such a disclosure and will seek to meet all support requirements that are deemed reasonable.

Disclosure is a personal decision and it is the right of the learner not to disclose this information if they so choose. Where a learner chooses not disclose, DBS is not liable for the provision of additional supports and the impact this may have on learner performance in assessment cannot normally be taken into consideration retrospectively in any appeal.

Where a learner opts not to disclose their additional support requirements until they commence their studies but wish to avail of such supports, they should contact the Learner Supports Coordinator not later than 6 weeks after their programme start.

Failure to contact the Learner Support Coordinator within the 6 week timeframe may result in the required supports not being provided in a timely manner. This includes DBS not guaranteeing making reasonable accommodation for assessments and examinations that may occur within that semester.

DBS will ensure that all learners are informed of their right to request appropriate assessment arrangements.

9.3.9 Applying for Additional Support and Reasonable Accommodations

The learner must make their request for additional support in writing and include the report of the relevant expert or specialist.

The Learner Supports Coordinator will consider the application and approve additional support and reasonable accommodations as appropriate based on the evidence submitted.

Upon confirming entitlement to additional support, the Learner Supports Coordinator will make a note on the learner record and advise the relevant academic and support staff on a need-to-know basis.

The note on the learner record should set out the nature of the proposed supports. The consultant’s or educational psychologist’s report or other appropriate expert’s recommendations will be noted on the learner record to ensure the ongoing year on year support for the learner. Copies of the evidence
submitted will not be retained.

All appropriate assessment arrangements should be made on an individual basis depending on the learner’s abilities so as to minimise possible disadvantage and not to advantage the learner.

Arrangements put in place must be achieved in consultation with the learner.

Any nominal costs incurred in regard to approved arrangements for disabled learners or those with a specific learning need will be borne by the College.

9.3.10 Specific Disabilities and Additional Needs
Outlined below are some of the main areas where arrangements and procedures have been identified.

**Hearing Impairment/Deafness**
The extent of the challenges faced by a learner with a hearing impairment will vary depending on the degree of deafness and also the first language of the learner.

Support arrangements should allow for appropriate means of ensuring effective communication. This may include the provision of information in written form, use of amplified sound or arrangements for locating the learner at the front of the class for example.

Within an assessment setting, arrangements may or may not be required. Procedures should allow for extra time during which instructions may be given so that any misunderstandings with regard to the phrasing or vocabulary of the questions can be clarified, if necessary via a sign language interpreter. A learner is reasonably expected to understand the technical language of the subject but not necessarily the language or phrasing of the question itself. Partially/profoundly deaf learners may lip-read or require amplified sound during the instructions being given by the invigilator in an examination. It is essential that the invigilator is aware of the need for clear speech and arrangements are made to seat a learner who lip-reads at the front of the examination room. Alternatively, any instructions may be made available in written format. Where necessary a separate room should be provided.

**Visual Impairment**
Arrangements for visually impaired learners will vary according to their level of vision, the subject
under assessment, the nature of the programme or the assessment and the learner’s chosen work methods. Accommodations made for visually impaired learners may include:

- Providing written materials in a medium appropriate to the learner’s needs, for example, increased font size or audio recording
- Avoiding the use of diagrams in questions and answers or providing a clear means of presenting these that will be visible to the learner or clearly describing them in words in a manner that will be understandable and not inhibit the learner from completing the question to their full potential

In addition to the above, provision of a reader and scribe during assessment activities may be required and will involve the need for a separate room and invigilation.

**Physical Disability**

Learners with physical disabilities may require specific supports related to the physical access of the learning environment. Additionally, consideration may need to be given to the nature and format of teaching and learning activities.

Many physically disabled learners may need use of a laptop, to use a scribe or require extra time when undertaking examinations or in-class tests. Where the assessment relates to the completion of physical activities, alternative arrangements should be made to accommodate the needs of the learner. Again, the learner should not be disadvantaged or advantaged as a result of any such accommodations.

**Dyslexia**

Learners with dyslexia may require support relating to the format in which information is provided. This may include changing the font size and type, changing the colour of the paper or using strategies that are not text dependent.

Appropriate arrangements should be made so as to minimise the effects of dyslexia in assessment arrangements in a way that enables the learner to demonstrate attainment of minimum learning outcomes without being disadvantaged or advantaged.

Arrangements may differ from learner to learner and should be based on the specified recommendations of an appropriately qualified educational psychologist’s report and may include:

- Application of a spelling and grammar waiver in all assessments
- Extra time to allow the learner to read and understand the question and to plan, structure and check the answer, or a scribe to write on behalf of the learner
- Use of particular fonts, font size, background paper colour, use of a reader and so on
• Opportunity for the learner to sit an exam in a separate room if the extent of their anxiety in a shared environment is likely to significantly exacerbate the effects of their dyslexia and prevent them from presenting an accurate reflection of their knowledge.

**Hidden Disabilities**
Learners with hidden disabilities will normally be accommodated in managing their condition throughout their programme of study. This may require special arrangements regarding the use of electronic equipment, breaks during class time, recovery time, arrangements for self-administering medication etc.

Learners with hidden disabilities should have the option of taking their examinations in separate, appropriate accommodation if there is a possibility that a symptom of the illness may interrupt the examination sitting.

Where a medical recommendation is that a significant break is provided for a learner, this should be accommodated and arrangements made for the learner to sit the examination in a separate room with individual invigilation.

**Mental Health**
In the instance of evidence of a long-term mental health condition constituting a disability, appropriate accommodations should be made in line with recommendations from the qualified practitioner. This may include:

- Provision of a separate room and invigilator
- Provision of additional time to complete exams or continuous assessments

This does not apply to short-term mental health issues where the regulations relating to extenuating circumstances should be referred to.
9.3.11 Practical Arrangements

Extra Time for Exams and In Class Tests
Where an expert recommendation identifies the requirement, extra time is given at a rate of:
- 1 hour test: 10 minutes
- 90 minute test: 15 minutes
- 2 hours or longer: 30 minutes

Extra Time in Exams
Learners go to a dedicated exam room with up to 15 learners who are also having special exam arrangements. Academic Affairs will contact learners by email with the room location and the dedicated room will also be shown on the exam timetable. Some learners in the dedicated exam room will be using laptops to write their exams so it is acceptable to bring ear plugs into the exam room if the learner is sensitive to noise.

Extra Time in In-Class Tests
Learners will either be given the test in a separate room with an invigilator along with any other class members entitled to extra time or alternatively they will be accommodated in the same room as the rest of the class and given the extra time after the other learners have left the class.

To avail of the extra time for an in-class test, learners must notify the lecturer at least 3 weeks in advance. On the day learners should introduce themselves to the lecturer at the start of the class to let them know that they are to receive the additional time.

Rest Breaks during Exams and In-Class Tests
Where an expert recommendation identifies the requirement, extra time is allocated to the learner to be used for rest breaks at a rate of:
- 1 hour test: 10 minutes
- 90 minute test: 15 minutes
- 2 hours or longer: 30 minutes

Learners may choose when to take their breaks. During rest breaks learners may move around the room as they wish. Should they wish to leave the exam room to access toilet facilities or any other facilities they must be accompanied by an invigilator.

During rest breaks learners may not read the exam paper, read their answers or write or prepare answers.
Spelling and Grammar Waiver
Learners who are entitled to a spelling & grammar waiver will be given S&G stickers to stick onto their submitted work and exam papers. They will also be given an electronic version to attach to work submitted online. The onus is on the learner to ensure that they have enough stickers for all of their exams and coursework. Stickers can be collected from the Learner Supports Coordinator at any time during working hours.

The S&G sticker should be placed on either the first or second page of a piece of coursework or exam paper. The stickers will alert lecturers marking the work that they must apply the spelling and grammar waiver. Please note that lecturers double check the learner’s eligibility before applying the waiver. Anyone found to be passing stickers to other learners or using stickers without permission from the Learning Support Office will face disciplinary procedures.

Alternate Exam Papers Format
Where an expert recommendation requires that a learner has exam papers provided in a different font / font size / colour paper or has recommended the use of a coloured overlay, learners will sit the exam / in-class test in the same exam room as the rest of the class. Learners should make themselves known to the lecturer or invigilator at the start of the exam so that they know who to give the adapted exam paper to.

Learners who have been assessed as entitled to use assistive technology for exams will have exam papers provided as a MS Word document on a memory stick. They will sit the exam in a dedicated exam room with up to 15 learners who are also having special exam arrangements. An Academic Affairs representative will contact learners by email with the room location and the dedicated room will also be shown on the exam timetable.

A Reader
DBS does not use text to speech technology or Dictaphone recordings. Where learners are entitled to use a reader for exams and in-class tests they will be working with a human reader. The learner will be given a private room for the exam / in-class test. Present in the room will be the learner, the reader and an invigilator or alternatively the reader will also be the invigilator so only the learner and the reader will be present.
The reader will read the questions, as written on the exam paper, to the learner. They will not explain or paraphrase the question or give the learner any other information. The reader will read the questions in any order that the learner chooses allowing the learner to attempt the questions in their preferred order and can re-read the questions as often as the learner wishes. The reader can also read back the answers that the learner has written if requested by the learner.

**Using a Reader for In-Class Tests:**
Where a learner has been assessed as entitled to the use of a reader, to avail of the reader for an in-class test the learner must make contact with the Academic Affairs Office to arrange this at least 3 weeks in advance. Learners will be accommodated in a separate room for the in class test.

**A Scribe**
DBS does not use Dictaphones or speech to text technology. Where a learner has been assessed as entitled to a scribe for exams and in-class tests they will be working with a human scribe. The learner will be given a private room for the exam / in class test. Present in the room will be the learner, the scribe and an invigilator or alternatively the scribe will also be the invigilator so only the learner and the scribe will be present.

The scribe transcribes the learner’s dictation of answers by hand or using a computer depending on the scribe’s own preference. If separate marks are given for spelling or punctuation, these will not be credited to a learner using a scribe. They will be assessed on the content of their answer only.

The scribe will not advise, explain or discuss answers with the learner. They will write the learner’s answers accurately without paraphrasing the content. Scribes can, at the learner’s request, read back what has been written.

Paper will be available for the learner to use for any rough work, planning or any handwritten material that they would like to submit in addition to the work produced by the scribe.

**A scribe for In-Class Tests:**
Where a learner has been assessed as entitled to the use of a scribe, to avail of the scribe for an in-class test the learner must make contact with the Academic Affairs Office to arrange this at least 3 weeks in advance. Learners will be accommodated in a separate room for the in class test.
Using A Reader and A Scribe
Where a learner has been assessed as entitled to the use of both a reader and a scribe, the same person may perform both functions. In this case present in the exam room would be the learner, the Scribe / Reader and possibly a separate invigilator.

A Laptop
Where learners have been assessed as entitled to use of a laptop for exams and in-class tests a laptop will be provided for the learner’s use on the day. The learner will be given a memory stick to save their answers on and submit both the laptop and the memory stick at the end of the exam. Exam answers will be written in MS Word. It is the responsibility of the learner to be proficient in the use of the computer and the appropriate software.

Learners who use an assistive technology for exams may be given permission to use their own equipment in exams if it is not practical to transfer the technology to a college laptop.

Using a laptop in Exams:
Learner will go to a dedicated exam room with up to 15 learners who are also having special exam arrangements. Academic Affairs will contact learners by email with the room location and the dedicated room will also be shown on the exam timetable.

Using a Laptop in In-Class Tests:
Learners will either be given the test in a separate room with an invigilator along with any other class members entitled to use a laptop or alternatively they will be accommodated in the same room as the rest of the class.

**To avail of the laptop for an in class test learners must contact Academic Affairs three weeks in advance. On the day, learners must introduce themselves to the lecturer at the start of the class to let them know that they are the learner who will be using a laptop.

Alternative Assessment Methodology
Where the assessment methodology itself is deemed to be the barrier, this should be discussed between the Lecturer and the Learner Support Coordinator. An alternative assessment methodology may be approved in such cases where it is possible to assess the attainment of learning outcomes through another means and where an unfair advantage is not being provided. DBS encourages
lecturers to consider automatic use of assessment methodology that is as inclusive as possible. Where recurring barriers to assessment are identified as a result of the chosen methodology it is reasonably expected that the methodology will be revised and replaced with a more inclusive one.
9.4 On-line Learning Support

DBS provides on-line learning support to learners via a facility known as ‘Moodle’. Moodle is a virtual learning environment (VLE), a software package designed to help educators create quality on-line courses and manage learner outcomes. Lecturers assigned to deliver and assess modules are required to make certain course materials available to their learners via Moodle. All course material uploaded to Moodle is subject to review and validation.

For each module delivered, the lecturer is required to place the following materials on Moodle for the benefit of learners:

- module guide
- lecture notes
- schedule of continuous assessment
- assessment specification that forms part of the continuous assessment
- reference to the DBS Plagiarism policy
- past examination papers
- current reading list
- grade criteria

It is recommended that lecturers also supply:

- tutorial support
- links to useful information on the web, support reading/journals
- links to library reservation for books.

Moodle provides learners with an additional channel through which learning materials can be accessed and used. The materials can be accessed locally or remotely, thus facilitating learners who prefer to study at home and part-time learner. Learners who have missed lectures for whatever reason can use the facility to catch up on missed material. The on-line facility is seen as a valuable addition to the more traditional learning resources.

Staff Development sessions are provided for staff to support their engagement with Moodle. Training is provided for all new academic staff members, those who feel they need a refresher course and those who wish to explore other academic activities (formative quizzes, blogs, etc) in Moodle.
9.5 IT Facilities for Learners

DBS’s policy in relation to learner computing facilities and services is one of continuous improvement to cater for emerging academic needs (e.g. additional software) and to capitalise on developments in technology. IT facilities for learners comprise of 11 teaching suites, located as follows:

Castle House: 9 suites each with 21-34 workstations
Balfe Street: 1 suite with 28 workstations
Auniger Street: 1 suite with 23 workstations
Library: 40 workstations for learner use (which must be booked through the Library)

There is also a wireless network to facilitate learners who prefer to use their own portable computers for academic work. Learner e-mail has been launched using new Microsoft Windows Live for educational institutions. Learners can have profile pages and can contact each other through instant messaging.

