

# Independent Panel Report on a Provider's Programme Review

<b>Provider</b>	Dublin Business School
<b>Programme(s) Reviewed</b>	Bachelor of Laws (Hons)

## Independent Panel Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role on Panel</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr Tara Ryan	Chair	Irish Management Institute
Alexandra Anton-Aherne	Report Writer	ThreeSixtyInsights
Dr Lydia Bracken	Subject Matter Expert	University of Limerick
Dr Conor Hanly	Subject Matter Expert	University of Galway
Tserendorj Otgonbaatar	Learner Representative	Griffith College
Darren Lalor BL	Industry Representative	Practicing Barrister

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 document presents the findings of the Independent Panel (hereafter, ‘the panel’) following a review and evaluation of the Programme Review Report and the modified Bachelor of Laws provided by Dublin Business School (hereafter, ‘DBS’).

It is closely guided by the terms of reference agreed by DBS with QQI for programmatic review of the level 8 Bachelor of Laws (Hons) (180 ECTS). No major changes are proposed to the overall structure of the programme.

The programme was reviewed by the provider and by the panel with reference to QQI’s Award Standards. Revalidation is sought for the programme for a five-year period commencing with an intake in September 2024.

## Part 2. Evaluation Process

### 2.1 Documents Supplied to the Panel

	Document Type	Document Name
	Folder	DBS PR_LL B_2024_QQI Panel
1.	Programme Review Report (docx)	1. Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_Programme Review Report_QQIPanel2024.docx
2.	Programme Review Report (pdf)	1. Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_Programme Review Report_QQIPanel2024.pdf
3.	Programme Document (docx)	2. Programme Document_Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_QQIPanel2024 (1).docx
4.	Programme Document (pdf)	2. Programme Document_Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_QQIPanel2024 (1).pdf
5.	Module Document (docx)	3. Appdx3_Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_Module Document_QQIPanel2024.docx
6.	Module Document (pdf)	3. Appdx3_Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_Module Document_QQIPanel2024.pdf
7.	Assessment Document (pdf)	Appdx4_Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_Assessment Document_QQIPanel2024.pdf
8.	Programme Team CVs (pdf)	Appdx5_Bachelor of Laws (Hons)_ProgrammeTeamCVs2024.pdf
9.	Programme Handbook (pdf)	Appdx6_Programme Handbook_Bachelor in Laws (Hons)_2024.pdf
10.	Independent Review Report and Revalidation IER Template (docx)	independent-review-report-and-revalidation-ier_LL B.docx
11.	Initial Feedback Form Template (docx)	Initial Feedback Form_Programme Review and Revalidation_2024.docx
12.	Staffing (pdf)	LLB Supplement_Staffing WTE2024.pdf
13.	Terms of Reference (docx)	Terms of Reference_LL B_2024v2.docx
	Folder	PR Supporting Document
	Folder	QQI Validation Documents

### 2.2 Provider’s Representatives Met

	Person	Role / Job Title
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1.	Lori Johnston	Academic Dean
2.	Rita Day	Academic Director (Business, Marketing and Law)
3.	Tanya Zubrzycki	Assistant Academic Director (Business and Law)
4.	Eimear Long	Programme Level Manager
5.	Nicholas Kelly	Faculty Manager
6.	Shane Mooney	Head of Student Experience
7.	Darragh Breathnach	Registrar & Director of Campus Operations
8.	Emma Balfe	Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production
9.	Grant Goodwin	Assistant Registrar
10.	Finola Thorn	Education Administrator
11.	Sarah Sharkey	Student Engagement Officer
12.	Trevor Haugh	Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre/ Library
13.	Francesca Knight	Head of Academic Operations
14.	Maryrose Molloy	Lecturer
15.	Sharon Sheehan	Lecturer
16.	Clem McGauley	Lecturer
17.	Jennifer Byrne	Lecturer
18.	Mike Venn	Lecturer
19.	Daniel Dwyer	Lecturer

### 2.3 Description of evaluation process

The panel was engaged by Dublin Business School (DBS) and approved by QQI in April 2024. The panel was comprised of a suitable qualified Chair, two Subject Matter Experts, an Industry Representative, a Report Writer and a Learner Representative. The panel had two main tasks relating to the programme:

- To address the programme review report that was provided by DBS along with any further discussions that were held during the site visit and to outline any findings and recommendations pertaining to this.
- To evaluate the modified programme (as documented) for validation against the QQI validation criteria and sub-criteria, and outline any accompanying special conditions and recommendations.

DBS provided the panel with a suite of programme review and revalidation documentation. Members of the panel conducted a thorough review of the documentation and provided the Chair with their initial impressions at a panel meeting prior to the site visit. A site visit was scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024, and was hosted online via the platform of Zoom.

During the online site visit, the panel engaged with provider staff and stakeholders, including:

- Leadership and management staff
- Programme staff
- Institutional support staff
- Current students

Following these meetings during the site visit, the panel identified a number of recommendations for DBS. The Chair delivered preliminary oral feedback to the provider representatives on the day. Panel

members subsequently contributed to the drafting and review of this report and the associated Independent Evaluation Report (IER), specific to the programme proposed for revalidation. These reports summarise the findings, commendations and recommendations made by the panel as detailed in the sections below.

## 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:**

DBS provided a programme review report in which the process and outcomes of the internal programmatic review process are outlined in the Executive Summary section. The review report notes that the programme review process has been multifaceted in its approach and provides detail pertaining to this. In terms of overall findings from the programme review process, DBS notes a general satisfaction among stakeholders with the current programme and its delivery. There are no changes proposed to the overall structure of the programme. DBS notes that while certain aspects of the programme may be slightly adjusted and updated, such as the general aims and learning outcomes, there are no major changes proposed. DBS notes that the Contemporary Issues in Law module will be amended in line with the dissertation modules on other DBS undergraduate programmes.

Section 1 provides information pertaining to the location where programmes are being delivered (Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street, and Bow Lane), mode of delivery (online and in-person in DBS campuses), maximum intake numbers per enrolment, modes of programme delivery and intake periods. Section 1.5 of the review report notes that no conditions were made by the panel in the previous programme review in 2019. A number of recommendations were made; these are detailed in section 1.5 and a summary of actions that have been implemented since is included.

Section 1.6 refers the reader to the terms of reference available in the supporting documents.

#### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## Section B. Provider Information and Programme Context

### **Commentary:**

Section 2.1 of the review report outlines the provider context and provides an introduction to DBS, noting that it was established in 1975 and has grown to offer programmes that span a broad range of disciplines to 8,000 students every year. Section 2.1.1 provides additional information around accreditation bodies, campus locations and facilities, employees. This section also makes reference to DBS being a wholly owned subsidiary of Kaplan Inc. and its aim to seek Delegated Authority from QQI within the life of its current strategic plan. Quality assurance, programme specific information and the Teaching and Learning Strategy, and Research Strategy are also detailed in this section.

In section 2.2 DBS provides details of the department responsible for the programme under review, the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) including: department profile; department operations and management arrangements and programme management.

Section 2.3 of the review report provides detail around the programme. The programme's objectives are provided in section 2.3.1 along with a list of the programme MIPLOs. The target learners for the programme (full-time/part-time school leavers) are set out in section 2.3.2. The minimum entry requirements are set out in section 2.3.3 and include information around EU, non-EU and international applications. Two complementary programmes are detailed in section 2.3.4. Section 2.3.5 details the programme specific quality assurance procedures at DBS such as: Quality Assurance Handbook; assessment regulations in accordance with QQI Assessment and Standards Revised 2022 and documents referred to therein; QA functions being carried out in compliance with overarching College policies; programme content and delivery monitoring; and alignment of MIPLOs with the aims and objectives of the programme.

No implications for the programme are listed in section 2.3.6. DBS however notes that the programme benefits from established, integrated and cohesive processes and QA procedures as well as a stable faculty team. DBS is therefore well supported to implement any minor incremental changes that may arise over the next validation period.

### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## 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:**

DBS's programme review report provides an overview of application data, both full-time and part-time. Student enrolment and application numbers are presented for the Bachelor of Laws programme between 2019 and 2022. More recent figures are not presented. Section 3.1.1.2 of the review report notes that application numbers for the programme have been strong over the past four years. However, it is also noted that from initial application to enrolment on the programme, the conversion rate is considerably lower and that applications are significantly higher for the full-time programme in comparison to the part time programme.

Minimum and maximum enrolment intake numbers per enrolment are provided in section 3.1.2.1 of the review report, noting that 317 learners have enrolled on the programme from 2019/20 to 2021/22. The review report notes that the intake figures have remained steady through the global pandemic years.

