

QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

2025 Edition – Part A

2025

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Foreword

This edition of the Dublin Business School *Quality Assurance Handbook* has been developed by DBS, for DBS learners and staff, as part of the Re-Engagement process with QQI in accordance with the *Education Act 2012*. As part of the process, DBS has taken the opportunity to extensively review its quality assurance policies, processes and procedures. A key focus has been to work towards ensuring greater clarity for learners, faculty and all stakeholders. This has been achieved through structuring the *Quality Assurance Handbook* into three distinct parts as follows:

- Governance and Policy
- Learner Journey
- Programme Quality

Of necessity, these three sections are themselves comprised of a number of subsections in order to adequately document the range of areas and functions that need to be covered. We have, however, tried to sign-post these areas as clearly as possible, in order to assist the reader in locating information as easily as possible.

Ultimately, our aim in DBS is to provide a high quality and consistent learning experience to all students, achieved through appropriate governance structures and supporting processes and procedures that ensure best practice in programme development, delivery and review, with sound approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, and clear mechanisms for learners and staff to engage with the College and to raise concerns or complaints.

In presenting this *Quality Assurance Handbook* and associated documentation, DBS is cognisant that quality assurance and enhancement remains an on-going endeavour, and it is important to acknowledge that this remains a 'live' document. Mechanisms for approval of refinements to existing policies and procedures, or introduction of proposed new policies and procedures, as required, exist through the DBS Academic Board. Learners and staff are invited to contribute to on-going quality assurance practices in DBS by e-mailing quality@dbs.ie regarding queries or comments on any element of this *Handbook*, or with suggestions for updates or additions to policy.

This *Quality Assurance Handbook* and associated policies and procedures will be published on the DBS website and is made available to staff and learners through the VLE, Moodle.

Darragh Breathnach

Chief Operating Officer & Registrar

2024

1.1 Introduction to DBS and the *Quality Assurance Handbook*

1.1.1 DBS Purpose and Vision

Quality assurance sits at the heart of DBS's purpose and vision.

DBS

To inspire and nurture every learner to realise their career ambitions.

Purpose:

DBS

DBS will be the most respected, diverse and progressive higher education institution in Ireland, renowned globally for making a difference and creating successful careers.

Vision:

1.1.2 Background to DBS

DBS was established in 1975 and is now the largest independent third-level college in Ireland, with over 8000 learners. The College is recognised nationally and internationally as a high-quality provider of third level education, with a record of distinction in learners' academic and career achievements. DBS programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) are accredited through Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

DBS provides a comprehensive range of programmes:

- Full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, accredited through QQI (NFQ Level 6 to Level 9 programmes including Higher Certificate, Higher Diploma, BA, BA Hons, BSc, Postgraduate Diploma, MA, MSc programmes)
- Springboard and ICT programmes accredited through QQI
- Professional and executive education diplomas and programmes (IMI)
- Professional accountancy qualifications (ACCA)
- English language programmes.

The College currently offers over 100 programmes. Most programmes are offered on a full-time and part-time basis. Learners 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 learners on DBS programmes in Dublin, and, since the first international student was admitted in 1989, thousands of international learners have completed programmes at DBS.

The DBS campus is located in Dublin city centre, with premises on Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street, and Bow Lane. Facilities include lecture theatres, PC labs and tutorial rooms, a library including

study rooms, study areas and PC terminals, canteen facilities and student services, including student welfare and counselling, and careers services.

DBS graduates have progressed to successful careers and many occupy senior positions in professional and commercial institutions, both in Ireland and overseas.

DBS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kaplan Inc. (<https://kaplan.com/>), the education division of the Graham Holdings Company (<http://www.ghco.com/company-profile>), having been acquired in 2003. Kaplan, Inc. is a global education company, serving more than one million learners per year in over 400 locations in 30 countries. Kaplan's programmes include higher and professional education, language instruction, test preparation and services to primary/secondary learners and schools. In the area of professional education alone, in 2021 Kaplan provided some courses to approximately 700,000 individuals and professionals worldwide. It has turnover of approximately \$1.4 billion and represents just under half the overall Graham Holdings company business.

1.1.3 Overview of the *Quality Assurance Handbook*

The *Quality Assurance Handbook* (QAH), Parts A, B and C, lays out all approved DBS quality assurance policies and procedures relating to the delivery of education programmes for the information of learners, staff, the public and all stakeholders. This includes policies and procedures applicable to both traditional on-campus and remote/online modes of delivery. DBS is committed to ensuring that the same high standards of academic quality and learner experience are maintained across all delivery formats.

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). For online and remote delivery, DBS will adhere to all relevant national and international guidelines and best practices for digital education, ensuring compliance with QQI's core statutory quality assurance guidelines. Quality assurance in DBS is managed through the Academic Board and its associated sub-committees. However, all DBS staff are involved in quality assurance and enhancement activities, with a particular emphasis on fostering a culture of quality within the evolving digital learning landscape.

All quality assurance policies, processes and procedures have been developed by DBS in good faith with the key aim of ensuring clarity and transparency for all stakeholders involved in our education programmes. In developing its QA processes, DBS has endeavoured to be as exhaustive as possible, addressing unique considerations such as technological infrastructure, online pedagogy, digital

assessment integrity, and remote learner support. However, from time to time the need for revisions or additional provisions may arise, particularly as digital learning technologies and methodologies evolve. Where these are sufficiently minor in nature, or constitute enhancements or reasonable additions to existing policies that do not change the principle and essence of a policy, changes are agreed and managed internally, through the Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee, and approved by the Academic Board. Changes or additions of a major or significant nature, especially those impacting the core principles of online delivery or requiring specific regulatory approval, may be required to be referred to QQI. DBS will proactively engage with QQI on matters pertaining to the quality assurance and enhancement of its online and blended learning offerings.

1.1.4 Quality Assurance Document History

- Prior to 2005, DBS operated under agreed QA policies with its then-partner institutions/accrediting bodies, Liverpool John Moores University, the University of Wales, and HETAC.
- 2005: The DBS Quality Manual was published for agreement by HETAC.
- 2009: An extensively reviewed DBS *Quality Assurance Handbook* was published in advance of HETAC Institutional Review in 2010. This included 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.
- 2009–2015: Individual policies were approved externally by QQI or LJMU, or internally as appropriate.
- 2016/17: A review of policies and procedures reflecting establishment of QQI following the amalgamation of HETAC along with other statutory bodies, revised policies from QQI, and an amended organisational structure in DBS and the conclusion of offering joint awards with LJMU and University of Wales.
- The 2019 QAH has been revised for Re-Engagement with QQI against the *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* (QQI, 2016). Consultation has been undertaken across the 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.
- The 2023 QAH has been revised through consultation across the College to ensure ongoing policy currency, fitness of purpose, and relevance to the evolving educational sector.

1.1.5 *Quality Assurance Handbook Structure*

For the 2019 edition of the *Quality Assurance Handbook*, DBS undertook a mapping exercise against the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. In order to improve user experience and facilitate ease of access to relevant policy and procedure, as part of this mapping exercise the updated QAH has been grouped into sections as follows:

- Part A: Governance and Policy:

This includes:

- Overview of DBS
- Governance and Organisation
- Boards and Committees
- Key Roles
- QA Policy
- Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Policy
- Data, Child Protection and Garda Vetting Policies

- Part B: Learner Journey:

This includes:

- Learner Admissions
- Learner Supports
- Learner Conduct, Appeals and Complaints
- Programme Participation, Attendance, Deferrals, Mitigating Circumstances, Additional Needs
- Assessment Regulations
- Exam Board and Awards

- Part C: Programme Quality:

This includes:

- Staff Recruitment and Training
- Programme Development and Approval
- Collaborative, Transnational and Joint Provision

1.2 DBS Governance and Organisation

1.2.1 Overview

This section sets out the key bodies within the governance and committee structure of Dublin Business School.

DBS recognises the importance of governance structures in overseeing the provision of education, training and research activity. DBS has designed its committee structure with a view to ensuring that best practices are embedded in all areas of the College, and that academic standards and quality drive its operations and strategy at all times.

As per the QQI *Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines* (2016, p.5)¹ DBS is aware of the need for a structure that ensures separation of decision-making powers and approval of decisions made. In designing its structure, DBS has also considered the governance vehicles of other higher education institutions in Ireland and the UK, including other private educational institutions.

Membership of the College's governance and committee structures will at all times aim to reflect the College-wide commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, subject to requirements of *ex-officio* membership and required expertise.

1.2.2 Senior Governance

The overall governance structure of DBS comprises three related but distinct Boards: the Board of Directors; the Academic Board; and the Executive Board, also known as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The following graphic shows the composition and relative position of each Board.

¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

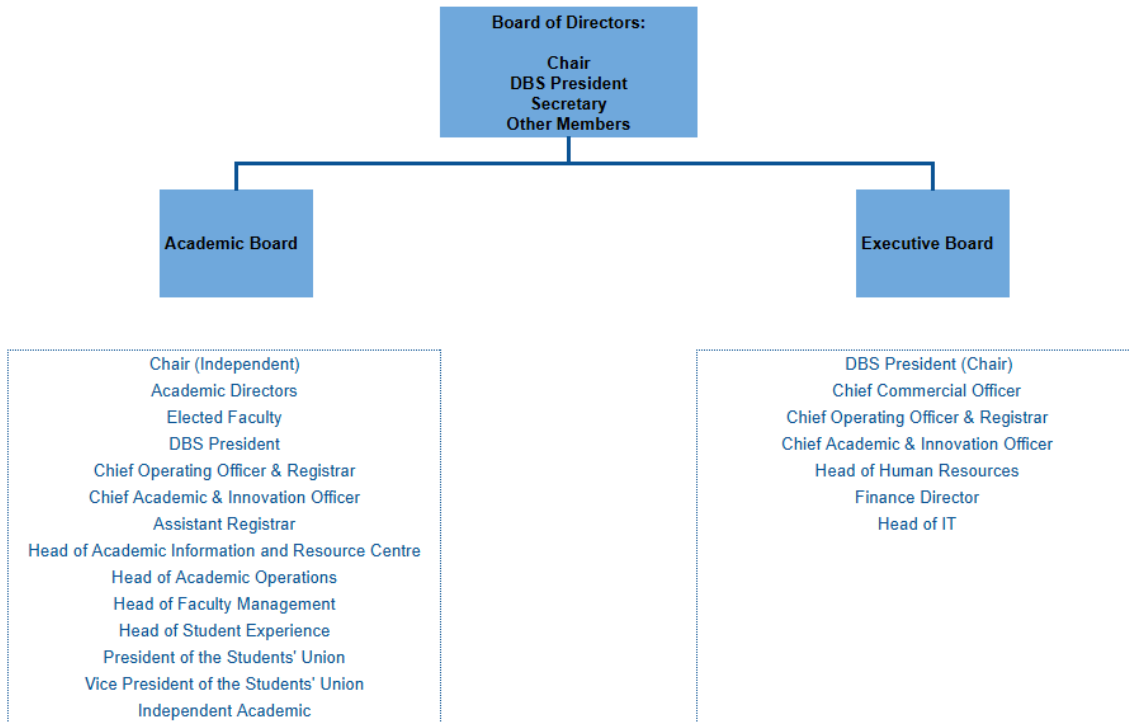


Figure 1: DBS Senior Governance Boards

The Board of Directors is the most senior authority of Dublin Business School, with responsibility for overseeing all activities and for directing the educational mission of the business. Its remit is to ensure the College functions effectively and legally, and in line with the overarching corporate goals. The Board of Directors currently comprises the Chair, Andrew Conlan-Trant, Vice President, International Business Development, Kaplan International; Lisa Nelson, Director of Learning & Curriculum, Kaplan UK; Brendan McCormack, non-executive director; Audrey O'Sullivan, non-executive director and Legal Director, SIRO; and Rachael Dupont, Company Secretary and General Counsel, Kaplan International

The Board of Directors has the authority to approve decisions made by other entities.

The Academic Board is the supreme senior academic authority of DBS, and ultimate guardian of the academic integrity and quality of its higher education Awards. The Academic Board has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of academic governance to ensure compliance with external and internal academic regulations, policy and quality assurance standards.

The Academic Board is chaired by an independent external member of high standing within the higher education sector. It also comprises the DBS President, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Assistant Registrar, Head of Academic Operations, Head of Faculty Management, Head of Student Experience, Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre,

Academic Directors, elected Faculty representatives, the President of the Students' Union, the Vice President of the Students' Union, and an independent academic member for another third-level institution.

The Academic Board delegates some matters relating to quality management to subcommittees, such as the Programme Approval Sub-Committee, Board of Studies, Programme Boards and the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee.

The Academic Board has the authority to ratify decisions made by other academic entities within the College. The Academic Board has ultimate decision-making powers and authority on academic matters, with responsibility to advise the Executive Board and Board of Directors accordingly.

The Executive Board, also known as the Senior Leadership Team, is comprised of all senior managers within the College, and operates in tandem with the Academic Board to ensure the effective operation and quality delivery of academic programmes alongside commercial viability of the College. The Executive Board holds responsibility for the character, mission, values and strategic development of the College. The Executive Board is chaired by the President of the College, and comprises the Chief Commercial Officer, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Finance Director, Head of Human Resources, Head of IT.

The Executive Board is a decision-making entity.

The interaction of these three Boards at the most senior level of the College is fundamental to the success of DBS in maintaining and improving quality and standards. As a private college, the business integrity of DBS is further safeguarded by strong corporate governance from the parent company, Kaplan Inc.

Academic governance is achieved through the Academic Board and its academic subcommittees. This ensures all aspects of the academic quality and standards are maintained.

1.2.3 Boards and Committees

Table 1 below summarises the different boards and committees that form the governance and operational structures of DBS, and the primary function of each. Figure 1 below shows the governance and operational structure graphically.

Table 1: Summary of DBS Boards and Committees

Body	Function
Board of Directors	Oversees the activities of the Academic Board and the Executive Board to safeguard the strategic interests of the business and ensure DBS functions effectively and legally, in accordance with our overarching corporate goals.
Academic Board	Oversees the academic governance of the College, thus ensuring compliance with external and internal academic regulations, policy and quality assurance standards.
Executive Board	Promotes the character, mission, values and strategic development of the College, to ensure the effective operation and quality delivery of academic programmes alongside the commercial viability of the College.
Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee	Oversees the strategic position of the College, holds a College-wide perspective to inform, develop and sustain an annual Academic Plan.
Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee	Monitors and reviews quality assurance and quality enhancement matters arising, and reviews and approves policy for raising to the Academic Board and Executive Board (SLT) for final approval.
Programme Approval Sub-Committee	Rigorously evaluates proposals for new programmes against current QQI criteria and against other relevant professional and/or industry standards.
Board of Studies	Cross-programme monitoring and review and collation of Annual Programme Reports.
Programme Board	Detailed reporting on an individual programme of study with respect to individual modules, learner outcomes, retention and progression, learning and teaching, assessment and external examiner feedback.
Admissions Committee	Monitors admissions data to ensure compliance with standards, processes and procedures for access, transfer and progression to programmes of study, and evaluates new or alternative qualifications for entry.
Academic Approval Sub-Committee	Reviews qualifications and the professional experience of proposed academic staff appointments, including lecturers, tutors and external examiners, and approves such appointments as appropriate and where found suitable.
Learning and Teaching Committee	Supports the development and implementation of innovative learning and teaching activities within the College, that are linked to the assessment of programme and module learning outcomes.

Body	Function
IT Steering Committee	Ensures IT and business strategy are aligned, and senior management is involved and accountable for IT decisions regarding Investments, projects, risk, services and data.
Academic Programmes Committee	Ensures the policies, standards, processes and procedures associated with new programme development, review and amendment are followed.
Applied Research and Practice Committee	Promotes a research ethos across the College and monitors the effectiveness of policy and strategy which promotes, encourages and supports Applied Research and Practice activities across the College.
Academic Operations	Monitors and makes decisions regarding the day-to-day functions and operations of the College relating to all aspects of the learner journey, systems, enrolments, learner support, assessment and examinations.
Exam Board	Ratification of results of modules and stages in programmes, including degree classification at award stage.
Appeals Committee	Reviews all information relating to any learner Appeal with regard to grades/assessment outcomes or other academic decisions, and reaches a decision on the outcome of any such Appeal.
Academic Impropriety (AI) Committee	Reviews all information relating to a suspected case of Academic Impropriety, and reaches a decision on the outcome, with the imposition of appropriate penalties where applicable.
Complaints Committee	Reviews all information relating to any Complaint by a learner, and reaches a decision on the outcome of any such Complaint.
Dissertation Viva Panel	Undertakes oral examinations of learner submissions in order to confirm the authenticity and veracity of a learner's work, and assess the learner's understanding of their own analysis and the wider field of research.
Research Ethics Committee	Reviews all research proposals (learners and staff) to ensure the research meets the College's Ethical Approval criteria.
Student and Graduate Experience Committee	Monitors and reports on the effectiveness of student supports and learner supports across all college academic and support activities.

