

Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

Provider	Dublin Business School
Programme(s) Reviewed	Certificate in Digital Marketing

Independent Panel Members

Name	Role on Panel	Affiliation
Dr. John Bartlett	Chair	ATU
Dr. Joe Fitzgerald	Report Writer	TU Dublin
Dr. Dinusha Weerawardane	Academic Expert	University of West London
Matthias Glowatz	Academic Expert	UCD
Lenka Vrancikova	Learner Rep	Dundalk IT
Elizabeth Sheehan	Industry Rep	Ad Net Zero

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

Part 1. Introduction

This programme review will be undertaken in accordance with DBS's internal quality assurance processes, which are informed by QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (pp 11-12) and Programme Review Manual 2022.

This review of this programme was undertaken by the DBS's School of Business. Many of the current teaching staff have been involved in the delivery of the programme for a number of years, so they had the benefit of clear understanding of the programme description, learning outcomes and understanding of the benefits for students.

Part 2. Evaluation Process

2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
1.	Programme Review Report	CertDigitalMarketing_Programme Review Report
2.	Programme Document	CertDigitalMarketing_Programme Doc
3.	Programme Modules	CertDigitalMarketing_Module & Assessment Doc
4.	Programme CVs	CertDigitalMarketing_Programme Team CVs
5.	Teaching & Learning Strategy	CertDigitalMarketing_Teaching and Learning Strategy 2024
6.	Programme Handbook	CertDigitalMarketing_Programme Handbook 2425
7.		
8.		

2.2 Provider's Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
1.	Tim Bicknell	President
2.	Lori Johnston	Academic Dean
3.	Dr. Rita Day	Academic Director
4.	Tanya Zubrzycki	Assistant Academic Director
5.	Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
6.	Darragh Breathnach	Registrar & Director of Campus Operations
7.	Emma Balfe	Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production
8.	Grant Goodwin	Assitant Registrar
9.	Various Faculty Members	Lecturer

2.3 Description of evaluation process

This is the programme review prepared by Dublin Business School (DBS) for the purpose of a review of the Certificate in Digital Marketing for re-accreditation by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The review process for the programme was led by the academic programme team

in order to critically analyse all aspects of this programme. The consultation embraced a wide range of relevant issues including:

- Programme rationale
- Programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes
- Programme structure
- Module choice and content
- Teaching, learning and assessment methodologies
- Access, transfer and progression

The guiding principles underpinning this review were:

- that the proposal for the programmatic review of the Certificate in Digital Marketing has been developed and approved internally as a result of the DBS quality assurance procedures.
- that the proposed programme will assist DBS and the School of Business in the achievement of DBS's mission and strategy.
- that the programme learning outcomes will meet the needs of current and future learners, employers and other stakeholders.
- that teaching and learning or research activity at any level shall be conducted in a manner morally and professionally ethical.

The programme review process for the Certificate in Digital Marketing has been multifaceted in its approach. Firstly, the Assistant Academic Director and Programme Level Manager are in regular consultation with faculty to discuss the nature of the programme and to question how the current programme can be modified and updated to reflect the complex and diverse changes in the world of business. With this in mind, programme team meetings form an integral part of this process and are conducted once per semester per intake for all Springboard programmes. These have given lecturers an opportunity to explain the dynamics which are unfolding in the teaching environment and to question and debate how changes can be made accordingly, in all aspects of the design, delivery and assessment of the programme.

Secondly, DBS engages on a regular basis with industry practitioners and professionals for many reasons. The importance of developing relationships and links with Industry is becoming a significant priority for the learner. The Industry Advisory Board is an active forum which fosters discussion and debate between DBS academic staff and a number of industry professionals, some of whom are actively engaged in senior marketing roles within industry. These meetings which take place 3-4 times a year are an important forum for discussing how to create links between learners and industry.

Thirdly, the academic management team ensured that the perspectives of learners are taken into account by designing a qualitative learner survey and engaging in smaller focus groups. The results attached are an important part of the mix when making overall decisions with respect to the needs of the contemporary marketing learner.