During the site visit the panel sought to understand the stark difference between the number of applicants versus the number of students. The programme team noted that many Leaving Certificate students indicate DBS Bachelor of Laws (Hons) in their top 10 choice for CAO, but that it is not ranked number 1. Additionally, some non-EU applications may not get visa acceptance. Financial reasons were also noted. A variety of activities are offered to potential students/leads such as open evenings, taster sessions, social media.

A breakdown of gender is provided in section 3.1.2.2 of the review report for the total enrolment figures across three academic years, from 2019/20 to 2021/22. DBS notes that the overall gender demographics show a higher percentage of female students (56%) participate in the programme. When assessing gender breakdown data per year, female enrolment figures increased from 2020/21 (52%) to 2021/22 (63%) while male enrolment figures decreased from 2020/21 (48%) to 2021/22 (37%). Nationality data is also provided for the three year period, grouped by continent with the exception of Ireland. DBS notes an error with the nationality data which accounts for 25% resulting in blank entries. Of the data which was collected, the review report notes that domestic learners accounted for 56% of learners enrolled during the three year period, followed by Europe (8%), Africa (4%), Asia (4%) and South America (2%). Upon further analysis, the review report notes that domestic enrolment appears to be on the decline. However the accuracy of this interpretation is questioned due to the previously mentioned error. The vast majority of learners (50%) during the three year period fall into the "under 23" age bracket, while 40% fall into the 23-30 and 31-40 age brackets. Upon further analysis per year, the review report notes that enrolled learners under the age of 23 are rising while learners in the 23-30 appear to be decreasing. In section 3.1.2.3 Implications for the revised programmes, DBS notes that the number of learners from outside Ireland has been slowly increasing and that this should be taken into account when reviewing modules to ensure international appeal as well as having appropriate support in place for students that are outside of Ireland.

Section 3.1.3.1 of the review report, notes that Attrition at DBS is classified under two categories: Withdrawn (a notified drop-out) and Non-Activity (inclusive of Withdrawn and non-

notified drop out). In section 3.1.3.2 of the review report, it is noted that for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22, the global pass rate (total passed enrolled) for the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme was 76.82%, with 86.57% pass rate for learners who completed examinations (11.92% of enrolled students completed exams but did not pass). During the three-year period, 23% of enrolled students deferred, withdrew or were non-active. No implications for the revised programme are listed, however section 3.1.3.4 acknowledges the data collection systems are timely and suitable to provide an analysis of the programme's success.

Analysis of grades and awards classification is presented in section 3.1.4 of the review report. Analyses of average marks are provided for the three year period, broken down per intake and programme year. Best and least well performing modules are presented in section 3.1.4.2. The review report notes that the 2021/2022 intake recorded a lot of zero-marked students which brought the average down considerably and increased the standard deviation within each module against the previous years. Table 3.1.4.2j shows award classifications by academic year and mode of delivery. The review report notes that this data is incomplete however from what is available, it is evident that the vast majority of learners on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme graduated with Second Class Honours Grade 1 and Second Class Honours Grade 2. Data is benchmarked against and discussed in relation to other equivalent NFQ level and programme types, drawn from QQI data from 2018-2023. This reflects that DBS learners are achieving a lower rate of First Class Honours and Second Class Honours Grade 1 award outcomes and a higher rate of Second Class Honours Grade 2 and Pass award outcomes. The review report notes that this could be due to the nature of the programme with regard to PSRB focus. The review report notes implications for the revised programme including additional exam preparation and practice sessions as well as reviews of assessments to ensure that all assessments are valid, authentic and fit for purpose.

DBS presents an analysis of graduate destinations in section 3.1.5. Findings indicate that the majority of graduates are progressing to employment (82%), with a smaller proportion progressing to further education (18%).

During the site visit the panel queried the lack of graduate destination data in the documentation provided. Members of the programme team commented on the profile of students on the programme, namely that often students are already employed/working part time to support their studies and some complete the course to further their knowledge within their existing discipline. Graduate destination data is collected informally, and certain aspects/elements are discussed at programme review. The programme team further noted that they recognise the importance of this information, and a more formal process for collecting this information is currently underway at institution level.

The panel further sought a deeper understanding of the use of learning analytics at DBS and how this information was used in the programme review process. Members of the programme team explained that information is collected and collated for the review report. Learning analytics is also used in terms of student engagement. In 2017 an Early Alert Report was built which collates a variety of information from Moodle and over time builds a profile of students at risk. Staff can then reach out to these students specifically or refer them to support staff.

### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## 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 review report outlines the physical resources required to facilitate teaching and learning on the programme. Learners have access to various supports, facilities and tools at DBS. The review report notes that considerable investment has been made to the physical, ICT and learner support service environments at DBS. Notably, physical environments have been transformed and now include new classrooms layouts such as two new café-style rooms (envisioned to promote group work) and improved ICT facilities. Improvements are noted in relation to the library, for example the addition of three private study rooms for group work and an enhanced learner support area. Further improvements are noted in relation to Zoom room technology, introduced at DBS in 2021. This allows for hybrid delivery and provides quality recordings. The review report notes that DBS has extended the use of Zoom rooms into every classroom at Castle House and two thirds of the rooms in Augier Street. Further improvements in this regard include the installation of six booths in Castle House where lecturers can deliver online classes while on campus. The review report also notes a major transformation with regard to learner support services and facilities, notably DBS has developed an integrated holistic approach to the delivery of support services, however further information on this is not provided in the review report.

Section 3.2.2 provides detail around the contact hours for the duration of the programme. The review report notes that contact hours for all modules are timetabled in accordance with the Approved Programme Schedule and DBS Principles of Timetabling, which are detailed in section 3.2.2.1. The software Celcat is used by DBS for timetabling and attendance purposes. An analysis of data inclusive of class representative feedback, indicated the following: that modules scheduled for delivery at 9am on Mondays and Fridays have poor attendance and for this to be taken into consideration; scheduling of 3-hour blocks may be more suited to practical modules/content rather than theoretical modules/content; some timetables do not adhere to the DBS Principles of Timetabling for varying reasons. The review report also notes that current learner feedback indicates that flexibility in terms of learning environment is desired. DBS noted the implications of the for the revised programme include continuing to carefully manage and monitor timetabling.

Section 3.2.3 of the review report outlines the learner feedback process and workload balance at DBS. Assessment details are provided for each module on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. The review report notes that assignments and assessments are given consideration such that the average learner can complete the work in the notional timeframe of the module. Learners receive formative or summative feedback from the module leader within a standard time of two weeks. DBS note that the implications for the revised programme include ongoing work between the programme team to coordinate assessment activities such that learners are not overburdened and have a balanced assessment regime.

Section 3.2.4 outlines the average attendance rates for full-time and part-time for learners in their first year on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme for a three year period from 2019/20 to 2021/22. The review report draws attention to the Covid-19 pandemic and the move to online teaching and learning, and therefore notes that representation may be skewed. The review report notes that attendance is captured by the Celcat software which is activated when learners scan their card as they enter the classroom. It is therefore noted that the ratings may not reflect the true attendance as some learners “can be lax in relation to scanning their student cards”. Further issues with attendance are noted in the review report, such as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and modules where the dissertation/supervision structure of the modules did not require full attendance (Contemporary Issues in Law and International Law). DBS highlights implications for the revised programme in section 3.2.4.3, such as the role of various staff in engaging and supporting learners that are experiencing difficulties with attendance.

Section 3.2.5 of the review report details the teacher to learner ratios. DBS provide rationale for various teacher to learner ratios depending on the teaching activity. For example, the teacher learner ratio is set at 1: 150 for classroom sessions and online classes (live), whereas these are smaller for workshops/tutorials and practical sessions (1:40) or interactive online tutorials (1:25).

The review report notes that the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme teaching and learning started is informed by the QQI Generic Awards Standards. It is noted in the review report that various feedback exercises over the last number of years have contributed to the review process of the programme, which has resulted in various staff development sessions on “learning aims, learning outcomes, and the constructive alignment of assessment to learning”. While initially a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, online delivery has now become integrated at DBS. The review report notes that extensive training and support has been provided on the use of live online delivery and for faculty roles in the development of asynchronous resources, which will continue post-pandemic. DBS acknowledges that the programme review process has prompted a review of assumptions around teaching and learning on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme and the role of learner feedback in enabling reflection on future delivery. Implications identified by DBS for the revised programme include the increased use of online and hybrid learning. The review report notes that the development of teaching and learning methodologies using these mechanisms will be reflected in the teaching and learning strategy for the revised programme.

