Dublin Business School

2022

Annual Quality Report (Dublin Business School) Reporting Period 2020-2021

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2020-2021

PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report** (**AQR;** formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

CONTENTS

PREFACE 3

Guidelines on Completing the Report 6
Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template 7

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM 8

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG) 8

Introduction and Overview of Institution 9
1.0 Internal QA Framework 11
1.1 Governance and Management of Quality 11
1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision 16

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery 17
2.1 Programme Development and Approval 17
2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification 22
2.3 Procedures for Making Awards 24
2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment 25

3.0 Learner Resources and Support 27
4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes 31
5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support 32
6.0 Information and Data Management 40
7.0 Public Information and Communication 43
8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review 45
9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties 49
9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies 49
9.2 Collaborative Provision 52
9.3 Articulation Agreements 53

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM 61

Guidelines on Completing Part B 61
1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments 62
1.1 Strategic QA Updates 62
1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR 65
1.3 Governance and Management 69
1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review 72

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts **76**
2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity 80

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period **81**
3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives 81
3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods 85
3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period 85
3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period 86

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies **89**

Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report – where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new polices or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

Legislation

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended)
- Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 (as amended)
- Technological Universities Act 2018
- Universities Act 1997

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- Core QAG
- Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers
- Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies
- Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology
- Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes
- Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes
- Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning

Other QQI Policy Documents

- QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012
- QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015
- QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015

Other National/International References

- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)
- IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019
- HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education
- The Salzburg Principles
- The Salzburg II Recommendations
- SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices
- UN Sustainable Development Goals

[1] These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - *Internal QA Framework*	**2.1**	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	**2.3**	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*				
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
5.0 - *Staff Recruitment, Development and Support*	**2.4**	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*	**2.5**	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - *Learner Resources and Supports*	**2.7**	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - *Information and Data Management*	**2.8**	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - *Public Information and Communication*	**2.9**	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - *Programme Delivery and Development*	**2.10**	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*				
9.0 - *Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	**2.11**	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Dublin Business School for the reporting period **1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021.**

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 25 February 2022**.

The AQR has been approved by DBS Academic Board, Senior Leadership Team, and Board of Directors and is submitted by **Grant Goodwin.**

Introduction to the College

DBS was established in 1975 and over the following 40-plus years has increased its range of programmes and specialisms. Currently, programmes span a broad range of disciplines including accounting, business, film and creative media, finance, humanities and social sciences, law, marketing, and the computer sciences. Typically, DBS has over 8,000 active students every year, over half of which are part-time evening students and the remainder are full-time, day students. This number was moderately impacted by the COVID-19 situation in 2020-21 but is already returning to previous levels for the 2021-22 academic year.

Approximately three quarters of the student body is enrolled on QQI validated programmes, specifically full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at NFQ Level 6 to Level 9, including Higher Certificate, Higher Diploma, BA, BA Hons, BSc Hons, Postgraduate Diploma, MA, MBA and MSc programmes. The remaining quarter of the students take programmes that are not on the NFQ, some of which are accredited by professional bodies such as the Project Management Institute or ACCA. DBS also offers a small number of programmes that are on the UK Ofqual framework. These are awarded by Kaplan Professional Awards (https://kaplanpa.co.uk/).

DBS also offers some English language programmes, though only where the learner is planning to progress to a higher education award programme. DBS has held ACELS accreditation for some years.

The DBS campus is located in Dublin city centre, with premises on Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street and Bow Lane. Facilities include lecture theatres, PC labs and tutorial rooms, a library including study rooms, study areas and PC terminals, canteen facilities and student services, including student welfare and counselling, and careers services. In the 2020-21 academic year, with an evolving COVID-19 context, the capacity of the campus was significantly reduced in order to meet the public health requirements of social distancing. However, when restrictions allowed, the College allowed the return to campus of identified 'vulnerable' groups (such as first-year learners, international learners), who were most impacted by the reduced social factor of campus experience and remote teaching and learning. Teaching delivery remained on a hybrid schedule from September 2020, where classes are delivered in the classroom while broadcast online at the same time. This facilitates students to have some classroom and on-campus experience. This was important for first years, international and vulnerable students in particular.