Support for learner computing is provided by six IT support staff, that cover all buildings from 09.00-18.00 every weekday and two members of staff provide cover onsite from 17.30-21.30. During induction, each learner is given the computer services e-mail address and helpdesk number for use in the event of any IT-related issues or queries. Learners are also advised to contact the computer services office in the event of any significant problem. The IT Department continues to develop a computer services area on the learner website which provides helpful information to learners on general support questions and answers, for example, how to connect to the learner wireless network and how to access learner email.

All lecture rooms are equipped with a projector, pc, multimedia and sound facilities. In each room, there is an on-line facility for reporting faults or usage problems to computer services staff. Faults or issues reported in this way are addressed as quickly as possible by computer services. This allows the IT Department to monitor the quality of service provision to learners and lecturers alike.

The IT manager currently sits on two Committees, part of whose brief is to monitor and review the quality of computing services provided to learners. The IT Steering Committee, which meets quarterly and involves the heads of all major departments within DBS, is responsible for the strategic management of IT affairs in DBS and considers, in particular, the adequacy and quality of learner computing services and how those services might be further improved. The Learning and Teaching Committee, meets monthly to consider academic support issues and to respond to feedback from
learners. Any significant IT issues or matters involving additional resources or investment are referred to the IT Steering Committee.

Any computing/IT related issues raised at Boards of Studies meetings are reported back to IT management for attention. A representative from the IT Department may be invited to attend a Board of Studies, if there is a particular IT issue or requirement. This frequently results in improvement initiatives.

9.6 Premises and Facilities

The Facilities Department is responsible for managing all building and maintenance work in the College, along with providing and maintaining all furniture and equipment, including but not limited to:

- teaching aids
- desks and seating
- electricity and heating.

The facilities department is further responsible for programme and module timetabling and classroom scheduling across the entire school. The primary objective of the Facilities Department is to provide and maintain a safe, well-resourced physical environment, with appropriate availability and accessibility to all the College’s staff and learners. The department attempts to cater, and provide adequate resources, for the many different learning and teaching requirements of the College. The department is also responsible for ensuring that all current Irish health and safety legislation is strictly adhered to.

To maintain quality in the physical environment, all materials and equipment are sourced from reputable suppliers based on satisfactory references or prior experience. Supplier contracts are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the College obtains quality products and services that represent good value for money. Equipment audits are periodically carried out on all teaching-related equipment to ensure optimum performance. Defective or poorly performing equipment is repaired or replaced.

Communication with learners is facilitated by a series of notice Boards each of which is dedicated to particular learner groups. All learners are made aware of which notice Board relates to their
programme and are actively encouraged to check it regularly. Additionally, there are dedicated learner notice boards in the reception areas of Aungier Street and Castle House where urgent or last minute room changes or other relevant information is posted. Web texts are also used to ensure learners become aware of room changes or other facilities issues at the earliest opportunity.

In common with other service areas in DBS, the Facilities Department gathers feedback from learners as part of the process of quality monitoring and enhancement. This is seen as most important to ensure quality is maintained in the provision of physical teaching and learning facilities.

Feedback from learners is gathered via the student surveys carried out towards the end of first term. The survey results are tabulated and forwarded to the Facilities Manager. Issues raised are addressed as a matter of priority and where necessary budget approval is sought for any more extensive and costly improvements.

An ongoing refurbishment and redecoration programme is in place to ensure that the physical environment remains conducive to the learning and studying process. DBS remains committed to its policy of continuous improvement of the physical College environment and all associated teaching and learning facilities.

9.7 Careers and Student Services

Careers and Student Services provides the many support services available to learners ensure that they have an excellent student experience, settle into college life and maximise their potential. The department is arranged into Student Experience and Careers Development and arranged across two main buildings.

Student Experience Office:
- Education, Welfare & Learning Support
- International Student Officer
- Accommodation Officer
- Sports & Societies Development Officer
- Study Abroad Student Officer

DBS Careers Development Office:
• Careers Advisor
• Placement Officer
• Employer Liaison Officer

9.7.1 DBS Careers Development Office

The office offers an extensive range of services to develop employability skills. The team publicise recruitment campaigns, internship opportunities and current vacancies via social media channels, email job alerts and on campus vacancy boards. Downloadable career management tools, templates and resources are available via the careers and student services Moodle page. The team also features an Employer Liaison Officer who focuses on employer relations and work placement opportunities.

The Careers Department host a number of Careers Fairs on campus throughout the academic year. These events present ideal opportunities for our learners and graduates to access a range of personal and career development options and to network with recruiters.

External career and networking events are also promoted to the student body via social media channels and careers e-newsletters. DBS is focused on creating a three-way partnership relationship between our learners, employers and DBS staff.

Services offered include:

• One to One Career Consultations
• Career Management Tools and Resources
• Jobs, Internships and Work Placement Opportunities
• Drop In Career Planning Clinic
• Interview Coaching Services
• Career Skills Seminars and Resource Publications

The careers team design and deliver career skills related workshops and seminars on a regular basis. Key relationships have also been developed with employers and industry guest speakers. This provides a variety of opportunities for learners to connect with the graduate labour market.

A wide variety of publications, guides and career skill related fact sheets and online resources have been developed by the team for the student body. Examples of resources include the following:-
The Student Services team aim to assist learners during their time in DBS through a number of support services including a counselling information service, drop-in hours for international learners, accommodation service and a welfare office.

9.7.2.1 Accommodation

The Student Services Department manage the DBS Accommodation Guide, which includes information on the various accommodation options available to learners in Dublin's City Centre, which is available on the Student Services website. There is also an Accommodation Notice-board on the ground floor of Aungier Street. The College also provide a Homestay Accommodation option for learners who wish to experience the Irish culture in depth.

9.7.2.2 Welfare

DBS employ an Education, Welfare and Learning Support Officer. The service guarantees a high level of confidentiality at all times and can point learners in the right direction to ensure that they obtain the support that they need.

9.7.2.3 Counselling Options
DBS offers a confidential referral service to Counselling and Psychotherapy and guides learners to other appropriate support services.

**9.7.2.4 International Student Officer**

The International Student Services Officer provides general guidance, immigration advice and support to all non-European learners. Services provided by the officer include the issuing of formal letters on behalf of learners to the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) and prospective employers which include Visa related letters, eligibility to work letters and an array of general reference letters. The officer also advises learners on opening bank accounts, applying for Personal Public Service (PPS) cards and acquiring health insurance cover.

There is a dedicated Study Abroad Officer to co-ordinate and promote entertainment/sports and other activities specific to international learners as well as promoting the interests of international learners, to provide advice and assistance to help integrate international learners into the student community and the promotion of multicultural and all-inclusive events within the college.

DBS is informed by the ‘Code of Practice and Guidelines for the Provision of Education to International Learners’ which has been published by the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN www.iheqn.ie). This Code of Practice is intended to guide Irish HEIs – Universities, Institutes of Technology, other publicly funded institutions and the leading private colleges - in setting their own education provision arrangements for international learners against agreed sector wide benchmarks.

**9.7.2.5 Sports and Societies**

The office is responsible for facilitating student led clubs and societies and arranges a range of sports and social activities. They also manage college sports teams and organises training and facilities.

**9.7.2.6 Learning Supports**

DBS’s Learning Supports Service aims to provide support for learners with learning challenges and to assist the achievement of educational goals. Learners with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health issues, on-going illnesses or short term illness or injury should register with the Support Service to ensure they receive the appropriate assistance during their studies. Learners who require additional support register with the service who co-ordinate the examinations or teaching supports.

Supports Available
• Assistive technology
• Academic support
• In class support
• Special arrangements for exams
• Counselling.

9.8 Learner Responsibilities

Learners are ultimately responsible for their own learning and whilst the college provides learner and academic support, learners have a responsibility to engage in the college supports and maintain a positive learning environment.
## Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Learner Attendance Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Academic Systems Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Programme Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Careers and Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Faculty and School Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Systems team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for consideration to:</td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Marketing and Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.9.1 Attendance Policy Overview

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to successful academic achievement. Each learner is responsible for managing their time to ensure satisfactory attendance is achieved. Satisfactory attendance is deemed to be attendance that is 80% or greater of the potential attendance for any given module. In addition, where applicable, the following specific requirements must be satisfied:

- the minimum requirements of regulatory or statutory bodies
- the specific compulsory requirements of a programme or component thereof

DBS recognises that circumstances may prevent learners from consistently maintaining attendance rates of 80% or greater. However, attendance that is less than 60% of the potential attendance for any given module is considered to be a cause for concern.

Learners are also responsible for all work from the first day of class and must notify the college regarding any anticipated absences. Learners who do not maintain a satisfactory level of attendance are hindering their overall academic performance.

Priority for the provision of further support to learners will always be given to those learners with a strong attendance record, including those with authorised absence.

In order to encourage high attendance levels, the College invests substantial time and resources in tracking and following up on poor attendance. Attendance records are kept for all classes. It is each learner’s responsibility to comply with attendance monitoring processes and procedures, including electronic or paper-based systems.

When absence from assessment or examinations is caused by illness or other personal mitigating circumstances, the Programme Coordinator should be informed in writing and documentary evidence (e.g. a medical certificate) should be provided. Time limits for presentation of medical certificates apply. See Personal Mitigating Circumstances Policy for full information on requirements.

9.9.2 Compulsory Attendance

Some aspects of College provision dictate a compulsory attendance requirement e.g. professional practice placements. In such instances, a specific policy is drawn up to manage this. The attendance policy and the consequences of failure to comply with the requirements of this policy are brought to the learners’ attention in advance.
Non-attendance in compulsory elements of a programme does not entitle the learner to being offered a further opportunity and may result in the learner being deemed to have failed the programme.

It is the Programme Leader’s responsibility to develop, communicate and implement any such compulsory attendance policy. Where practicable, learners must be advised of any such requirements from the outset of the programme. The policy must include details of any potential implications on a learner’s enrolment status or entitlement to an award as a result of failing to satisfy attendance requirements.

9.9.3 International Learner Attendance Requirements

There are strict regulations regarding the class attendance of non-EU learners. These regulations have been set by the Department of Justice and Equality, and are enforced by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS). In keeping with official regulations, DBS enforces a strict attendance policy for Visa holding learners.

All international learners are required to attend classes to the levels specified by the Department of Justice and Equality and monitored by INIS. Full details of requirements can be obtained from INIS or through contacting the DBS International Office in Student Services. In addition, the following rules apply:

- If an international learner is ill for more than two days, they are required to submit a medical certificate from a qualified registered medical practitioner. This will be taken into account when calculating their attendance rate. The medical certificate must be provided within 5 working days of the period of absence. Failure to do so may have implications for the learner’s status with INIS.
- Learners are required to attend meetings arranged by the college to investigate poor attendance records

Under the study visa regulations a learner is permitted to work for up to 20 hours per week. Working more than 20 hours per week can affect a learner’s ability to maintain a good attendance rate and their academic performance may suffer, and is in contravention of the study visa regulations. Learners are permitted to work up to 40 hours per week during academic vacation periods only.
9.9.4 Learner Entitlements

Learners are entitled to the appropriate opportunities to enable them to succeed in their studies. DBS ensures the appropriate teaching, learning and support facilities are in place to satisfy this. However, it is each learner’s responsibility to avail of these. Attendance is a key contributor to learner success.

Whilst DBS doesn’t impose compulsory attendance, except where specified or where an external agency imposes regulations, attendance is monitored and will be followed up where there is cause for concern.

It is acknowledged that it is each learner’s responsibility to notify the College of any circumstances that are impacting on their programme of study. However, should the College observe attendance levels that give cause for concern efforts will be made to contact the learner concerned. In the case of personal mitigating circumstances affecting attendance, DBS will seek to support the learner and identify the options available to them.

Learners are entitled to classes and tutorials, which start and end punctually and last for the duration of the time scheduled. In the event of lecturer absence, DBS will make every effort to arrange an alternative lecturer. Where this is not possible, the class will be rescheduled.

9.9.5 Learner Responsibilities

Learners are required to arrive for classes punctually and remain present for the duration of the class.

Learners are required to actively participate in the class and follow the reasonable instruction of their lecturer.

Learners should not miss class except in extenuating circumstances such as illness or bereavement. In the event of any absence, the learner is required to notify the Programme Coordinator via email. In the event of any absence, it is each learner’s responsibility to make arrangements to catch up on work missed.
If a learner is absent without explanation for a period of greater than one calendar month and there has been no response to attempted contact by the College, or reasonable explanation for absence, the learner will be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme and will be notified of this.

If a learner’s pattern of attendance or participation gives cause for concern and has not been deemed as authorised absence through the presentation of PMCs, it may affect their entitlement to progress on their programme. DBS reserves the right to prevent a learner from progressing where it is felt they are not sufficiently and appropriately engaging with the programme. The specific requirements will vary depending on the nature and level of the programme concerned.

It is each learner’s responsibility to ensure accurate and honest recording of their attendance. Attendance is recorded on Moodle for each individual learner to view their record. This should be checked by the learner, ideally on a daily basis, and any discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the relevant lecturer and or the Programme Coordinator. Any attempts to falsify attendance records including but not restricted to scanning cards of fellow learners or requesting a fellow learner to scan your card when absent, is considered a disciplinary offence and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee where penalties up to an including dismissal from the College may be applied.

9.9.6 College Responsibilities

In this context, the responsibilities of the College are carried out by different members of the College including academic lecturing staff, administrators and managers.

The College is required to:

- Notify learners, through the Academic Affairs Department, of its attendance policy including attendance monitoring and any compulsory attendance requirements
- Notify learners, through the Academic Affairs Department, of potential implications of poor attendance or failing to satisfy specific requirements
- Ensure effective attendance monitoring and recording arrangements are in place
- Record learner attendance through the electronic recording system provided or via paper based recording undertaken by the lecturer in the event of system failure
- Ensure Programme Coordinators monitor learner attendance and attempt to contact those absent without notice and notify Level Managers and Programme Leaders of those learners whose attendance levels or patterns are of concern for further follow up
• Ensure lecturers and Programme Coordinators provide advice and guidance to those learners who give evidence of personal mitigating circumstances impacting their attendance and participation
• Ensure classes start and finish punctually and last for the duration scheduled
• Where practicable, provide advance notification to learners when a class is moved or rescheduled, through issuing of emails and text alerts from the Academic Affairs Department
• Submit notification from the International Office to the INIS of any visa holding learner who fails to satisfy the attendance regulations as stated.