The review report notes that for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22, the global pass rate (total passed enrolled) is 76.82% and overall, the fail rate for the programme for the combined years is only 11.92%. DBS notes implications for the revised programme in section 3.2.7, namely that the revision of MIPLOs should take into consideration wider impact and should inform assessment instruments utilised.

Section 3.2.8 provides detail on the assessment strategies at DBS. The review report notes that feedback from the programme team, learners and external examiners is mostly positive, however it notes that “learners have commented negatively on delays in obtaining feedback at times”. The review report notes concerns on the part of the programme team and learners around the increased possibilities for plagiarism and the use of AI by learners, and points to the need for assessments instruments to be sound and appropriate. DBS indicates that the implications for the revised programme include aiding learners in skill development, the review of all assessment instruments through a plagiarism and AI lens, and continuing the development of exam skills as exams will continue to play an important role in the revised programme.

**Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## Section D. Evaluation of the programme by stakeholders

### Evaluation by current learners and graduates of the programme

#### Commentary:

The review report notes that learner feedback is an important part of monitoring and review at DBS. The review report notes that the programme review has been informed by findings from various sources of learner feedback. These include the Teaching and Learning survey, a Qualitative Survey from summer 2023, student feedback gathered via class representative meetings as well as consultations with graduates of the programme. The review report provides a high-level overview of how learner feedback is dealt with at DBS and highlights that every effort is made to monitor programmes and address learner feedback. DBS outline the following as areas of strength based on learner feedback in section 4.1.1: "relevance of the curriculum for the workplace/future career of students, in both the modules included and the skills developed and the balance of the different assessment mechanisms across the programme" as well as commendations of the programme team and design. Opportunities for improvement highlighted within the feedback include: "keeping the assessment schedule under constant review and ensuring that all lecturers abide by the schedule set down, reviewing the part-time timetable for final year students and reviewing the relevance and appropriateness of the module content of the IT Skills for Law module".

Survey data from a qualitative student survey is presented in section 4.2.1 of the review report. This data is based on a total of 14 responses, representing approx. a 22% response rate from current learners on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. Feedback points include the following:

- 71% of learners were of the view that the "overall programme structure and workload were balanced and reasonable". Comments from learners highlighted some potential pressure points, namely that the semester two workload is heavy, assignments are not being issued as scheduled sometimes which results in further scheduling issues, and there is a lack of clarity around assignment weighting. In terms of specific feedback relating to the part time delivery, one learner noted the scheduling of classes four evenings per week in year four as challenging.
- Learners found modules not required by professional bodies relevant, with the exception of the IT Skills for Law. Further comments noted that this module is time consuming and may not be relevant to learners that are already proficient in this area.
- Learners commented that a wider range of elective modules would be preferred as well as a progression route to follow from the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme.
- In terms of teaching delivery format, results from the survey are mixed: 43% said they would prefer a combination of online and classroom; 36% said they would prefer fully online delivery, while 21% preferred delivery of in-class lectures/tutorials/seminars/practical sessions.
- In terms of assessment, 74% of learners felt that there was a balance of different types of assessments. Learners expressed a preference for fewer group assignments.
- Learners generally agreed that the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) "meets the skills requirements for the workplace/their future career". Learners noted opportunities for improvement in terms of "greater feedback on written assignments" as well as "opportunities for participating in debates and more practical experience".

The Teaching and Learning Survey is comprised of 14 items on a Likert scale and is administered to learners each year via Moodle. The review report notes that ratings below 3.75 require specific action. The Bachelor of Laws (Hons) scored above that figure across all survey items in the 2022-23 surveys. The review report notes particularly high scores for areas such as: clarity of lecturing, module content being relevant and current, receiving clear information in terms of module content, support received from lecturers and clarity of assessment requirements and marking criteria. Suggestions for improvements included: clearer roadmap and explaining how modules are linked, provision of detailed feedback within a reasonable timeframe, spending more time on

exam preparation. Further comments were noted in the review report around increasing the use of visual aids and provision of feedback on assignments.

In terms of consultations with graduates from the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme, section 4.1.4 of the review report notes that “82% of respondents who were graduates of the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme were in full-time employment within 9 months of graduation, with 18% in further education”.

In terms of class representative meetings, the review report notes that have raised some concerns in addition to those mentioned above. These include issues around the “release recordings of lectures, use of Moodle pages and issues around classroom suitability”. These issues along with concerns voiced around the provision of law specific career events and requests for increased ebook access have been addressed by DBS.

DBS has identified specific implications for the revised programme, pertaining to building on the identified strengths, ensuring that module content is updated and remains relevant, reviewing assessment instruments to ensure a more balanced workload, improving skills development throughout the programme as well as reviewing the IT Skills for Law module to incorporate learner feedback.

The panel noted that the response rate for the student survey and surveys with external stakeholders were particularly low. The panel therefore sought to understand how DBS ensured that the feedback is valid for the purpose of the review process. The programme team noted that they had extensive consultation with students and external stakeholders and that both formal and informal feedback was collected. The broader picture was therefore considered rather than individual strands/streams of feedback. The panel further noted that student surveys were administered over the summer and therefore may account for the low response rate. The panel queried whether DBS would consider gathering student feedback during term to allow more input from students. The programme team noted that various feedback activities take place during term also, such as class representative meetings and module feedback surveys. The programme team reassured the panel that programme is monitored thoroughly, and that feedback is collated until the sample size has been saturated and that quality processes ensure that the student voice is heard.

#### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

### **Evaluation of the programme by Staff**

#### **Commentary:**

The process for gathering feedback and input from the programme team is outlined in section 4.2 of the review report. DBS note that feedback was gathered via various methods, namely Programme Team Meetings, Board of Studies Review, Programme Boards and Direct Lecturer Feedback. The role of each feedback channel is discussed in detail in the review report.

The review report notes that discussions took place within Programme Team Meetings around assessment schedules with the view of balanced learner workload, exam preparation in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, structure of the Contemporary Issues in Law module and associated staffing issues around dissertations. Some suggestions were highlighted by lecturers

via direct lecturer feedback, namely: considering incorporating adaptability and innovation into the learning outcomes and the programme itself, suggestion of further emphasis on the development of skills such as presentation skills in year 1, suggestion to offer the Criminology module as an elective module. The Contemporary Issues in Law dissertation module was mentioned via direct lecturer feedback also. The review report notes that the programme team are of the view that “it should be established as a full dissertation module in line with those found in other DBS undergraduate programmes”.

Some challenges were mentioned and pertained to perception of year 2 as a “difficult year for students”, with mixed lecturer views around greater weighting for exams and careful consideration needed around assessment in terms of the increased availability of AI tools available to learners. Challenges also noted around the use of online teaching mechanisms and the impact of this, with consequences noted such as greater use of Moodle and more variety of teaching methods.

The review report notes that overall, the programme team are mostly satisfied with the aims, outcomes and structure of the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. DBS noted the implications of the revised programme to include a review of the development of skills throughout the programme (presentation skills, adaptability and innovation), a review of the overall assessment strategy for each module within the programme, and a review of the Contemporary Issues in Law module with a view of proposing a dissertation module in line with other DBS undergraduate programmes.

DBS notes that the programme team also consulted with external stakeholders to gauge the perception of the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme by industry. An analysis of feedback is presented in section 4.3 of the review report. Findings suggest satisfaction with the programme overall; some suggestions were provided for consideration and incorporation into the programme.

### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## **External Examiner Feedback**

### **Commentary:**

The overall external examiner process is presented in the documentation. Feedback from external examiners is provided which is overall positive and constructive. Various concerns were raised and outlined in the review report around learner exam preparation, learner oral communication skills, the use of online open book exams outside of the Covid-19 pandemic, clear guidance given to learners around dissertation assessments, and timing of provision of examination packs.

DBS notes various implications for the revised programme, namely: maintaining variety of assessments and authenticity of assessments, clear marking schemes and provision of feedback, ensuring opportunities for learners to develop communication skills, building exam skills into the programme and modules individually, considerations around closed book exams and online assessment.

**Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## Section E. Programme Quality Assurance

### Complaints, appeals and commendations

#### **Commentary:**

DBS outlines the processes for complaints and appeals in section 5.1 of the review report and notes that no formal complaints or appeals have been recorded since the last programme review. Section 5.1.2 of the review report notes that some data on complaints is unavailable, however according to the available data one complaint was made in 2023. No further information is provided in relation to this. DBS notes that the “system of handling complaints and student feedback will remain unchanged” for the revised programme.