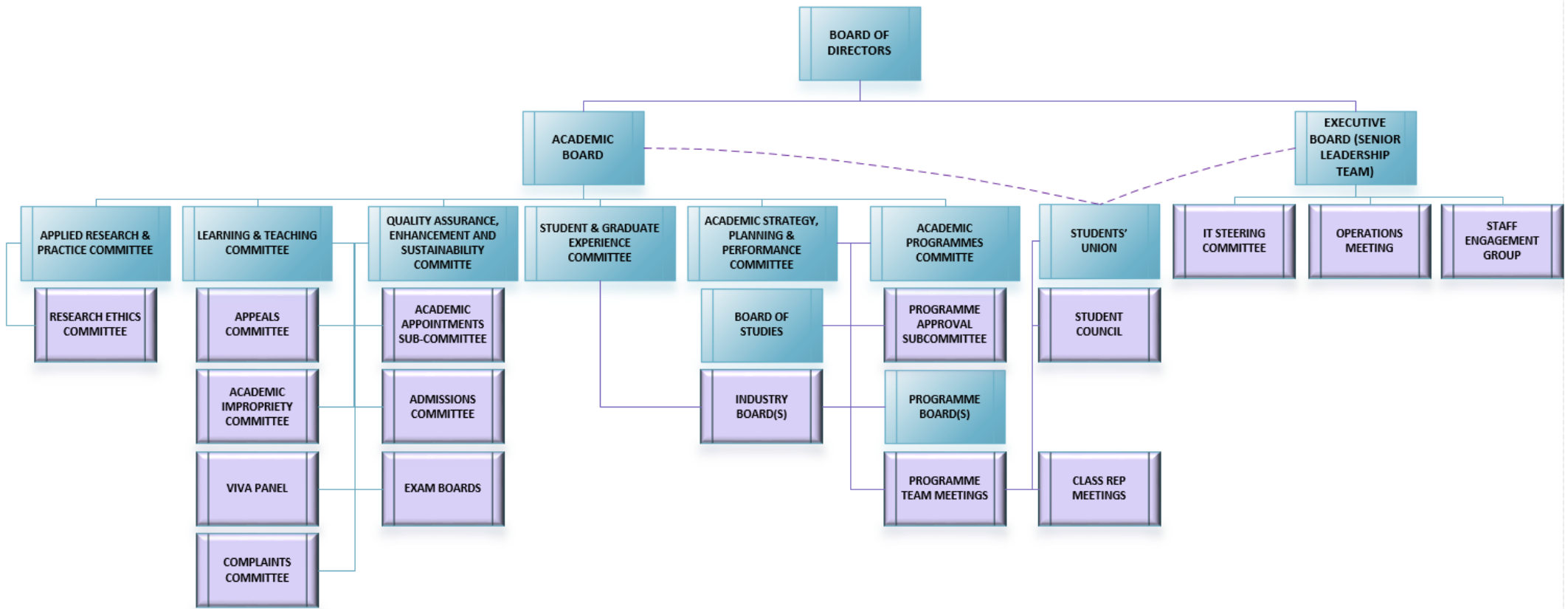


Figure 2: Governance and Operational Structures

ANNUAL CALENDAR OF GOVERNANCE BOARDS & COMMITTEES														Calendar Notes	Governance Notes	
Board/ Committee/ Intake	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT			
SEPT-INTAKE	Start	SEMS 1			EXAMS	SEMS 2			EXAMS	Disse rtation	REPEATS	[Start]				
JAN-INTAKE		[Disse rtation]			Start	SEMS 1			EXAMS	SEMS 2		EXAMS				
APR-INTAKE		[SEMS 2]			[EXAMS]	[Disse rtation]	Start	SEMS 1			EXAMS					
Board of Directors		X						X			X			4th meeting agreed each year to review strategy.	Senior Governance (Institutional)	
Academic Board	X			X		X		X		X			X		Senior Governance (Academic)	
Executive Board	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly	Senior Governance (Corporate)	
Academic Strategy, Planning and Academic Programmes Committee														Two meetings per year	Academic Board SubComm ittee	
Programme Approval SubCommittee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly (and as required)	Academic Board SubComm ittee	
Board of Studies			X						X					As required	Operational SubComm ittee	
Programme Boards	X			X					X				X		Operational SubComm ittee	
QAESC	X			X			X			X			X	Bi-monthly	Academic Board SubComm ittee	
AASC	X				X			X					X	As required (monthly to bi-monthly Reviews)	Operational SubComm ittee	
Admissions Committee			X						X						Operational SubComm ittee	
Appeals, AI, Complaints, VIVA	(x)				(x)	(x)			(x)	(x)			(x)	As required (generally these periods)	Operational SubComm ittees	
Exam Boards	X			(x)	(x)	X			(x)	X	(x)		X	As required (x)	Operational SubComm ittee	
Learning & Teaching Committee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly	Academic Board SubComm ittee	
Student & Graduate Experience Committee	X			X				X		X			X	4 times per year, meets 1 week prior to Academic Board Meetings.	Academic Board SubComm ittee	
Class Rep Meetings		X				X				(x)				Jan/ Apr intakes only (x)	Operational SubComm ittees	

Figure 3: Annual Calendar of DBS Governance and Committees

1.3 Terms of Reference for Governance Boards and Committees

The following section details the remit of the various key governance boards and committees. QAH *Appendix 1C* sets out the restructure of the Academic Board subcommittees in 2022/23.

1.3.1 Terms of Reference for the Board of Directors

Board of Directors	
Membership	Chair (Kaplan representative); DBS Head of Institution; Senior Manager (Kaplan Representative); Secretary (Kaplan Representative), independent member.
Frequency of Meetings	x 4 per year (April, July, October, and 4 th agreed in the year)
Function	The Board of Directors reviews the activities of the Academic Board and the Executive Board to safeguard the strategic interests of the institution and ensure DBS functions effectively and legally, in accordance with the vision and mission statement of the organisation.
Operation	<p>The main operations of the Board of Directors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Defining the character and mission of the College ● Ensuring alignment of DBS strategic plans with those of Kaplan Inc. ● Oversight and ratification of all activities of the institution ● Financial stewardship ● Oversight of risk management for the organisation ● Responsibility to report malpractice to the relevant regulatory bodies
Authority/Decision-Making Power	<p>The Board of Directors approves decisions made by other entities in the College. N.B. The Academic Board is the supreme academic authority of DBS, and ultimate guardian of the academic integrity and quality of its higher education awards. The Academic Board has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of academic governance to ensure compliance with external and internal academic regulations, policy and quality assurance standards.</p> <p>In the performance of its functions, the Academic Board shall have regard to the resources available to the College and, where a decision has a significant risk implication for DBS, the Academic Board will submit to the Board of Directors for approval.</p>

1.3.2 Terms of Reference for the Academic Board

Academic Board	
Membership	Independent Chair, DBS President, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Head of Academic Operations, Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre, Head of Student Experience, Head of Faculty Management, Academic Directors, Head of Department of Arts, Languages and Study Abroad, Assistant Registrar, President of Students' Union, Vice President(s) of Students' Union, elected members from academic faculty, Quality Assurance Officer, Data Analytics and Reporting Manager, Exams Manager, Practice Research Coordinator, Director of Studies Malaysia, School Administrative Officer (Secretary), Independent Member.
Frequency of Meetings	x 5 per year: September, December, February, April, June
Function	The Academic Board is the supreme academic authority of DBS and ultimate guardian of the academic integrity and quality of its higher education awards.
Operations	<p>The main operations of the Academic Board include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approval of the annual academic plan encompassing all elements pertaining to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme management and development ○ School operations (including staffing) ○ Teaching and Learning ○ Research ○ Quality Assurance and Enhancement ○ Transnational Delivery ● Approval of policies, standards, processes and procedures associated with academic management and governance at DBS, including those specific to online and blended learning environments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme validation and review ○ Learner admission and progression ○ Teaching, learning and assessment ○ Staff development and academic research ○ Academic resources ● Ratification of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changes to academic quality, regulations or standards ○ New programmes and amendments to programmes ○ Academic staff appointments, including external examiners ○ Assessment results marking the end of an academic stage ● Oversight of liaison arrangements with the validating bodies, including approval of relevant submissions and reports. The primary validating body is Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). 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 <p>Some of the functions of the Academic Board may be delegated to sub-committees appointed by and accountable to the Board.</p>
Authority/Decision-Making Power	<p>The Academic Board approves decisions made by other entities in the College.</p> <p>The Academic Board is the supreme academic authority of DBS and ultimate guardian of the academic integrity and quality of its higher education awards.</p>

The Academic Board has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of academic governance to ensure compliance with external and internal academic regulations, policy and quality assurance standards. In the performance of its functions, the Academic Board shall have regard to the resources available to the College and, where a decision has a significant risk implication for DBS, the Academic Board will submit to the Board of Directors for approval.

Contact Chief Operating Officer & Registrar

1.3.3 Terms of Reference for the Executive Board²

Executive Board	
Membership	DBS President (Chair), Chief Commercial Officer, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Finance Director, Head of IT, Head of Human Resources
Frequency of Meetings	Monthly
Function	Responsibility for the character, mission, values and strategic development of the College, to ensure the effective operation and quality delivery of academic programmes alongside commercial viability.
Operations	<p>The main operations of the Executive Board include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification and development of interim- and long-term strategic goals for the College, and submission to the Board for approval ● Leading on implementation of projects to achieve strategic goals ● Overseeing the operational management of the College relating to all aspects of the learner journey, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment ○ Admissions ○ Induction ○ Learner support, welfare, pastoral care ○ Teaching and learning ○ Assessment ○ Graduation ○ Identified risks and challenges ● Overseeing quality assurance of all aspects of the learner experience in tandem with the activities of the Academic Board and its sub-committees ● Ensuring financial security of the College to maintain quality provision and protection of learners ● Ensuring appropriate resourcing with respect to staffing, facilities and any other resources ● Addressing any other matters referred by other authorities within the College, with particular regard to the Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee
Authority/Decision-Making Power	The Executive Board is a decision-making body. It is required to report governance matters and risk directly to the Board of Directors.
Contact	President of DBS and Head of the Institution

1.3.4 Terms of Reference for the Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee

Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee	
Membership	<p><i>Ex-Officio members:</i> President, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, and members of the Senior Leadership Team</p> <p><i>Elected members:</i> three academic lecturers who are members of the Academic Board; two of the student representatives on the Academic Board; an external</p>