DBS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kaplan Inc. (https://kaplan.com/), the education division of the Graham Holdings Company (http://www.ghco.com/company-profile). Kaplan is a global education company, serving more than one million learners per year in over 400 locations in 30 countries. Kaplan's programmes include higher and professional education, language instruction, test preparation and services to primary/secondary learners and schools. In the area of professional education alone, Kaplan last year provided some 600,000 courses to individuals and firms in financial services and related fields around the globe. Kaplan has turnover of approximately $1.5 billion and represents about half the overall Graham Holdings company business.

DBS currently (February 2022) employs 370 staff. Of these, 274 are directly involved in teaching delivery while 119 are administration staff.

DBS successfully completed the Re-Engagement process with QQI in 2019, including gaining approval for provision of blended learning.

DBS's Strategic Plan was reviewed and a Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 was launched, and can be found **here**.

Process for Development and Approval of the AQR

DBS welcomes the opportunity to engage with the AQR process for the second time. This has been a chance for the organisation to monitor developments through the pandemic and formalise monitoring and self-reflection activities around professional services as well as policy development.

In terms of completion of the report, initial preparation was carried out by the Registrar and Assistant Registrar. Briefings on compilation of the 2022 Report were provided by the Registrar at meetings of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Academic Board prior to Christmas 2021.

The Assistant Registrar reviewed the 2021 AQR submission for any components of Section A that required updating for the 2022 submission, and transferred the corresponding components of Section B to the appropriate spaces for self-reflection and commentary or updates. The key stakeholders due to report back on progress since the 2021 submission were invited to provide their respective updates.

A draft of the report was presented to the SLT on 8 February and Academic Board on 15 February 2022 for consultation and approval. The document was left open for review and comment before finalisation ahead of the QQI deadline on 25 February.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Please refer to:

QAH Part A Section 1 Governance:

1.2 DBS Governance and Organisation

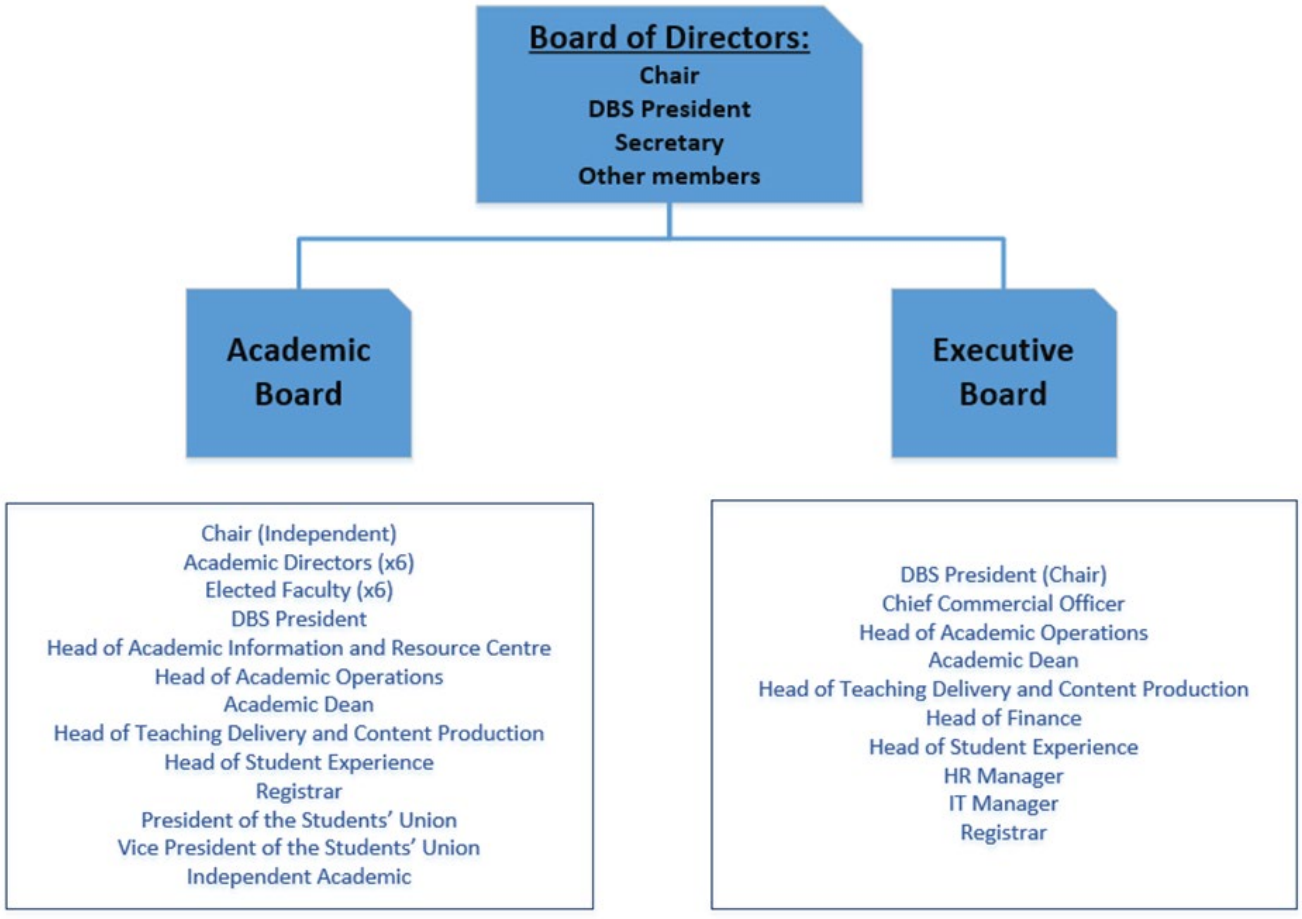
1.3 Terms of Reference for Governance Boards and Committees