Finally, the academic programme team is in constant contact with multiple internal stakeholders to ensure that the programme design aligns with the various functions within the organisation. This includes regular and ongoing debate and discussion with the DBS Teaching and Learning Unit. This

unit has become a vital part of discussions around programme and curriculum development, assessment trends and responses to issues around Generative AI and how best to consider responses to such developments

Part 3. Panel Findings on Provider Programme Review Report

The following is the panel's commentary and recommendations on the provider's programme review report. It follows the section structure of the report in headings and in sequence.

References to specific parts of the provider report will use the relevant report reference e.g. 2.2.4 Programme Management

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

Commentary:

The Independent Evaluation Panel has been convened to evaluate the programmatic review conducted by DBS in respect of the Certificate in Digital Marketing, and to make a recommendation on the suitability of the revised programmes for revalidation.

The revised programme will continue to lead to a Certificate at level 7 on the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ). A blended delivery model will be utilised.

The provider's own programmatic review found some proposed modifications were appropriate which the Panel was generally satisfied were appropriate.

Recommendations:

n/a

Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

Commentary:

Comprehensive information provided on the provider and where these programmes resides within the providers operations. Programmes also discussed and situated within their governmental department for which they are designed.

Recommendations:

n/a

Section C. Baseline qualitative and quantitative information

Programme Data Overview

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

Commentary:

This programme has traditionally been offered through the Springboard initiative. From 2018/19 to 2020/21, the programme received a large number of applicants, driven by its inclusion on Springboard. The programme did not have an intake in 2021/22, as it was not included on the Springboard initiative for that year.

As this is a Certificate delivered within one academic year, there is no 'progression' within the programme, but rather completion of the programme is the concern. Of those who enrolled, approximately 81% successfully completed the programme in the year they enrolled.

DBS does not record data for its graduate destinations from this programme.

Recommendations:

n/a

Programme Delivery and Teaching & Learning Strategies

This section will include the panel's views on any or all of the following topics covered in the provider's review report: Physical Facilities and Resources, Timetabling, Learner Workload, Attendance, Teacher Learner Ratios, Community of Practice Learning, Teaching and Learning Strategies, Learning Outcomes achieved, Assessment Strategies.

Commentary:

The evaluation of the programme delivery and T&L strategies incorporated feedback from faculty and students. They were happy that the programme broadly met the needs of industry.

As an outcome of this programme review, a programme-level assessment strategy was created, with the view of creating a more balanced approach to assessments across the programme. The intention is that this would allow for a variety of assessments, a mix of individual and group assessments, and to facilitate feedback. UDL principles have also been taken into account in the development of the assessment strategy.

Recommendations:

n/a

Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

Commentary:

Feedback from learners and graduates found a preference for a blended learning approach, as it affords them the flexibility to undertake this course even if they don't live in the Dublin area, but they also stated that they wanted some face-to-face classes to help facilitate group dynamics. Group work was also cited as an issue. DBS has taken this advice on board and has sought to incorporate more individual assessments and to maintain a blended delivery model.

Recommendations:

n/a

Evaluation of the programme by Staff

Commentary:

Programme staff provide regular feedback through the formal mechanisms in place (programme boards, exam boards etc.). Given the relatively small size of this programme, with a small programme team as a result, faculty seem to be able to easily feed into the development of the programme through open access to programme management.

The faculty suggested some relatively minor changes to modules, which have been incorporated into the programme review.

Recommendations:

n/a

External Examiner Feedback

Commentary:

External Examiner feedback has been broadly positive. Any issues that are highlighted, are noted by DBS to address.

Recommendations:

n/a

Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

Complaints, appeals and commendations

Commentary:

The provider has robust QA policies in place at an institutional and programme level. These policies are clear, fair and transparent. The report details these and provides links to DBS's QA policies in these areas.

Recommendations:

n/a

Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

Commentary:

The report is clear in how this programme fits within DBS's overarching QA system, but also the programme specific QA. The key policies relevant for this programme are clearly outlined.

Recommendations:

n/a

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

Commentary:

The blended learning model intended for this programme is clearly documented throughout.

Recommendations:

n/a

Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

Commentary:

The programme review summary analysis is coherent with the analysis undertaken as part of the programme review and other sections presented in the report.