9.9.7 Advance Information to Learners
From the outset of their studies, as part of the orientation and induction, learners should be alerted to the attendance policy and recording and monitoring arrangements in place.

Visa holding learners should be notified of the specific requirements for their attendance and the communication of their attendance to INIS as well as the intent of the College to notify where attendance falls below the required level.
All learners should be provided with access to their timetable for the semester ahead. This should detail all classes including the location. Further to this, learners should be notified of other key programme activities such as examination periods.

Learners are advised that timetables are intended to run as scheduled but may change due to unforeseen circumstances in which case, where practicable, the learners will be notified at the earliest opportunity by text and email to their DBS email account.

9.9.8 Recording Attendance
The academic systems team will provide each lecturer with details of all learners registered to attend their class.

Each learner is required to use their student card and the scanning device located in each classroom to scan in for each class they attend.

In the event of a fault with the scanning device or absence of a student card, the learner must notify the lecturer immediately so a manual attendance can be recorded.
The learner is responsible for monitoring their attendance record on Moodle and immediately notifying the relevant lecturer where there is an error in their attendance. Where the lecturer is able to verify the inaccuracy the attendance record will be updated.

The lecturer should make all reasonable attempts to ensure the accuracy of attendance records. This includes reminding learners of the requirement to have signed in. Depending on the size of the class, additional checks may include ensuring the class count correlates with the attendance register and undertaking periodic sign-in registrations to ensure no learner is scanning more than their own student card. A lecturer may opt to complete a sign in registration regularly in addition to the electronic card scanning system should they wish to do so.

DBS recognises there may be instances where a learner is unable to attend class. The learner is required to notify the Programme Coordinator of this by email at the earliest opportunity. DBS reserves the right to request evidence of reason for absence e.g. medical certificate.

Where the Programme Coordinator is notified of absence he/she will record the reason for absence and date of notification on the student information system.

9.9.9 Implications of Absence
Programme Coordinators will initiate contact with any learner that shows unauthorised absence for a period of greater than one week.

In instances of ongoing or recurring absence without notification the Programme Leader or Level Manager will attempt to contact the learner concerned to establish the continued intention to complete the programme and whether or not there are any circumstances which may be preventing improved attendance. Attempts will be made to support the learner to improve their attendance or alternatively, appropriate options such as deferral, programme change or transfer of study mode may be discussed.

The learner may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the implications of their non-attendance or non-participation.
All absentee learners will be advised that continuous or recurring absence may impact on their potential to succeed and could prevent their progression on the programme.

Where professional body, academic validation, or a government agency regulations have implications for a learner’s potential progression, enrolment, award, or residency status this will be communicated to the learner. Visa holding learners will be advised of the intention to notify INIS and the potential implications this may have on their residency status.

Where applicable, DBS reserves the right to prevent a learner undertaking a professional practice placement where it is felt that poor attendance or participation is demonstrating a lack of commitment to the programme or has prevented the learner from being adequately prepared for the placement requirements.

While a learner may be withdrawn for non-attendance without communication for a duration greater than one calendar month, a learner will not be withdrawn for poor attendance in itself. However, if a learner fails an assessment, a module, a stage or a programme and has a track record of poor attendance, without accepted mitigating circumstances, this apparent lack of commitment to the programme will be a factor taken into account by the Committee in the event of any appeal.

9.9.10 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Impacting Attendance
Where PMCs are impacting on a learner’s attendance DBS will advise the learner of options available to them including but not limited to:

- Additional learner supports in place
- Deferral
- Extension requests
- Submission of PMCs for consideration by the Board of Examiners
- Change of programme
- Transfer of mode of study

In each case, the learner will be required to follow the procedure associated with each instance outlined above and the associated policy will apply.

9.9.11 Failure to Respond to Communication from DBS
Learners who are absent for an extended period, greater than one calendar month, and fail to respond to a minimum of two attempts by DBS to make contact with them will be assumed to have
withdrawn. The final attempt at communication will notify the learner of the imminent withdrawal and the requirement to make contact within 5 working days in order to prevent this. Visa holding learners will be notified of the intention to advise INIS of their absence and non-engagement and the implications this may have on their residency status.

Should the learner fail to respond by the deadline, the Programme Coordinator will confirm the withdrawal of the learner, including issuing a withdrawal letter to the learner, and update the student information system.

In the event of withdrawal, the Assessment and Regulations Manager will ensure any completed modules are put through the Examination Board as scheduled and a transcript of results will be issued to the learner as applicable.

Withdrawal does not entitle a learner to any full or partial refund of fees.

Where a learner is withdrawn due to non-attendance and failure to communicate with the College, any return to study will normally only be facilitated through the standard admissions process at the next programme intake point. Fees paid on previous admission will not be carried forward.
9.10 Deferral Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Deferral Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Responsibility: | Director of Admissions and Marketing  
                  Head of Academic Affairs |
| Implemented by: | Admissions staff  
                  Programme Coordinators  
                  Exams Officer and Administrator |
| Updated by:   | Director of Academic Affairs |
| Circulated for consideration to: | Programme Leaders  
                  Head of Academic Affairs  
                  Director of Admissions and Marketing  
                  Schools Executive Board |
| Version number: | 2016/1 |
| Review date:  | 2019 |
9.10.1 Deferral Policy Overview

A deferral refers to a break or delay in the completion of a programme of study or component thereof. It includes any one of the following:

- A pre-registration deferral of an offer
- A pre-programme deferral of a place, within 2 weeks of registration
- A full programme deferral, during the programme of study
- A module deferral, during the programme of study

In considering deferral requests DBS will consider the best interest of the learner but will only implement decisions that ensure the academic integrity of the programme and the College and will not provide personalised learning arrangements that create an unfair advantage for a learner over other learners. The completion of a programme through its natural progression is paramount, and DBS will not facilitate completion of the programme more quickly than the validation permits.

Learners are responsible for their registration status and maintaining communication with the College in relation to any factors that may impact that status. DBS provides clear guidance and opportunity for learners to communicate any circumstances impacting their studies at the time they arise and in the immediate period following same. DBS will not normally authorise retrospective deferrals where the request stems from academic under-performance or failure or non-participation in the programme due to circumstances that arose some time previously.

DBS will seek to consider and respond to deferral requests as quickly as possible. Learners are advised that a deferral should not be assumed and therefore wherever practicable should continue as an active student, including the completion of all assessments, until the deferral outcome has been confirmed. Where there are extenuating circumstances that prevent this, the deferral will be backdated to the date of first notification to the College or the date indicated on supporting evidence provided.

Deferring studies may also result in the requirement to repeat programme components or assessments that have already been satisfied, except where a complete module has been successfully completed and this module remains current within the programme. Failure to do this can constitute failing an assessment attempt and will be subjected to the implications this carries in line with QQI HET Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013.

DBS reserves the right to impose a programme deferral on a learner where it is felt it may be detrimental to the learner, the College, or the individuals or groups with whom the learner is required to engage to complete their studies.
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

DBS will retain all records confidentially in line with data protection requirements and will only share information on a need-to-know basis.

9.10.2 Pre-registration deferral of an offer of a place
A pre-registration deferral of an offer of a place on a DBS programme is available to all applicants in receipt of an offer of a place. In such cases the applicant may defer the offer for a maximum of two years. Requests for a pre-registration deferral should be submitted to the Admissions Team.

9.10.2.1 Conditions of deferral of an offer of a place
Deferral of an offer is accepted and confirmed subject to conditions which the Admissions Team must communicate to the applicant at the time. The following conditions apply:

a. The deferral is granted for a maximum of two academic years
b. The deferral is granted subject to the programme continuing to be offered and in its current format and structure. DBS reserves the right to amend the programme format and structure without notice and further reserves the right to no longer offer the programme without notice

c. DBS reserves the right to amend the entry requirements and standards without notice and all deferred offers will be subject to these revised requirements which may include the offer being withdrawn
d. Deferred applicants will be subject to the fees applicable at the time they commence the programme of study.

9.10.3 Pre-programme deferral of a place, within 2 weeks of registration
Pre-programme deferral is only available to those learners who are within 2 weeks of having completed registration. In such cases the applicant may defer for a maximum of one academic year subject to specific conditions. Requests for a pre-programme deferral must be submitted to the Programme Coordinator.

9.10.3.1 Conditions of a pre-programme deferral of a place, within 2 weeks of registration
A pre-programme deferral is accepted and confirmed subject to conditions which the Programme Coordinator must communicate to the applicant at the time. The following conditions apply:

a. The deferral is granted for a maximum of one academic year
b. The deferral is granted subject to the programme continuing to be offered and in its current format and structure. DBS reserves the right to amend the programme format and structure without notice and further reserves the right to no longer offer the programme without notice.

c. DBS reserves the right to amend the entry requirements and standards without notice and all deferred learners will be subject to these revised requirements which may include the offer being withdrawn.

d. Deferred learners will be subject to the fees applicable at the time they commence the programme of study.

e. Fees paid will be deferred for the duration of the deferral. There is no entitlement to a refund of fees paid in the event of the learner no longer wishing to pursue the programme of study or in the event of programme changes made by DBS.

f. It is the learner’s responsibility to contact DBS in order to recommence their studies at the end of the deferral period. Where a learner fails to return at this point, and up to a maximum of one month post this point, they will be deemed to have withdrawn. In such cases return to DBS will only be facilitated through the standard admissions process at the next programme start point.

9.10.4 A full programme deferral during a programme of study

A full programme deferral is an option available to learners who are undertaking a programme of study at DBS and who, for reasons beyond their control, can no longer commit to completing the programme in the original intended timescale. DBS does not encourage learners to defer their studies except in extenuating circumstances that provide no other option. Learners are advised to speak with their programme leader in the first instance to establish alternative arrangements that may suit their needs. Where a full programme deferral is required, the learner should submit their request to the Programme Coordinator.

A full programme deferral may also be imposed on a learner where the Programme Leader believes their continuation may be detrimental to the learner, the College, or the individuals or groups with whom they must work in order to complete their studies. In such cases the Programme Leader will discuss the concerns and the recommendations with the learner concerned. The additional requirements to confirm fitness to return will also be outlined to the learner.
9.10.4.1 Conditions of a full programme deferral during a programme of study

A full programme deferral is only granted to those learners who are able to evidence extenuating circumstances which prevent them from completing their programme of study in the intended original timescale. Full programme deferrals are only normally offered at a complete stage point in the programme. Where learners defer mid stage, they may be required to repeat modules and/or assessments previously completed and recommence the stage on their return. Where a full programme deferral is granted it is subject to conditions which the Programme Coordinator must communicate to the learner at the point of the deferral being confirmed. The conditions apply as follows:

a. The deferral is granted for a maximum of one academic year
b. DBS reserves the right to discontinue the programme without notification to deferred learners
c. DBS reserves the right to change the format and content of the programme without notification to deferred learners
d. A deferral may result in a learner being required to undertake additional modules and/or assessments upon their return
e. A deferred learner will be subject to the fees applicable to the academic year into which they return
f. Fees paid will be deferred for the duration of the deferral. There is no entitlement to a refund of fees paid in the event of the learner no longer wishing to pursue the programme of study or in the event of programme changes made by DBS
g. It is the learner’s responsibility to contact DBS in order to recommence their studies at the end of the deferral period. Where a learner fails to return at this point, and up to a maximum of one month post this point, they will be deemed to have withdrawn. In such cases return to DBS will only be facilitated through the standard admissions process at the next programme start point.

9.10.5 A module deferral during a programme of study

DBS operates on the principle of fit to sit or submit and therefore does not normally facilitate the deferral of an individual module or modules (where these have been signed up to at the point of registration), including the deferral of a module assessment, whilst other modules are being undertaken, except in extreme extenuating circumstances. In such cases DBS is entitled to apply
discretion. This does not remove the right of part time learners to deviate from the recommended learning route.

Independent evidence alone e.g. medical certificate, is not sufficient to warrant a module deferral. DBS will always recognise the expertise of independent third parties in the evidence they provide but all deferral decisions will be made based on the requirements of the programme and the need to retain academic standards and integrity. DBS reserves the right to deny a module or assessment deferral where it is felt this may negatively impact the academic integrity of the programme or the individual learner experience and requirements. A full programme deferral may be offered as an alternative. All such decisions are made by the Programme Leader.

9.10.5.1 Conditions of a module deferral, including assessment only

In the rare and extreme circumstances where DBS approves a module deferral, including an assessment only deferral, the conditions of the deferral must be communicated by the Programme Coordinator to the learner at the point of acceptance. The following conditions apply:

a. The deferral is granted until the next sitting only
b. DBS reserves the right to discontinue the module without notification to deferred learners
c. DBS reserves the right to change the format and content of the module and assessment without notification to deferred learners
d. A deferral may result in a learner being required to undertake an alternative module and or assessment
e. A deferred learner will be subject to the fees applicable to the academic year in which they undertake the module
f. Fees paid will be deferred for the duration of the deferral. There is no entitlement to a refund of fees paid in the event of the learner no longer wishing to pursue the programme of study or in the event of programme changes made by DBS
g. It is the learner’s responsibility to contact DBS in order to recommence their studies at the end of the deferral period. Where a learner fails to return at this point, and up to a maximum of one month post this point, they will be deemed to have withdrawn. In such cases return to DBS will only be facilitated through the standard admissions process at the next programme start point.
9.10.6 Procedure for seeking a Deferral

Applicants and learners wishing to apply for a deferral must follow the appropriate procedure for the deferral type being sought. Where required, independent supporting evidence must be provided as part of the deferral request. Where evidence is required and not provided the deferral request will be denied.

9.10.7 Requesting a deferral of an offer of a place

An applicant wishing to hold an offer of a place may do so upon applying to the admissions administrator.

The admissions administrator will consider the request and confirm approval of same, except where it is known to be the final intake of a programme.

In confirming agreement of the deferral, the admissions administrator must advise the applicant of the relevant conditions as outlined in section 1.1.

Where a deferral is denied, the applicant must be advised of the rationale for the decision.

An appeal against the deferral decision may be made in writing to the Director of Admissions and Marketing.

