

QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

2026 Edition – Part B

Section 2: Learner Supports

2026

Contents

Contents	2
Learner Support	4
2.1 Information and Support for Learners	5
2.1.1 Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU)	5
2.1.2 Induction and First 100 Days.....	5
2.1.3 Communications	6
2.1.4 DBS Student Website	6
2.1.5 Administrative Supports.....	10
2.1.6 Learners with Additional Needs (Need Extra Provision)	12
2.2 Premises and Facilities	12
2.3 IT Facilities	13
2.4 Online Learning Supports	14
2.4.1 DBS Online Programmes.....	15
2.4.2 Blended Learning	15
2.5 Student Experience	16
2.6 DBS Library	18
2.6.1 Library Opening Hours	18
2.6.2 Library Staffing and Staff Development.....	18
2.6.3 Library Collection	19
2.6.4 Relevancy and Currency of the Library Collection.....	19
2.6.5 Equitable Access to Library Resources	20
2.6.6 Staff Inductions and Staff Research	20
2.6.7 Learner Library Induction	20
2.6.8 Digital Literacy Classes.....	20
2.6.9 Quality Assurance and the Library Service	21
2.6.10 Library Resources (physical).....	22
2.6.11 Library Service Personnel and Professional Affiliations	23
2.7 Digital Wellbeing Policy	24

2.7.1	<i>Policy Overview</i>	24
2.7.2	<i>Policy Statement</i>	25
2.7.3	<i>Additional Documents</i>	30
2.8	Learner Acceptable Usage Policy for Facilities and Services	31
2.8.1	<i>Policy Overview</i>	31
2.8.2	<i>Policy Statement</i>	31
2.8.3	<i>Infringements</i>	33
2.8.2	<i>Additional Documents</i>	33
2.9	Policy on Benchmarking the Learner Experience	34
2.9.1	<i>Policy Overview</i>	34
2.9.2	<i>Scope</i>	35
2.9.3	<i>Policy Principles</i>	35
2.9.4	<i>Benchmarking Methodology</i>	36
2.9.5	<i>Areas for Benchmarking</i>	37
2.9.6	<i>Reporting and Dissemination</i>	38
2.10	Policy on Student Pregnancy and Parental Support	39
2.10.1	<i>Policy Overview</i>	39
2.10.2	<i>Policy Scope</i>	40
2.10.3	<i>Policy Outline</i>	40
2.10.4	<i>Health and Safety</i>	40
2.10.5	<i>Assessment and Examinations</i>	41
2.10.6	<i>Maternity Related Leave-of-Absence</i>	42
2.10.7	<i>Childcare Support and Family-Friendly Facilities</i>	43
2.10.8	<i>Communication during absence</i>	43
2.10.9	<i>Partner Pregnancy or Adoption Support for Students</i>	43
2.10.10	<i>Miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death</i>	44
2.10.11	<i>Related Documents</i>	44
2.10.12	<i>Resources and Support</i>	44

Learner Support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and learner support are provided.

ENQA (2015)¹

This section of the *Quality Assurance Handbook* lays out the elements available to DBS learners to support their studies and ensure a high-quality learning experience.

This includes:

- Information provided to learners
- Facilities and premises for classrooms, labs and communal areas
- Information technology facilities
- Online learning support
- Student Experience: Student Services and Careers
- Library and study facilities

¹ ENQA (2015) *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, Part 1, Standard 1.6, 'Learning Resources and Learning Support', https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf.

2.1 Information and Support for Learners

2.1.1 Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU)

The Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU) at Dublin Business School provides a wide range of support services for students. Specifically, SESU focuses on academic support, offering workshops on academic writing, digital IT skills, and numerical skills. They also provide guidance and advice for students.

SESU helps new students transition into higher education by addressing various aspects of student life, including informal online drop-in sessions called Tea & Talk Sessions. While disability support is handled formally by a separate officer, SESU collaborates to ensure students with disabilities receive appropriate support and information. Furthermore, SESU contributes to general student well-being by fostering a supportive environment and connecting students with well-being services like counselling. Overall, SESU is a crucial hub for student support at DBS, offering academic and personal resources.

2.1.2 Induction and First 100 Days

As part of the Registration process a series of Induction seminars and events is held for all learners. These sessions are designed to give learners an introduction to DBS and to College life. Seminars include an overview of the programme of study given by academic teaching staff, a welcome from the DBS President, and sessions on IT resources, the library and study skills. In addition, the Students' Union hosts welcome events, and parents of new undergraduates are welcomed in order to assist learners in settling in to College life and getting to know the layout of the campus and facilities.

DBS carries out a 'First 100 Days' programme to support learners with adapting to college life. This initial 12-week period is crucial for laying the foundation for academic success, building connections, and establishing routines for wellbeing and learning. This is a cross-College collaboration involving the Student Experience Team, SESU, lecturers, the Library, Students' Union and Student Peer Mentors. Whether a learner is joining DBS on campus or fully online, the First 100 Days are equally vital. For online learners, this period focuses on adapting to independent study, building a virtual social network through online events and platforms, establishing effective routines, and embracing remote opportunities like virtual career fairs and online workshops. All key support teams and services are available both in-person and virtually to ensure online learners thrive and feel fully integrated into the vibrant DBS community.

2.1.3 Communications

Information is provided to learners through the DBS website, the VLE (Moodle) and/or the Student Handbook. This *Quality Assurance Handbook* and related documentation is published in the 'Policies and Procedures' section of the DBS website via the Registry homepage.

DBS will also contact learners via their DBS e-mail address and via their personal mobile phone. It is a learner's responsibility to check e-mail regularly and advise the College if their contact details change.

Learners can request to update their details via the Helpdesk:

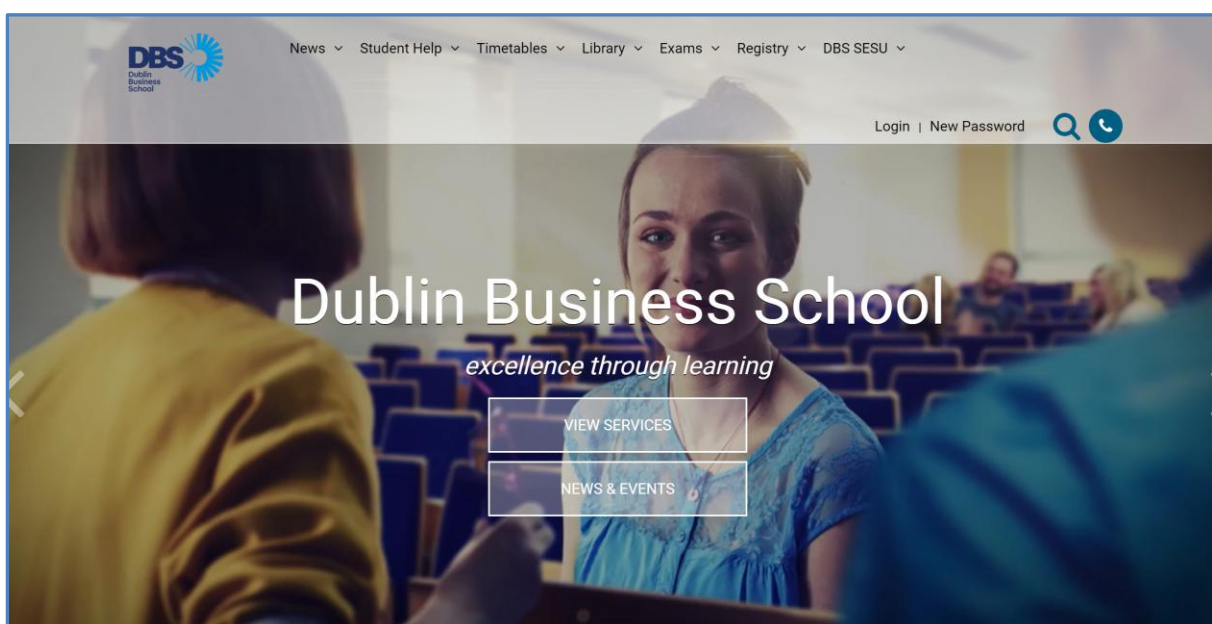
<https://students.dbs.ie/dashboard/sccm>

DBS strives to keep schedule changes to a minimum, but as a busy College with a high volume of classes, some changes are inevitable. It is a learner's responsibility to check the timetable in advance of classes, i.e. every day for full-time students. Where a schedule is changed less than 12 hours before a scheduled class notification will be sent by text message to the mobile number provided at registration.