Recommendations:

n/a

Section G. Revision of the programme

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

Commentary:

Section 7 outlines the main changes suggested for the programme. The panel is supportive of these changes.

Recommendations:

n/a

Part 4. Overall Findings

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

Section A. Commentary on review process:

The review process undertaken by the provider was extensive, comprehensive and completed with the clear goal of improving the programme.

Section B. Recommendations on review process:

The volume of material produced by the provider is commendable, and clearly indicative of the thoroughness of the review process undertaken. However, the scale of the material provided might have been structured to differentiate between core material and supplemental evidence to enable the Panel's effective engagement within the short time timeframe of the review/revalidation event. Though the process is clearly robust and inclusive, the workload it presents to panels is significant.

The focus should be on retaining the robustness of the system, but reducing the administrative burden on both the provider and panels.

Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The panel is supportive of the revisions identified during the programme review process.

Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:

The panel supports the proposed programme revisions outlined and proposes no conditions of validation.

Signed: John Borliff
Panel Chairperson:

Date: _16/05/2024

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

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

Part 1. Provider details

Provider name	Dublin Business School
Date of site visit	18/04/2024
Date of report	15/05/2024

Section A. Overall recommendations

Principal programme	Title	Certificate in Digital Marketing
	Award	Special Purpose
	Credit	40 ECTS
	Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Dr. John Bartlett	Chair	ATU
Dr. Joe Fitzgerald	Report Writer	TU Dublin
Dr. Dinusha Weerawardane	Academic Expert	University of West London
Matthias Glowatz	Academic Expert	UCD
Lenka Vrancikova	Learner Rep	Dundalk IT
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Section C. Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (<i>per centre</i>)	Minimum number of learners
Dublin Business School	600	10

Proposed Enrolment	
Date of first intake	September 2024
Maximum number of annual intakes	2 full-time; 2 part-time
Maximum total number of learners per intake	150 full-time; 150 part-time
Programme duration (<i>months from start to completion</i>)	1 year
Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:	
<p>The numbers provided are standard for DBS. However, during the panel visit, they noted that they do not expect to have numbers near the maximum of this range. They anticipate enrolments in line, and perhaps slightly above, previous years.</p>	
Target learner groups	
<p>This programme is aimed at learners who have achieved a full Level 6 award (such as a Higher Certificate or full equivalent FETAC award) in any discipline and who wish to upskill and specialise in the field of digital marketing or with a view to entering an industry which requires this skill set. Applicants who have at least 3 years experience working in a business environment may also be considered through the college's normal RPL procedures.</p> <p>On completion of this programme, learners will have the digital marketing skills necessary to move into various customer-focused (either B2C or B2B) industry roles where the presentation of services or products through a digital channel is a key function of the organisation. These learners will also have the competencies in general website design and presentation should they prefer those roles. The learners will gain an understanding of the impact of digital marketing on a business and its customers so they can take a more focused view and effectively integrate their knowledge of the digital channel into decision-making in an organisation. Through the assignments and projects as part of the assessment criteria, learners will develop independent research and problem-solving skills which will be valuable in a variety of contexts in the workplace.</p> <p>Participants who complete this course will be able to pursue opportunities within the digital marketing environment in many different business disciplines and settings.</p>	
Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Full-time and Part-time
The teaching and learning modalities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to Face • Online • Blended 	

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g. who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)

This programme is targeted towards the learner who wishes to specialise in the field of digital marketing with a view to entering the industry, or those who are working in an industry that requires the input of digital marketing techniques to enhance, or in some cases drive, the overall marketing function and strategy. The massive growth of social media and mobile marketing in recent years means that marketers need a strong skill set and knowledge base that is digital. Therefore, they will need both the visibility and traceability that digital marketing affords. Given how fast the digital marketing arena moves in terms of technologies and practice all modules are written with flexibility in mind. Students are facilitated in exploring new ideas and technologies where applicable. In this way, the programme remains up-to-date with industry trends and best practice. On completion of the programme the learner will be equipped with the skills needed to work in a digital marketing environment. This programme accommodates a wide audience of learners whose specific interests in digital marketing may be either technically focused or business-focused.