1.4 DBS Leadership Structure and Roles

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

See QAH Part A 1.2.2 Senior Governance

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



The Board of Directors is the most senior authority of Dublin Business School, with responsibility for overseeing all activities and for directing the educational mission of the business. Its remit is to ensure the College functions effectively and legally, and in line with the overarching corporate goals. The Board of Directors is currently comprised of

- Chair, Peter Houillon, CEO Kaplan UK, Ireland and Middle East
- DBS Head of Institution, Andrew Conlan-Trant, DBS President
- Secretary, Rachael Convery, General Counsel, Kaplan International
- Board Member, Zoe Robinson, Managing Director, Kaplan Professional Qualifications
- Board Member, Dr Richard Thorn, President Emeritus, IT Sligo (Independent Board Member)

There is currently a vacancy for another independent board member. At the time of writing the Chairman and President are in advanced discussions with a person with significant business experience at Director and Chief Executive level

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

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

The Academic Board is chaired by an independent external member of high standing within the higher education sector; currently the Chair is Brian Bennett, former Registrar of IT Carlow. The Academic Board also comprises the DBS President, Registrar, Academic Dean, Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production, Head of Academic Operations, Head of Student Experience, Head of the Information and Resource Centre, Academic Directors, six elected Faculty representatives, (four from the Accounting, Business, Computing and Law disciplines and two from the Humanities, Social Sciences and Creative Media disciplines), the President of the Students' Union, the Vice President of the Students' Union, and an independent academic member, currently Donna Bell, an experienced Higher Education Consultant in Ireland and internationally, with extensive experience as a QQI Chair and external advisor to the HEA.

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

The Academic Board has the authority to ratify decisions made by other academic entities within the College.

The Academic Board has ultimate decision-making power and authority on academic matters, with responsibility to advise the Executive Board and Board of Directors accordingly.

The Executive Board, also known as the Senior Leadership Team, comprises all senior managers within the College, and operates in tandem with the Academic Board to ensure the effective operation and quality delivery of academic programmes alongside commercial viability of the College. The Executive Board holds responsibility for the character, mission, values and strategic development of the College. The Executive Board is chaired by the President of the College, and comprises the Chief Commercial Officer, Registrar, Academic Dean, Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production, Head of Academic Operations, Head of Student Experience, Head of Finance, Head of IT and Head of Strategy, Corporate Development & People.