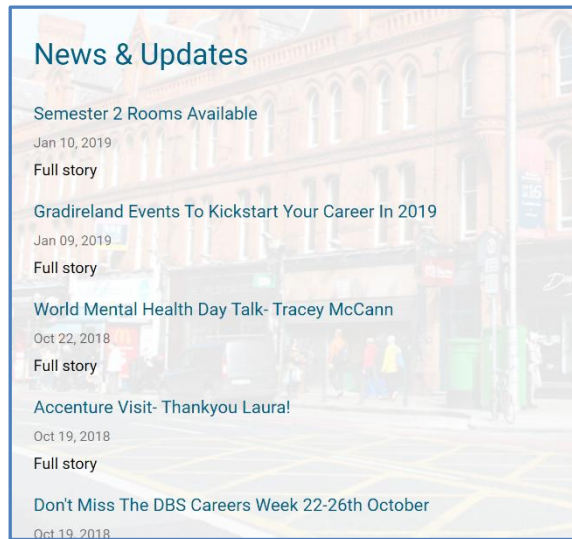
Communication with learners regarding their class schedule is also facilitated through the use of screens in the reception areas of Aungier Street and Castle House.

2.1.4 DBS Student Website

The learner section of the DBS website can be found at <https://students.dbs.ie/>. An overview of content is given below, but the site is updated on an on-going basis.

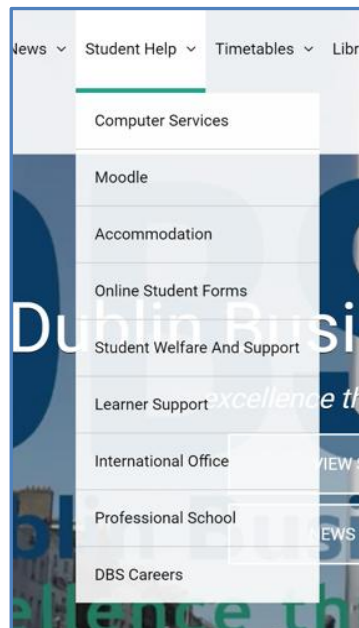


News



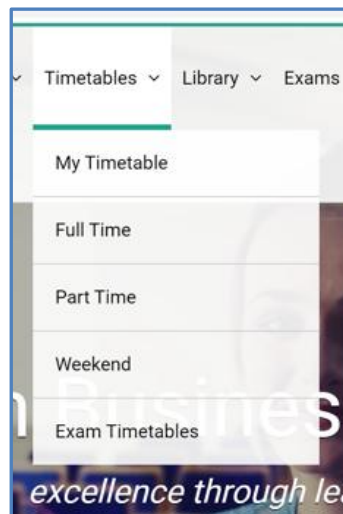
This section holds announcements for on-campus events, such as employer visits, careers fairs, support workshops, and learner welfare events (e.g. International Students Week, Mental Health Awareness Week).

Student Help



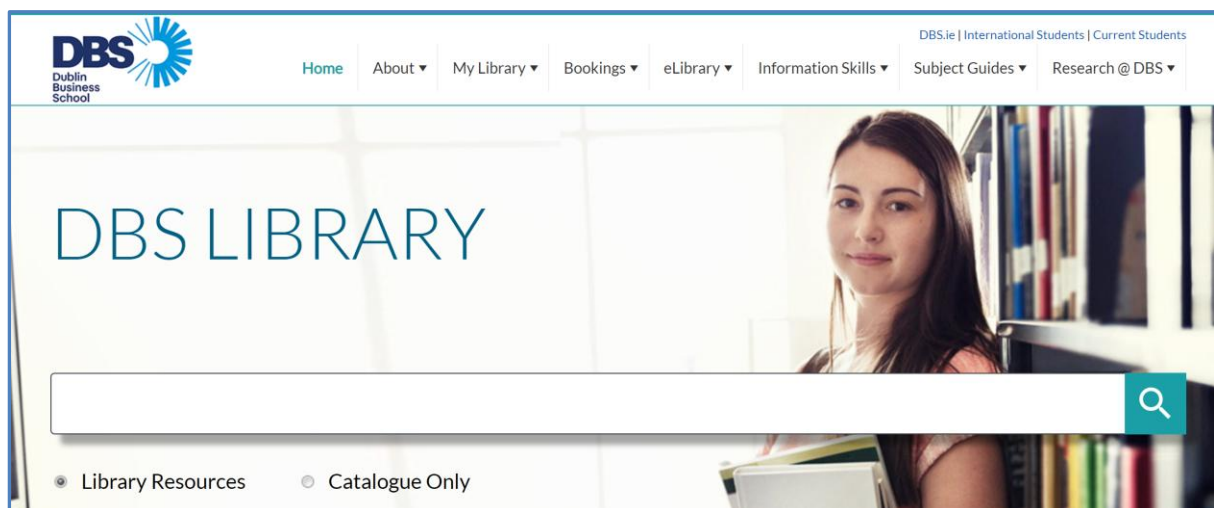
The Student Help section of the website provides a host of information and support relating to learner experience, including Student Services, Student Welfare, Accommodation, International Supports and Careers.

Timetables



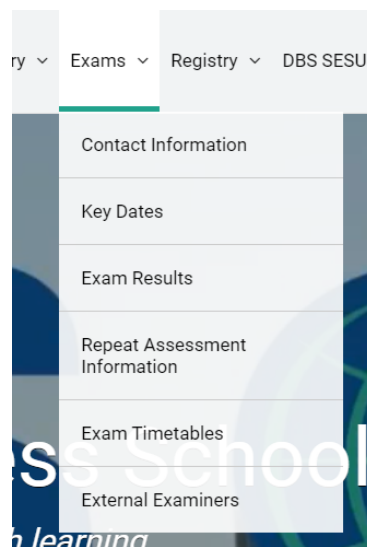
Class and exam timetables for all programmes, full-time and part-time, are published here. A mobile and computer based app allows learners to access their personal timetable from their phone.

Library



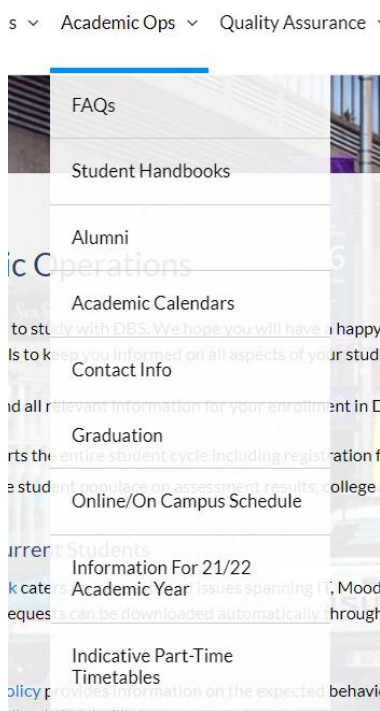
This links to the main DBS Library website and all resources therein. Further details about the library and resources available are given in Section 2.6 below.