This one year programme will be delivered on a part-time basis with a full-time option enabled within a normal college day (9am-5pm), but will be delivered with the same composition in terms of hours, modes of delivery and independent learning. There are four taught modules, each of 10 ECTS, which lead to a Certificate in Digital Marketing, Level 7 Special Purpose Award. Learners who have taken this programme previously have been funded by the HEA Springboard+ fund and this programme will continue to be offered as part of the DBS Springboard+ portfolio.

Summary of specifications for teaching staff

WTE

Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a level 8 qualification in the following areas: Digital Marketing, Marketing or Business. In modules where industry experience is desirable, holders of level 8 Honours degrees in Marketing who are exceptionally qualified by virtue of significant marketing/business experience may also be considered.

4

The Academic Director for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in Business or related areas along with programme management/ academic leadership experience.

1

The Academic Director for this programme will have a minimum of a NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or Masters qualification in Business or related areas along with programme management/ academic leadership experience.

1

Administration and Support Staff, such as Library, Admissions, Student Experience, Finance etc. Experience and qualifications relevant to the role.

1

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Classroom sessions	1:50
Workshops	1:25
Practical sessions	1:25
Online Class (live)	1:50

Online Tutorial (interactive)	1:25
Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing: DBS has the necessary staff for this programme already in its employment.	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
PG24205	Certificate in Digital Marketing	August 2024

Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

n/a

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

The formalising of the delivery model as a blended delivery is appropriate and the provider has established QA processes in place to ensure the successful delivery of the programme.

Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

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

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

Criterion 1. The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme

<p>a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme.</p> <p>b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed.</p> <p>c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.¹</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	DBS will deliver this programme under its approved Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures. DBS meets the pre-requisites under Section 44 (7) of the 2012 Act to apply for validation of the programme. This was confirmed to the panel during the site visit.

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

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

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

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel discussed the programmes' aims, objectives, and title with DBS and deemed them to be an accurate representation of the intended programmes and to be informative to potential learners. The updates to the existing programme are relatively minor, and thus the previous programme objectives remain relevant.

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

³ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

Criterion 3. The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)

- a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.⁴
- b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
 - (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
 - (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
 - (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
 - (iv) There is evidence⁵ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁶.
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁷
- c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
- d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
- e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel queried the programme structure and rationale for this. The programme structure is 3 weeks f2f and 3 weeks online. The provider determined that a 50/50 split was optimal, and once this decision was made, then this model was deemed optimal for learners as it allows for concepts to be fully explored in a f2f format (given the three week block).

⁴ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

⁵ This might be predictive or indirect.

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

⁷ There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

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

<p>a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied⁸.</p> <p>b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR⁹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.</p> <p>d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that target learners are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).</p> <p>e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.</p> <p>f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Reflects the core <i>intended programme learning outcomes</i>, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es). (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners; (iii) Has long-lasting significance. <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	<p>Progression options are limited given the size of the programme (40 credits). The Provider does have a L8 programme, but graduates of this programme would not be directly suitable for this because they will not have a full 60 credits at level 7.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The panel recommends that the provider explores options of allowing formal progression options for programme graduates (e.g. allowing students to get the remaining 20 credits at level 7, which may then facilitate progression).</p>

⁸ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider’s evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

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

Criterion 5. The programme’s written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

- a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
- b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
- c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
- d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff.
- e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹⁰.
- f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
- g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
- h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
- i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
- j) The programme **duration** (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its **fulltime equivalent contact time** (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.¹¹

	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	<p>The panel discussed the Digital Marketing Fundamentals module, which introduces digital marketing tools to students and equips them with the capability to be able to appraise them to reach business outcomes. This module seeks to link theory with practice through the assessment, by conducting a digital audit of a firm’s digital marketing strategy and recommend what could be improved by the firm in this regard.</p> <p>The panel queried if alumni are used currently as guest speakers. The provider confirmed that this does not happen currently, though many guest speakers are used, but this is something that they would seek to incorporate.</p> <p>The Digital Media Transformations module looks at tools for analysis and creating content. This module also looks at AI and how this can be used to help create content.</p> <p>The Digital Marketing Planning & Management module looks to equip students with skills to develop dig marketing strategies for firms. It looks at campaign planning, learning and execution. As an outcome of the review, additional tools have been incorporated into the module, such as Google Analytics.</p>