The panel noted some discrepancies in the review report with regard to complaints and appeals and sought clarification on this. The programme team acknowledged an error and clarified that no complaints have taken place and that the appeals information provided is accurate.

#### **Recommendations:**

The panel recommends that a check is carried out on documentation for discrepancies to ensure the accuracy of information.

### Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

#### **Commentary:**

DBS outlines the quality assurance processes in place to maintain and ensure standards of delivery of the programme in section 5.2 of the review report. Details of programme specific quality assurance procedures currently in place for the programme are provided in section 2.3.5.

It is noted that informal programme meetings with the lecturing team have taken place and that these should be more formal going forward. An analysis of the effectiveness of quality assurance systems and processes at DBS is provided in section 5.2.2 of the review report, and examples of actions taken are also provided. DBS note that quality assurance is a continuous process; no implications for the revised programme are noted.

#### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

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

#### **Commentary:**

A section is not specifically included on additional quality assurance systems and processes required in the review report. However, section 2.1 of the review report notes that DBS are

seeking Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI as part of the current strategic plan and is currently undertaking associated actions relating to this by planning its route to an application for DA. No additional QA procedures are identified to be required.

**Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## Section F. Summary Analysis of the programme

### **Commentary:**

An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the programme is included in the review report in section 6.

Section 6.2 of the review report overall concludes that DBS should continue to offer the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme and expand delivery to online learners. It notes that implications for the revised programme as a result of learner, staff and external stakeholder feedback along with amendments to the programme, which will strengthen interest and get a strong conversion rate in the future.

### **Recommendations:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to this aspect of the programme review.

## 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:**

The panel endorses the general direction of the revisions proposed at a high level. A number of recommendations were proposed by the panel.

The panel sought information from the programme team on the review process of the Bachelor of Laws (Hons). Namely, the panel highlighted that an in-depth review was undertaken which resulted in minimal changes for the revised programme. DBS noted that a thorough review process was carried out which included seeking feedback from both internal and external stakeholders via various means, for example: series of focus groups, interviews with students, programme team meetings, programme board meetings, surveys. DBS noted that within the review process, they also consulted with the industry advisory board (which is made up of approximately 30 external stakeholders), desktop reviews, SOLAS as well as looking to competitors. The results from all of these consultations were positive overall, and stakeholders overall were satisfied with the programme, content and how it runs. DBS noted some points of feedback received, namely:

- Industry advisors and students would prefer more choice around the modules available in the third year of the programme. DBS noted that the option of choosing three from a list of five modules is available to students and that various aspects have been taken into consideration in this decision such as transparency and restrictions due to numbers.
- DBS received a mixed response in terms of the IT module, with students not seeing the value of it whereas in contrast, industry deemed it useful. The programme team noted that students have varying levels of IT skills when they join the programme and that

various discussions took place around common understanding on how to proceed. A review of the module has taken place.

The panel queried the currency of the information provided in the review report and therefore challenged the basis of DBS's subsequent decision for no major changes to the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) as the review report lacked information for the 2022/23 academic year. The programme team indicated that the review process is lengthy in nature, and the lack of 2022/23 data was merely an oversight. It was further noted that updated figures are available (and can be made available to the panel) and no significant differences or trends are noted. The programme team acknowledged the panel's point and noted that it will be taken into account in future. They also noted that the team has been expanded to include programme level managers on individual programmes.

The panel noted some discrepancies in the documentation provided around the timeline for assessment feedback. The panel further noted that this can be confusing and frustrating for students and the information should be the same throughout. DBS clarified that the standard waiting time is four weeks however lecturers may return feedback sooner. The programme team clarified that some timeframes may take into consideration quality assurance and the wider process including external moderation but agreed to standardise the information for the benefit of students.

**Recommendations:**

- The panel recommends that the programme team makes full use of all data available and update relevant documentation before issuing the information to a panel.
- The panel recommends that more robust, more current and more clearly expressed data be included in the future.

## 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:

With regard to the overall review process, the panel acknowledges the three-sixty-degree approach adopted and the identification of stakeholders as well as the consultation of same. However, the panel notes that the data provided in the report, on which the findings were based, could have been stronger and more accurate. There were some discrepancies between the detail which undermined the conclusions reached. It was not sufficiently clear that the recommendations were supported by the evidence, or that all the evidence was available, e.g. minutes of programme boards, was used in decision making. The panel was of the view that some of the quantitative and qualitative information presented did not demonstrate a robust and reliable use of data. There were errors and inconsistencies due to the various time periods at which the reports were completed and submitted to the panel and also due to different definitions used in the programme and in the College as a whole. These weaknesses did detract from the overall standard of the reports, though the panel accepted that they did not significantly undermine the overall findings.

### Section B. Recommendations on review process:

The panel recommends that:


- future programme review documentation be updated with all available quantitative data prior to issue to a panel to ensure all cohort data is up to date at the time of the panel evaluation.
- that more robust, more current and more clearly expressed data be included in the future.
- that a model for the systematic collection of graduation data and the monitoring of progression into the legal profession, albeit challenging due to the longitudinal dimension of graduate progression in the context of law, be developed.
- there be a thorough proofing of documentation to ensure that there are no contradictions or inconsistencies and ensure accuracy of information.
- the good work being undertaken around learning analytics be continued and the College support the development of and integration of innovative, but useful data sets, into continuous improvement activities.

### Section C. Commentary on programme revisions:

The panel has no specific concerns in relation to the programme revisions. Although the panel has made recommendations regarding the review process in Section B, the panel is nonetheless of the view that the revisions are appropriately grounded in reflection on the provider's experience of delivering the programme over the years 2019 – 2024.

**Section D. Recommendations on programme revisions:**

There are no specific recommendations in relation to the programme revisions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tara A. Ryan." The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Signed:**

Panel Chairperson: TARA RYAN

**Date:** 17/06/24



**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

<b>Provider name</b>	Dublin Business School
<b>Date of site visit</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024
<b>Date of report</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2024

## Section A. Overall recommendations

<b>Principal programme</b>	<b>Title</b>	Bachelor of Laws (Hons)
	<b>Award</b>	Bachelor of Laws (Hons)
	<b>Credit</b>	180 ECTS
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

<b>Embedded programme 1</b>	<b>Title</b>	N/A
	<b>Award</b>	N/A
	<b>Credit</b>	N/A
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	N/A

<b>Embedded programme 2</b>	<b>Title</b>	N/A
	<b>Award</b>	N/A
	<b>Credit</b>	N/A
	<b>Recommendation</b> <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	N/A

## Section B. Expert Panel

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr Tara Ryan	Chair	Irish Management Institute
Dr Lydia Bracken	Subject Matter Expert	University of Limerick
Dr Conor Hanly	Subject Matter Expert	University of Galway
Darren Lalor BL	Industry Representative	Practicing Barrister
Alexandra Anton-Aherne	Report Writer	ThreeSixtyInsights
Tserendorj Otgonbaatar	Learner Representative	Griffith College

## 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
DBS campus (premises on Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street and Bow Lane)	800	20

Proposed Enrolment	
<b>Date of first intake</b>	September 2024
<b>Maximum number of annual intakes</b>	2
<b>Maximum total number of learners per intake</b>	200
<b>Programme duration (<i>months from start to completion</i>)</b>	27
<b>Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:</b>	
The panel is satisfied that the provider has the appropriate physical and human resources in place to sustain the maximum number of learners proposed for the programme.	
<b>Target learner groups</b>	
The programme is aimed at the following learner groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent school-leavers who wish to gain an undergraduate education in law.</li> <li>Full and part-time learners who are seeking career advancement by obtaining a legal education, including both those currently seeking employment and those working wishing to upskill in the area of law.</li> <li>Applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements of two H5 + four O6/H7, to include English in the Irish Leaving Certificate. Any FETAC Level 5/6 award with three Distinctions will also meet the entry requirements for all programmes.</li> <li>Applicants without this will be considered on the basis of the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Such applicants are considered on a case-by-case basis.</li> <li>Mature applicants who are over 23 years of age on the 1st of January on the year of admission and do not meet the minimum entry requirements, are also welcomed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Approved countries for provision</b>	Ireland
<b>Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time</b>	Full-time (day) / Part-time (evening)
<b>The teaching and learning modalities</b>	
The programme document notes the following: <p>With respect to this specific programme, and in considering the building blocks upon which a comprehensive teaching, learning and assessment strategy was conceived, it was decided, based upon learner and lecturer feedback, that a more ‘focused’ approach to assessment be facilitated. There is a sustained benefit from a more traditional delivery approach with a focus on in-class delivery. Therefore, it has been decided to continue with maintaining a linear structure to ease learners into the delivery of the programme.</p>	

In conjunction with this approach has been a recognition of the need to constantly question the authenticity of assessment and to ensure that a wide range of assessment tools be considered by the programme team in response to the emergence of Generative AI tools and ChatGPT. Accordingly, a number of modules are employing verbal defences as a way in which individual learners are assessed to prove authenticity. The speed of change in respect to AI and assessment is such that the education sector is challenged in significant ways. The programme team is continuously meeting this challenge by engaging with faculty to ensure that substantial consideration has been given in each module to assessment design.