Exams



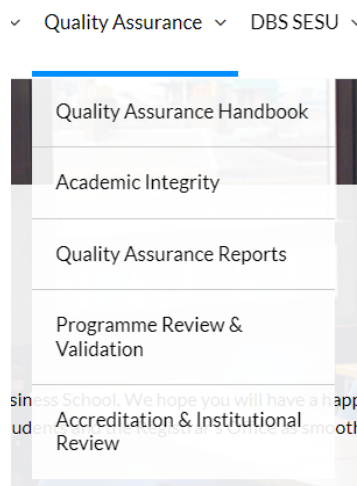
The Exams section of the site outlines the contact information for the Exams Team. DBS handles queries and requests via the Student Helpdesk. There is also a link to access exam results (published in Moodle, where a login is required), and a link to access exam timetables.

Academic Ops



This area of the DBS site includes links to FAQs, Student Handbooks, the academic calendars and graduation, in addition to special information around programme delivery and management.

Quality Assurance



This area of the DBS site includes links to the *Quality Assurance Handbook* (QAH), in addition to sections on Academic Integrity, and Programme and Institutional reporting.

Moodle (VLE)

All course notes and slides are provided to learners through the Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, including a copy of the Student Handbook.

2.1.5 Administrative Supports

Role of Programme Coordinators

The Programme Coordinator is the first line of contact with learners in terms of day-to-day communications and administration of the programme of study. Each Programme Coordinator has responsibility for a designated set of programmes (e.g. postgraduate business, undergraduate business, School of Arts, professional programmes, etc.). The details of Programme Coordinators are set out in the Student Handbook for each programme.

Programme Coordinators are available on a rotating basis on the Service Desk, alongside IT Support and Reception, in Castle House during term time. The Service Desk provides direct access to support services and an opportunity to resolve queries promptly.

Service Desk

The Service Desk, located on the 2nd floor in Castle House, comprises a member of the team from Reception, Academic Operations, and IT Support Staff. Its aim is to be a student-facing point of contact for all students to assist in addressing concerns they may have during their studies. For online learners, this support is readily accessible through the online Helpdesk ticketing system.

Programme Coordinators staff the desk from 9:30 am–1:30 pm (IST) and 2:30 pm– 6:30 pm (IST) Monday to Thursday, and until 5 pm (IST) on Fridays.

Each Programme Coordinator take turns at the desk and therefore may not be able to answer all queries that come to them, but will be able to swiftly direct queries to the most appropriate person to help.

The Service Desk is very useful as a general information point of contact to resolve day-to-day queries quickly.

Where issues cannot be solved at the desk, the programme coordinator will either:

- Log a ticket on behalf of the student which will direct their query to the appropriate person,
or
- Will provide guidance to the student on how best to deal with the query via other avenues.

Note that academic queries should continue to be addressed to the relevant lecturer or Academic Director.

2.1.6 Learners with Additional Needs (Need Extra Provision)

Information regarding the support available for learners with additional needs can be found on the website at: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services/disabilities-support>

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 learning needs that can have an impact on day-to-day activities (NEP learners). 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.

The full policy for support of learners with additional needs can be found in the QAH Part B Section 4.4.

2.2 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, seating, electricity and heating.

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.

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 particularly important to ensure that quality is maintained in the provision of physical teaching and learning facilities.

Feedback from learners is gathered via learner surveys which are carried out toward the end of the each term. The survey results are tabulated and forwarded to the Facilities Manager for review and action as required.

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.

As per the Learner Code of Conduct and Acceptable Usage Policy for Facilities and Services, all learners and staff are required to respect the premises and facilities. Misuse or damage of facilities may be subject to disciplinary action.

2.3 IT Facilities

Information regarding the IT support services available for learners can be found on the website at: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services/computer-services>

DBS policy in relation to learner computing facilities and services is one of continuous improvement. The IT Department aims to consistently meet changing academic needs and to keep up to date with the latest developments in technology and software. IT facilities for learners comprise of 21 teaching suites, located as follows:

- Castle House: 12 suites each with 8–30 workstations (including one Mac lab)
- Aungier Street: 2 suites each with 30 workstations

In addition to the computer lab teaching suites, there are additional workstations available as follows:

- Castle House: 3 mobile labs each with 60 Chromebooks
- Aungier Street: 4 mobile labs each with 60 Chromebooks
- Library: 19 workstations for learner use (which must be booked through the Library)

All DBS learners are assigned a DBS e-mail address and have an Office 365 account through which they can use Word, Excel and other Microsoft packages. All lecture rooms are equipped with a projector/smart interactive display, PC, multimedia and audio facilities.

The IT Department provides IT support to both learners and lecturers. Should an IT issue arise, whether in a lecture room or lab, lecturers can telephone the IT Department for immediate assistance.

The IT Department Support is open for learners to call in 7 days a week, at the Castle House Campus. Remote learners can contact the IT Department for support via the Helpdesk link below.

Monday to Thursday	8 am–8.30 pm (IST)
Friday	8 am– 6pm (IST)
Saturday and Sunday	9 am–4pm (IST)

The IT Department webpage provides information to learners on general support questions and answers, for example, how to connect to the wireless network and how to access DBS e-mail. During induction, learners are directed to this webpage and are also given the IT Department helpdesk number and details of how to log a request for assistance using the [online ticketing system](#).

The Head of IT 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, 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 Programme Boards or Board of Studies meetings are reported back to IT management for attention. A representative from the IT Department may be invited to attend Programme Boards/Board of Studies, if there is a particular IT issue or requirement.

2.4 Online Learning Supports

For all programmes, QQI-accredited and non-accredited programmes, DBS provides online learning support to learners via the virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle. The Moodle platform is designed to help educators create quality online 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.

For each module delivered, the lecturer is required to place the following materials on Moodle for the benefit of learners:

- Lecturer Details
- Module guide
- Lecture notes
- Schedule of continuous assessment
- Assessment specification that forms part of the continuous assessment
- Reference to the DBS Academic Impropriety 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

Moodle provides learners with a 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 learners. Learners who have missed lectures for whatever reason can use the facility to catch up on missed material. Lectures delivered online are recorded and made available on the Moodle page for the module for revision and playback. The online facility is seen as a valuable resource along with 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 resources (formative quizzes, blogs, etc.) in Moodle.

2.4.1 DBS Online Programmes

DBS Online Programmes are programmes which are delivered exclusively online. Classes are delivered live online using virtual classroom software. Learners can log in from their homes or work, wherever they are, and participate in a live class with the lecturer and other students. This is supplemented by resources in Moodle as above, and access to the online library resources.

2.4.2 Blended Learning

DBS is increasingly availing of technologies to support and deliver innovative teaching and learning. A Blended Learning Policy has been developed in line with the *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes* (QQI, 2018)². Refer to the QAH Part C Section 1 on Learning and Teaching for full the policy.

² <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Statutory%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20Blended%20Learning%20Programmes.pdf>

2.5 Student Experience

Information regarding the Student Experience services available for learners can be found on the website at: <https://students.dbs.ie/dbs-student-services>

The Student Experience Department encompasses Careers and Student Services, which together work to enhance the experience of learners at all stages in their journey through DBS by providing a range of support services in a learner-friendly, accessible way. Our objective is to ensure DBS learners have the best possible College-life experience and to promote a DBS community and culture that is focused on learner wellbeing and success. In supporting international learners, DBS is informed by the *QQI Code of Practice and Guidelines for the Provision of Education to International Learners* (QQI, 2015)³.