¹⁰ This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

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

		The Provider outlined the curriculum as a whole and intentionally incorporated topics across modules rather than silo topics within modules. The panel was satisfied with this approach.
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Criterion 6. There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹² (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners’ achievements as required.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development¹³ opportunities¹⁴.</p> <p>e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.</p> <p>f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	<p>The lecturers for this programme are all currently in place within the Provider’s faculty. The panel met with a number of the faculty during the site visit all of whom presented as professional and highly competent within their disciplinary areas. The programme director has a clear command of all aspects of the programme, and many of the lecturing team have significant teaching experience.</p> <p>The provider has a thorough process in place, which they detailed, around staff recruitment and induction, which is to ensure that staff are supported to implement the programme as intended.</p>

¹² Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme’s provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

¹³ Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

¹⁴ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff’s professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

Criterion 7. There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

<p>a) The specification of the programme’s physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).</p> <p>b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g. availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme’s learning environments including the workplace learning environment) (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided) (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable (v) technical support (vi) administrative support (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable <p>c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).</p> <p>d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planned intake (first five years) and (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake. <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	<p>The panel queried if the College provides devices to facilitate attending online sessions. The provider confirmed that computers & laptops are available within the College, but most learners will use their own devices as they typically login to online sessions remotely (i.e. outside the College’s campus).</p> <p>The programme document details the resources that the provider has in place, which the panel were satisfied were sufficient for the successful delivery of this programme.</p>

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

<p>a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.</p> <p>c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.</p>		
	<p>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</p>	<p>Comment</p>
<p>Principal Programme</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>DBS already has sufficient classroom capacity for this programme, and it uses Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment. The panel are content that the learning environment (both physical and virtual) that DBS has in place are sufficient for learners on this programme.</p>

Criterion 9. **There are sound teaching and learning strategies**

<p>a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.</p> <p>b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).</p> <p>d) Learning is monitored/supervised.</p> <p>e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁵ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
	<p>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</p>	<p>Comment</p>
<p>Principal Programme</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The panel noted that the use of guest lecturers, and it suggested that the provider could consider using alumni as these guest lecturers, as they could also add an additional element to the programme delivery as it would allow alumni speakers to detail how the programme helped them in their careers.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The panel recommends that the provider considers incorporating alumni into its guest lecturer roster.</p>

¹⁵ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

Criterion 10. **There are sound assessment strategies**

<p>a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with <i>Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards</i>¹⁶</p> <p>b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.</p> <p>c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.¹⁷</p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.¹⁸</p> <p>f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable.</p> <p>g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.</p> <p>h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.¹⁹</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	<p>The panel queried how AI will/may impact on the assessment strategy of the programme. The provider has confirmed that there are high level policies now in place that consider AI and Assessment. The programme lecturers did confirm a move away from essays as a result of AI and towards other assessment instruments, such as presentations.</p> <p>The assessment and feedback approaches, outlined in the programme document, were deemed appropriate, and the panel had no issues with this.</p>

¹⁶ See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

¹⁸ The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁹ If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e. designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

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

<p>a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</p> <p>f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²⁰.</p> <p>i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the <i>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students</i>²¹ and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.</p> <p>j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g. while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	<p>The provider detailed its current learner support provision, which ensures that its learners are well informed, guided, and cared for. The provider offers a breadth of supports - both academic and non-academic. This includes areas like library supports, career guidance, social activities and assessment supports. The panel was satisfied with the level of learner support currently offered by the provider.</p> <p>DBS has targeted workshops and a learning analytics initiative, which looks at learner interaction data between students and the College to facilitate early interventions with students who may be struggling, and to ensure targeted supports are provided.</p> <p>The provider detailed its 'graduate work readiness programme', which is an optional, additional initiative that students can avail of. This is available to all students. The panel noted the opportunity for this to be an optional, credit-bearing component of programmes offered by the provider.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p>