An appeal must be submitted within 10 working days of the date of the decision being communicated. An appeal submitted beyond this point will not be considered.

Disagreement with the original decision is not considered grounds for an appeal.

The outcome of the appeal is final and there is no further right of appeal.

9.10.8 Requesting a pre-programme deferral, within 2 weeks of registration

A learner wishing to defer their place on a programme within two weeks of the registration may do so upon applying to the relevant programme coordinator.

The programme coordinator will consider the request and confirm approval of same, except where it is known to be the final intake of a programme.

Where it is known to be the final intake of the programme, the Programme Coordinator must refer the learner to the Programme Leader to discuss alternative programmes they may defer on to. The
Programme Leader will notify the Programme Coordinator of the appropriate programme alternative in order to facilitate the deferral offer.

In confirming agreement of the deferral, the Programme Coordinator must advise the learner of the relevant conditions as outlined in section 2.1.

Where a deferral is denied, the learner must be advised of the rationale for the decision.

An appeal against the deferral decision may be made in writing to the Head of Academic Affairs.

All such appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being communicated. Any appeal submitted outside this timeframe will be denied.

The following are the only grounds for appeal:

- Failure on the part of the College to consider information made available to the College that would have influenced the deferral outcome
- An irregularity in the application of the procedure for considering a deferral

Disagreement with the original decision is not considered grounds for an appeal.

The outcome of the appeal is final and there is no further right of appeal.

9.10.9 Requesting a Programme Deferral

A learner wishing to defer their place on a programme must submit a formal request to the relevant Programme Coordinator.

A learner wishing to defer a programme should normally have completed a stage and be in good academic standing i.e. be up to date with all assessments. It is expected that there are circumstances present which prevent the learner from progressing as part of the programme as scheduled.

The programme coordinator will draw the request to the attention of the Programme Leader who will consider the request and confirm approval of same, except where it is known to be the final intake of a programme.

Where it is known to be the final intake of the programme, the Programme Leader must discuss alternative programmes they may defer on to. The Programme Leader will notify the Programme Coordinator of the appropriate programme alternative in order to facilitate the deferral offer.

In confirming agreement of the deferral, the Programme Coordinator must advise the learner of the relevant conditions as outlined in section 3.1.
Where a deferral is denied, the learner must be advised of the rationale for the decision.

An appeal against the deferral decision may be made in writing to the Head of Academic Affairs.

All such appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being communicated.

Any appeal submitted outside this timeframe will be denied.

The following are the only grounds for appeal:

- Failure on the part of the College to consider information made available to the College that would have influenced the deferral outcome
- An irregularity in the application of the procedure for considering a deferral

Disagreement with the original decision is not considered grounds for an appeal.

The outcome of the appeal is final and there is no further right of appeal.

9.10.10 Requesting a Module Deferral, including assessment only

DBS does not encourage deferring individual modules when continuing studies of other modules. Such requests will only be accommodated in exceptional circumstances. Deferral of assessment for a module or modules will normally be denied except where there are extreme extenuating circumstances beyond the learner’s control. Scheduling of assessments over a longer period of time to the specified learning route may provide an unfair advantage and impact on the academic integrity of the programme.

Module deferrals, including assessment only, will only be considered where it is evidenced that the learner is unable to participate or that their ability to perform to their academic potential is diminished due to circumstance beyond their control. Such circumstances are expected to be beyond the normal stress associated with the completion of assessments and programmes of study. Such circumstances include illness and bereavement and in both cases DBS reserves the right to request evidence.

Employment demands or commitments are not normally considered as grounds for deferral, including assessment only deferrals. Learners are reasonably expected to manage their employment commitments to facilitate the completion of their studies.

Where appropriate evidence of extenuating circumstances is submitted to the Programme Coordinator, this is brought to the attention of the Programme Leader who may approve the request, deny the request or deny the request but recommend a full programme deferral.
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

DBS operates on the principle of fit to sit or submit and therefore reasonably expects that learners are fit for all assessments or for no assessments. As a result, deferral of modules or assessments will normally be denied but may result in a programme deferral being offered.

In confirming agreement of the deferral, the Programme Coordinator must advise the learner of the relevant conditions as outlined in section 4.1.

Where a deferral is denied, the learner must be advised of the rationale for the decision.

An appeal against the deferral decision may be made in writing to the Head of Academic Affairs.

All such appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being communicated. Any appeal submitted outside this timeframe will be denied.

The following are the only grounds for appeal:

- Failure on the part of the College to consider information made available to the College that would have influenced the deferral outcome
- An irregularity in the application of the procedure for considering a deferral

Disagreement with the original decision is not considered grounds for an appeal.

The outcome of the appeal is final and there is no further right of appeal.

9.10.11 Returning to study post deferral

It is the learner’s responsibility to return to College at the expected time. All learners who defer are required to familiarise themselves with the DBS academic calendar, and the examination timetables where applicable, as published, and make themselves available for their return to study and or assessment.

Failure to return to study within one month of the expected return date will result in the learner being withdrawn. The Programme Coordinator will notify the learner of the withdrawal. In such cases fees paid will not be refunded.

Returning to a programme of study at DBS following a withdrawal will only be facilitated through the standard admissions process for the next programme start point. In such cases any fees previously paid will no longer be available as deferred payment and the learner will be liable for all fees applicable to a new learner.
Failure to return to complete an assessment, including examinations, at the scheduled return point will be considered as an assessment attempt having been offered to the learner. A mark of 0% will be recorded. The implications of this are as outlined in QQI HET Assessment and Standards Revised 2013, and specifically sectoral convention number 3 which outlines learners who fail a module at the first attempt (including where the opportunity provided was not attempted) will no longer be entitled to an honours award.

Depending on the reason for deferral, a student might be required to provide the College with documentation on return to the programme that confirms their suitability and or fitness to return, in line with the deferral offer, before recommencing the programme.

9.10.12 Timescales

It is the applicant / learner’s responsibility to submit a request for a deferral in a timely manner. Delays in deferral requests may result in DBS assuming the learner has withdrawn due to non-communication and failure to engage with the College.

Where a deferral request is submitted through the proper channels as outlined, the applicant / learner may reasonably expect a response within 10 working days.

Where an appeal is submitted through the proper channels, the applicant / learner may reasonably expect a response within 20 working days.

9.10.13 Fees

Students availing of a whole programme deferral who are on payment schedules agreed upon acceptance of their place on the programme are entitled to defer their scheduled payments during the deferral period.

Students withdrawing from a programme of study have no entitlement to a full or partial refund of fees paid as per the terms and conditions outlined at the point of payment.
## 9.11 Personal Mitigating Circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Personal Mitigating Circumstances Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Implemented by:** | Programme Coordinators  
Programme Leaders  
Exams Officer and Administrator |
| **Updated by:** | Director of Academic Affairs |
| **Circulated for consideration to:** | Programme Leaders  
Head of Academic Affairs  
Schools Executive Board |
| **Version number:** | 2016/1 |
| **Review date:** | 2021 |
9.11.1 PMC Policy Overview

Undertaking a programme of studying and completing all attendance and assessment requirements is physically and mentally challenging for many learners and can result in feelings of increased stress. There is a strong correlation between attendance and achievement and therefore DBS encourages all learners to attend all of their classes in order to assist them in succeeding in their studies and in receiving the maximum support available to them.

Learners who feel under pressure as a result of their studies and whilst preparing for assessments should continue to make all reasonable efforts to meet the programme requirements and deadlines and avail of the support provided by the lecturers, programme leader, DBS Library Service and DBS Student Services.

Learners who feel this way whilst preparing for or undertaking assessments should make all reasonable effort to comply with programme assessment requirements. Symptoms typically associated with assessment stress, for example, anxiety, nervousness, upset, feeling sick, loss of sleep, are not normally considered to be extenuating circumstances warranting absence, failure to submit or underperformance in an assessment or examination.

DBS does recognise that there are additional circumstances in a learner’s life that may diminish their ability to satisfy programme requirements or to achieve their academic potential. These are known as personal mitigating circumstances and can be requested to be taken into consideration when seeking an extension to a submission deadline or in assessing the learner’s performance in an assessment.

Whilst this policy applies to learners who require a short-term extension to the submission deadline for an assessment. A student cannot normally seek and obtain an extension and subsequently ask for the same extenuating circumstances to be taken into account after the fact.

This policy is not for the purpose of taking into consideration a diagnosed chronic medical condition, disability or specific learning need. Learners who wish for such circumstances to be considered in order for appropriate reasonable accommodations to be made for teaching, learning and assessment, need to consult the Learner Support Policy.
9.11.2 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Preventing Completion or Submission of a CA

When, owing to personal mitigating circumstances, a learner is unable to complete or submit a piece of continuous assessment, the learner must complete the Extension Request form and submit it to the relevant Programme Coordinator.

The form is available on the student website and must be submitted electronically. The form should normally be submitted at least 3 days in advance of the CA submission date or in class assessment. Where it is not practicable to do so, the Extension Request Form may be submitted up to 7 calendar days after the submission deadline or date of in class assessment.

The form should normally be supported with independent documentary evidence e.g. medical certificate, bereavement notice, travel advisory.

All records are retained confidentially in accordance with data protection requirements and information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

The Programme Coordinator will forward the extension request to the Programme Leader who will review the form and supporting evidence and will determine an appropriate decision.

The decisions available are:

a. Deny the request (usually due to absence of evidence or insufficient cause)
b. Approve the request
c. Require further information

The Programme Leader will notify the learner and the Programme Coordinator of the outcome.

In the case of a. the learner will be notified of the outcome and the reason for same. The Programme Leader will also advise the learner of the penalties and implications of failing to meet the required deadline or complete the assessment concerned.

In the case of b. the learner will be notified of the outcome and the revised arrangements for completion or submission of the CA. It should be noted that any period of extension will not normally be for greater than 10 working days and will typically reflect the period of the duration of the PMCs i.e. a 3 day illness will warrant a 3 day extension.

In the case of c. the Programme Leader will contact the learner for further information in order to facilitate a fully informed decision being made.
Upon approving an extension or alternative date for an in class assessment, the Programme Coordinator will advise the learner that failure to submit by the revised deadline or to attend on the date for the rescheduled in class test will result in appropriate penalties being applied.

It is the learner’s responsibility to ensure they satisfy the arrangements for assessment. Failure to do so may have implications for their enrolment and entitlement to an award.

Learners are advised not to assume that PMCs will be accepted and an extension granted.

DBS reasonably expects that learners who encounter PMCs close to the assessment submission deadline would normally have the significant majority of the assessment completed and therefore only a minimal extension period may be granted.

Learners are advised to be aware of penalties for late submission should an extension not be granted or the extended submission date be missed.

Where an extension is granted the Programme Leader needs to ensure the relevant lecturer is notified and that the necessary arrangements are made on Moodle to facilitate the extended submission date.

### 9.11.3 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Impacting Performance during an Assessment (excluding examinations)

DBS operates the fit to sit or submit principle which means that learners who undertake an assessment declare themselves fit to take that assessment. Normally, any subsequent claim for personal mitigating circumstances in relation to that assessment will not be considered. The exception to this is in the case of a learner who becomes unwell during the course of an assessment such as an in class assessment or professional practice placement. In this instance, independent evidence must be communicated to the College within five working days in order to be considered.

The PMC form is available on the student website and must be submitted electronically.

The PMC form should normally be submitted to the relevant Programme Coordinator supported with independent documentary evidence e.g. medical certificate, but may also refer to College based evidence such as a report from the relevant lecturer, Programme Leader or member of Student Support Services.

All records are retained confidentially in accordance with data protection requirements and information will only be shared on a need to know basis.
Where the PMC form and evidence submitted relates to an in class assessment or professional practice placement, the Programme Coordinator will notify the Programme Leader and a decision will be reached to determine whether or not the learner should be afforded a further assessment opportunity as the current attempt and the arrangements for this.

The Programme Leader will advise the learner and the Programme Coordinator of the decision and of the implications of this in respect of their enrolment status and entitlement to an award.

9.11.4 Right of Appeal

A learner wishing to appeal a PMC decision relating to continuous assessment, excluding examinations, may do so in writing to the Head of Academic Programmes.

Grounds for appeal are as follows:

a. The learner believes there was a procedural irregularity in the original decision making
b. The learner believes information made available to the College was not taken into consideration in the decision making process

Disagreement with the original decision is not in itself grounds for appeal.

Failure on behalf of the learner to provide the necessary evidence in the relevant timeframe is not normally considered grounds for appeal, except where the evidence itself provides justification for not being able to do so.

The Head of Academic Programmes will determine if there is evidence of grounds for appeal and will advise the learner of the outcome.

Where there are no grounds present, the matter is considered closed and there is no further right of appeal.

Where grounds are present, the Head of Academic Programmes will convene a PMC Appeal Committee comprising:

- The Assessment and Regulations Manager
- A Programme Leader (not previously involved in the case)
- A student services representative

The PMC Appeal Committee will determine a decision based on the evidence provided. The Appeal Committee is not a re-hearing of the original PMC submission but determination of whether there was a procedural irregularity or information not considered. In determining the presence of either
circumstances, the PMC Appeal Committee may make a revised decision which can be applied retrospectively if applicable.

9.11.5 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Impacting Performance during an Examination

DBS operates the fit to sit or submit principle which means that learners who undertake an examination declare themselves fit to do so. Normally, any subsequent claim for personal mitigating circumstances in relation to that examination will not be considered. The exception to this is in the case of a learner who becomes unwell during the course of an examination. In this instance, independent evidence must be communicated to the College within five working days in order to be considered.

The PMC form is available on the student website and must be submitted electronically.

The PMC form should normally be submitted to the relevant Programme Coordinator with independent documentary evidence e.g. medical certificate, but may also refer to College based evidence such as invigilator’s report.

All records are retained confidentially in accordance with data protection requirements and information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

The Programme Coordinator will notify the Assessment and Regulations Manager who will convene a PMC Committee in advance of the relevant Board of Examiners.

The PMC Committee will determine whether or not there is evidence that PMCs are present. This will be determined on the evidence submitted. The PMC Committee does not determine the impact of PMCs.

Internal Examination Board will be notified of which students have PMCs approved for which examinations. The Board will not be notified of the nature of the PMCs but will be required to determine if there is evidence that learner performance has been impacted.