The Team:

- Provides advice and support to learners on sourcing accommodation.
- Assists learners on their health and wellbeing.
- Provides free or low-cost access to health and mental health professional services.
- Organises a full and varied diary of learner events throughout the year.
- Oversees and assist learners in the running of clubs and societies.
- Manages the Student Mentor Programme.
- Manages the Student Digital Badge Programme.
- Oversees and assist the Student Council.
- Forms relationships for learners with cultural and other support organisations.
- Provides support and assistance to international learners throughout their stay in Ireland, including information regarding acquiring and renewing student visas.
- Leads the development and maintenance of a DBS community amongst both learners and alumni.
- Works with employers as a means of sourcing placements and jobs for learners.
- Sources and provide up-to-date information about fields of work, job vacancies, postgraduate courses and research opportunities.
- Provides relevant advice, guidance and opportunities for learners and graduates to understand their competencies, aspirations and options that will enable them to develop the necessary skills to successfully seek employment.
- Organises weekly Careers and Personal Development Workshops and Events.

³ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>

- We provide services impartially, confidentially, efficiently and free from discrimination, adhering to national codes of good practice and professional standards.

Locations - Student Experience Hub:

Student Services Hub: Castle House (4th Floor)

- Student Life
- Student Wellbeing
- Disability and Inclusion
- International Student Affairs

Careers Hub: Aungier Street (Ground Floor)

- Careers Workshops
- CV Clinics
- One-to-one careers advice
- Placements

All services and supports are available online.

Opening hours: (both offices)

8:45 am–17:15 pm (IST)

Key Contacts:

The Careers Team, Student Services, and International Student Services can all be contacted through the [Ticketing System](#).

2.6 DBS Library

The library website is available at: <http://library.dbs.ie>

Library-specific policies (including Library Fines) are available on their website: <https://libguides.dbs.ie/libraryessentials>

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 main objective guiding the Library's efforts has been to deliver high-quality learning experiences that engage students and lead to the best academic outcomes.

2.6.1 Library Opening Hours

The library has established two opening terms. The winter/spring period is in operation from September to May while summer period operates from May to September.

Winter/Spring period opening hours:

The library is open 6 days a week from September to May.

Monday to Thursday: 9 am – 10 pm

Friday: 9 am – 9 pm

Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Summer period opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 9 am – 5 pm

Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Library opening hours are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of users.

2.6.2 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). The Library subscribes to the Library and Information Science Source database. The Library team support the Research Coordinator in hosting the DBS Annual [Practical Applied Research Conference \(PARC\)](#), to which library professionals, researchers, academics and learners from Ireland and beyond are invited.

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 of private

higher education college libraries. The Library also holds institutional membership of the LAI. The Library team is engaged in organizing committees for the annual DBS PARC and HECA research conferences. Alongside organizing these events, DBS staff have delivered presentations at these events.

2.6.3 Library Collection

The Library has extensive print and audio-visual resources, with over 40,000 items listed on the Library catalogue, (<https://books.dbs.ie/>), across the subjects of Psychology, Computing, Business, Accounting, Psychotherapy and Law.

The Library has more than 40,000 print books. In order to ensure equitable access to print books, they are placed across a number of lending categories: reference only, three-day, one-week and two-week lending. Ebooks facilitate multiple concurrent users. Books can be searched via the library catalog (<http://books.dbs.ie>). 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 employs an interactive discovery tool to allow students to seamlessly search across our resources. The Library website also provides information on Library services as well as access to a range of Library guides. The Library's electronic holdings can be accessed off-campus 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world via Shibboleth authentication. The Library has an Institutional Repository, eSource (<http://esource.dbs.ie/>), which provides full-text access to learner dissertations with a 1st class honours (subject to the learner's authorisation), as well as to the scholarly publications of academic staff.

The Library has been equipped with RFID technology and has 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.

2.6.4 Relevancy and Currency of the Library Collection

The Library's Collection Development Policy is published on the Library website at <https://libguides.dbs.ie/collectionsguide/policy>. An annual evaluation of the collection is undertaken to ensure that it remains relevant to users' needs. Reading lists are updated on an annual basis by the Acquisitions Librarian. Prior to the commencement of academic programmes, faculty supply reading lists to the Acquisitions Librarian, who then ensures that the latest editions of titles are sourced.

The Library manages 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 of library books and links to eBooks, eJournals and other eResources.

2.6.5 Equitable Access to Library Resources

The Library acquires one copy of every book on each submitted reading list. Acquisitions of online resources will be prioritised to better support changing teaching and learning needs in a hybrid environment. EBook versions of textbooks are purchased where available to support flexible learning and increase accessibility. Learners with additional needs are entitled to an extended loan period and borrowing allowance.

2.6.6 Staff Inductions and Staff Research

The Research 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. They also delivers a programme of classes to faculty on getting published, measuring citation impact, etc.

2.6.7 Learner Library Induction

The Library delivers a Library induction to all new and returning learners. Tours of the Library can also be organised at the request of faculty or groups of learners.

2.6.8 Digital Literacy Classes

The Library delivers a programme of digital literacy classes on a standalone and integrated (at the invitation of the lecturer) basis. Classes are delivered by the dedicated Digital Literacy Librarian include:

- Assignment planning
- Referencing assignments (including APA, Harvard and OSCOLA systems), avoiding academic impropriety/ plagiarism/ using referencing software
- Effective use of electronic resources
- Critical Thinking for Academic Research
- Preparing a Literature review
- Understanding GenAI
- Revision and examination techniques

For more details on the Library's programme of Digital Literacy classes, please refer to the [library website](#). The Digital Literacy Librarian liaises with relevant stakeholders (students, faculty, SESU etc)

to ensure the classes continue to meet the needs of students. Students that cannot attend these classes are provided with online support at a more convenient time.

2.6.9 Quality Assurance and the Library Service

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 learners 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.

The evaluation of library facilities is performed on an ongoing basis, and considered in internal and external review processes. The library reviews our policies and procedures for our users on an annual basis.

Faculty involved in proposing new modules liaise with the library to ensure that new modules can be supported in terms of learning resources

The library conducts an annual online survey. The survey is also posted to the Library Website. Feedback is addressed firstly at Library management level and actions documented. Issues requiring higher-level decisions are referred to the Student and Graduate Committee. 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.

The library team produces an annual report which reflects on the previous year outlining the developments that have taken place, detailing collection data and analyzing data pertaining to use of library services such as usage of library databases, library class attendance, visitors to the library etc. The annual report is completed by the library team as submitted to the teaching and library committee.

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.