² The Executive Board is referred to internally as the Senior Leadership Team.

	member of the Academic Board; co-option where appropriate of those senior staff of the College who are not members of the Academic Board.
Frequency of Meetings	Two meetings per year.
Scope	Holds a College-wide perspective to inform, develop, and sustain an annual Academic Plan for DBS.
Function	<p>Creating and sustaining a coherent Academic Vision and Strategy for DBS. The Vision will identify the medium and long-term academic aims and strategy of the College, in line with the overall College Strategy, by emphasising an ethos of organisational flexibility, responsiveness and transformation.</p> <p>Deriving from the Academic Vision and Strategy, the creation of a framework for an Annual Academic Plan, encompassing all elements pertaining to the Learner Life-cycle within DBS. These will include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner admission and progression. • Teaching, learning and assessment. • Learner support services. • Staff development and academic research. • Programme management and development. • School/Faculty operations. • Transnational delivery. • Programme management and development, including validation and review. <p>The Academic Plan will have an integrated system of qualitative and quantitative performance metrics to facilitate ongoing evaluation of the Plan. This is to ensure it is adaptable, sustainable and transformational in a challenging Higher Education environment.</p>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and monitor the 3-year academic strategic plan (and any amendments or updates made annually) • Develop the annual Academic Plan for the coming academic year, incorporating a review of the previous academic year • Receive a report on the academic performance of the College in the current academic year (based on agreed performance measures as set out by the Chief Academic & Innovation Officer (see latest learning review) • Taking inputs from work led by the Chief Academic & Innovation Officer and President and other SLT members as appropriate, e.g. Learning Reviews, KPIs.
Reports Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Studies Report • Retention Reports • Annual Programme Reports
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	No.
Contact	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar

1.3.5 Terms of Reference for Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee

Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee	
Membership	<p><i>Ex-Officio members:</i> Chief Operating Officer & Registrar (Chair), Assistant Registrar, QA Officer, Exams Manager, Admissions Manager, Admissions QA Officer, Head of Academic Information Resource Centre</p> <p><i>Elected members:</i> Academic Directors x 2 (as nominated by Chief Academic & Innovation Officer), Faculty x2 (as nominated by Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production), Student Union Rep</p>
Frequency of Meetings	Bi-monthly
Scope	Formal monitoring of QA audits and reviews, identification and follow up on QA & QE matters arising, review and approval of policy for raising to SLT and Academic Board for final approval, ensuring alignment with all regulatory requirements with respect to QQI and other PSRBs.
Function	<p>Monitoring and assessing the suitability and sustainability of academic and academic support activities across the College.</p> <p>Ensure a culture of quality enhancement through continuous improvement, identifying and critically assessing risk and channelling this as appropriate to the Academic Board and/or Executive Board.</p> <p>Monitoring and reviewing Quality Assurance policies and procedures in compliance with internal and external regulatory requirements.</p> <p>This involves developing and updating specific policies and procedures for online programme design, delivery, and assessment, ensuring they align with evolving national and international standards for digital education.</p>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive the audit and monitoring reports from the Registrar’s Office on quality performance and compliance. ● Receive reports from other QA processes and committees, e.g. AASC, Exam Boards, etc. ● Monitor effectiveness of existing Quality Assurance policies and procedures. This includes a critical review of how current QA policies and procedures apply to and support high-quality online education, identifying any gaps or areas for improvement unique to digital learning. ● Proposal and development of new policies. ● Proposals for updates to existing policies. Updates will ensure that all existing policies are inclusive of and adequately address online and blended delivery methods. ● Proposal of solutions or steps to enhance quality of module and programme delivery. ● Proposal of solutions or steps to mitigate risk and ensure sustainability. This includes identifying and addressing risks specific to online education, such as technological failures, cybersecurity threats, digital divide issues, and the sustainability of online learning models.
Reports Received:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Academic Appointment SubCommittee ● Admissions ● Exam Board ● Departmental Audits ● Al/vivas ● Appeals

- Complaints

Authority/ No

**Decision-
Making Power**

Contact Chief Operating Officer & Registrar/ Assistant Registrar

1.3.6 Terms of Reference for the Programme Approval Sub-Committee

Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC)	
Membership	<p>Chief Academic & Innovation Officer (Chair), Portfolio Performance Manager, Assistant Registrar, Academic Representative (nominated).</p> <p>No members of the PASC can have been involved in the proposal or development of the programme.</p>
Frequency of Meetings	Convened as required
Function	To peer-review proposals for new programmes for suitability against institutional quality standards and regulatory expectations, ensuring due diligence has been carried out with respect to research, stakeholder input and curriculum design.
Operations	<p>The Programme Approval Sub-Committee carries out two reviews in the development cycle for any new programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Review of Programme Documentation for approval to go to Internal Review Board (Mock Panel) • Review of the revised programme following the Internal Review Board (Mock Panel) for final approval to proceed for validation. <p>PASC will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm alignment between the developed programme and the version approved in the original proposal by SLT. 2. Confirm if a clear target audience and rationale for the programme has been defined. 3. Evaluate academic coherence, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appropriateness and alignment of Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs); ○ Appropriateness of mode(s) of delivery for the content and target audience; ○ Cohesion between modules and overall structure; and ○ Appropriateness of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies 4. Assess curriculum quality, using criteria such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of evidence-based pedagogical practices; ○ Constructive alignment; ○ Use of Bloom’s Taxonomy in learning outcomes; and ○ Balance and progression across stages 5. Verify stakeholder engagement during development, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industry/External Input: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Evidence that relevant and significant industry or sector partners have been consulted during programme development. ii. Industry feedback is specific, relevant, and has influenced curriculum design (e.g., content, skills focus, graduate attributes).

- iii. Engagement includes appropriate types of stakeholders (e.g., employers, professional bodies, accreditation boards or societies).
- iv. External input is timely (not outdated or generic) and demonstrates alignment with current labour market needs or professional trends.
- Internal Academic Consultation:
 - i. Input from relevant internal academic departments (e.g., those who will lecture on the modules, cross-disciplinary input where modules have cross-listing potential or feeder / progression opportunities) has been sought and documented.
 - i. Conflicts or overlaps with existing programmes have been identified and addressed.
 - i. The Learning Unit as pedagogic advisors have advised or contributed to the design of the learning model and assessment approach.
 - ✓ DBS Creative Studio has been consulted with respect to requirements for online content development.
 - Internal Operational Stakeholders:
 - i. Discussions with the Registrar’s Office, Admissions, and Timetabling to confirm feasibility of delivery (intake sizes and frequencies / delivery methods), entry requirements, and learner support.
 - ii. Clear evidence that resourcing (staffing, facilities, digital infrastructure) has been reviewed collaboratively.
 - Student/Graduate Voice:
 - i. Where feasible, student representatives or alumni have been involved or consulted to inform learner perspectives, workload considerations, and relevance of the programme offer.
 - Documentation:
 - i. Summary of stakeholder input is included in the programme documentation, including who was consulted, when, how, and how their feedback was acted upon.
- 2. Check operational readiness, including:
 - Feasibility of delivery (staffing, timetable, resources)
 - Clarity of learner workload and contact hours
 - Internal compliance with policies (e.g., assessment schedule, credit weighting)
- 3. Provide a summary evaluation and identify:
 - **Green:** Approved and ready to proceed to the relevant panel.
 - **Amber:** Minor issues to be addressed. Reverted back to Programme Team prior to proceeding to the relevant panel.
 - **Red:** Significant misalignment requiring further development and SLT review.

Authority/Decision-Making Power	The Programme Approval Sub-Committee has the authority to recommend programmes to the Academic Board, via the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, for submission to QQI. It has the authority to recommend to the Senior Leadership Team and Academic Board that a programme does not proceed.
Contact	Chief Academic & Innovation Officer / Assistant Registrar

1.3.7 Terms of Reference for the Board of Studies

Board of Studies	
Membership	Assistant Registrar (Chair), Chief Academic & Innovation Officer Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee, Chair of Applied Research and Practice Committee, Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Academic Directors, Library representative, other attendees by invitation of the Chair as required by the agenda, School Administrative Officer (Secretary).
Frequency of Meetings	x 2 per year: November and May
Function	To ensure academic quality across all programmes and appropriate implementation of the five-year strategic plan in programme delivery.
Operations	<p>The main operations of the Board of Studies are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor programmes and suites of programmes to ensure consistency of approach in teaching, learning and assessment across the Schools ● Review and approve updates to teaching, learning and assessment for programmes or modules, within its scope, referred from Programme Boards ● Agree implementation of new initiatives in teaching, learning and research identified by the Teaching and Learning Committee, Applied Research and Practice Committee and programme teams, for deployment through Programme Boards ● Prepare and submit Annual Summary Report to the Academic Board
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	The Board of Studies approves programme changes (within scope) and implementation of learning, teaching, assessment and research strategies.
Contact	School Administrative Officer/Assistant Registrar