In determining evidence of impact, the Board is required to consider the learner’s overall profile and compare performance in other modules and assessments in that programme stage. Particular consideration should be given to similar assessment types i.e. examinations.

Upon reaching a decision, the Internal Board is required to make a recommendation to the External Board of Examiners. Where the decision is that there is evidence of performance being impacted i.e. the percentage of marks out of sync with the profile of performance, it is reasonably expected that
the evidence will also indicate the extent of the impact and therefore the grade increase to be recommended. Where the Board feels there is no evidence of impact, this should also be recorded with a recommendation that the grade remains unchanged.

The External Board of Examiners will be asked to ratify the recommendation.

The decision of the Board of Examiners will be communicated to the learner 5 working days after the Board.

9.11.6 Right of Appeal

An appeal against a decision of the Board of Examiners may be initiated in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy.

9.11.7 Provisions in respect of Academic Judgements

The following provisions apply to the exercise of academic judgement in relation to the assessment process:

- The assessment of a learner’s work is a matter of judgement, not simply of computation
- Marks and percentages are not considered definitive absolute values but a means of an examiner communicating their judgement on different aspects of a learner’s work to enable the determination of a learner’s fulfilment of programme outcomes.
- The academic judgements of examiners cannot, in themselves, be questioned or overturned.

The PMC process may result in an amendment to the decisions of an examiner. Where this is the case, it should be clearly understood that this is not a review of the soundness of the original academic judgement made in respect of the assessment or assessments in question.

An amendment to a decision of an examiner is a recognition that while extraneous or more recently disclosed circumstances make it appropriate to change the final decision in respect of a student, the integrity and soundness of the initial academic judgement itself is not thereby questioned.

9.11.8 Personal Mitigating Circumstances Preventing a Learner Sitting an Examination

In line with the fit to sit principle, learners are reasonably expected to sit all exams or defer all exams as opposed to selective sitting of some and not others.
A learner who is unable to sit an examination is required to request a deferral. Deferral of selected exams in a sitting will not normally be allowed, unless specific supporting documentation is provided. Learners should consult the Deferral Policy and follow the relevant procedure.

9.11.9 Limitations of PMCs

When instances arise where a learner’s performance has potentially been impacted during an examination or assessment, in order to determine the impact of PMCs on learner performance it is necessary to compare performance in affected assessments and modules with unaffected assessments and modules within a programme stage. Therefore, DBS will not accept PMCs for a complete programme or stage. It is understood that completion of the assessments and continuation of the programme is a declaration of fitness to do so.

9.11.10 Retrospective PMC applications

DBS recognises that instances arise where learners fail to notify the College of PMCs until such a time as the learner is notified of their failure and withdrawal. It is essential that learners notify DBS of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity. Failure to do so may result in all fail grades standing and the withdrawal status of the learner being considered final. DBS provides sufficient opportunity to communicate PMCs and therefore will not normally accept post failure or post withdrawal PMC applications except in extreme cases where the evidence itself provides justification for previous non-communication.

For a claim of valid reasons for non-disclosure to be accepted, it is normally expected that the circumstances themselves were exceptionally serious, or had an exceptionally serious impact on the learner’s academic performance, and there were substantial and grave reasons why the learner was unwilling to disclose them at the time. Simple unwillingness to disclose or lack of appreciation/awareness of potential impact of personal circumstances is insufficient for acceptance of late submission of extenuating circumstances.

Learners who are deemed to have failed and withdrawn are entitled to avail of the Academic Appeals process.
### 9.12 Code of Conduct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Learner Code of Conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Head of Faculty and School Operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Implemented by:** | Programme Coordinators  
                      | Programme Leaders  
                      | Academic Lecturing staff  
                      | Head of Student Experience  
                      | Careers and Student Services staff  
                      | DBS Library Service Staff  
                      | Head of Academic Programmes  
                      | Disciplinary Committee |
| **Updated by:**  | Director of Academic Affairs |
| **Circulated for consideration to:** | Programme Leaders  
                      | Head of Academic Affairs  
                      | Head of School  
                      | Schools Executive Board  
                      | Head of Student Experience |
| **Version number:** | 2016/1 |
| **Review date:** | 2019 |
9.12.1 Overview

Each learner at DBS is required to comply with the College’s Code of Conduct. The aim of the DBS Learner Code of Conduct is to ensure that an appropriate academic environment in which mutual respect for all College staff, learners, visitors and guests is promoted. The Code requires reasonable behaviour and consideration for others and is intended to assist learners in spending a fulfilling and rewarding time at the College.

The Code of Conduct is intended to set and maintain acceptable standards of behaviour within the college community, to encourage individuals to accept their obligations and to maintain the College’s good standing. The code applies to all learners regardless of their study location. In the case of learners undertaking a programme that is a collaboration between DBS and others, this code shall apply except where a specific alternative is identified.

This code is not exhaustive. Other regulations concerning expected norms of behaviour and communication are documented throughout the College Quality Assurance Handbook.

The enforcement of the code is a shared responsibility. The Disciplinary Committee is called to review cases of suspected or alleged breaches of this code.

9.12.2 Commitment to Code of Conduct

In registering for a programme of study at DBS all learners are accepting the Code of Conduct and agreeing to adhere to the requirements and expectations identified within it.

9.12.3 General Behaviour

All learners are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner throughout their interactions with and on behalf of DBS and will not engage in any activity that may negatively impact the name of the College, its staff or learners.

Learners are expected to conduct themselves legally, ethically and responsibly in all interactions and communications in all mediums, including those interactions through technology and social media, within and outside their programme of study.

All communications and interactions with the College or any of its stakeholders, and on behalf of the college as a DBS learner, are expected to be conducted in a respectful manner based upon dignity, equality and inclusion.
Any act or omission that affects adversely the rights of any other member of the College community, including partners or external stakeholders, or that disrupts the conduct of any College activity will be considered a breach of discipline and may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

9.12.4 Satisfaction of College and Programme Requirements and Regulations

Learners take personal responsibility for their studies and their progression through their chosen programme of study and for the consequences and implications of their actions and inactions in this regard.

Learners are required to attend scheduled classes punctually and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner throughout the class.

Learners are responsible for the accurate and honest recording of their attendance. Any attempt to falsify College records will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Learners are required to maintain communication with DBS in all instances where they are unable to attend or engage with their studies. Failure to do so may impact on a learner’s enrolment status.

It is the responsibility of each learner to familiarise themselves with the regulations, policies and procedures of DBS, including assessment regulations governing their programme, and any implications that failure to comply or adhere to specifics outlined within same may have on their enrolment status and potential entitlement to an award.

Each learner is required to produce their learner i.d. (student card) upon request by any member of DBS staff.

9.12.5 In-class Conduct

Learners are required to adhere to the reasonable and lawful instruction of DBS staff during class and whilst on DBS premises.

Where any learner is responsible for disruption or acting in a manner that fails to display dignity and respect, including failing to follow the instructions of DBS staff, the staff member is within their rights to ask the learner to withdraw from the particular activity and report them for a breach of this code.
9.12.6 Use of Social Media and Technology
DBS encourages learners to engage in groups and societies and establish informal networks, including through the use of social media and technology, to promote the development and enhancement of the learner community. Participation, whilst often informal and social in nature, must be appropriate, inoffensive and respectful at all times. Learners are required to be mindful of their terminology and images they may share.

9.12.7 Premises, Property and Staff Associated with DBS or its Programmes
Learners are required to respect the staff, premises, property and fellow learners of DBS and any associated venue or partner, including local residents and businesses. Conduct that might be deemed in breach of this requirement will normally be considered a disciplinary matter.

Learners who undertake part of their studies in locations outside of DBS are required to familiarise themselves with any specific codes of behaviour or conduct belonging to those locations and adhere to them during their time there.

Where the College is notified of an allegation of a breach of a code of conduct belonging to another location associated with the completion of a DBS programme of study, the learner can be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

9.12.8 Enforcement
For the purpose of enforcing this code, DBS is entitled but not obliged to investigate any allegation of misconduct and following appropriate disciplinary procedures may impose a penalty where the allegation is upheld.

Any breach of this code is normally considered a breach of discipline and will be considered under the Disciplinary Procedure. A range of penalties can be applied up to and including the requirement for the learner to withdraw from the College and programme with no entitlement to a refund.

9.12.9 Rights of DBS
DBS reserves the right for any member of staff to request and, where a conduct breach is alleged, retain the student card of any individual learner.

DBS reserves the right to suspend a learner from their programme of studies and from accessing any
facilities and resources of DBS pending investigation into any allegation of a breach of a code of conduct.

Where deemed appropriate, for ensuring the continued fitness for the programme of study concerned, the College reserves the right to request a learner attends an independent assessment by a relevant professional, for example, a medical or psychiatric assessment. Failure to meet with this request will result in the learner not being permitted to continue with their programme of study.

The College reserves the right to refuse to provide a reference for the purpose of professional registration, employment or further study for any learner who has breached the code of conduct.

The provisions of this Code are without prejudice to the legal rights of learners. However, where DBS deems it appropriate or necessary DBS reserves the right to notify the Gardai of any allegation of a crime having been committed or other such threat of a crime.

9.12.10 Major Offences

Criminal Offences (including theft) shall be referred to the authorities.

Major Offences include but are not limited to:

- Academic Impropriety, including but not limited to plagiarism.
- Furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive.
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records or student identity cards. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance records, reference letters, registration status letters, certificates, assessment results and transcripts.
- Physical or verbal harassment, bullying or abuse of any learner or member of staff of the College.
- Malicious destruction, damage or misuse of College property, including Library materials and computer equipment, or of private property on the campus (over €50 replacement cost).
- Unwarranted interference with College’s safety equipment, fire-fighting equipment and alarm systems or failure to observe fire drill procedures.
- Use of alcohol or other substance use on the campus or the premises of any partner or organisation utilised for the completion of the programme of study.
- Forcible occupation of College buildings.
• Activities by learners outside the College while engaged in work experience, placement, co-curricular events, volunteer placement, study tours, assignments organised by the College or while representing the College, its Clubs or Societies, which would breach the regulations of the College.
• Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the above.

9.12.10.1 Penalties for Major Offences

Where a learner is found to have committed any of the offences outlined above, the Disciplinary Committee is permitted to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination:

• Expulsion from the College
• Suspension from the College for a stated period, or until such time as any requirements laid down by the Committee, such as payment of a fine or the restitution of damage or loss, are fulfilled.
• Exclusion from specific College facilities.
• Disbarment from examinations for a specific period.
• A fine not exceeding 50% of the annual full time fee of the course being undertaken.
• In the case of the offence of academic impropriety a range of penalties may be applied, up to and including dismissal from the College with no right of return, as outlined in the academic impropriety policy.
• An order for reparation of any damage or loss caused to the College or any of its staff or learner members or members of the public.
• Deprivation of award of degree, diploma, certificate, prize or other academic award.

9.12.11 Minor Offences

Minor Offences include but are not limited to:

• Littering
• Disorderly Conduct
• Causing minor damage to College property or private property on the campus (involving up to €50 replacement cost).
• Being in unauthorized areas without permission
• Failing to establish identity on request.
Dublin Business School – Quality Assurance Handbook

- Conduct, which disrupts or is likely to disrupt lectures, research, study, examinations, use of College facilities or the administration of the College.
- Conduct which obstructs or is likely to obstruct a member of staff of the College, or a person authorized by the College to carry out specific tasks, in the performance of his or her duties.

9.12.11.1 Penalties for Minor Offences

Where a learner is found guilty of the offence charged, the Disciplinary Committee is empowered to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination:

- A reprimand from the Head of Faculty and School Operations or other authorised College official.
- A reprimand and a note on the learner’s record.
- An order for the reparation of any damage or loss caused to the College or to any members of staff or learners or members of the public.
- The imposition of a fine up to a maximum of 50% of the annual full time fee of the programme being undertaken.

9.12.12 Right of Appeal

A learner may appeal the outcome of the Disciplinary Committee and / or the penalty imposed. See DBS Learner Disciplinary Policy for full details.
### 9.13 Disciplinary Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Learner Disciplinary Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility:</strong></td>
<td>Assessment and Regulations Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Implemented by:** | Head of Faculty and School Operations  
Disciplinary Committee  
Academic Impropriety Committee |
| **Updated by:** | Director of Academic Affairs |
| **Circulated for consideration to:** | Programme Leaders  
Head of Academic Affairs  
Head of School  
Assessment and Regulations Manager  
Schools Executive Board |
| **Version number:** | 2016/1 |
| **Review date:** | 2019 |
9.13.1 Overview

DBS learners are responsible for their own actions, behaviours and decision-making. Nonetheless, DBS imposes expected minimum standards of conduct from all learners in order to ensure a respectful environment conducive to learning and development. This is reflected in the Learner Code of Conduct, hereafter referred to as the code.

Learners are advised that any breach of the code may be considered a disciplinary offence and be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in this policy.

Where an allegation of misconduct is upheld, appropriate sanctions will be applied up to and including the requirement to withdraw from the College and the programme with no entitlement to full or partial refund.

Where appropriate and feasible, the College will seek to resolve any breach of the code of conduct without the requirement to invoke formal disciplinary proceedings. In such cases, learners are required to meet with the Head of Faculty and School Operations to discuss the concerns and agree prevention of any future recurrence.

However, it is accepted that there might be instances that necessitate immediate engagement of formal disciplinary proceedings in which case the following procedure will apply.

The College will not normally engage with legal representatives or advocates as part of the implementation of this policy. However, it should be noted that on completion of the investigation, where matters of a criminal nature are discovered to have likely occurred, the College can refer the matter to An Garda Síochána or the law enforcement agency of the relevant jurisdiction.

9.13.2 Principles

This procedure is based on a principle of natural justice which means that anonymous complaints will not be considered and all parties have the right of response to any allegation.

All learners subject to a disciplinary investigation are entitled to be informed of the identity of the complainant, except where it is felt this might present serious risk to the complainant or others associated with him/her. The subject of the disciplinary investigation is also entitled to receive details of the allegations made against them and afforded appropriate opportunity to respond.