2.6.10 Library Resources (physical)


Number of staff	Nine full-time staff (most are professionally qualified librarians with a master's qualification in librarianship).
<i>Study Rooms</i>	There are three collaborative study rooms at Aungier Street Library. Learners can book rooms online via the Library Website.
<i>Collaborative Space</i>	This section includes craft material (jigsaws, coloring books etc) and couches for collaboration engagement. The library has titled this section the unloading zone.
<i>Computers</i>	Multiple learner PCs. PCs are equipped with Microsoft Office software; research software: SPSS and QSRNvivo7, virtual laboratory software, the Virtual Rat and accounting software: Sage and TASbook2. The Library is Wi-Fi enabled.
<i>Books</i>	40,000 print titles, +30,000 eBooks via Ebook Central, EBSCO eBooks, VLeBooks, Taylor & Francis, Cambridge Core eBooks, IEEE, SAGE Research Methods, Bloomsbury Professional.
<i>Newspapers (Print and Electronic)</i>	Online access to over 2,600 newspapers from around the world via the ProQuest database.
<i>Electronic Resources</i>	ABI Inform Complete, Academic Search Complete, Bloomsbury Professional, Business Source Complete, Cambridge Core eBooks, Computer and Applied Sciences Complete, EBSCO eBooks, Emerald Insight, Greenfile, Film and Television Literature Index with Full Text, Ibisworld , IEEE, JSTOR, Library and Information Science Source, Pep Archive, PsycArticles, Proquest Central, ProQuest Ebook Central, Regional Business News; Sage Business Cases, Sage Research Methods, SOCIndex, Taylor Francis eBooks, VLeBooks, vLex Justis, WARC, Westlaw IE, Westlaw UK
<i>Inter-Library Loans Services</i>	British Library
<i>Photocopiers</i>	3 photocopiers. Photocopiers are also networked for printing. They also offer high quality colour photocopying and printing
<i>Printing software</i>	Papercut (including wireless printing)
<i>Library Catalogue</i>	https://books.dbs.ie
<i>Library Website</i>	http://library.dbs.ie/
<i>Institutional Repository</i>	http://esource.dbs.ie/
Reading List Software	https://lorls.dbs.ie

2.6.11 Library Service Personnel and Professional Affiliations

The Library service has nine full-time and three part-time dedicated members of staff. Eight full-time staff have a professional library qualifications. Institutional and Personal Memberships include:

- Library Association of Ireland (LAI)
- Acquisitions Group of Ireland (AGI)

2.7 Digital Wellbeing Policy

	
Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) Part B Section 2	
Document Name	Digital Wellbeing Policy
Policy Document Number	036
Version Reference	v1.1
Document Owner	Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	Faculty, Learners
Applicability	All programmes: NFQ L6 to L9, Professional Programmes, Study Abroad, DBS Online
Approved By	Academic Board
Approval Date	05/12/2019, 07/12/2021
Date Policy Becomes Active	09/12/2019
Revision Cycle	A minimum of 18 months from initial approval date
Revision History/Amalgamation History	15/05/25 - reviewed
Additional Information	N/A
References/ Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENQA (2015) <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</i>, Standard 1.3. 'Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment'.⁴ QQI (2016) <i>Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines</i>, Section 2.5.1, 'Teaching and Learning' and Section 2.5.2 'A Provider Ethos that Promotes Learning'.⁵ QQI (2023) <i>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully online Programmes 2023</i>

2.7.1 Policy Overview

This document details DBS policy relating to online behaviours, including conduct in online classrooms and all communications, including e-mail activity, and use of social media, as well as academic propriety in the online context. As technology is constantly evolving, this policy is not deemed to be exhaustive in terms of specific technologies or apps to which students and staff might be exposed. However, central to the policy is the tenet that as per the DBS Code of Conduct, all online activity related to study of academic and professional programmes with DBS should be conducted in a professional, appropriate and courteous manner. All members of the College, both students and staff,

⁴ https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

⁵ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

should be treated with respect and dignity at all times. Further, high standards of academic and personal integrity must be maintained.

2.7.2 Policy Statement

DBS is increasingly introducing blended and online learning into its programme delivery offering to allow increased flexibility for learners. This is aligned with DBS's Strategic Plan and the objective to deliver teaching that is *'agile, using multiple modes that are best suited to the way our students learn and...will leverage digital technology'*.

Classroom

DBS considers all online delivery platforms to equate with the on-campus classroom in terms of learner engagement and behaviours. The Learner Charter and Learner Code of Conduct apply in all cases.

The purpose 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, including the online learning environment.

Communications and Social Media

DBS encourages learners to engage in groups and societies and establish networks, including through the use of social media and technology, to promote the development and enhancement of the learner community. Participation, whilst often social in nature, must be appropriate, inoffensive and respectful at all times. All parties are required to be mindful of their language and the material they choose to share.

Students may set up social media groups for study and socialising but the College is in no way aligned with or responsible for these. Notwithstanding this, if inappropriate behaviour such as cyberbullying involving members of DBS is brought to the College's attention, the College will take action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

Communications by learners relating to their programme of study, assessment or any official College supports must be directed through formal channels, i.e. via the Helpdesk or via DBS e-mail to the appropriate department. Messages via social media about programmes of study are not considered formal communications channels and will not be actioned.

Before sending an e-mail or posting on social media, users should consider if it is the best medium of communication. It is also important to consider the tone and approach. Be aware that, without visual cues, there is more scope for misunderstanding than in a face-to-face setting. Be as clear and concise as possible.

- Students must either log a ticket via the Helpdesk or use their DBS e-mail for all correspondence with staff, including lecturers.
- Lecturers and other staff members are not expected to respond to e-mails from students outside of working hours.
 - Consideration should be made that working hours will vary between teams and individuals.
 - When sending communications, learners should be respectful of an individual's right to disconnect outside of working hours.
- Complaints or other issues should be raised via the proper channels, as per the Appeals, Complaints or Disciplinary policies.
- Defamatory posts via social media will not be tolerated and will be removed and disciplinary action will be taken.
 - Learners are entitled to make complaints about a College service or individual where they feel it necessary to do so. Complaints must be dealt with through the proper channels, with all parties given the opportunity to state their position.
- Students may not contact DBS staff via social media apps such as Facebook messenger or WhatsApp.
- Formal **professional** communications may be sent via LinkedIn, but correspondence relating to programmes of study must be conducted via the Helpdesk or College e-mail.
 - Lecturers and other staff are **not** obliged to accept connection requests in LinkedIn or to respond to messages via LinkedIn.
- Staff and lecturers are not permitted to share their personal contact details with learners. Where a member of staff has a DBS mobile phone they may choose to share this number if it is required for the programme of study (for example, in the case where external site visits are

part of the programme of study it may be necessary for students and lecturers to be able to make contact).

- In availing of online platforms provided by the College, learners must comply with the Learner *Acceptable Usage Policy* for Facilities and Services. Online platforms provided by the College must not be used to engage in any of the following:
 - Any illegal activity, including but not limited to:
 - Terrorism
 - Hacking
 - Money laundering
 - Fraud of any type
 - Stalking or cyberbullying
 - Accessing or broadcasting content of a sexual nature
 - Commercial activity

These activities are not exhaustive and DBS reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action where inappropriate usage is deemed to have occurred.

Online Behaviours

Classroom Etiquette

- Learners should arrive promptly to online classes.
- Learners should ensure they attend online classes from an appropriate environment.
 - Learners should endeavour to attend from a quiet, dedicated study space, free from distractions.
 - Learners should be aware that confidentiality issues may arise if other parties are present during classes.
 - Learners must adhere to any confidentiality requirements pertaining to specific classes of a sensitive nature.
 - Lecturers may ask a learner to leave a class or re-locate if they have concerns about disruption from background activity or confidentiality issues.
 - In certain classes third parties must **never** be present and learners will be disconnected from the online platform if a third party is observed or heard.

- Cameras should be switched on where possible to increase and demonstrate engagement with peers (See **DBS QAH Part B Section 3.7 Cameras On Policy**).
 - Lecturers may request cameras to be switched on.
 - Learners should ensure their attire and surroundings are appropriate for professional online interaction.
- Microphones should be muted when not speaking.
- The raise hand or other indicator should be used if a learner wishes to speak during a class.
- It is not permitted for learners to record sound or video in a teaching situation (such as, but not limited to, lectures, seminars, tutorials or labs) to support their personal learning, without the prior written consent of the lecturer and the other participating learner.
- It is never permitted to distribute content from a teaching situation, including but not limited to personal and professional use via social media.