With respect to the balance of assessment between group work and individual assignments, the programme team has engaged with multiple viewpoints in designing specific modules. Whilst a recognition exists of the significant value attached to the production of assignments in groups in terms of building work together as part of a team which of course reflects the nature of work, it is also important that individual pieces of assessment be employed throughout the programme. With this in mind, the programme team has devised a comprehensive and multi-faceted assessment plan, with a balance of group assignments (incorporating individual components) and individual assignments.

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

The Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme is intended to provide students with a rigorous legal education. The programme provides context in a number of legal areas and aims to equip students with foundational legal concepts and principles while also equipping them with a number of practical skills such as: analysis, research, communication, interpersonal and organisational skills. The programme contains a mix of modules with a focus on various core legal areas as well as more specialised areas.

One of the aims of the programme is to prepare learners for progression to professional legal qualifications such as the Law Society of Ireland (Solicitors) or Honourable Society of King's Inns (Barristers) Examinations. The programme aims to not only provide a solid base within the Irish context but also for learners seeking to obtain professional legal qualifications in other international jurisdictions. The programme also recognises that students may not necessarily proceed down the professional route and therefore also prepares students for other career pathways such as private practice or even unrelated to the professional practice of law. The programme engages a variety of teaching and learning modalities to cater for a multitude of students and backgrounds.

Upon completion of the programme, students will have a deep understanding of the foundational legal concepts and the relationship between these; have the ability to analyse legal issues and apply the relevant and appropriate law; have the self-confidence to comprehend and clearly express complex concepts; have the capability to carry out legal research; have skills necessary to apply legal knowledge to contemporary social problems; have the ability to identify and address own education needs in order to maintain current. Upon completion of the programme, students will also possess a number of competencies, such as:

- Problem solving and critical thinking skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalism and a strong work ethic</li> <li>• Attention to detail</li> <li>• Teamwork skills</li> <li>• Information literacy and associated IT skills</li> <li>• Oral and written communication skills</li> </ul>						
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Summary of specifications for teaching staff</th> <th>WTE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lecturer</td> <td>2.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Master and/or PhD in law, or an Honours Bachelor's Level 8 degree and a professional legal qualification.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE	Lecturer	2.4	Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Master and/or PhD in law, or an Honours Bachelor's Level 8 degree and a professional legal qualification.	
Summary of specifications for teaching staff	WTE					
Lecturer	2.4					
Lecturing staff will have a minimum of a Master and/or PhD in law, or an Honours Bachelor's Level 8 degree and a professional legal qualification.						

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Classroom sessions	1/100
Online lectures	1/100
Workshops	1/25
Practical sessions	1/25
<p><b>Panel Commentary on programme outline and staffing:</b></p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the staffing proposed is appropriate to the programme outlined. The programme curriculum is discussed under Criterion 5 in this report and the programme staffing is discussed under Criterion 6.</p>	

Programmes being replaced (applicable to applications for revalidation)		
Code	Title	Last enrolment date
PG24186	Bachelor of Laws (Hons)	August 2024

## Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

The Bachelor of Laws (Hons) is proposed for revalidation. It is a well-established programme and extensive documentation has been submitted by the provider.

**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)

N/A

## Part 2. Evaluation against the validation criteria

### 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.<sup>1</sup></p>		
	<p><b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b></p>	<p><b>Comment</b></p>
<p><b>Principal Programme</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Panel is satisfied that the provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme. DBS successfully completed the re-engagement process with QQI in 2019 and also gained approval for the provision of blended learning. DBS are planning to seek Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI in the future and are currently planning their application for DA. The provider has established procedures for quality assurance; access, transfer and progression; and has ensured that learners are adequately protected through their current PEL arrangements.</p> <p>A letter accompanying the application for validation was signed by the Registrar &amp; Director of Campus Operations, Darragh Breathnach, and a copy of this letter was provided to the panel alongside the programme documentation. The letter confirmed that the information that is provided within the documentation is truthful, and that DBS has addressed all applicable criteria.</p>

<sup>1</sup>This 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**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.</li> <li>b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).</li> <li>d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's <i>Policy and Criteria for Making Awards</i>.</li> <li>e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</li> <li>f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.</li> <li>(ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>g) For each programme and embedded programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The <b>minimum intended programme learning outcomes</b> and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>(ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are <b>consistent with</b> the relevant QQI awards standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>h) Where applicable, the <b>minimum intended module learning outcomes</b> are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.</li> <li>i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.</li> </ul> <p>For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.<sup>3</sup></p>
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	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel noted that the overall workload and time period (3 years) is the same for what were described as the “part time” and the “full time” programme offering and therefore queried whether the part time programme may be better referred to as an evening programme rather than a part time programme. The programme team noted that the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) has been traditionally known as a day/evening programme and the three year timeframe is the selling point of this programme as it allows students to work while completing the programme in a shorter period of time than a part time programme. The programme team noted that evening students are motivated and enthusiastic.</p> <p>The panel identified a recommendation in relation to criterion 2 in part 3 of this report. Namely, the panel recommends that DBS makes sure that information in the public domain clearly indicates that the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme is a full time programme, i.e. 180 ECTS over three academic years, but with options to study either by day or by evening.</p>

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

		Separately, the panel further recommends that DBS considers having an actual part time delivery of the programme over 4 years.
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**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)**

<p>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.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>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.</p> <p>(i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).</p> <p>(iv) There is evidence<sup>5</sup> of learner demand for the programme.</p> <p>(v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p>(vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.</p>
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	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>It is noted in the documentation provided that DBS relate year 1 of the programme to Level 6, year 2 of the programme to Level 7 and year 3 of the programme to Level 8. The panel sought to understand why DBS have chosen this model. Members of the programme team noted that this is the way in which all programmes are structured at DBS. The panel further queried whether DBS would consider revising the current structure ensuring that students are working to degree level from the very start. Members of the programme team noted that if this approach was implemented,</p>

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> This might be predictive or indirect.

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.

		<p>DBS would see much higher dropout rates due to the profile of students. The programme team further explained that each level is built upon with additional skills and educational experience to gradually reach degree level. Progression is the norm at DBS, and student surveys confirm that students feel supported in this approach. The panel further queried whether the programme team anticipated any issues arising with regard to professional bodies and Constitutional Law and Criminal Law being taught at level 6. Members of the programme team noted that they didn't foresee any issues and emphasised that the scaffolding of learning is built into the programme as students progress from year to year.</p>
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Criterion 4. **The programme’s access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory**

<p>a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied<sup>8</sup>.</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 (CEFR<sup>9</sup>) 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 <b>target learners</b> 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 <b>recognition of prior learning</b> 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"> <li>(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).</li> <li>(ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;</li> <li>(iii) Has long-lasting significance.</li> </ul> <p>g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.</p>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel queried academic progression opportunities available to students on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons). The programme team explained that progression opportunities are discussed with students both formally and informally. DBS don't have any links with specific institutions; a variety of information on external courses is provided to students to enable them to make informed decisions.</p>

<sup>8</sup> 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

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](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**

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended <i>programme</i> learning outcomes.</p> <p>d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme’s elements are clear to learners and to the provider’s staff.</p> <p>e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles<sup>10</sup>.</p> <p>f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.</p> <p>g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.</p> <p>i) Elements such as practice placement and work-based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.</p> <p>j) The programme <b>duration</b> (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its <b>fulltime equivalent contact time</b> (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.<sup>11</sup></p>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel met with current student representatives on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. They were complementary of various aspects, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student representatives felt supported in choosing a stream/path in the programme.</li> </ul> <p>The panel also heard a number of concerns from student representatives, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student representatives did not regard the IT module as fit for purpose. It was described as a pick and mix of everything, with content that is disjointed from other law modules. It was suggested that relevant parts could be incorporated into other modules such as Privacy Law or Introduction to Legal Research Skills and that the overall time for the module be reduced. Alternatively, the module could be offered as an elective module. Assignments such</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