DBS reserves the right to suspend a student pending investigation when it is in receipt of an allegation of a breach of the code of conduct or formal complaint. In all such cases, the investigation
will be processed as a priority. The College is not liable for any delay in the completion of a programme of study for any learner who is suspended pending an investigation where a reasonable and justifiable decision to suspend was acted on.

This is an internal procedure for the purpose of managing learner conduct and does not and will not normally include dialogue with or between legal representatives of either or all parties.

In the interest of all parties, these procedures will be invoked as soon as possible and concluded as quickly as possible. Due consideration must be given to timings of assessments and examinations and the Board of Examiners meeting.

Before any stage of these proceedings, the learner will be notified in writing (including e-mail) of the reason for their attendance and their rights. Should a learner decide not to attend at any stage, the appropriate committee or panel is authorised to proceed in their absence.

A written record will be made at each stage of this procedure. In the event of finding that no offence has occurred, all records will be destroyed.

9.13.3 Receipt of an Allegation of Misconduct

An allegation of misconduct must be reported to the Head of Faculty and School Operations in the first instance.

The Head of Faculty and School Operations will review the allegation and determine whether formal action is required.

In most cases, it is expected that the meeting with the Head of Faculty and School Operations has been implemented as an attempt to address the matter informally.

The formal commencement of initial action under the disciplinary policy will only occur where the case is considered to be:

- A serious breach of the code of conduct
- An inability to resolve the matter informally
- A repeat instance of a breach of discipline on the part of the student
- Academic Impropriety

With the exception of academic impropriety, all cases, however reported or arrived at under this policy, must be forwarded for the attention of the Head of Faculty and School Operations.
The report must be made in writing, including e-mail, and should detail the allegation and include all relevant supporting information and evidence.

On receipt, the Head of Faculty and School Operations will arrange for investigatory interviews to take place and a decision will be taken with regard to the requirement to suspend a student pending the investigation.

Cases of Academic Impropriety are managed by the Assessment and Regulations Manager in accordance with the Academic Impropriety Policy which replaces the investigation stage of this policy.

9.13.4 Investigating Allegations of Misconduct

On receipt of a report of suspected misconduct, with the exception of academic impropriety, the Head of Faculty and School Operations, or nominee, will contact the learner concerned and advise them of the nature of the allegations and the intention to undertake an investigation.

The learner will normally be notified at this point if they are to be suspended. However, it is recognised that information uncovered in the course of an investigation can warrant suspension at later stage.

The investigation will involve evidence collection in the form of documentation and interviews with all relevant parties.

Any party invited to attend an interview as part of the investigation is entitled to be accompanied or represented by a member of Student Services, the class representative, or family member who isn’t acting as a legal representative.

On completion of the evidence gathering stage, the Head of Faculty and School Operations will collate all evidence provided.

A copy of all evidence will be provided to the subject of the allegation with an invitation for them to respond by a specified deadline and provide any additional information to support their case.

The subject of the complaint is advised not to attempt to conduct their own investigation or to approach potential witnesses as doing so can be detrimental to their case.
9.13.5 Failure to Respond to an Allegation

Failure to respond to an allegation, or response after the deadline, will result in the case proceeding without the response. The case will not be terminated as a result of non-response from the learner concerned.

9.13.6 Potential Outcomes from Investigatory Interviews

Having invited a response from learner at the centre of the allegation of misconduct, the Head of Faculty and School Operations is required to compile a report summarising the allegation and all evidence obtained. On completion the Head of Faculty and School Operations is required to determine one of the following outcomes:

- A finding that no offence has occurred
- Admission of the offence by the student concerned
- Non-resolution of the matter – that is, the evidence to suggest an offence might have occurred but with no admission from the student

The outcome of the investigatory interview will be determined as quickly as possible and the learner will be informed of the outcome and the potential consequences, as outlined in this document.

Decisions will be based on the evidence presented and determined based on the balance of probability that an offence might have occurred.

9.13.7 Finding That No Offence Has Occurred

If the Head of Faculty and School Operations is satisfied that there is no case to answer, that no offence has occurred, the matter will be considered closed and all records will be destroyed after 14 working days.

Admission of Offence

Where a learner admits to having carried out the misconduct alleged, the Head of Faculty and School Operations may take the following action:

- For minor offences, impose an appropriate penalty
- For major offences, refer the matter to the disciplinary committee for the purpose of imposing penalty

The Head of Faculty and School Operations must notify the learner of the intended action and the fact that a record of the offence will be retained on their file.
Non-Resolution of the Matter

Where the Head of Faculty and School Operations is not able to confirm that no offence has occurred, and the learner has not admitted to any offence, the Head of Faculty and School Operations must convene a Disciplinary Committee.

The Head of Faculty and School Operations must notify the learner of this outcome, in writing.

9.13.8 Disciplinary Hearing

An appropriately convened Disciplinary Committee must be established within 10 working days of the Head of Faculty and School Operation’s decision or the outcome of the Academic Impropriety investigation.

The Disciplinary Committee membership comprises:

- Assessment and Regulations Manager or nominee (chair)
- 1 x academic staff representative
- 1 x support staff representative
- 1 x member of student services

The QA Officer or School Executive Administrator will act as secretary to the Committee.

In the case of Academic Impropriety, due to earlier involvement of the Assessment and Regulations Manager, the Disciplinary Committee will be Chaired by the Head of Academic Programmes.

Any person involved in the formal complaint or with a pre-existing relationship with the learner concerned is excluded from membership of the Committee.

Once the Committee has been confirmed, the Head of Faculty and School Operations will write to the learner and advise them of:

- The date, time and location of the hearing;
- Membership of the committee
- The entitlement to be accompanied by a friend, family member or colleague who isn’t acting as a legal representative
9.1.3.9 Outcomes of the Disciplinary Hearing

The Disciplinary Committee shall hear the case and record its deliberations and finding.

The Committee is required to determine, on the balance of probability, whether or not an offence has occurred, and the appropriate sanction to be applied if applicable. In the case of the admission of a major offence at an earlier stage in proceedings, the Committee is solely required to determine appropriate penalty.

Where the Committee determines on the balance of probability that no offence has occurred, the matter will be considered closed and all records will be destroyed.

The secretary, on behalf of the Chair of the Committee, will write to the learner and advise of the finding.

Where the Committee determines on the balance of probability that an offence has occurred, or acts on admission of an offence in the investigatory stage, a penalty proportionate to the offence will be imposed.

The secretary, on behalf of the Chair, will write to the learner and advise of the outcome and sanction applied. The learner will also be advised of the right of appeal and the timeframe in which to do this.

9.1.3.9.1 Major Offences

Criminal Offences (including theft) shall be referred to the authorities.

Major Offences include but are not limited to:

- Academic Impropriety.
- Furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive.
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records (including attendance records) or student identity cards.
- Physical or verbal harassment, bullying or abuse of any learner or member of staff of the College.
- Malicious destruction, damage or misuse of College property, including Library materials and computer equipment, or of private property on the campus (over €60 replacement cost).
• Unwarranted interference with College’s safety equipment, fire-fighting equipment and alarm systems or failure to observe fire drill procedures.
• Abuse of alcohol or other substance abuse on the campus.
• Forcible occupation of College buildings.
• Activities by learners outside the College while engaged in work experience, placement, co-curricular events, volunteer placement, study tours assignment organised by the College or while representing the College, its Clubs or Societies, which would breach the regulations of Committees in the College.
• Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the above.

9.13.9.2 Penalties for Major Offences

Where a learner is found to have committed any of the offences outlined above, the Disciplinary Committee is permitted to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination:

• Expulsion from the College
• Suspension from the College for a stated period, or until such time as any requirements laid down by the Committee, such as payment of a fine or the restitution of damage or loss, are fulfilled.
• Exclusion from specific College facilities.
• Disbarment from examinations for a specific period.
• A fine not exceeding 50% of the annual fee of the course being undertaken.
• In the case of the offence of academic impropriety a mark of 0% and the requirement to repeat the assessment where opportunities naturally remain, with or without the entitlement to an honours award as determined by the Disciplinary Committee.
• An order for reparation of any damage or loss caused to the College or any of its staff or learner members or members of the public.
• Deprivation of award of degree, diploma, certificate, prize or other academic award.

9.13.9.3 Minor Offences

Minor Offences include but are not limited to:

• Littering
• Disorderly Conduct
• Causing minor damage to College property or private property on the campus (involving up to €60 replacement cost).
• Being in unauthorized areas without permission
• Failing to establish identity on request.
• Conduct, which disrupts or is likely to disrupt lectures, research, study, examinations, use of College facilities or the administration of the College.
• Conduct which obstructs or is likely to obstruct a member of staff of the College, or a person authorized by the College to carry out specific tasks, in the performance of his or her duties.

9.13.9.4 Penalties for Minor Offences

Where a learner is found guilty of the offence charged, the Disciplinary Committee is empowered to impose any of the following penalties, either separately or in combination:

• A reprimand from an authorised College official.
• A reprimand and a note on the learner’s record.
• An order for the reparation of any damage or loss caused to the College or to any members of staff or learners or members of the public.
• The imposition of a fine.

9.12.10 Right of Appeal

A learner may appeal a decision of the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the DBS Appeals Procedure.

9.13.11 Criminal Matters

In dealing with disciplinary matters, the DBS Policy is:

• All criminal matters of which DBS staff becomes aware are reported to the Gardaí or the authorities of the relevant jurisdiction.
• DBS does not take internal disciplinary action in a criminal matter where the complainant is unwilling to press criminal charges.
• Criminal proceedings do not preclude DBS instituting its own disciplinary proceedings against a learner. To avoid prejudice, DBS avoids progressing disciplinary proceedings until the criminal processes are complete.

• DBS cannot take formal action without a written formal complaint.

9.13.12 Other Regulations

Other college regulations consistent with this Code apply in certain situations. These include policies relating to the usage of:

• the library, found at: http://library.dbs.ie/AboutLibrary/Policies.htm

• IT facilities

• General College Facilities

• English Language Programmes – Refer to Student Handbook.

• Examination Halls - These regulations are displayed as appropriate.
### 9.14 Learner Grievances and Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Learner Complaints Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility:</td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented by:</td>
<td>Programme Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Executive Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Faculty and School Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Student Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated by:</td>
<td>Director of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulated for consideration to:</td>
<td>Programme Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version number:</td>
<td>2016/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date:</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.14.1 Overview

Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), Part 2, Standard 2.7 states “Complaints and appeals process should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to institutions.”

DBS is committed to providing a learning environment that is conducive to successful study and the achievement of each learner’s target award. It is, however, recognised that, from time to time, learners may wish to raise concerns regarding the services provided and a procedure for dealing with learner complaints and grievances has therefore been put in place.

The DBS complaints procedures attempt to resolve complaints or issues to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the person, service or department against which the complaint is being made. DBS commit to timely, transparent and fair resolution within a supportive framework. DBS polices reflect the principles of natural justice and are aware of the dignity of the persons involved. Natural justice protects against arbitrary exercise of power by ensuring equal treatment and fair play. It ensures that no decision is valid if it was influenced by any other interest or bias and where the opposing party has not been given full right of response. For this reason, anonymous complaints will not be considered.

Learners are advised that in making a complaint, it is expected that they themselves have complied with the requirements of the student code of conduct in relation to the matter concerned. It is also expected that complaints will not be of a vexatious nature or for the purpose of personal gain.

Most complaints are capable of being resolved on an informal basis without recourse to the formal procedure. The College accepts that there might be instances that necessitate immediate engagement of formal action in response to a complaint.

This complaints procedure applies to all students of DBS in respect of any service they receive from the College with the exception of academic appeals. Academic appeals should be conducted in line with the Academic Appeals Policy. The complaints procedure is not intended as a further avenue of appeal in the event that an academic appeal is not upheld.

It is preferred that complaints or issues are resolved locally and mutually. To achieve this end the complaints policy has a series of stages to facilitate both informal and formal resolution.
9.14.2 Causes of Complaint

Complaints usually fall into the following categories:

- Issues regarding learning activities
- Academic or support services
- Facilities
- Difficulties with a member of staff
- Difficulties with an enrolled learner

Issues regarding assessment are covered under the Policies on Assessment chapter 8.

9.14.3 General Principles

DBS is committed to ensuring that:

a. Complaints are handled in a fair, transparent, timely and sensitive manner, with due recognition of the dignity and confidentiality of the persons involved.

b. Learners will not be disadvantaged by making a complaint.

c. Complaints are to be handled in a co-operative manner, every effort will be made to arrive at a solution by consensus among the relevant parties.

d. Complaints that impact on the assessment process, but are not directly concerned with the process, will not interfere with a learner’s normal right to appeal the result of an examination.

e. The reputation and professional integrity of DBS staff and learners will be safeguarded by ensuring that complaints are dealt with in a confidential manner and are resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both parties as far as is possible.

f. Complaints that are proved to be malicious or vexatious may result in a disciplinary action taken against the complainant.

g. The principles of natural justice are applied when dealing with complaints:
   - All parties to a complaint have the right to be heard and represented or accompanied by a friend, family member, DBS Student Union member or colleague at all meetings held in relation to the complaint
   - The person against which a complaint is made is entitled to a right to respond to all allegations
   - DBS does not engage with legal representatives as part of the complaints process
• Any hearings or meetings will be undertaken by an independent staff member, without bias. Minutes will be taken of all formal meetings and records are maintained in accordance with the College records retention policy.

9.14.4 Stages of the Complaints Process

Any complaint should be raised within 14 days of the alleged incident, matter or concern.

It is expected that all complaints should be considered informally in the first instance. This can be directly with the learner and relevant person or department, or facilitated by the Class Representative, Student Services, Module Leader, Programme Leader or relevant manager.

Where complaints are made as a group these should addressed through a Class Representative or agreed spokesperson.

All complaints received will normally be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

The person or department against whom the complaint (formal or informal) is made will normally be notified within 5 working days that a complaint has been made.

Where a complaint is formal, a copy of the complaint will be made available to the person or department against whom the complaint is made. This should be redacted to remove personal information such as an address or telephone number but not the identity of the complainant.

Both parties will be notified of the steps the college are taking, whether an investigation is being undertaken or meetings called for clarification.