1.3.8 Terms of Reference for Programme Boards

Programme Boards	
Membership	Academic Directors, Faculty, Library representative, learner representatives.
Frequency of Meetings	x 3 per year: September, December, May
Function	Detailed review and reporting on individual programmes of study and implementation of learning, teaching and research initiatives at programme level.
Operations	<p>The main operations of the Programme Board is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate consistent and comprehensive annual monitoring and reporting regarding delivery of programme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enrolment data ○ Responsiveness to learners, including review of meetings with Class Representatives ○ Responsiveness to External Examiners ○ Learner support ○ Learning and teaching ○ Assessment ○ Learner retention and progression ○ Learner outcomes ● Approve routine operational changes to the delivery and support of the programme, in accordance with DBS overarching policies and procedures ● Table proposed changes, within scope, to learning, teaching and assessment for a programme or modules, for approval by Board of Studies ● Communication of and plan deployment of new initiatives in teaching, learning and assessment approved through Board of Studies ● Develop an interim and annual programme reports for submission to Board of Studies as part of the Schools Annual Report
Authority/Decision-Making Power	Programme Boards are not a decision-making body. Proposed changes emerging from Programme Boards are referred to Boards of Studies for approval.
Contact	Academic Director

1.3.9 Terms of Reference for the Admissions Committee

Admissions Committee	
Membership	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar (Chair), Chief Commercial Officer, Admissions Manager, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Academic Directors by invitation of the Chair as required.
Frequency of Meetings	x 2 per year: November and May
Function	Monitoring of admissions data to ensure compliance with standards, process and procedures for access, transfer and progression of learners, and to evaluate new or alternative qualifications for entry.
Operations	<p>The main operations of the Admissions Committee are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and develop, as appropriate, the College’s admissions policy in relation to selection procedure • Monitor the College’s advanced stage admissions and transfer policy and develop methods for otherwise facilitating learners from other institutions transferring onto undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at DBS, with due regard to their academic standards and the maintenance of quality. • Evaluate 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 Quality and Qualifications • At each cycle, review admissions data provided by the Chief Commercial Officer, including information on standard and non-standard admissions, admissions with advanced standing, and admission of mature learners • Agree Annual Admissions Report compiled by the Chair for submission the Academic Board
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	The Admissions Committee is a decision-making body.
Contact	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar

1.3.10 Terms of Reference for Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC)

Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC)	
Membership	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar (Chair), Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Senior Academic Developer, Assistant Registrar, QA Officer (Secretary). [Quorate – 4 members] <i>Information as required is provided from Faculty Managers to support academic appointments and Academic Directors to support External Examiner Appointments.</i>
Frequency of Meetings	Convened as required for new nominations Convened monthly for Review meetings.
Function	Review qualifications and professional experience of proposed academic staff appointments, including lecturers, tutors and external examiners, and approve as appropriate where found suitable.
Operations	The main operations of the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review CVs and Candidate Nomination Forms provided by the School for approval or rejection, for ratification by Academic Board ● Where required, set conditions of approval, which may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appointment of a teaching mentor or teaching training pathway to provide appropriate academic guidance and mentoring for one full academic year and evaluate if further mentoring or training is required thereafter ○ Appointment of a supervision mentor or supervision training pathway to provide appropriate academic guidance and mentoring for one full academic year and evaluate if further mentoring or training is required thereafter ○ 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.
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	The Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC) approves candidates recommended through the standard HR processes.
Contact	Quality Assurance Officer
Notes	<p>The AASC is convened promptly in response to presentation by the School of an application for a prospective Faculty member or an External Examiner, and may be convened online or via e-mail.</p> <p>If a prospective member of teaching staff, the nominee will already have been deemed the preferred candidate following a recruitment process conducted in line with DBS HR policies and procedures. The AASC reviews information supplied on CVs 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.</p> <p>If endorsed by the AASC the Academic Appointments Record or External Examiner Register is updated for the Academic Board where staff are formally ratified. An AASC certificate is issued and sent to the Faculty Manager, and the Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production; this must be received by HR before a formal appointment can be made.</p> <p>¹ <i>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.</i></p>

1.3.11 Terms of Reference for the Learning and Teaching Committee

Learning and Teaching Committee	
Membership	<p><i>Ex-Officio members:</i> Chief Academic & Innovation Officer (Chair), Academic Directors (or nominee) and Head of Department (x5), Data Analytics and Reporting Manager</p> <p><i>Elected members:</i> SESU nominee, Learning Unit nominee, Information & Resource Centre nominee, nominees from Academic Faculty (x1 per discipline area), Student Union nominee and IT Tech Support nominee, Transnational partners representative x 2.</p>
Frequency of Meetings	Monthly
Scope	Ownership of the College Strategy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. (SLATE).
Function	<p>Develop the Strategy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. A core aspect of this is to create a Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE). This strategy will explicitly incorporate principles and best practices for high-quality online, blended, and remote learning, ensuring coherence across all delivery modes.</p> <p>Devise a plan to implement SLATE through the setting of strategic objectives.</p> <p>Promote and support the implementation of current pedagogies and innovation in teaching, learning and assessment across all faculties and departments.</p> <p>Foster a culture of Continuous Personal Development (CPD) of faculty in educational, technological and discipline specific areas. Particular emphasis will be placed on equipping faculty with the skills and knowledge required for effective online instruction, instructional design for digital learning, and the use of educational technologies.</p> <p>Review reports and metrics in relation to performance from other committees, offices, support services, and stakeholders as they relate to Learning, Teaching and Assessment.</p> <p>Ensure the alignment of strategy and policies for library, knowledge management and Information Systems to the Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE).</p>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor and review metrics and reports in relation to the quality and effectiveness of all components of the Learning and Teaching environment, including curriculum, technologies, resources, and facilities provided by DBS against current standards and benchmarks for higher education. This includes specific attention to the performance and efficacy of digital learning platforms, online content delivery, and virtual collaboration tools ● Consider internal and external developments, including academic quality and standards as they relate to Learning and Teaching. This encompasses staying abreast of emerging technologies, online pedagogical research, and best practices in global digital education to inform DBS's online learning strategy. ● Review guidelines, training and support to ensure compliance with DBS quality assurance policies and regulations. This involves developing and reviewing guidelines for effective online teaching, ensuring faculty have access to adequate training on digital tools and online instructional design, and providing robust technical support for both staff and learners in the online environment. ● Discuss matters pertaining to the delivery of teaching. ● To set out actions and guidelines where teaching, learning and assessment quality and standards are unsatisfactory. ● Receive reports on progress against the objectives of the SLATE.

Reports Received	Content Summary Reports from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exam Board ● Library ● <i>Al/vivas</i> ● Appeals ● Complaints ● Industry Advisory Boards ● Student feedback ● Class rep meetings
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	No
Contact	Chief Academic & Innovation Officer

1.3.12 Terms for Reference for the IT Steering Committee

IT Steering Committee	
Membership	DBS President, Chief Commercial Officer, Head of IT (DBS), CTO (Kaplan UK&I)
Frequency of Meetings	Quarterly
Function	To support and develop innovative learning and teaching practices, linked to assessment of programme and module outcomes.
Operations	<p>The main operations of the IT Steering Committee are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritise the whole IT portfolio in terms of the relative importance of major initiatives and their sequencing of projects ● Approve the commencement of major IT initiatives (pre-business case) ● Agree in principal (pre-financial approvals) the annual levels of investment in IT ● Arbitrate on significant conflict of resources/budget ● Own the IT Strategy and ensure it is reviewed and updated annually ● Ensure that business strategy and IT strategy and plans are linked and co-dependent through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment with the annual business planning process ○ Advance insight into business initiatives that may require significant IT resources ● Ensure that project risks are mitigated in terms of (a) approach (b) resources/budget (c) quality ● Ensure that sufficient measurement is in place to monitor programme objectives ● Ensure that IT market trends and opportunities are assessed and acted upon ● Own and support the full adoption of a set of IT Guiding Principles, i.e. desirable behaviours that guide IT decision-makers
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	The IT Steering Committee is a decision-making body.
Contact	President of DBS and Head of the Institution

1.3.13 Terms of Reference for the Applied Research and Practice Committee

Applied Research and Practice Committee	
Membership	<p><i>Ex-Officio members:</i> Chief Academic & Innovation Officer; Dissertation Coordinator; Capstone Director; Practice Research Coordinator; Designated Research Methods Lecturer; Ethics Committee nominee; Research Librarian (secretary); Student Council representative;</p> <p><i>Elected members:</i> Two active applied researchers/practitioners from each discipline to be nominated the Academic Directors at the start of each academic year in time for the September meeting.</p> <p>Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee to be appointed by the committee at the end of each academic year (June meeting) for the duration of the academic year to come.</p> <p>The quorum for each meeting will be the Chair (or nominee) plus four additional committee members.</p> <p>Other DBS staff may be invited to attend meetings to speak to specific items on the agenda as required.</p>
Frequency of Meetings	Bi-monthly
Scope	To monitor and assess the effectiveness of policy and strategy which promotes, encourages and supports Applied Research and Practice activities across the College.
Function	<p>Develop applied research and practice policies and strategies at an institutional level for approval by the Academic Board.</p> <p>Oversee the implementation of an applied research and practice strategy for DBS.</p> <p>Position DBS as a significant actor within this field across the Higher Education sector in Ireland.</p> <p>Develop, promote and maintain a robust applied research and practice ethos across the College.</p> <p>Closely monitor applied research and practice activity at DBS.</p>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore practice-led research and research-led practice at DBS. ● Provide active support for those carrying out applied research and practice activities in line with the stated strategy of DBS in this area. ● Engage with DBS Industry Advisory Boards in the pursuit of suitable and sustainable applied research and practice collaboration. ● Promote and support collaborative applied research and practice activity across DBS. ● Liaise where appropriate with external partner bodies for the purposes of funding, resourcing and collaboration. ● Liaise with the Research Librarian to actively promote the publication and dissemination of applied research and practice outputs involving DBS staff, students, faculty and collaborators on a national and international level. ● Recommend procedures for the allocation and management of applied research and practice funding mechanisms at DBS. ● Organise an annual applied research and practice seminar/conference at DBS. ● Identify and disseminate information regarding external funding mechanisms and opportunities available to DBS staff and faculty. ● Ensure ongoing consideration of agreed QA measures and metrics for applied research and practice activity and output.
Reports Received	Ethics Committee
Authority/Decision -Making Power	No

Contact

The Chair, and the Research Librarian (Secretary to the Committee).