The Executive Board is a decision-making entity.

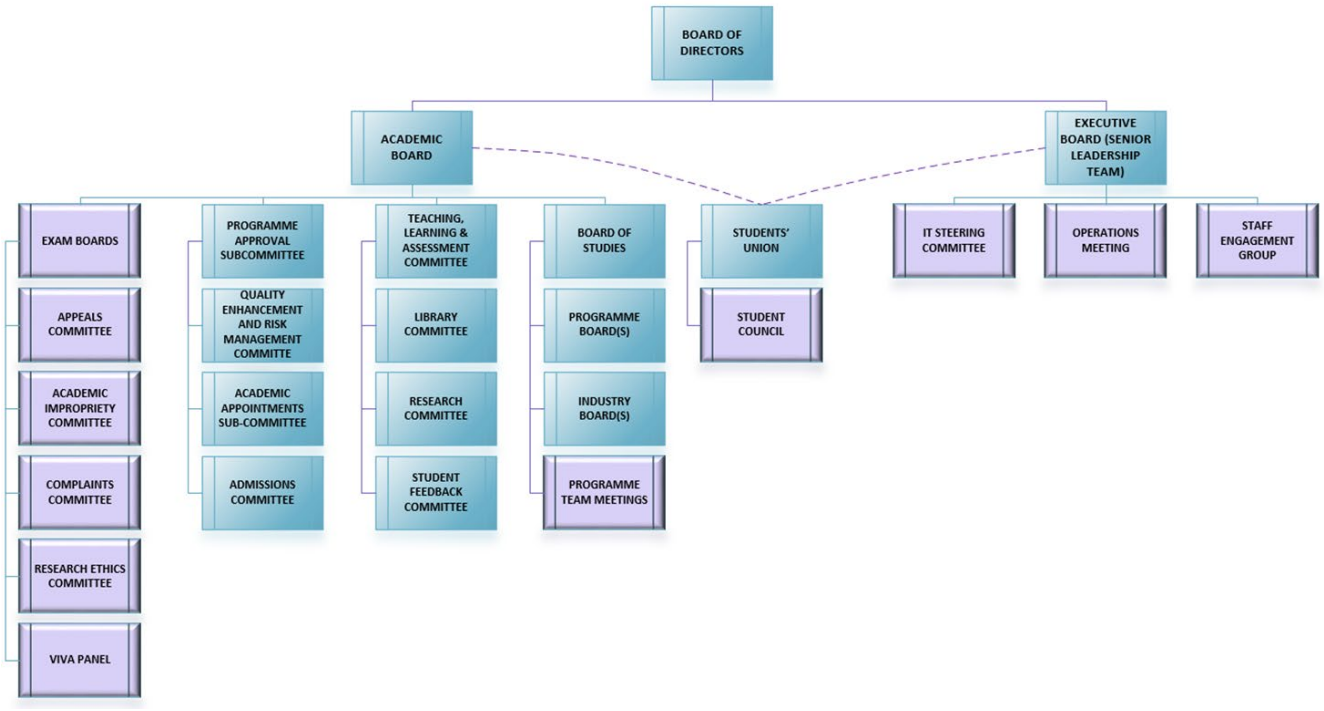
The interaction of these three Boards at the most senior level of the College is fundamental to the success of DBS in maintaining and improving quality and standards. As a private college, the business integrity of DBS is further safeguarded by strong corporate governance from the parent company structure, Kaplan Inc. and Graham Holdings Company. DBS currently operates through Graham Holdings committees such as the:

- Compliance Committee
- IT Security Committee
- Corporate Audit Services Committee
- Compensation Committee

The arrangements with Kaplan and Graham Holdings go even further than this. In addition to regular contact on operational matters, more formal coordination of policies and practice is achieved through the following structured engagements across the Kaplan group.