9.14.5 Informal Process

In order to initiate an informal complaint the learner is advised to directly contact the subject of their complaint or the manager responsible for the service. This can be directly with the learner and relevant person or department, or facilitated by the Class Representative, Student Services, Module Leader, Programme Leader or relevant manager.

Initial informal action can be initiated in writing but will not be considered a formal written complaint at this stage. No formal record will be retained.

The subject of the complaint should attempt to seek a satisfactory resolution through informal communication with the student and the subject of the complaint.
In some incidents, where appropriate, the Programme Leader or relevant department manager may also communicate with the learner and the subject of the complaint (if applicable) if it will assist the informal resolution.

If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, the learner can seek to raise a formal complaint.

In some cases a learner may request to go directly to the formal process and contact the School Executive Administrator directly. Where this is the case the member of staff first approached will no longer be involved unless approached by the relevant complaint investigator.

9.14.6 Formal Process

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, or where the matter is considered to be of a grave or serious nature, the learner may choose to initiate a formal complaint.

In order to lodge a formal complaint the learner should contact the Schools Executive Administrator via their Programme Coordinator.

Once initial contact has been made the School Executive Administrator will advise of the following:

- The requirement to put the complaint in writing using the relevant form available on the student website
- The right of the subject of the complaint to receive notification of the nature of the allegations made, a copy of the complaint and the details of the complainant
- The requirement of the complainant to be able to stand over all allegations and provide evidence to support the complaint
- The right to representation and reassurance that there will be no detrimental impact on the student for invoking the complaints procedure

All complaints received should be evidence based and factual. The complaint must detail the complainant’s name and contact details, any relevant documentation, dates, locations and witnesses as appropriate. Any previous efforts to resolve the matter should also be noted.

All complaints should normally be made within 14 days of the alleged incident, matter or concern or 14 days of the informal process concluding.
The complaints procedure is based on the principle of natural justice. Consequently, anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

When received, the School Executive Administrator will catalogue the complaint including details of the date received, the identity of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and the individual(s) and or department(s) against which the complaint is made.

The School Executive Administrator will forward the complaint to the Head of Academic Affairs, who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and contact an appropriate manager to investigate the complaint, if appropriate.

Where the complaint relates to the actions or activities of the Academic Affairs Department, the Head of Academic Affairs will undertake the role of investigating manager.

Where the complaint is made against the Head of Academic Affairs the School Executive Administrator will forward the complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs who will investigate the matter.

The investigating manager will, where applicable, advise the person who is the subject of the complaint and provide that person with the details of the nature of the allegations.

The investigating manager can arrange to discuss the complaint with the complainant. This can take place by telephone, e-mail or face-to-face.

The purpose of any complaint discussion is to establish facts and seek clarification. The investigating manager is not authorised to give a viewpoint or decision relating to the complaint.

For the discussion, the investigating manager may be accompanied by a note taker so that an accurate record can be created.

A summary of the discussion should be documented and emailed to all members of the discussion for transparency. Matters of factual inaccuracy may then be identified and corrected. Responses should normally be received within 5 working days.

Where two parties disagree on the record of the meeting, the two versions of events should be retained.

Any party involved in a complaint is entitled to be accompanied by a friend, fellow student or family member who is not a legal representative or advocate. Where the complainant or subject of the complaint wishes to be accompanied, the discussion must take place face-to-face.
The investigating manager will hold a separate meeting with the person who is the subject of the complaint, who can also be accompanied by a friend, colleague or family member who is not a legal representative or advocate, and can also interview any material witnesses.

Records of all meetings should be documented and provided to the other parties to the meetings for record and confirmation of accuracy. Any disagreement should be noted and retained.

On completion of the investigation into the facts, the investigating manager will compile a report summarising the actions taken as part of the investigation, including a summary of the main findings and the evidence available to inform decision making.

The investigating manager must submit the report and supporting evidence to the Head of Faculty and School Operations who will convene a Complaints Committee within 10 working days.

Where the Head of Faculty and School Operations is the investigating manager or the subject of the complaint, the investigating manager will submit the report and supporting evidence to the Head of Student Experience who will convene a Complaints Committee.

9.14.7 The Complaints Committee

The Head of Faculty and School Operations or Head of Student Experience, one other departmental manager and a member of academic lecturing staff form a Complaints Committee to hear the findings of the investigation.

The investigating manager is required to present the investigation to the Complaint Committee and provide clarification on any points raised.

The complainant is not required to attend the complaint committee hearing but may be contacted by the investigating manager for further clarification where required.

Where necessary and appropriate, to ensure fair process and informed decision-making, alternative members of staff, student representatives or an external expert may be requested to sit on the committee.

The Complaints Committee will meet to discuss the findings with a view to determining a fair resolution.

The Investigating Manager will formally respond, in writing, to both parties to inform them of the findings of the investigation, any decisions made, the reason for the decisions and any subsequent action, where appropriate.
A copy of all correspondence, along with the investigation report and evidence, will be lodged with the School Executive Administrator and where applicable may be forwarded to HR.

Where the result of the complaint includes consequent action or recommendations, the Investigating Manager shall notify the appropriate person or committee, without undue delay.

It should be noted that there can be instances where it is not possible for a decision to be reached and the College will attempt to provide further clarity to the student issuing the complaint while also providing guidance to the subject of the complaint in an attempt to prevent a recurrence of such incidents.

The complainant and the subject of the complainant should each be notified of the right to appeal.

9.14.8 Right of Appeal

Any party wishing to appeal the decision of a Complaints Committee can do so by writing to the Executive Dean or appropriate nominee. Where a nominee is appointed the complainant will be notified of this and the identity of the nominee.

Any appeal should be submitted within 5 working days of the outcome of the Complaints Committee being communicated.

Grounds for appeal should be clearly outlined in the appeal submission. Valid grounds for this appeal can relate only to the processes and procedures followed at the previous stages. Disagreement with the outcome of the Complaints Committee or a request for a rehearing do not constitute valid grounds for an appeal. Thus, the appeal does not normally involve reconsideration of the original complaint and new evidence is not normally accepted at this stage.

The Executive Dean will determine whether or not an appeal shall be heard. The decision will be communicated to the appeal applicant normally within 5 working days post appeal deadline.

If an appeal is granted, the Executive Dean will appoint an appropriate hearing panel. This will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity and normally not greater than 15 working days after the Executive Dean has confirmed an appeal hearing will take place.

Any party to the complaint, including Complaints Committee members, may be invited to attend the panel meeting depending on the basis of the appeal request, where the panel deems this to be necessary. Attending parties are entitled to be accompanied by a family member, friend or colleague who is not acting as a legal representative.
The complainant and subject of the complaint are entitled to a record of the meeting and the outcome determined. Where required some information may be redacted in accordance with data protection legislation.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the complainant at the earliest opportunity.

No further right of appeal is available.

9.14.9 Reporting and Recording

A list of formal complaints managed under this process will be maintained by the School Executive Administrator.

A summary report, detailing the number of complaints, the nature and focus of the complaint, the outcome of the investigation and any corrective action recommended will be submitted to the Executive Dean at the end of each academic year for consideration by the Senior Management Group.

The Senior Management Group is responsible for addressing areas of common concern and ensuring appropriate interventions and / or corrective actions at institution level to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
9.15 Data Protection

DBS recognises the importance of effective records’ management to:
- meet statutory and legal requirements
- optimise the use of space
- minimise the cost of record storage
- ensure that obsolete records which are of no further use are destroyed in an appropriately sensitive and confidential manner with due regard to the minimising effects on the environment.

The College is committed to managing and preserving records and appropriate materials, handling procedures and storage systems, devices and practices are implemented within the institute to ensure long-term security, to prevent physical damage and minimise the physical deterioration of college records.

The College is registered as a Data Controller and Data Processor under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. The following are the eight fundamental rules of the 1988 and 2003 Acts regarding personal information:

1. Obtain and process information fairly
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
4. Keep it safe and secure. All waste papers, printouts, etc should be disposed of carefully
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date
6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes
8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to that individual, on request.

The College has developed a policy to ensure that a system is in place which guarantees that records are secure and cannot be altered or deleted without appropriate authority and that the privacy and confidentiality of DBS records are maintained, where appropriate. The DBS Document Retention and Management Policy is available from the Academic Affairs Office.
10 Staff Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Policy on Staff Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective From</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Review</td>
<td>September 2018 or as requested by Academic Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This chapter considers all polices relating to staff recruitment, appointment and development. Including polices on research, scholarly activity and DBS Ethics Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1 Recruitment and Induction

DBS has developed recruitment and selection procedures which ensure that sufficient, appropriately-qualified teaching, management, administrative, professional, technical and support staff are employed to meet academic and quality requirements.

Academic staff vacancies are advertised on online job sites and on the DBS website. For each position advertised, the requisite academic qualifications and business experience are stated. Only candidates that satisfy the minimum criteria specified are considered for appointment. All academic staff appointed to lecture on DBS undergraduate programmes are required to have a qualification at least one level higher than level to which they are teaching, staff appointed to lecture on postgraduate programmes are required to have a qualification at least at the level to which they are teaching subject to appropriate experience. Applications are screened by the Faculty Manager and PL and a short-list of qualified candidates is drawn up. Those on the short-list are invited to present for interview. An appropriate interview panel is constituted which is normally chaired by the Faculty Manager or PL.

For all lecturer appointments, candidates presenting for interview are required to give a 15-20 minute presentation on an allocated topic within their subject area. The presentation is attended and evaluated by a group of fellow academics. A Lecturer Evaluation Form (F10.1) is completed by each attendee and returned to the Faculty Manager to assist the selection panel with their post-interview analysis. These documents must be returned to the HR Department and are retained on the personnel
files of successful candidates. Each candidate is required to provide the names of two referees; these are followed up by the hiring manager prior to a decision being confirmed or an offer made.

All candidates for academic positions must be presented to the School Executive Board - Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC) for endorsement prior to a contract being issued using the AASC Nomination Form (F10.2). If endorsed by the sub-committee, the Record of Academic Appointments is updated and an AASC Certificate (F10.3) is issued. The Record of Academic Appointments is sent to the School Executive Board for approval and ultimately the Academic Board where they are formally ratified. An endorsement may be made with conditions and will always note the level at which the new appointment is approved to teach or supervise projects or dissertations. Refer to section 2.1.5 for Terms of Reference for the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee.

On acceptance, a contract of employment is provided to successful candidates. It is DBS policy to issue a contract within three working days of receipt of acceptance, subject to all the required documentation being received.

All new members of academic staff undergo an induction process which is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Manager with input from senior academic management. The induction comprises two parts, an initial academic/HR induction followed by localised IT and Library inductions. Areas covered in the induction include:

1. Introduction to the College; its background, ethos and culture; its structure and organisation; its development strategies and plans
2. Roles and responsibilities of academic staff
3. Course preparation and materials to be provided to students
4. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies
5. Academic and administration procedures and regulations,
6. General terms and conditions of employment
7. HR and staff development policies, procedures and regulations
8. Introductory training on College computer systems
9. Introduction to Library Services

HR also arranges for new and existing staff members to conduct Kaplan Compliance training on Security Awareness and Privacy Principles and Ethics and Code of Conduct on an annual basis. Non-
academic staff appointees also receive a full staff induction coordinated by HR. HR policies are reviewed regularly to support the implementation of DBS’s strategy and goals.

Peer to peer mentoring arrangements are available to new academic staff and in some cases an additional teaching or assessment mentor may be appointed subject to AASC recommendation.

10.2 Equal Opportunities

DBS is committed to working towards equality of opportunity in all aspects of its business for staff and students. Equality of opportunity is the right of all persons to receive fair, equal and non-discriminatory consideration in access to and the processes of education and employment as outlined in various equality and anti-discrimination legislation. DBS believes that our commitment to principles of fairness and respect for all helps create a climate that is favourable to the free and open exchange of ideas and the welfare of staff and students. DBS endeavours to ensure that all of its activities are governed by principles of equality and opportunity, and that all staff and students are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

DBS is committed to promoting equal opportunities in education and employment in recognition of the principles of equity and social justice and in conformity with equality and anti-discrimination legislation. DBS recognises the rights of individuals and groups to be free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community.

DBS affirms the right of all staff and students to work in an environment free from harassment and bullying and does not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation of customers by employees and non-employees. Behaviour of this kind may lead to disciplinary action and other sanctions at the discretion of the College.

In line with this commitment, DBS has developed a Dignity at Work Policy which has been disseminated to staff. A copy of this policy is also available on the staff intranet.
10.3 Staff Development

10.3.1 Introduction

The success of DBS is based on the calibre and competence of the academic staff and the College’s commitment to the continuing enhancement and encouragement of staff development. This ensures that staff involved in designing, delivering and assessing programmes are capable and competent to do so. Academic competence to teach is evaluated at the recruitment stage but ensuring currency both in one’s academic subject and more general pedagogy should be the responsibility of the academic, facilitated by the College.

It is widely acknowledged that knowledge and understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in one’s discipline area directly informs and enhances teaching.

The College’s Staff Development Policy broadly covers the following areas:

- Pedagogy
- Continuing Professional Development
- Research/scholarly activity

The first two of these categories are discussed within the general staff development, section 10.3.2 and the latter within the research policy, section 10.4.

10.3.2 Staff Development Policy

DBS is committed to ensuring that:

- academic staff have the academic and/or professional expertise to deliver their programmes
- staff are qualified to a level commensurate with the degrees being offered
- academic staff have the opportunity to engage with the pedagogic development of their discipline
- staff development and appraisal opportunities are available to enable staff to develop and enhance their professional competence and scholarship
- staff are informed of, and provided with guidance on, policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review
- staff with key programme management responsibilities, e.g. PLs have relevant experience and knowledge of curriculum development and assessment design and engage with such training courses as the College deems appropriate
• academic staff are encouraged to engage with the activities of other providers of higher education, or accreditation bodies by involvement as external examiners, validation panel members, etc.
• appropriate resources are identified to support the policy.

10.3.3 General Staff Development

Categories of Staff development:
1. Representing and supporting projects of interest to DBS
2. Pedagogical effectiveness
3. Discipline specific staff development
4. Personal development

1. Representing and Supporting Projects of Interest to DBS
Various staff development opportunities are offered to DBS such as attendance at conferences which deal with issues of significance to the development of DBS. In these instances appropriate staff who have expressed an interest and who have displayed initiative in the area may be invited to attend by their line manager. These staff members are asked to prepare a report on the conference for wider dissemination upon their return.