1.3.14 Terms of Reference for the College Wide Operations Meeting

Academic Operations	
Membership	Head of Academic Operations, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar (Chair), Curriculum Systems Manager, Academic Directors (x 6), Facilities Manager, Data and Analytics Manager, Student Retention Officer, Faculty Managers (x 3), Financial Controller, HR Generalist, IT Manager, Admissions Manager, Marketing Manager, Learning Technologist, Exams Manager, Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre, other operational staff as required.
Frequency of Meetings	Fortnightly
Function	To ensure that all operational matters across the College are progressed in a clear, integrated way so as the ongoing operational activity and actions in all Departments are completed on time and to a high quality.
Operations	<p>The main considerations of the Academic Operations Meeting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Upcoming events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New intakes ○ Exams ○ Exam paper submissions/collections ○ Events ○ Board meetings: Exam, Academic, Board of Studies ○ Class rep meeting ○ Programme review and validation actions ○ Facilities matters ● Projects ● Staff changes ● Updates from Senior Leadership Team ● New to DBS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programmes ● Policies and procedures ● Other matters ● Main risks/red flags for the month ahead ● AOB, as required
Authority/Decision-Making Power	<p>The group will discuss and agree actions regarding the operational matters that are relevant in the short term, typically over the following month.</p> <p>The Operations Meeting is not a forum for debate of policy or strategy matters though it may identify items that require a policy or strategy discussion in a different forum.</p>
Contact	Head of Academic Operations

1.3.15 Terms of Reference for the Student and Graduate Experience Committee

Student and Graduate Experience Committee	
Membership	<p><i>Ex-Officio members:</i> Head of Student Experience (Chair), Head of Information and Resource Centre, Manager - Student Retention (SESU), Student Union Representative - VP Education, Head of Academic Operations, Data Analytics and Reporting Manager, Career Coach, Disability and Inclusion Officer, DBS Graduate (Former SU President or VP)</p> <p><i>Elected members:</i> None</p>
Frequency of Meetings	4 times per year, meets 1 week prior to Academic Board Meetings.
Scope	To monitor and report on the effectiveness of the student supports (supports for student health, wellbeing and additional needs) and learner supports (supports for academic activities) across all college academic and support activities
Function	<p>Receive reports on student supports and activities both academic and non-academic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submit these reports to the Academic Board. ● Identifying deficits and areas where student supports, learner supports, and other activities can be improved. ● Where process or other improvements have been identified or implemented, bring these to the Academic Board for approval or for noting.
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor learning support activities in DBS - both Academic and Non Academic. ● Act as a platform for disseminating information in relation to library developments to both academic staff and learners. ● Reduce 'feedback fatigue', improve response rates, avoid repetition, provide resources and operational support, and enhance the overall use and applicability of the results of student feedback to advance the mission and strategic plan of DBS. ● Provide support for the gathering and analysis of student feedback and subsequent resolution. ● Expand accessibility to and use of student feedback results across the College ● Report on progress of relevant sections against Academic Plan.
Reports Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student feedback ● Net Promoter Score (NPS) ● Class rep meetings ● Graduate outcomes ● Employer Engagement Board ● Other feedback as relevant
Authority/ Decision-Making Power	No
Contact	Head of Student Experience

1.3.16 Terms of Reference for the Academic Programmes Committee

Academic Programmes Committee	
Membership	<p><i>Ex-Officio members (seven): Chief Operating Officer & Registrar (Chair), Assistant Registrar, 4 X Academic Directors (or nominee), 1 X HoD (or nominee).</i></p> <p><i>Elected/ Rotating members (three): 3 X Faculty members.</i></p> <p><i>A quorum shall number five.</i></p> <p><i>The relevant Programme Level Manager(s) report into this committee at the relevant stages.</i></p> <p><i>A Secretary shall be appointed separately to convene, minute and manage communication.</i></p>
Frequency of Meetings	Monthly (and as required)
Scope	Ensure that the policies, standards, processes and procedures associated with new programme development, programme review and programme amendment have been followed and are in compliance with regulatory requirements of QQI and other PSRBs.
Function	<p>Review and approval of the processes by which proposals for new programmes and reviews of existing programmes as per academic cyclical requirements. Evaluation criteria include College, QQI and Professional requirements, as well as industry needs. This includes ensuring that specific policies, standards, processes, and procedures for the development, review, and amendment of online and blended learning programmes are rigorously followed and are in full compliance with regulatory requirements of QQI and other relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).</p> <p>As part of its review activities, the Committee monitors programme updates through Boards of Studies and Programme Boards and the progression of these as appropriate into cyclical review requirements.</p> <p>To submit for ratification by the Academic Board new programmes and amendments to programmes.</p>
Operations	<p>Monitor the development of new programmes to ensure all phases of the internal and external validation process are adhered to with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initial concept approval ● Proposal development ● Notifications to validation bodies and PSRBs ● Completion of Internal approval cycle ● Completion of external evaluations ● Specific validation considerations for online and blended programmes, including evidence of robust online pedagogical design, appropriate digital learning resources, secure online assessment methodologies, and comprehensive technical support for learners and faculty. <p>Monitor the review cycle for existing programmes, including Professional Diploma programmes, to ensure that all phases of review and revalidation are adhered to with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring programmes coming up for review ● Notification to validation bodies and PSRBs regarding review and/or closure of programmes ● Initiating review ● External evaluations ● Evaluation of the ongoing effectiveness and quality of online and blended programme delivery, drawing upon learner feedback, performance data, and technological advancements. ● Monitor updates to programmes through Programme Boards and Boards of Studies.
Reports Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programme Approval SubCommittee ● Board of Studies ● Programme Boards

Authority/ Decision-Making Power	No
Contact	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar / Assistant Registrar

1.4 DBS Leadership Structure and Roles

1.4.1 Overview of DBS Leadership

The leadership of DBS 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.

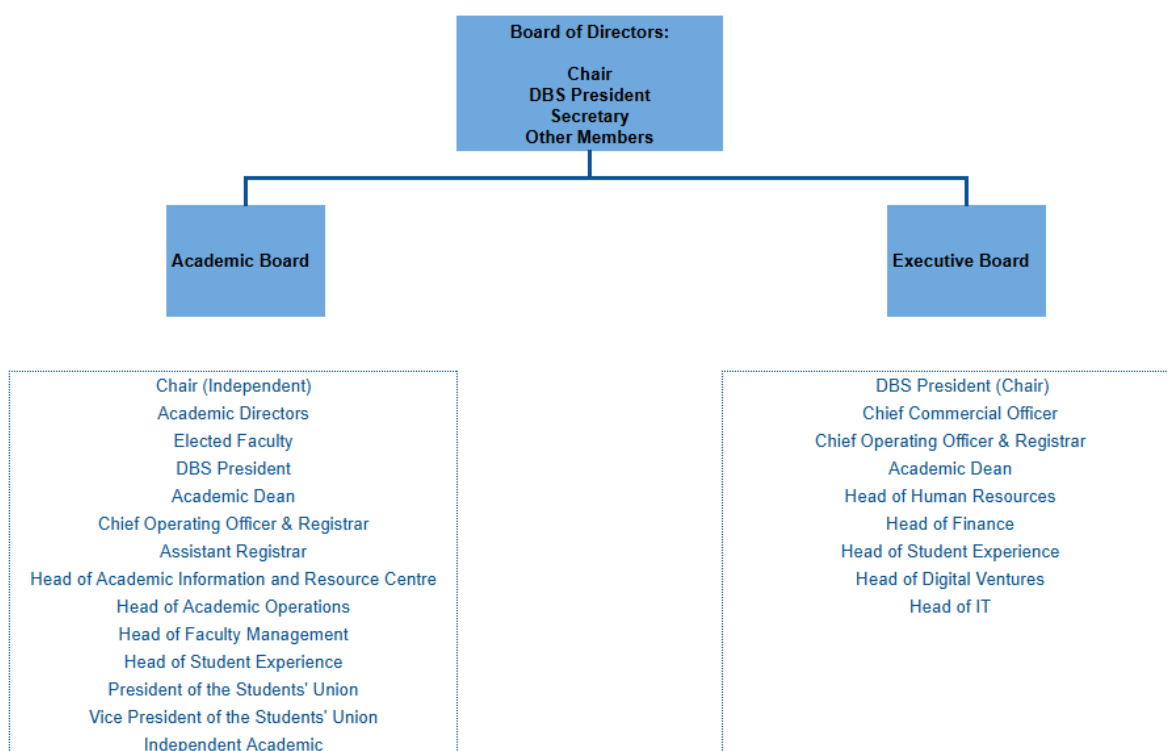


Figure 4: DBS Leadership

The Executive Leadership and Academic Management structure is based on a functional model related to learning and ancillary services offered to learners in DBS.