		<p>as creating a website were deemed time consuming and irrelevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A preference for more choice around elective modules was noted, however it was highlighted that classes are quite small and therefore awareness that this may not be possible was noted.</li> </ul> <p>The panel had concerns around the content and relevance of the IT module from reading the documentation provided with regard to feedback and also from meeting with student representatives. Panel members were also concerned about the fact that the IT module is 10 credits, the same as law related modules. The programme team reiterated the importance of the module in terms of providing transferrable skills to students as well as catering to the varying levels and necessity of students on the programme, especially with regard to mature learners. The programme team noted that plagiarism software is covered in the module, and AI awareness elements have also been incorporated. The panel queried if perhaps the programme team would consider building the elements of the module within other relevant modules. DBS noted that this was the original format of the module, and it was changed to the current format. The panel noted that there is considerable disconnect between student feedback and staff in respect of the IT module. Students through a variety of channels were strongly of the view that this module could be better structured and/or should have revised content. The panel has therefore identified a recommendation pertaining to criterion 5, outlined in part 3 of this report. Specifically, the panel urges DBS to reconsider the role of the IT module in the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme, consider the content be reevaluated, and in particular, consider the reduction of the size of the module from 10 credits to 5 credits, and that the content be better tailored to the target cohort.</p>
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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 staff<sup>12</sup> (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.</p> <p>c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners’ achievements as required.</p> <p>d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme’s staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development<sup>13</sup> opportunities<sup>14</sup>.</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>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel highlighted the DBS response in the SWOT analysis where reliance on part time staff was noted as a weakness. The panel sought clarification from DBS on whether there are enough academic staff to cover teaching requirements. The programme team outlined that delivery is linear in nature across two semesters and that a core team is supplemented by part time staff as needed.</p> <p>Further clarification was sought around research requirements and whether this would detract from staff’s availability for teaching. Representatives from DBS noted that there is no research requirement, however faculty is encouraged to participate in research and DBS promote this by carving out time for staff. Further breakdown was provided with regard to contact hours.</p>

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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"> <li>(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)</li> <li>(ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)</li> <li>(iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment</li> <li>(iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g. kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable</li> <li>(v) technical support</li> <li>(vi) administrative support</li> <li>(vii) company placements/internships – if applicable</li> </ul> <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"> <li>(i) Planned intake (first five years) and</li> <li>(ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.</li> </ul> <p>e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.</p>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel noted that the wording in the review report with regard to physical spaces was future facing i.e. page 35 of the review report “There will be adequate seating and writing facilities”. The panel sought to understand whether certain physical resources and supports were currently unavailable and will become available in the future. DBS clarified that all facilities are already in place and the wording in the review report relates to any future changes that may be needed. Indeed, the space in Castle House has been altered to support online teaching.</p> <p>The panel sought to understand student supports with regard to physical spaces for students with mobility impairments. DBS noted that lifts / ramps are available in a particular building and classes are scheduled there accordingly for students with mobility impairments.</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><b>Satisfactory?</b> (yes, no, partially)</p>	<p><b>Comment</b></p>
<p><b>Principal Programme</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel sought to understand what practical / work experience opportunities are provided to students. DBS noted that a number of staff on the programme team are practicing barristers and therefore bring a level of industry experience. Court visits, guest speakers (inclusive of previous students) and other events are also arranged for students.</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, support<sup>15</sup> and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.</p>		
	<p><b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b></p>	<p><b>Comment</b></p>
<p><b>Principal Programme</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel sought clarification around the meaning of “hybrid” delivery. The programme team explained that both full time and part time students have 4.5 hours of face to face classes for the first 3 weeks after which it reverts to synchronous online for part time students. Classes remain face to face but recorded for full time students. The panel has identified a recommendation pertaining to criterion 9, outlined in part 3 of this report. Specifically, the panel recommends that DBS should use consistent language to describe the nature of the ‘hybrid’ delivery in marketing and programme materials to avoid any confusion – what is live and recorded for subsequent viewing vs online should be made clear as a part of this.</p> <p>The panel met with current student representatives on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. They were complementary of various aspects, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High praise was given to the mooted module and the level of support and practice opportunities provided by the lecturer.</li> </ul> <p>The panel also heard a number of concerns from student representatives, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More consistent practical elements and more consistent allocation of time for practical elements was suggested.</li> <li>• Great disparity was noted in some modules each year and issues noted, for example: style does not cater to visual learners, lack of practical elements, very little explanation provided.</li> <li>• Suggestions were made to incorporate practical elements, such as discussions, into each class.</li> </ul> <p>The panel queried student engagement requirements and whether these are formalised for the programme. Members of the</p>

<sup>15</sup> 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.

		<p>programme team noted Moodle is the learning management system used at DBS and that usage guidelines are available to lecturing staff. Further emphasis was placed on experiential learning within the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme and examples provided include quizzes, debates, examples, discussions, factual scenarios, engaging with the content / contextualising the information and theory, presentations / mooted activities. The panel notes that students suggested teaching is not at the same standard across all modules. The panel have identified a recommendation pertaining to this in part 3 of this report. Specifically, the panel recommends that the teaching standard is carefully monitored across all modules, particularly where there are small classes sizes, to ensure that the learning environment is as effective as possible.</p> <p>The panel queried DBS's approach to AI, particularly in relation to the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. The programme team noted that policies are in place, which are reviewed regularly to maintain relevancy with AI advances. The team noted the importance of students using AI ethically and recognising limitations. It was further noted that modules and assessments are reviewed to mitigate AI concerns.</p>
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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><sup>16</sup></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.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.</p> <p>e) There is a satisfactory written <b>programme assessment strategy</b> for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.<sup>18</sup></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.<sup>19</sup></p>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel met with current student representatives on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. They were complementary of various aspects, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student representatives felt prepared in terms of exams and were complementary of their lecturers.</li> <li>• Student representatives generally felt that the workload was manageable and were in favour of completing the programme in three years following the evening offering rather than completing it part time over four years.</li> </ul> <p>The panel also heard a number of concerns from student representatives, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally, assessments are spaced out, however student representatives noted an instance where multiple assessments were due within the same month. It was noted that these were perhaps spaced out initially, but deadlines were changed which then had a knock-on effect for the rest of the scheduled assignments.</li> <li>• A preference was noted for more evenly split assignments throughout the semester or alternatively moving 20% assignments to earlier in the semester to avoid multiple</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> See the section on transitional arrangements.

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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).

		<p>assignments accumulating towards the end of the semester before exams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of timely feedback on assignments and even grades in some instances was noted. A preference was noted for the availability of feedback and grades such that these can be taken into consideration prior to exams.</li> <li>• It was also noted that receiving feedback on exams would be helpful, especially in terms of raising confidence with regard to completing exams for professional bodies.</li> <li>• More notice was needed for exam timetable, especially for part time students that may need to seek time off work.</li> <li>• There seemed to be a lack of understanding around the reasoning for the breakdown between continuous assessment (CA) and exams.</li> </ul> <p>The panel queried the content of the IT module and the relevancy of some of the assessments such as continuous assessment 3: designing a logo and website. The programme team explained that not all students proceed into the professional route, some will go into industry and assessments such as the one in question ensure that students are appropriately equipped in that context.</p> <p>The panel noted some discrepancies in the documentation provided around the timeline for assessment feedback. The panel further noted that this can be confusing and frustrating for students and the information should be the same throughout. DBS clarified that the standard waiting time is four weeks however lecturers may return feedback sooner. The programme team clarified that some timeframes may take into consideration quality assurance and the wider process including external moderation but agreed to standardise the information for the benefit of students. The panel note that a policy is in place around provision of continuous assessment results within 4 weeks and have identified a recommendation in relation to this in part 3 of this report. Specifically, the panel recommends that the policy is implemented rigorously; students should not be undertaking exams without the benefit of CA results and feedback.</p> <p>The panel sought to understand the process behind the assessment schedule at DBS, noting that some modules had a long lead in time. The programme team explained that they have a robust procedure in place and consideration is given to ensure that students are well supported in terms of CA and examinations.</p> <p>The panel sought to understand if enough notice of examination timetables is provided especially to part time students. The programme team noted that an academic timetable is available early in the semester, which gives an indication as to the examination timeline. The programme team further noted that a mechanism exists at DBS where students can seek out exam</p>
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		<p>feedback on an individual basis, however it was noted that this would be difficult to complete across the board.</p> <p>The panel has identified two further recommendations pertaining to assessment in part 3 of this report. First, the panel recommends that DBS systematically provide students with information on how to access feedback on exam performance should they wish to do so. Second, the panel recommends that in light of the profile of the part time student cohort (many are in employment) more notice of examination sessions should be provided to allow students to better plan.</p>
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**Criterion 11. Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for**