E-mail Etiquette

- E-mails should always be sent from College e-mail accounts to College e-mail accounts.
- E-mails should be appropriate and professional.
- E-mails should commence with an appropriate salutation and be signed off by name. Learners should include their programme and student number.
 - It is not necessary to be overly formal, but mails must always be courteous. An address such as 'Hi X' is usually acceptable between learners and staff. If in doubt, or if sending a more formal request, a more formal address such as 'Dear X' should be used – no one will be offended by this so it can be best to err on the side of caution.
 - Acceptable sign-offs include 'Best regards', 'Best wishes', 'Regards', 'Many thanks'.
- E-mails should be properly written, punctuated and spell-checked. It is discourteous to the recipient to send poorly written e-mails and creates a bad impression.

Social Media Etiquette

- Online study groups, even amongst friends, should be treated as a professional and constructive environment.
- Posts and discussions should be properly written, punctuated and spell-checked.

- The tone of a communication should be considered, and whether it could be misinterpreted or seen as an attack on someone.
- Posts should be relevant to the discussion at hand.
- Social media groups used to study should not be used to air personal political or religious views or to discuss sensitive topics that are not germane to the area of study.
 - It is recognised that students in specific disciplines may have more need to discuss sensitive topics. Such discussions should nonetheless not become overly personal.
- Consideration should be given to whether a topic may be perceived as sensitive, and if so, whether it is appropriate to post at all, and possible motivations for doing so.
- If a post raises concerns, before reacting, consideration should be given to whether there is a possibility of a misunderstanding.
 - It can be better to send an individual message politely asking for clarification, rather than risk inflaming the situation with a group post.
 - Most platforms are moderated or have mechanisms for reporting controversial posts – it can be better to have matters dealt with formally than to try to intervene in something directly.
- Other people’s content, such as text, photos or videos should never be posted or re-posted without their permission.
 - Learners are reminded that, as per the Code of Conduct, it is not permitted to record sound or video in a teaching situation (such as, but not limited to, lectures, seminars, tutorials or labs) without the prior written consent of the lecturer and the other participating learners.

Users should remember:

- *Digital content is effectively indelible – once content has been posted it is impossible to remove its footprint completely.*
- *You are unlikely to regret **not** posting something at a later date. If in doubt, do not post.*
- *You are free to block individuals or to leave a group if you become uncomfortable.*
- *Even if you only post in your personal accounts, with secure settings, posts can be screenshots and redistributed.*
- *It is possible to disagree with something and still remain polite.*

Academic Propriety

The full DBS policy on Academic Impropriety (i.e. including all forms of cheating and plagiarism) is given in the Academic Impropriety Policy in the QAH Part B Section 3.3. However, learners and staff alike should be aware of proper academic conduct in the digital and online contexts.


- Websites or other electronic resources consulted and cited as part of any academic piece of work should be verified as legitimate sources of information, and fully referenced.
- The use of purchased material from online ‘essay mills’, whether purchased by the learner or otherwise, is an intentional attempt by the learner to submit work that is not their own and will be dealt with severely.
 - It should be noted that Ireland has introduced a law to make the advertising and provision of cheating services **illegal**⁶.
 - There have been reported cases of students who have used essay mills or ghost-writing services subsequently being blackmailed by such sites.

2.7.3 Additional Documents

- DBS Online Code of Conduct – see Part B, Section 3.2.7
- DBS Complaints Policy – see Part B, Section 3.6
- DBS Cameras On Policy – see Part B, Section 3.7

⁶ Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019:
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/32/section/15/enacted/en/html#sec15>

2.8 Learner Acceptable Usage Policy for Facilities and Services

Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) Part B		
Document Name	Learner Acceptable Usage Policy	
Policy Document Number	44	
Version Reference	v1.0	
Document Owner	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar	
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	Exams Manager, Head of Faculty Management, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Head of IT, Facilities Manager	
Applicability	All programmes: NFQ L6–9, Professional Programmes, Study Abroad, DBS Online	
Approved By	Academic Board	
Approval Date	07/12/2021	
Date Policy Becomes Active	07/12/2021	
Revision Cycle	A minimum of every five years	
Revision History/ Amalgamation History	15/05/25 - reviewed	
Additional Information	N/A	
References/ Supporting Documentation	QQI (2023) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully online Programmes 2023	

2.8.1 Policy Overview

The College invests its resources to ensure all services are maintained and are fit-for-purpose. It is expected that all members of the College avail of the range of resources available, and are free to utilise them to support academic and associated professional development activities in keeping with the core business of the College and aligned with the core vision, mission, purpose and values of the institution. This Acceptable Usage Policy lays out the criteria around what constitutes appropriate usage of these College facilities and platforms.

2.8.2 Policy Statement

DBS provides services to support teaching and learning in the form of physical spaces, including access to study space, computer labs, the library and student common room, and IT services and online platforms. As per the *Learner Charter and Code of Conduct*, the College seeks to create an environment, both on-campus and in the online space, which is conducive to learning and supports learners to achieve their potential.

In engaging with the range of series and supports available, it is accepted that at times activities may go beyond pure learning, teaching, assessment and research activities associated with a specific programme of study, and learners are encouraged to engage with clubs and societies which enhance their overall personal and professional development.

In availing of College facilities and services however, including IT platforms, all learners must ensure that any activity:

- Does not pose a risk of damage to College facilities or resources.
- Does not pose a risk of reputational damage or litigation to the College or members of the College.
- Does not incur financial costs for the College.

Activities which are forbidden include, but are not limited to:

- Use of College resources for any illegal activity whatsoever, including but not limited to:
 - Terrorism
 - Hacking
 - Money laundering
 - Fraud of any type
- Use of College physical premises to host events unrelated to College work or activities.
- Use of College online platforms to host online events unrelated to College work or activities.
- Use of College resources (physical or online) for commercial or promotional activities relating to other organisations, entities or companies.
- Use of College resources (physical or online) for religious or political campaigning.
- Excessive use of College resources (physical or online) for pursuit of personal projects.
 - 'Excessive' in this case is defined as anything that incurs a significant financial cost over time OR inhibits other members of the College by hindering their access to services.
- Use of College online platforms to access or broadcast content of a sexual nature.
- Use of College online platforms to engage in stalking or any form of cyberbullying or harassment.

These activities are not exhaustive and DBS reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action where inappropriate usage is deemed to have occurred.


2.8.3 Infringements

Where it is suspected or identified that a learner has engaged in activities which infringe the Acceptable Usage Policy, the matter will be investigated in keeping with Disciplinary Policy (QAH Part B Section 3.4).

2.8.2 Additional Documents

- QAH, Part B Section 2 Learner Supports
- QAH, Part B Section 2.7 Digital Well Being Policy
- QAH, Part B Section 3.2.2 Learner Code of Conduct

2.9 Policy on Benchmarking the Learner Experience

<p><i>Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) Part X</i></p>	
Document Name	Policy on Benchmarking the Learner Experience
Policy Document Number	050
Version Reference	v1.0
Document Owner	Data Analytics & Reporting Manager
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	President, Senior Leadership Team, Quality Assurance Officer, Academic Directors, Programme Level Managers, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Student Council, Faculty, Data Analytics & Reporting Manager
Applicability	All academic and administrative departments within DBS that contribute to the overall learner experience
Approved By	Academic Board
Approval Date	tbc
Date Policy Becomes Active	tbc
Revision Cycle	A minimum of every five years from approval date
Revision History/Amalgamation History	N/A
Additional Information	n/a
References/ Supporting Documentation	QQI (2023) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully online Programmes 2023.