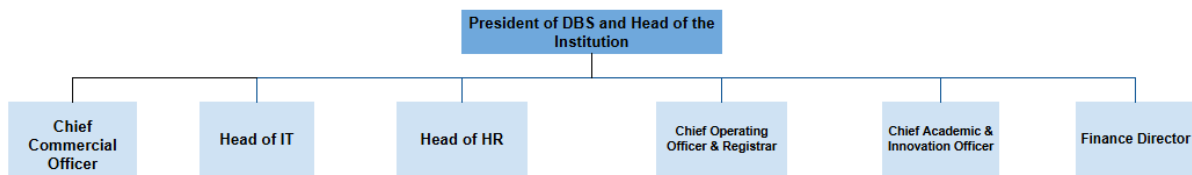


Figure 5: Executive and Academic Leadership Roles

1.4.2 President of DBS and Head of the Institution

The President of DBS and Head of Institution, has responsibility for promoting and protecting the educational character and mission of the organisation; appointing, leading and directing staff; determining academic activities in association with the Board, the maintenance of student discipline and the management of budget and resources. The post is assisted in carrying out these functions by the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, and other senior leaders. The President is a member of the Board of Directors and the Academic Board, and Chair of the Executive Board.

1.4.3 Chief Commercial Officer

The Chief Commercial Officer has responsibility for strategy and management for the recruitment of new students to DBS and for their admission to a programme. This is a key role in the senior leadership of DBS and its purpose is to:

- Develop a student recruitment plan for all programmes.
- Ensure the academic brand and purpose of DBS are embedded across the organisation and communicated internally and externally.
- Manage the student recruitment channels in line with good governance practice.
- Ensure all students meet the entry requirements for the programme to which they wish to be admitted.
- Communicate all relevant programme and institution information to all applicants and admitted students, ensuring that all rights, responsibilities and obligations of both the students, and the institution to the students, are clearly known.

1.4.4 Chief Academic & Innovation Officer

The Chief Academic & Innovation Officer is responsible for the leadership, development and management of all academic programmes, and leads the evolution of teaching delivery through the

adoption of digital technology and the introduction of innovation to the learning environment. The purpose of the role is to:

- Ensure all programmes are delivered in accordance with their approved validation criteria, e.g. the Approved Programme Schedule and Programme Document.
- Set and monitor academic performance targets for each programme, including retention, progression and learner satisfaction.
- 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.
- Monitor and annually review all programmes and their modules through Board of Studies.
- Annually review the viability of programmes, both educationally and commercially.
- Lead the development of new academic propositions and programmes including liaising with Marketing on new programme initiatives.
- Strengthen links between education and research, supporting Faculty to pursue scholarly activities.
- Lead the planning, monitoring and evaluation of developments and progress on learning and teaching enhancement through the preparation of a detailed Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE) and an annually updated action plan.
- Work with sector bodies in both Ireland and Europe to identify and incorporate innovative learning and teaching best practice into the DBS SLATE
- Lead a programme of innovative change in the methods of learning and teaching at DBS, incorporating digital technologies and flexible delivery styles into the culture and practice of teaching to enhance the learning experience for all students and improve academic and employment outcomes.
- Strengthen links between education, research and industry, enabling lecturers to pursue scholarly activities in line with the College strategy of employer-led programmes and delivery, and enabling students to benefit from practiced-based projects.
- Oversee the quality of delivery of teaching.
- Enhance the reputation of DBS and promote its programmes and DBS as an institution.
- Lead the establishment and periodic review of the assessment strategy for the Institute.

1.4.5 Chief Operating Officer & Registrar

The Chief Operating Officer & Registrar is a member of the senior management, the Academic Board, and the Admissions Committee, and reports to the DBS President. The purpose of the 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.
 - Ensure academic quality and standards and the academic integrity of programmes.
- Manage the end to end student journey
- Manage the relationship with accrediting bodies, e.g. QQI.

As Chief Operating Officer & Registrar , this role has responsibility for the Academic Operations, Exams, Registrars and Facilities department which provides administrative support to the School. Specifically, the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar 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 Academic Operations department comprises the Curriculum Systems Team, Timetable Team and the Programme Coordination team. Collectively the department is responsible for the provision of an effective administration support service to facilitate learner recruitment, management and support, programme development, validation, management and delivery, learner registration, assessment, progression and graduation. The department also provides a first point of contact service to learners for programme related matters.

1.5 Faculty Roles

1.5.1 Academic Directors

Academic Directors (ADs) have ownership of a suite of programmes in a specific discipline and are responsible for the overall delivery and development of those programmes. Academic Directors report to the Chief Academic & Innovation Officer.

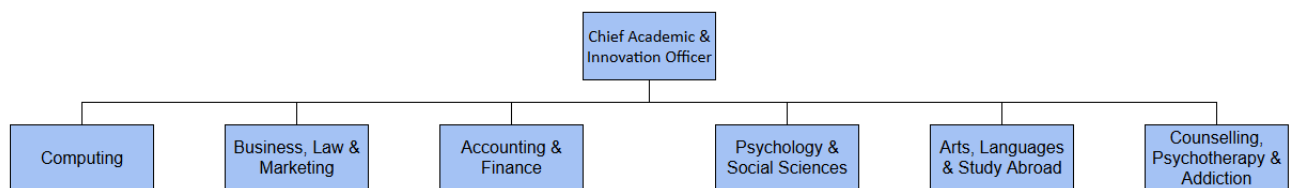


Figure 6: Academic Directors

The key responsibility of the AD is the management and delivery of the programme(s) for which they hold responsibility. This includes:

- Management and development of a defined set of programmes.
- Management and support of learners on those programmes, mentoring learners and providing guidance and support on both academic and non-academic matters related to learner life.
- Coordinating 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 Operations, ensuring all learners 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, moderated and submitted to the Exams Team in accordance with deadlines set out in the Academic Calendar.
- Ensuring that continuous assessment is balanced across the academic year, by coordinating the continuous assessment for all programme Faculty.
- Ensuring exam results for modules on their programme(s) are input to the Student Information System and that all examinations-related documentation is returned to the Exams Office in accordance with deadlines set out in the Academic Calendar.
- Communicating with learners on all programme-related matters, liaising with the Class Representatives and participating in the Class Representative Meetings.
- Chairing Programme Boards.
- Reporting to the appropriate Board of Studies, or equivalent board, on all programme-related matters such as learner numbers, attendance and performance indicators.
- Preparing and managing the programme action plan based on feedback from External Examiners, learner 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 Programme 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 Programme Review process.
- Leading on the validation process for new programmes assigned to them by the Chief Academic & Innovation Officer.
- Working with learners who fail assessment to enable them to take the next available sitting so as to maximise the opportunity the learner has to successfully achieve a positive outcome.

- Monitoring the market for equivalent or competitive programmes on offer at other colleges.
- Working with Faculty Managers, the Chief Academic & Innovation Officer and the DBS President to assess the viability of programmes and to take the necessary decisions as a consequence.
- Working with and supporting the Faculty Managers in staff planning for their programmes.

Each Academic Director has an Assistant Academic Director who may undertake any of the responsibilities set out above, and for each programme within their remit, a Programme Level Manager supports the Academic Director and Assistant Academic Director in programme specific management.

NOTE: where reference is made to an Academic Director in any College document, including the *Quality Assurance Handbook*, this is understood to include the two distinctly titled versions of the Academic Director role, the *Head of Department - Arts, Languages & Study Abroad Programmes* and the *Academic and Clinical Director (Counselling and Psychotherapy)*.

1.5.2 Lecturer/Teaching Faculty

The primary role of a lecturer is to lecture and assess learners.

Before Teaching Commences

- Prepare the Module Guide using the current Module Guide Template and submit to the AD prior to the start of the semester.
- Ensure a copy of the Module Guide is available for the class on the Moodle page from the first teaching week.
- 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 learners.

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 Programme Boards and Board of Studies meetings as required.
- Attend and participate in the appropriate Class Representative Meetings.
- Support learners in a pastoral role, where appropriate.
- When requested by learners, append comments to Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC) Forms.

Assessment

- Liaise with the AD regarding submission dates for assessments, so as to avoid periods of assessment overload for learners.
- 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 the AD 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 in the Academic Calendar.

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 uploaded to Moodle.
- Ensure all scripts and assignments are submitted to the Examinations Office in the required format, to meet the published deadline in the Academic Calendar.
- 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 AD or Faculty Manager in advance and arrange for a fully-briefed representative to act as substitute at the Examination Board.
- Be present to counsel learners on release of results.
- Respond to feedback from the External Examiner – action any minor changes, and make the AD aware of any major requirements.

On Completion of Module Assessment

- Review module content to meet School, subject and professional body requirements.