²⁰ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

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

		The panel recommends that DBS explores the opportunity for their graduate work readiness programme to be an optional, credit-bearing component of programmes offered by the provider.
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Criterion 12. The programme is well managed

<p>a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider’s general or institutional procedures.</p> <p>b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider’s QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider’s QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI’s statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance²² is intrinsic to the programme’s maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.</p> <p>f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI’s statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.</p> <p>g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.</p> <p>h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.</p>		
	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment
Principal Programme	Yes	The panel asked DBS to detail its programme management structure and how it relates to this programme. DBS detailed its overarching QA structure and how this allows for strong management of its programmes (this is detailed in the programme document). DBS also explained that each programme has an Academic Director, an Assistant Academic Director, and a dedicated programme coordinator, who can provide assistance with many ‘day-to-day’ queries of students. The panel were satisfied with the programme management arrangements in place and that these allow for quality management of this programme.

²² See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

3.1 Principal programme:

Select one	
✓	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e. proposed (minor) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons for the overall recommendation

DBS presented a thorough rationale for the revalidation of this programme. The documentation is thorough, comprehensive and detailed. During the provider meetings, DBS presented as highly functional, organised and committed to providing a quality programme. Its QA structure was comprehensive and demonstrates an ability to successfully operate this programme. The panel had no conditions of validation as it was happy that the programme as presented fulfilled the validation criteria.

Commendations

1. Demonstrated impact, relevance and applied nature of the programme.
2. Dynamic and passionate team delivering and supporting the programme
3. Strong pedagogical and assessment design underpinning the programme.

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

1. none

Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

none

Summary of recommendations to the provider

1. The panel recommends that the provider explores options of allowing formal progression options for programme graduates

2. The panel recommends that the provider considers incorporating alumni into its guest lecturer roster.
3. The panel recommends that DBS explores the opportunity for their graduate work readiness programme to be an optional, credit-bearing component of programmes offered by the provider.

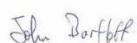
Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: John Bartlett

Date: 16/05/2024

Signed:



3.2 Disclaimer

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

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Part 4. Proposed programme schedules

4.1 1B.2 Proposed Programme Schedule Full-Time															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Certificate in Digital Marketing				QQI Award Title		Certificate in Digital Marketing				ECTS		40	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		Award	Exit Award Title (if relevant)				NA				Stage ECTS		40		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended				Online			Workplace Learning			
					✓										
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid		Synchronous Online		Asynchronous			Work Based			
		✓					✓								
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment		Proctored Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work based		
		✓													
Modules in this stage															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous*	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent Learning Hours	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Digital Marketing Environment	1	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Digital Marketing Fundamentals	1	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Digital Marketing Planning and Management	2	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Digital Media Transformations	2	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Special Regulations:	N/A														

*The hours for synchronous delivery should be read as “up to” with the proviso that full contact hours will be delivered. Any hours not covered by synchronous sessions will be covered by in person face-to-face contact hours.

4.2 1B.3 Proposed Programme Schedule Part-Time															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Certificate in Digital Marketing				QQI Award Title		Certificate in Digital Marketing				ECTS		40	
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		Award		Exit Award Title (if relevant)				NA				Stage ECTS		40	
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Blended					Online			Workplace Learning		
					✓										
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		On-site Face-to-Face			Synchronous Hybrid			Synchronous Online		Asynchronous			Work Based		
		✓						✓							
Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓one or more as appropriate.		Continuous Assessment			Proctored Exam – in person		Proctored Exam – online			Project		Practical Skills Demonstration		Work based	
		✓													
Modules in this stage															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous*	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent Learning Hours	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Digital Marketing Environment	1	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Digital Marketing Fundamentals	1	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Digital Marketing Planning and Management	2	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Digital Media Transformations	2	M	10	250	18	18	0	0	214	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Special Regulations:	N/A														

*The hours for synchronous delivery should be read as “up to” with the proviso that full contact hours will be delivered. Any hours not covered by synchronous sessions will be covered by in person face-to-face contact hours.