2.9.1 Policy Overview

Dublin Business School (DBS) is committed to providing an exceptional learner experience that supports academic success, personal development, and professional readiness. To uphold and continuously enhance this commitment, DBS will engage in systematic benchmarking activities with other leading higher education providers, both nationally and internationally, focusing specifically on aspects of the learner experience. This policy outlines the framework for such activities, ensuring a data-driven, collaborative, and improvement-oriented approach.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- **Enhance Learner Experience:** Identify and adopt best practices from peer institutions to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of the learner experience at DBS.
- **Ensure Quality Assurance:** Provide a robust mechanism for internal self-evaluation and external comparison, ensuring DBS meets and exceeds quality standards in learner support and provision.

- **Inform Strategic Planning:** Generate evidence-based insights to inform strategic decisions, resource allocation, and the development of new initiatives aimed at learner success and satisfaction.
- **Foster a Culture of Continuous Improvement:** Embed a proactive approach to identifying strengths, addressing weaknesses, and innovating in all areas impacting the learner journey.
- **Promote Collaboration:** Facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative learning with other higher education institutions.
- **Demonstrate Accountability:** Transparently report on DBS's performance in learner experience against established benchmarks.

2.9.2 Scope

This policy applies to all academic and administrative departments within DBS that contribute to the overall learner experience, from pre-enrolment to graduation and alumni engagement. It covers all programmes and modes of study offered by DBS.

2.9.3 Policy Principles

Benchmarking activities at DBS will be guided by the following principles:

- **Learner-Centred:** All benchmarking efforts will ultimately aim to benefit the learners and improve their overall experience at DBS.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Benchmarking initiatives will align with DBS' strategic goals, mission, and values.
- **Evidence-Based:** Decisions and improvements will be driven by data collection, analysis, and comparison.
- **Ethical and Confidential:** Data sharing and comparison will adhere to strict ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality, and data protection (GDPR compliance).
- **Collaborative:** Benchmarking will involve relevant stakeholders, including academic staff, administrative departments, and learners, fostering a shared understanding and commitment to improvement.
- **Action-Oriented:** The primary objective of benchmarking is to translate insights into actionable plans and measurable improvements.

- **Continuous:** Benchmarking is an ongoing process, not a one-off event, requiring regular review and adaptation.
- **Aspirational:** DBS will seek to benchmark against institutions recognised for excellence in learner experience, aiming not just to meet but to exceed sector standards.

2.9.4 Benchmarking Methodology

DBS will adopt a structured approach to benchmarking, typically following a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle:

Plan

- **Define Objectives:** Clearly articulate the specific aspects of learner experience to be benchmarked and the desired outcomes.
- **Identify Benchmarking Partners:** Select appropriate national and international higher education institutions or consortia that offer comparable programmes, student demographics, or are recognised for excellence in the chosen areas.
- **Establish Metrics and Indicators:** Determine relevant quantitative and qualitative metrics for comparison (e.g., student satisfaction survey scores, retention rates, student support service utilisation, feedback on teaching quality, digital learning environment satisfaction).
- **Develop Data Collection Strategy:** Outline methods for gathering data, including internal surveys (e.g., StudentSurvey.IE, internal student satisfaction surveys), focus groups, interviews and performance data analysis.

Do

- **Collect Data:** Systematically gather both internal DBS data and external data as available, ensuring consistency and comparability.
- **Analyse Data:** Conduct thorough analysis of collected data to identify gaps, strengths, and areas for improvement at DBS relative to the benchmarks.
- **Identify Best Practices:** Research and document exemplary practices from elsewhere as appropriate that could be adapted or implemented at DBS.

Check

- **Compare and Evaluate:** Critically assess DBS' performance against the identified benchmarks and best practices.
- **Review Findings:** Present findings to relevant stakeholders, including Senior Leadership Team, Academic Board, Academic Directors, and the Student Council, for discussion and validation.
- **Formulate Recommendations:** Develop concrete, actionable recommendations for improvement based on the analysis.

Act

- **Develop Action Plans:** Create detailed action plans with clear responsibilities, timelines, and measurable targets for implementing recommended improvements.
- **Implement Changes:** Execute the planned improvements across relevant departments and services.
- **Monitor and Review Progress:** Regularly track the implementation of action plans and measure the impact of changes on the learner experience.
- **Communicate Outcomes:** Share findings and improvements with the wider DBS community.

2.9.5 Areas for Benchmarking

Benchmarking of learner experience may include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- **Academic Support:** Quality of teaching and learning, library resources, digital learning platforms, assessment and feedback.
- **Student Support Services:** Welfare and counselling, career services, disability support, international student support.
- **Student Life and Engagement:** Student societies, college events, induction and orientation, sense of belonging, student representation and voice.
- **Facilities and Environment:** Learning spaces, open spaces, IT infrastructure, accessibility.
- **Communication and Information:** Effectiveness of communication channels, clarity of information provided to learners.

- **Employability and Graduate Outcomes:** Career readiness, internship and/or placement opportunities, graduate employment rates, alumni engagement.
- **Student Satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction with the institution and specific services.

2.9.6 Reporting and Dissemination


An annual benchmarking report on learner experience will be prepared by the Data Analytics & Reporting Manager, summarising key findings, identified best practices, and progress on action plans.

This report will be presented to the Academic Board and Senior Leadership Team.

Key insights and actionable recommendations will be disseminated to relevant departments and committees for implementation.

An executive summary of the report, highlighting improvements and learner success stories, will be made available to the wider DBS community, including students, via appropriate channels.

2.10. Policy on Student Pregnancy and Parental Support

Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) Part X	
Document Name	Policy on Student Pregnancy and Parental Support Policy
Policy Document Number	054
Version Reference	V1.0
Document Owner	Chief Operating Officer & Registrar
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	Chief Academic & Innovation Officer, Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre, Disability Support Officer, Wellbeing Officer, Programme Coordinator, Placement Officer, Student Engagement and Success Unit
Applicability	All programmes: NFQ L6–9, Professional Programmes, Study Abroad, DBS Online
Approved By	Academic Board
Approval Date	25/09/2025
Date Policy Becomes Active	29/09/2025
Revision Cycle	A minimum of every five years from approval date
Revision History/Amalgamation History	n/a
Additional Information	n/a
References/ Supporting Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENQA (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Standard 1.3, 'Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment'.
• QQI (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines, Section 2.5.1, 'Teaching and Learning' and Section 2.5.2 'A Provider Ethos that Promotes Learning'. DBS Deferral Policy

2.10.1 Policy Overview

Dublin Business School (DBS) is committed to equality of opportunity for students irrespective of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, nationality or ethnic origin. This policy reflects DBS's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. This Policy aims to inform all students of the support available to them during pregnancy, maternity and paternity to ensure that these circumstances do not negatively impact on their academic experience and to enable students to make informed choices. It details the roles and responsibilities of academic and support staff in advising and responding to the needs of pregnant students and student parents. In doing so, it seeks to ensure that there should be no academic or financial penalty for a student who chooses to take a leave of absence for maternity,

paternity, surrogacy or adoptive purposes. It aims, where possible, to facilitate students in returning to their studies at the point they left rather than requiring them to repeat an entire year.