<p>a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.</p> <p>b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.</p> <p>c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.</p> <p>d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.</p> <p>e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.</p> <p>f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.</p> <p>g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.</p> <p>h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities<sup>20</sup>.</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><sup>21</sup> 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>		
	<b>Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Principal Programme</b>	Yes	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel met with current student representatives on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. They were complementary of various aspects, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of disability supports that DBS offers. It was noted however that these great supports could be better promoted to students, in particular to part time students that may not be on campus as much as full time students.</li> <li>• Opportunities for the student voice to be heard. The panel heard that students sit on various academic boards and committees and bring the student perspective on a range of matters.</li> </ul> <p>The panel also heard a number of concerns from student representatives, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student representatives deemed it important to make information available to current students around graduate destination information.</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> For more information on making reasonable accommodations see [www.AHEAD.ie](http://www.AHEAD.ie) and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

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

	<p>The panel queried the lack of graduate destination data in the documentation provided. Members of the programme team commented on the profile of students on the programme, namely that often students are already employed / working part time to support their studies and some complete the course to further their knowledge within their existing discipline. Graduate destination data is collected informally, and certain aspects / elements are discussed at programme review. The programme team further noted that they recognise the importance of this information, and a more formal process for collecting this information is currently underway at institution level. The panel has identified a recommendation for DBS pertaining to this criterion in part 3 of this report. Specifically, the panel support the work to follow up with alumni to ascertain how many progress to law practice and develop more comprehensive data sets on the learner profile.</p> <p>The documentation received by the panel notes that students have access to approximately 40,000 books, 30,000 ebooks and 35,000 journals. The panel sought to understand whether these resources were the entire stock available or just the law stock. Members of the programme team clarified that these figures relate to the whole stock. The panel further queried whether these books are available to learners in an accessible format for students with hearing impairments. Members of the programme team noted that most books have read aloud functionality, and that additional support is available to students with regard to accessibility tools / strategies training. DBS noted that they are members of AHEAD and DAWN and certain staff have completed the AHEAD badge as well as the UDL badge. One to one support is also available to students in terms of using accessibility tools and resources. Disability supports are advertised on the DBS website.</p> <p>The panel sought to understand what supports are available to students with disabilities and what DBS have done to promote these supports. The programme team highlighted that private colleges do not qualify for FSD funding and therefore each application is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Examples were provided by DBS as to how students with disabilities may be supported, for example: needs assessments, disability support staff, lectures are recorded and can be reviewed, and physical spaces as mentioned previously. Members of the programme team noted that because funding is not available, it is not overtly advertised in the documentation.</p> <p>The panel queried the use of learning analytics at DBS. Members of the programme team explained that information is collected and collated for the purpose of the review report, and is also used in terms of student engagement. In 2017 an Early Alert Report was built which collates a variety of information from Moodle and over time builds a profile of students at risk. Staff can then reach out to these students specifically or refer them to support staff. The panel have identified a recommendation in relation to this in part 3 of this</p>
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		<p>report. Specifically, the panel commends the use of learning analytics by DBS to augment student support and encourages continued development of practice in this area.</p> <p>The panel queried how evening students are catered for with regard to support services. The panel heard that various supports are available: each programme has a dedicated programme coordinator; assistance desk is open until 6.30pm, IT support is available until 8pm, library is open until 10pm; career support workshops are scheduled at 5pm to cater for students post work and before lectures, which start at 6.15pm.</p> <p>The panel commends DBS on their student support provision, its flexibility and openness to providing supports to learners with disabilities and has identified a recommendation pertaining to this in part 3 of this report. Specifically, the panel recommends that DBS ensure as much information as possible is provided to students on available support, with particular regard to part time students that may not be as involved in campus activities as full time students.</p>
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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-the-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.</p> <p>c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme’s staffing requirements and can be added to the programme’s complement of staff.</p> <p>d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme’s complement of supported physical resources.</p> <p>e) Quality assurance<sup>22</sup> 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>		
	<p><b>Satisfactory?</b> (yes, no, partially)</p>	<p><b>Comment</b></p>
<p><b>Principal Programme</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The panel is satisfied that the provider has met this criterion.</p> <p>The panel sought clarification on the overarching programme management in context of the daytime and evening time offerings. Members of the programme team noted that these offerings are treated as one programme which is managed altogether. For example, class rep meetings take place together as do the end of year exams. The panel further sought clarity around the twice-yearly enrolment and the logistics of it. DBS noted that a mechanism is available however they have not needed to avail of it as they have never had a January intake.</p> <p>The panel sought to understand how attendance is accurately recorded on the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme. The programme team at DBS noted that the class sizes are small and that faculty are attuned to this. The attendance tag system is therefore used as an indicator of attendance. The programme team noted that other systems have been previously explored with no success, but further options are continuously considered.</p>

<sup>22</sup> See also QQI’s Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

## Part 3. Overall recommendation to QQI

### 3.1 Principal programme:

Select one	
<b>X</b>	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 ( <b>minor</b> ) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination);
	Not satisfactory.

#### Reasons for the overall recommendation

1. DBS has satisfied the validation criteria and presented a strong programme for revalidation.

#### Commendations

1. The panel commends DBS's provision of student support, its flexibility and openness to providing supports to students with disabilities.
2. The panel commends the use of learning analytics by DBS to augment student support and encourages continued development of practice in this area.

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

N/A

#### Summary of recommended special conditions of validation

N/A

#### Summary of recommendations to the provider

- The panel recommends that DBS ensure as much information as possible is provided to students on available support, with particular regard to part time students that may not be as involved in campus activities as full time students.
- The panel support DBS's work to follow up with alumni to ascertain how many progress to law practice and develop more comprehensive data sets on the learner profile and recommend this be further developed.
- The panel urges DBS to reconsider the role of the IT module in the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme, consider the content be reevaluated, and in particular, consider the reduction of the size of the module from 10 credits to 5 credits, and that the content be better tailored to the target cohort.
- The panel recommends that DBS should use consistent language to describe the nature of the 'hybrid' delivery in marketing and programme materials to avoid any confusion – what is live and recorded for subsequent viewing vs online should be made clear as a part of this.

- The panel recommends that DBS systematically provide students with information on how to access feedback on exam performance should they wish to do so.
- The panel recommends that in light of the profile of the part time student cohort (many are in employment) more notice of examination sessions should be provided to allow students to better plan.
- The panel recommends that DBS makes sure that information in the public domain clearly indicates that the Bachelor of Laws (Hons) programme is a full time programme, i.e. 180 ECTS over three academic years, but with options to study either by day or by evening. Separately, the panel further recommends that DBS considers having an actual part time delivery of the programme over 4 years.
- The panel recommend that the teaching standard is carefully monitored across all modules, particularly where there are small classes sizes, to ensure that the learning environment is as effective as possible.
- The panel recommend that the policy pertaining to the provision of continuous assessment results within 4 weeks is implemented rigorously; students should not be undertaking exams without the benefit of CA results and feedback.
- The panel commends the use of learning analytics by DBS to augment student support and encourages continued development of practice in this area.

## Declarations of Evaluators' Interests

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

Panel chairperson: TARA RYAN

Date: 17/06/24

Signed:



## 3.2 Disclaimer

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

While QQI has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will QQI be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or

consequential loss or damage) arising from, or in connection with, the use of the information contained in the Report of the External Evaluation Panel.

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

Full Time

• 1B.3a Proposed Programme Schedule(s) – FT (day) Year 1																															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School																													
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Laws (Honours)				QI Award Title		Major			ECTS		180																		
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title (if relevant)			NA					Stage ECTS		60																		
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		Face to Face			Blended			Hybrid			Online		Workplace Learning																		
		✓																													
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		In-person face-to-face			Synchronous				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 (add rows as required)																															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)										Assessment – Allocation of Marks (from the module assessment strategy)																					
Module Title		Semester		Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)		Credits (ECTS)		Total Hours		In person		Synchronous		Asynchronous		Work Based		Independent Work		Continuous Assessment %		Proctored Exam – in person %		Proctored Exam – online %		Project %		Practical Skills Demonstration %		Work Based %	

Introduction to Legal Research Skills	1&2	M	10	250	72				178	100%					
IT Skills for Law Students	1&2	M	10	250	72				178	100%					
Criminal Law	1&2	M	10	250	72				178	40%	60%				
Constitutional Law	1&2	M	10	250	72				178	40%	60%				
Legal Systems	1&2	M	10	250	72				178	100%					
Contract Law	1&2	M	10	250	72				178	40%	60%				
<b>NOTE:</b>	In fulfilment of professional body requirements, exams must be hosted on-site, proctored and invigilated.														