2. Pedagogical Effectiveness
Attendance at courses and conferences organised by DBS or held elsewhere which deal with areas related to teaching, course design and development, assessment strategies, student retention etc. is actively encouraged by DBS. Staff can apply to attend such courses using the Staff Development Procedures in section 10.3.4.

DBS has a nominated representative on the on the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. The National Forum is an important influence upon the pedagogical development at DBS.

3. Discipline Specific Staff Development
Academic staff are qualified to teach in their specific subject area. In addition to their own professional development, staff are encouraged to attend courses or conferences related to their own subject area. Support for this category of staff development should come from the school.
Where support is sought for attendance at a major research conference, the applicant should follow the relevant procedures in section 10.3.4. Additionally, publications or reports arising out of such DBS funded conference attendance are submitted by the attendee to the Research Librarian for deposit on the institutional repository eSource. Staff members are required to complete the Staff Works Submission Form (F10.4a) along with Deposit Agreement for Staff Form (F10.4b). These forms must be submitted along with the publications to the Research Librarian.

4. Personal Development
Attendance at courses which develop skills appropriate to the staff member’s role or function are encouraged. Staff are required to attend such courses using the staff development procedures contained in section 10.3.4.

10.3.4 Procedures for Applying to Access Staff Development
All staff development requests should go through the Faculty Manager for academic staff or Departmental Manager for non-academic staff. If the applicant has been asked to attend a course on behalf of DBS, clearance from the appropriate Manager is still required.

The Staff Development Application Form or Application for Support to Undertake a Taught Academic Programme (F10.5) must be filled out by the applicant. The Faculty Manager/Departmental Manager reviews the application. He/she clears the application and endorses it based on its applicability to the applicant’s responsibilities and an understanding that it does not interfere with the applicants core duties at DBS. Equally the course must not conflict with the core business of DBS.

Applications for staff development initiatives that require time off such as a Masters must be submitted to the Faculty Manager/Departmental Manager at least one month prior to the beginning of an academic year if it is going to impinge on that academic year.

Applications relating to pedagogy can be strengthened by seeking support from the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Learning and Teaching Committee expects the successful applicant to either post a summary of the event or carry out a short presentation to this Committee.

Applications for conference attendance, attendance at a short course or for research scholarships are submitted for consideration to the Research Committee. Please see section 10.4.4 for further information.
10.3.5 The Role of the Faculty Managers in Staff Development

Faculty managers are responsible for:

- Evaluating and balancing the goals of the School/Department and the aspirations of faculty members.
- The annual performance appraisal process is a key tool in identifying knowledge gaps or training needs for individual faculty staff members. Staff development goals can relate to the acquisition of new skills or competencies, individual goals or the strategic goals of the School.
- Managing and allocating the staff development budget for the department in pursuance of the above objectives and with the approval of the Head of Faculty and School Operations.

10.4 Research Policy

DBS is committed to consolidating and expanding its research capacity so that students learn in a research informed and research active environment as per the Hunt Report. The College recognises the importance of research in enhancing the learning experience of students; in attracting and retaining faculty and in forging links with the wider academic community and industry.

Research activity is an important barometer of the quality of faculty at DBS. In recognition of this, DBS routinely includes the research output of programme faculty in the documentation submitted to Quality Qualifications Ireland for Programmatic Review and new validation programmes.

DBS is committed to further supporting:

- Subject specific academic research
- Pedagogic research
- The integration of research with teaching and knowledge transfer developments
- Implementing the objectives of its Research Development Plan

The College has invested in a number of supports to assist faculty in their research endeavours.

These are reviewed annually:

- The allocation of funds to faculty via the Research Committee (please see Section 10.4.2).
- The allocation of a number of research scholarships via the Research Committee which provides faculty with the equivalent of 37.5 paid teaching hours to conduct research.
• The setting up of a Register of Scholarly Activity which records the research output of DBS faculty throughout their academic careers. (Please see section 10.4.7)

• The establishment of an open access institutional repository eSource to showcase the scholarly output of faculty and students at DBS. (Please see section 10.4.7)

• The appointment of dedicated Research Librarian based in the Library’s Research Support Office. The Research Librarian provides individual consultancy with faculty as well as a programme of classes on getting published in the academic literature, measuring citation impact etc. He also organises guest lectures of research interest. (Please see section 10.4.7)

The College’s Research Development Plan outlines objectives for the next two years which include:

• The consolidation of the College’s existing research base through the identification of key research themes in the College by School.

• The identification of key researchers in the college by virtue of their prolific output, contribution to their subject field or citation impact.

• The purchase of research software which records the research output of faculty and its impact in the academic literature/social media platforms.

• The establishment of a Research page on the DBS Website which showcases key researchers in the college as well as key publications in the academic literature by DBS faculty. The research page will include staff profiles as well staff members’ publications and a link to the institutional repository eSource.

• Dissemination and showcasing of the scholarly outputs of the Research Scholarships ensuring that this research is brought into the classroom to enhance the learning and teaching experience at DBS.

• The establishment of strategic alliances with other academic institutions to submit bids to national and international research funds.

• The production of a Research Strategy with the input of key stakeholders (senior management, faculty, Research Committee representative, the Library).

10.4.1 Procedures for Applying for Support for Research

Applications for conference attendance, attendance at a short course or for research scholarships are submitted for consideration to the Research Committee. Application to Attend a Conference or Short Course (F10.6) must be submitted to the Faculty Manager in the first instance and once approved by the Faculty Manager can be submitted to the Research Committee. Application details for Research Scholarships or support are issued with the relevant call.
10.4.2 Fee Sponsorship

(a) Applicant for Academic Programme

Where funding is approved for an Academic Programme the following Policy applies:

- Funding for educational courses is at the discretion of the Head of Faculty and School Operations and is approved where it can be demonstrated that the course is of benefit to both the employee and the College.
- If an employee leaves employment with the College within one year of completion of their course, they are liable to repay the last year’s fees paid.
- Funding of the course does not mean the employee is entitled to study leave, and generally employees are expected to arrange their timetables in such a manner as to ensure that there is no interference with their DBS commitments.
- The Faculty Manager/Departmental Manager must ensure that the employee signs this Acknowledgment Form F10.7 (confirming commitment to repayment of relevant fees in the eventuality of their leaving DBS employment), prior to their commencement on the programme. The form must be returned to the HR Department prior to registering for a course.

(b) Applicant for a DBS-based Academic Programme

Where funding is approved for a course based at DBS the following HR Policy applies:

- Approval for educational courses is at the discretion of the Head of Faculty and School Operations and subject to available spaces available on the course.
- Employees must register with the appropriate academic department prior to undertaking a course.
- Employees are not entitled to study leave for internal DBS courses.
- Attendance must not interfere with their DBS commitments.
- If an employee leaves employment with the College within one year of completion of their course, they are liable to repay any external cost incurred by DBS in relation to their place on the course.
- If an employee leaves employment with the College prior to the completion of a course, they are liable to repay the fees for the current year.
- The Faculty Manager/Departmental Manager must ensure that the employee signs the Acknowledgment Form (F10.7) which confirms their commitment to repayment of fees in the eventuality of leaving DBS employment. This form must be signed prior to commencement of the programme. The form must be returned to the HR Department, prior to registering for a course.
10.4.3 Research Committee

The Research Committee is a sub-Committee of the Schools Executive Board. The Committee convenes on a bi-monthly basis.

(a) Terms of Reference

• To oversee the DBS Research Development Plan (RDP)
• To monitor the effectiveness of the RDP in each School
• To consider applications for staff development in relation to conference attendance and short courses.
• To oversee the allocation of the Research Scholarships. Senior management of the College has provided a number of research scholarships to faculty which provides the equivalent of 37.5 paid teaching hours specifically for the purpose of research.
• To organise and deliver the Annual DBS Research Day (please see section 10.4.7 for further information)
• To identify and disseminate information regarding funding opportunities
• To monitor the Ethics Committee and ensure that the Procedures for Ethical Approval are current.
• To liaise and co-ordinate with the Library Research Support Office where relevant (e.g. archival of financially supported research activity outputs and conference attendance reports. Please see section 10.3.3, part 1 for further information.)

(b) Membership

• The Director of Academic Affairs
• A representative from each School
• One member of the Learning and Teaching Committee
• Research active academics co-opted
• A library representative

10.4.4 Research Requiring Ethical Approval

Where a project requires ethical approval the ‘Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants and Procedures for Ethical Approval’ (Appendix 10.1) are activated. To obtain ethical approval for a project the applicant familiarises themselves with the guidelines and then completes a
Research Ethics Application Form (F10.8). The Research Application Pack (Appendix 10.2) entails completing or preparing the following documents:

- Research Ethics Application Form.
- Research Ethics Review Exemption Form
- Participant Information Sheet(s)
- Participant Consent Form(s)
- Statutory Declaration Form.

The Procedures for Ethical Approval are managed by the Research Committee, which filters applications for ethical approval and convene the College Human Research Ethics Committee, (Ethics Committee) to advise as required.

- **Research category A** – Research involving human volunteers but not including; clinical trials of investigative medicinal products or other therapeutic interventions; studies using new methodologies; studies involving certain vulnerable populations (detailed below); studies requiring deception of the participant or any significant risk to anyone involved in the research.

- **Research category B** - Research involving human volunteers including; studies involving therapeutic interventions (but not including clinical trials of investigative medicinal products); studies using new research methodologies; studies involving vulnerable populations (detailed below); studies requiring deception of the participant or any significant risk to anyone involved in the research.

- **Research Category C** – Research involving human volunteers who are service users, patients, staff, records, etc. within the sphere of the HSE or similar setting (but not including clinical trials of investigative medicinal products).

- **Research Category D** - Clinical trials of investigative medicinal products involving patients or healthy volunteers.

**10.4.5 DBS Human Research Ethics Committee**

The Ethics Committee is convened by the Research Committee when required to consider ethical approval for a project. This *ad hoc* Committee is made up of no less than five representatives drawn from those Schools/Departments where research with human participants is typically conducted.
These representatives should have experience across the fullest range of research methodologies and populations. In addition it is recommended that a lay person and an individual with legal expertise sit on the Committee. The College Human Research Ethics Committee is also called on to monitor national and local legislation and practice to ensure that these are implemented in accordance with the needs of the College, its staff and students.

10.4.6 Evidence of Research or Scholarly Activity

Register of Scholarly Activity

The Library maintains a register of scholarly activity which records the scholarly output of academic staff members. Categories of scholarly work on the Register are informed by practices at the University of Monash in Australia and University College Dublin. They include:

- Peer reviewed journal articles
- Journal articles
- Conference articles
- Books
- Book Chapters
- Committee Membership
- External Examinership
- Creative works
- Consultancy

Material for inclusion on the Register of Scholarly Activity is harvested via the Work for Inclusion in the DBS Register of Scholarly Activity form which is completed by faculty as part of their annual performance appraisal process and submitted by the Faculty Manager to the Deputy Librarian who maintains and updates the Register.

Institutional Repository

DBS has an open access institutional Repository eSource which showcases institutional research by students and staff. All final year student dissertations and project work with a mark of 2.1 upwards are routinely deposited on eSource. Students complete the Deposit Agreement Form for Students to submit the aforementioned work on eSource at the point of submission on Moodle. Students can also complete an opt-out form should they not wish to submit to eSource. These forms are available from the library.
The Research Librarian harvests the aforementioned student works from Moodle in association with designated staff members in Academic Operations.

Academic staff members wishing to deposit scholarly work on eSource do so via the Research Librarian who ensures that the academic staff member signs a Deposit Agreement for Staff Form which is available in the appendices of this manual. The Research Librarian also obtains copyright clearance where required from publishers. Academic works considered for inclusion on eSource conform to the categories of scholarly work on the Register of Scholarly Activity. ESource also displays the scholarly output (presentations etc.) of internal research events such as the Annual Research Day or the Annual Library Seminar.

A caveat of research funding from the Research Committee is that the publication outputs of a funded project are deposited on eSource. Faculty complete the Staff Works Submission Form along with the Deposit Agreement Form for Staff and submit to the Research Librarian.

Annual Research Day
The Research Committee organises an annual staff research day. All staff are invited to submit a research application to the Research Committee that they would like to present on the day. These are evaluated by the Committee, and accepted applications are invited to present their research. The Committee draws up the programme for the day and disseminates this within the College. All members of staff in DBS are invited to attend the event. The Annual Research Day provides an opportunity for faculty to showcase their research activities to their peers in DBS. Presentations arising out of the Annual Research day are submitted to the Research Librarian for display on eSource.

Showcasing Scholarly Activity to Quality Assurance Agencies
The Deputy Librarian routinely compiles a report on the scholarly activity of the Programme Team for inclusion in Programmatic Review and new programme validation documentation. This enables the Programmatic Review and validation panels along with accreditation agencies to readily see the scholarly activity conducted by programme faculty.

10.4.7 Measurement of Success
A number of metrics are maintained to assess the level and impact of research activity in the College. These include:
- Project applications to the Research Committee: measurement of interest
• Project approvals by the Research Committee: quality, feasibility and approval of applications
• Project types: by discipline and scale
• Project starts
• Project completions
• Projects archived on eSource
• Publication Output as recorded by the Register of Scholarly Activity
• Web Analytics- Number of times an article is viewed or downloaded on a database or on the institutional repository eSource
• Submissions to Research Funds
• Successful submissions to Research Funds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Changed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20/09/2016</td>
<td>Published by GA, QA Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.11 Version 2</td>
<td>21/10/2016</td>
<td>Approved by NJ, DAA</td>
<td>GA, QA Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Version 2</td>
<td>08/12/2016</td>
<td>Approved by NJ, DAA</td>
<td>GA, QA Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3 – new</td>
<td>14/03/17</td>
<td>Approved by Academic Board</td>
<td>AF, Assessment &amp; Awards Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8.5 – Version 2</td>
<td>14/09/17</td>
<td>Inclusion of Viva Voce Approved by Registrar</td>
<td>GA, QA Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8.5 – Version 3</td>
<td>13/11/17</td>
<td>Expanded plagiarism definition</td>
<td>LJ, Registrar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>