1.6 Management and Support Roles

In addition to the leadership team, there are a number of key management and supporting roles within the organisation.

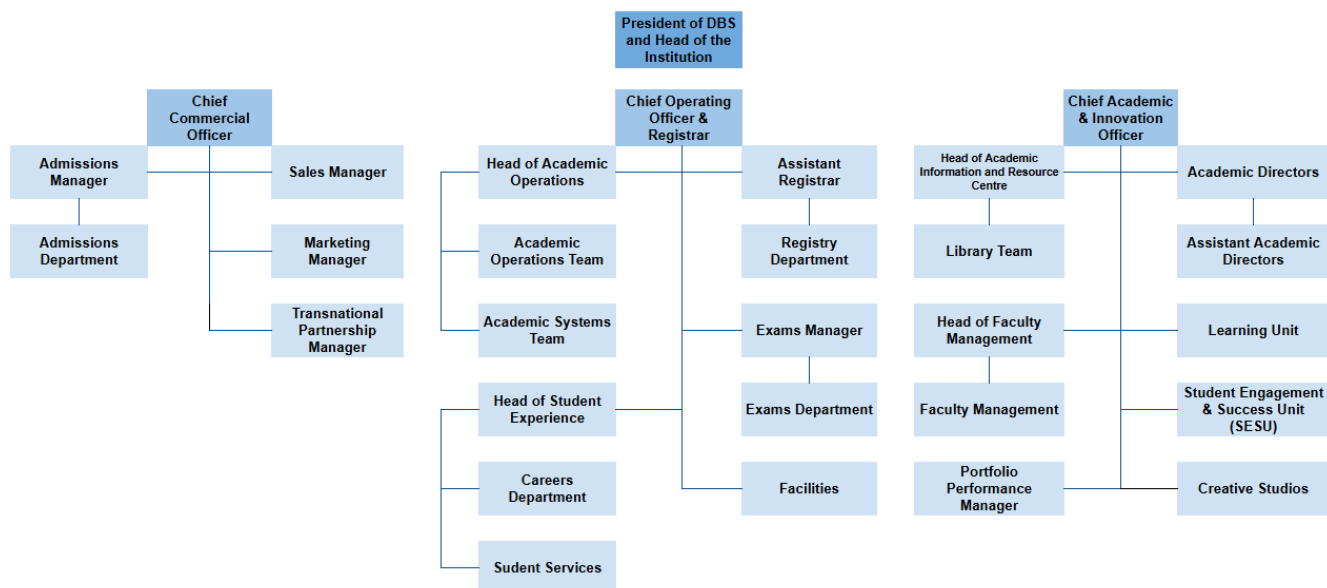


Figure 7: Management and Support Roles

1.6.1 Admissions Manager

The Admissions Manager oversees the admissions process, to ensure that all applications are properly assessed and in accordance with the admissions procedures. The Admissions Department holds all relevant admissions data and is responsible for supplying current and accurate information regarding admissions and policies or legislation relevant to the admissions process.

1.6.2 Student Retention Officer

The purpose of the Student Retention Officer role is to increase student retention and ensure a planned and coordinated approach is taken to retain students on programme each year and to maximise the numbers who progress to the next stage on their programme.

1.6.3 Data Analytics and Reporting Manager

This post uses the wealth of data on student activity stored on the student information system to produce data reports and analyse activity as an input to supports for students, decisions on programmes and monitoring academic performance. The post works closely with Academic Directors and senior leaders to provide relevant, timely data and information on the College overall, programmes or individual students. The post also has responsibility for the collection of data and analysis of research on student satisfaction and feedback for lecturers and others impacting on teaching, learning and the student experience.

1.6.4 Head of Academic Operations

The Head of Academic Operations is responsible for the management of the Student Management System, the timetabling and attendance systems, and the integration of the Moodle VLE with the other

College systems. The Academic Systems Team is responsible for ensuring that learners are correctly registered and progressed and auditing and reporting regularly to ensure accuracy of data in the system. The Head of Academic Operations undertakes on-going review of the approved programmes in the Student Management System, with the Curriculum Systems Manager, the QA Officers and the Registrar's Office, and ensures the curriculum set up for the new programmes is completed for all new programmes, including the creation of programme and module codes. The Head of Academic Operations is also responsible for the timetabling of all classes and booking the associated rooms, undertaking regular assessments of the overall timetabling area to ensure the best use of facilities, that staffing of programmes is complete, timetables are up to date with any changes and maintenance of accessibility and clarity of the timetables. The Head of Academic Operations also contributes to defining the best practise of day to day Moodle use, working across the schools to ensure consistent application and roll-out of Moodle by staff and identifying enhancements and improvements to the system.

1.6.5 Programme Coordinators

Programme Coordinators provide administrative support to learners and ensure all learners are provided with full details of their programme of study. They are first point of contact for learners on a range of issues such as programme queries, deferrals, and personal mitigating circumstances (PMCs) that may affect their learning. Programme Coordinators are responsible for day-to-day management of learner information and data.

1.6.6 Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre

The Library plays a key role in supporting learners to achieve their potential. The Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre has ultimate responsibility for the management and operation of the library service and the support services it provides to the Schools. The Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre plays a lead role in the development and enhancement of the academic programmes and research profile of DBS.

1.6.7 Assistant Registrar

The Assistant Registrar supports the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar and manages the day to day functions of the Registrars Officer dealing in the management of documentation and interactions with Quality & Qualifications Ireland, any other programme validation bodies and professional accreditation bodies applicable to individual or suites of programmes. The Assistant Registrar also manage administration associated with New Programme Validations and Programme Reviews.

1.6.8 Exams Manager

The Exams Manager, reporting to the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar and has responsibility for assessment and examinations, academic regulations, learner discipline and conduct, academic records and liaison with accrediting bodies. The Exams Manager has responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of academic quality assurance and standards in the College in conjunction with the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar.

The Exams Manager has ultimate responsibility for delivery and oversight of:

- Coordination of learner 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 learner 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.

1.6.9 Quality Assurance Officers

The Quality Assurance Officers (QAOs) take a lead in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of QA procedures. The QAOs are responsible for ensuring the administration and accurate and appropriate recording and storage of QA records and associated documentation. The QAOs coordinate and oversee the process learner appeals or complaints and Academic Impropriety, ensuring correct processes are implemented in this regard in line with the DBS Quality Assurance protocols.

1.6.10 Exams Officers

Exams Officers work with the Exams Manager in managing and administering all aspects of exams, including timetabling, organising rooms, booking invigilators, receipt and checking of exam papers and associated documentation, running exam events, management of scripts and provision of all information to External Examiners. Exams Officers audit upload of grades by lecturers and generate marks sheets for exam boards.

1.6.11 Faculty Managers

The Faculty Managers (FM) are key members of the academic management team in DBS who assist the Head of Faculty Management in the management of the academic full-time and part-time staff. Each Faculty Manager has direct line-management responsibility for a large number of staff, ensuring that 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.
- 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, learners, 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 and Admissions Department to ensure full coordination of all activity between both areas.
- Coordinating regular Faculty staff meetings.

While FMs have overall responsibility for academic staff management, operational responsibility for academic management and support of learners at programme level is the responsibility of Academic Directors.

1.6.12 School Administrative Officer

The School Administrative Officer provides administrative support to the Schools. The School Administrative Officer coordinates graduation ceremonies, registration and induction and is Secretary to Boards of Studies, Faculty Meetings, and Academic Board. The School Administrative Officer also acts as administrator of the Formal Complaint Process for learners.

1.7 Staff Communications

In addition to the governance committees described, there are additional communication channels within DBS.

1.7.1 Faculty Meetings

Three times per year the Head of Faculty Management holds a meeting of all Faculty and support staff. The purpose of this meeting is to inform staff of operational developments arising and consult with them on any matters requiring their input or impacting upon them. Typically, these meetings are held immediately before the start of the academic year in September and during each Reading Week.

1.7.2 Staff Intranet

Each department has a section within the staff intranet, which details the roles and responsibilities of the department, and the staff members and contact details.

1.8 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

Building strong and enduring peer relationships with the wider national and international training community is of critical importance to DBS. The adoption of best practice is of equal importance and DBS is a member of the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) (<http://www.heca.ie/>) and the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>).

International best practice is informed by DBS's relationship with Kaplan UK and Kaplan International.

DBS faculty and management regularly attend and/or present at national and international conferences.

In addition, the DBS Library publishes a peer reviewed journal, *The DBS Applied Research and Theory Journal* (<https://journal.dbs.ie/index.php/dbs>), which contain scholarly articles from within the international community and that are managed/ overseen by a team of editors from institutions across Ireland and the UK.

DBS also engages with professional bodies which in many cases accredit or endorse QQI validated programmes. These include:

- ACCA
- Kaplan
- PSI
- APPI
- IAHIP
- Library Association of Ireland
- The Honourable Society of King's Inns
- CIPD
- PMI

DBS is in good standing with these professional bodies. At all times, for QQI accredited programmes, QQI validation policies and criteria take precedence.

Policies and procedures for proposal, validation and monitoring of transnational, collaborative and joint award programmes are laid out in Part C Section 3 of the QAH.

[END OF PART A SECTION 1]