• 1B.3b Proposed Programme Schedule(s) – FT (day) Year 2										
<b>Name of Provider:</b>	Dublin Business School									
<b>Programme Title</b> <i>(Principal)</i>	Bachelor of Laws (Honours)				<b>QI Award Title</b>	Major			<b>ECTS</b>	180
<b>Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)</b>	2	<b>Exit Award Title</b> <i>(if relevant)</i>			NA				<b>Stage ECTS</b>	60
<b>Programme Delivery Mode</b> - <i>✓one as appropriate.</i>	<b>Face to Face</b>			<b>Blended</b>		<b>Hybrid</b>		<b>Online</b>	<b>Workplace Learning</b>	
	✓									
<b>Teaching and Learning Modalities</b> - <i>✓one or more as appropriate.</i>	<b>In-person face-to-face</b>			<b>Synchronous</b>			<b>Asynchronous</b>		<b>Work Based</b>	
	✓									
<b>Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage</b> - <i>✓one or more as appropriate.</i>	<b>Continuous Assessment</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – in person</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – online</b>		<b>Project</b>		<b>Practical Skills Demonstration</b>	<b>Work based</b>
	✓		✓							
<b>Modules in this stage (add rows as required)</b>										

Total Student Effort Module (hours)									Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent Work	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Mooting and Professional Practice	1&2	M	10	250	66				184	100%					
Law of Tort	1&2	M	10	250	66				184	40%	60%				
European Union Law	1&2	M	10	250	66				184	10%	90%				
Law of Real Property	1&2	M	10	250	66				184	25%	75%				
Company Law	1&2	M	10	250	66				184	25%	75%				
Commercial Law	1&2	M	10	250	66				184	100%					
<b>NOTE:</b>	In fulfilment of professional body requirements, exams must be hosted on-site, proctored and invigilated.														

• 1B.3c Proposed Programme Schedule(s) – FT (day) Year 3						
<b>Name of Provider:</b>	Dublin Business School					
<b>Programme Title</b> <i>(Principal)</i>	Bachelor of Laws (Honours)		<b>QI Award Title</b>	Major		<b>ECTS</b> 180
<b>Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)</b>	Award	<b>Exit Award Title</b> <i>(if relevant)</i>	NA			<b>Stage ECTS</b> 60
<b>Programme Delivery Mode</b> - <i>✓one as appropriate.</i>	<b>Face to Face</b>		<b>Blended</b>		<b>Hybrid</b>	<b>Online</b>
	✓					

<b>Teaching and Learning Modalities</b> – ✓one or more as appropriate.			<b>In-person face-to-face</b>			<b>Synchronous</b>			<b>Asynchronous</b>			<b>Work Based</b>			
			✓												
<b>Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage</b> – ✓one or more as appropriate.			<b>Continuous Assessment</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – in person</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – online</b>		<b>Project</b>		<b>Practical Skills Demonstration</b>		<b>Work based</b>		
			✓		✓										
<b>Modules in this stage (add rows as required)</b>															
<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>										<b>Assessment – Allocation of Marks</b> <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent work	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Contemporary Issues in Law	1&2	M	10	250	48				202	100%					
Equity and Trusts	1&2	M	10	250	60				190		100%				
Administrative Law	1&2	M	10	250	60				190	25%	75%				
Jurisprudence	1&2	E	10	250	60				190	25%	75%				
Family Law	1&2	E	10	250	60				190	25%	75%				
Law of Evidence	1&2	E	10	250	60				190	40%	60%				
Employment Law	1&2	E	10	250	60				190	100%					
International Law	1&2	E	10	250	60				190	100%					
<b>NOTE:</b>	In fulfilment of professional body requirements, exams must be hosted on-site, proctored and invigilated.														

Part-Time

• 1B.3d Proposed Programme Schedule(s) – PT (evening) Year 1															
Name of Provider:		Dublin Business School													
Programme Title (Principal)		Bachelor of Laws (Honours)			QI Award Title		Major			ECTS		180			
Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)		1	Exit Award Title (if relevant)		NA			Stage ECTS		60					
Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.		Face to Face		Blended		Hybrid		Online		Workplace Learning					
				✓											
Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.		In-person face-to-face			Synchronous			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 (add rows as required)															
Total Student Effort Module (hours)									Assessment – Allocation of Marks <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>						
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous*	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent Work	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Introduction to Legal Research Skills	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					
IT Skills for Law Students	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					

Criminal Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	40%	60%				
Constitutional Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	40%	60%				
Legal Systems	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					
Contract Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	40%	60%				
<b>NOTE:</b>		In fulfilment of professional body requirements, exams must be hosted on-site, proctored and invigilated.													

\*The hours for synchronous sessions 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.

<b>• 1B.3e Proposed Programme Schedule(s) – PT (evening) Year 2</b>											
<b>Name of Provider:</b>	Dublin Business School										
<b>Programme Title (Principal)</b>	Bachelor of Laws (Honours)				<b>QI Award Title</b>	Major			<b>ECTS</b>	180	
<b>Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)</b>	2	<b>Exit Award Title (if relevant)</b>			NA				<b>Stage ECTS</b>	60	
<b>Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.</b>	<b>Face to Face</b>		<b>Blended</b>		<b>Hybrid</b>		<b>Online</b>		<b>Workplace Learning</b>		
			✓								
<b>Teaching and Learning Modalities – ✓one or more as appropriate.</b>	<b>In-person face-to-face</b>			<b>Synchronous</b>			<b>Asynchronous</b>			<b>Work Based</b>	
	✓			✓							
<b>Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage – ✓one or more as appropriate.</b>	<b>Continuous Assessment</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – in person</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – online</b>		<b>Project</b>		<b>Practical Skills Demonstration</b>	<b>Work based</b>	
	✓		✓								
<b>Modules in this stage (add rows as required)</b>											
<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>								<b>Assessment – Allocation of Marks</b> <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>			

Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous*	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent Work	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Mooting and Professional Practice	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					
Law of Tort	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	40%	60%				
European Union Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	10%	90%				
Law of Real Property	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	25%	75%				
Company Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	25%	75%				
Commercial Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					
<b>NOTE:</b>	In fulfilment of professional body requirements, exams must be hosted on-site, proctored and invigilated.														

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• 1B.3f Proposed Programme Schedule(s) – PT (evening) Year 3						
<b>Name of Provider:</b>	Dublin Business School					
<b>Programme Title (Principal)</b>	Bachelor of Laws (Honours)		<b>QQI Award Title</b>	Major		<b>ECTS</b> 180
<b>Stage (1,2,3, Award etc)</b>	Award	<b>Exit Award Title (if relevant)</b>	NA			<b>Stage ECTS</b> 60
<b>Programme Delivery Mode - ✓one as appropriate.</b>	<b>Face to Face</b>		<b>Blended</b>		<b>Hybrid</b>	<b>Online</b>
			✓			
						<b>Workplace Learning</b>

<b>Teaching and Learning Modalities</b> – ✓one or more as appropriate.			<b>In-person face-to-face</b>			<b>Synchronous</b>			<b>Asynchronous</b>			<b>Work Based</b>			
			✓			✓									
<b>Assessment Techniques Utilised in Stage</b> – ✓one or more as appropriate.			<b>Continuous Assessment</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – in person</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – online</b>		<b>Project</b>		<b>Practical Skills Demonstration</b>		<b>Work based</b>		
			✓		✓										
<b>Modules in this stage (add rows as required)</b>															
<b>Total Student Effort Module (hours)</b>										<b>Assessment – Allocation of Marks</b> <i>(from the module assessment strategy)</i>					
Module Title	Semester	Mandatory (M) or Elective (E)	Credits (ECTS)	Total Hours	In person	Synchronous*	Asynchronous	Work Based	Independent work	Continuous Assessment %	Proctored Exam – in person %	Proctored Exam – online %	Project %	Practical Skills Demonstration %	Work Based %
Contemporary Issues in Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	22.5			223	100%					
Equity and Trusts	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214		100%				
Administrative Law	1&2	M	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	25%	75%				
Jurisprudence	1&2	E	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	25%	75%				
Family Law	1&2	E	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	25%	75%				
Law of Evidence	1&2	E	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	40%	60%				
Employment Law	1&2	E	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					
International Law	1&2	E	10	250	4.5	31.5			214	100%					
<b>NOTE:</b>	In fulfilment of professional body requirements, exams must be hosted on-site, proctored and invigilated.														

\*The hours for synchronous sessions 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.