2.10.2 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all students of DBS with the exception of First Year Undergraduate Students who wish to defer their 1st year before taking Semester 2. First Year Undergraduate Students who wish to defer their 1st year before taking Semester 1 are out of scope of this policy and must refer to the relevant DBS leave policies.

2. 10.3 Policy Outline

DBS is committed to being as flexible as possible to support students experiencing pregnancy, maternity and paternity to complete their programme of study whilst, at the same time, making sure that academic standards are not compromised. The special arrangements which can and should be made for a student in these circumstances will vary from programme to programme. However, the general approach to be taken in these circumstances is consistent across the college. DBS recognises that these responsibilities may change and can be unpredictable; however, the college will support students by taking a flexible and reasonable approach to attendance and assignment deadlines, while ensuring academic standards are achieved.

Students should inform their Programme Coordinator as early as possible of their pregnancy, surrogacy or adoption plans. The Programme Coordinator will discuss the implications for course completion, including arrangements that could be made for assessments, catching up on missed lectures, placements, time to attend antenatal care and maternity-related leave of absence.

The Programme Coordinator will refer the student to the Student Experience Team to ensure that the student is made aware of the supports available to enable them to make informed choices. The Student Experience Team will provide, where possible, information on:

- Disability Support and Welfare support
- Information about local childcare facilities

2.10.4 Health and Safety

There are health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and the risks to which students could be exposed will be assessed. Students are strongly encouraged to inform

the Programme Coordinator of their pregnancy as early as possible, particularly if their course work includes the following:

- Physical activity, including lifting and carrying equipment
- Working in compressed air environments

The Disability Support Officer will organise for a health and safety assessment to be conducted in consultation with the Facilities Manager. Where risks are identified during a health and safety assessment, the student and, if necessary, their GP will be consulted on ways to alleviate or minimise the identified risk.

If a student is required to undertake a placement as part of their course, the Placement Coordinator will liaise with the placement provider and the Disability Support Officer to ensure a health and safety assessment is conducted. If fieldwork is a requirement of the course, this will be considered within the health and safety assessment.

2.10.5 Assessment and Examinations

DBS will endeavour to support any student who is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines or the examination period, and wishes to complete their assessed work or sit their examinations. Please note that while most exams are held online, the following provisions apply to any in-person assessments.

Pre-Examination Support

When students are waiting to enter examination rooms, comfortable seating arrangements will be provided either outside the examination venue or in nearby designated areas to ensure pregnant students can rest comfortably before their examination begins.

During Examinations

In examinations, pregnant students may require:

- Rest breaks and/or more frequent toilet visits
- Access to water and appropriate snacks during the examination
- A comfortable and supportive chair
- Examination in a separate venue from other students if needed
- Additional breaks for breastfeeding mothers who may be expressing milk or need feeding-related breaks

If a student is concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines, or if they have a pregnancy-related health condition that is exacerbated by stress, they should seek advice from their midwife or GP. If their midwife or GP advises against sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, an alternative method of assessment will be explored. If an alternative method of assessment is not feasible or if the student experiences significant pregnancy-related problems in the course of an examination or when undertaking assessed work, the Deferral process and Personal Mitigating Circumstances form should be completed by the student for them to resit the examination at the earliest possible opportunity or agree an extension for resubmitting coursework. Resits of examinations will be considered as the student's first attempt.

2.10.6 Maternity Related Leave-of-Absence

All students will be facilitated to take maternity-related leave of absence (deferral) following the birth of their child. The duration of leave will be determined by the student's personal circumstances and the structure and content of their course, subject to a maximum period as outlined in the DBS Deferral Policy to ensure academic progression and programme integrity.

Students may opt to stay at college up to two weeks before the end of the week in which the baby's birth is expected. Normally, students following the birth of their child can return to their programme after a minimum of 4 weeks. However, a student may wish to interrupt their study for a semester or an academic year. To ensure appropriate arrangements can be made, students should notify their Programme Coordinator as soon as possible or at least 15 weeks before the expected birth of their baby.

For Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students, deferrals granted by the Academic Director in consultation with the Programme Coordinator when approving a maternity-related leave of absence. Academic considerations are critical in considering any application for a deferral. Deferral requests should be formally submitted through the DBS Helpdesk.

Should a student require a longer period of leave, they should apply for an extension of the leave prior to its expiry. It may not be possible to carry over previously passed modules as exemptions as programmes may change and students will be required to take modules currently on offer upon their return to their programme. Academic Operations will advise students on module selection.

The DBS "Deferral Policy" should be read in conjunction with this policy. The maximum deferral period is two academic years, however the College will review cases with extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis to ensure appropriate support while maintaining academic standards.

During a maternity-related leave of absence, fees are not payable by the student for leave approved for an academic year. For maternity-related leave of absence less than one year, the student is liable for fees in that academic year but will be granted the appropriate time credit at the end of their degree programme.

Full-time students may consider the option of changing to part-time status for an agreed period of time as appropriate within the circumstances of their programme.

A student who is externally funded should consult firstly with their funding agency regarding the leave of absence. Students should be aware of any implications a leave of absence will have on their funding. International students should also consider possible implications for their visas and should consult with the International Officer in Student Services.

On return to formal studies in the college, students are responsible for notifying Academic Operations to update their registration status following the end of their maternity-related leave of absence.

The utmost discretion will be exercised when considering applications for maternity-related leave of absence. Applications will be dealt with in a sensitive manner and only staff members who need to be consulted in connection with an application will be involved in the application process.

2.10.7 Childcare Support and Family-Friendly Facilities

DBS can provide information about local childcare facilities to students who require it. The Student Experience Team can assist students in finding information on childcare options near the campus.

Please contact student.services@dbs.ie for more information.

2.10.8 Communication during absence

The Programme Coordinator and Academic Operations will agree what information needs to be communicated to the student during their maternity leave. This agreement will include the preferred method of communication and details of who the student should contact to discuss their return date, if they have any concerns or their circumstances change.

2.10.9 Partner Pregnancy or Adoption Support for Students

Students who are partners or co-parent of a pregnant person and new mothers (including same sex partners) will be entitled to request time out of study. This may include time off for antenatal appointments as well as a period of maternity support/shared parental leave. A student wishing to take maternity/paternity related absence should inform their Programme Coordinator of their

partner's pregnancy as early as possible in order to coordinate arrangements for assessments, missed lectures, placements, antenatal care and maternity-related leave of absence.

Leave of absence may be granted for periods of not less than one month and up to one year. Students must liaise with the Disability Support Officer and Academic Operations to provide any supporting documents for the leave of absence.

For international students, specific advice should be sought from the International Officer in Student Services in relation to visa constraints before making any arrangements for time out of study.

Students should contact the DBS Accounts team to confirm if there will be fee implications if they apply for a leave of absence.

2.10.10 Miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death

DBS is mindful that students will require support if they miscarry or have a stillbirth, or if their baby dies shortly after it is born. If this happens, students are encouraged to inform their Programme Coordinator who will refer them to the Student Experience Team to establish the support they are receiving from their healthcare provider and the support available from the college.

Consideration should be given to the impact of a miscarriage on a student's ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations.

Support services and resources will be made available to any student who experiences a miscarriage stillbirth or neonatal death.

2.10.11 Related Documents

- Health and Safety Policy
- Deferral Policy
- Digital Wellbeing Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Learner Code of Conduct

2.10.12 Resources and Support

- DBS Student Experience Hub (4th Floor, Castle House)
- DBS Student Services
- DBS Careers Team (Ground Floor, Aungier Street)
- DBS International Student Services
- DBS Academic Operations (Service Desk, 2nd Floor, Castle House)

[END OF PART B SECTION 2]