- Quarterly Financial and Business Reviews with Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer of Kaplan Inc.
- Bi-annual IT reviews with Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer of Kaplan Inc.
- Bi-annual Learning Reviews with Kaplan Inc.
- Annual Balance Sheet review with Chief Financial Officer of Kaplan Inc.
- Monthly financial review by Head of Finance, Kaplan UK & Ireland
- IT Steering Group chaired by Head of IT, Kaplan UK & Ireland
- Legal & compliance support from Kaplan Legal Counsel
- HR support and oversight from Director HR, Kaplan UK & Ireland
- Learning and product development support from Director of Learning, Kaplan UK.

Further governance structures operate below the Academic Board and Senior Leadership level. These structures are laid out in the diagram below. Terms of reference for all committees are laid out in the DBS Quality Assurance Handbook Part A Section 1.3 and each academic-facing committee reports to the Academic Board on a cyclical basis.



DBS Governance Structures

Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC)

The remit of the PASC is to evaluate proposals for new programmes for suitability to progress at each stage of the development process, up to submission to QQI. This committee was instituted through the review of policy and procedure for Re-Engagement with QQI. This committee convened in pilot form on a number of occasions in 2019/2020, but a review and rationalisation of membership was carried out in January 2021 to ensure sustainability of the process going forward, with an updating of Terms of Reference to reflect this.

The Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Committee

The Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Committee is responsible for monitoring, review and updating of existing Quality Assurance policies and procedures and identification and assessment of risk as it relates to programme development, delivery and review. This committee was a new committee instituted through the review of policy and procedure for pilot-Re-engagement with QQI in 2017 and the subsequent Re-Engagement process completed in 2019.

Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC)

Following the formal recruitment and interview process carried out by Faculty Managers and Course Directors, all new Faculty/teaching staff in DBS are reviewed by the AASC before appointments are made. The AASC reviews qualifications and professional experience of proposed teaching staff, and may make recommendations or conditions of appointment such as specific training or mentoring.

Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee is responsible for the monitoring of admissions data to ensure compliance with standards, process and procedures for access, transfer and progression of learners, and to evaluate new or alternative qualifications for entry.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Committee

The LTA Committee aims to foster best practice in pedagogy by support and development of innovative learning and teaching practices, linked to assessment of programme and module outcomes.

Research Committee

The Research Committee's remit is to promote a research-ethos in the College and support those carrying out research, aligned with the College's research strategy.

Library Committee

The Library Committee oversees the strategic position of the library and its contribution to the College, including supporting and contributing to quality assurance in learning, teaching, assessment and research.

Board of Studies

The function of the Board of Studies is to monitor the oversight of programme delivery to ensure quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment. Programme delivery is monitored through programme team meetings and individual Programme Boards, with Course Directors reporting into Board of Studies on all programmes under their area. Any changes or updates to programmes which are proposed are presented to the Board of Studies for review and approval.

Programme Boards

Programme Boards are the mechanism for detailed review and reporting on individual programmes of study and implementation of learning, teaching and research initiatives at programme level. They are Chaired by Course Directors.

Details of all Academic Board Sub-Committees' including the membership and terms of reference are included in the QAH Part A Sections 1.2.3-1.3. Learners are represented on the Academic Board, Programme Boards, LTA Committee, and Library Committee.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Please refer to:

QAH Part C Section 3 Transnational Collaborative and Joint Awards

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

- DBS will enter into collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards where there is a clear academic or commercial benefit to such arrangements.
- All collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards equate to the core vision of DBS, which is the achievement of excellence through learning.
    - In all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards, DBS will fulfil its statutory obligations and protect its academic standing.
    - All elements of collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards must comply with the policies, standards and procedures set out in this section of the QAH which are informed by the policies, standards and procedures outlined in QQI's policy for '*Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards*'.
- DBS delivers programmes of study that lead to QQI awards. These awards are placed on the NFQ at the appropriate level as set out by programme validation. The learning outcomes of the programmes of study are informed by the appropriate QQI award standards.
- All collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards must comply with national and international legislative requirements.
- DBS will only consider collaborative programmes with partners who are found to be of good academic reputation and sound financial standing.
- All collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint awards, while operating within the framework of formal and legally binding agreements, shall be based on close working relationships with collaborative partners and accrediting bodies, in an environment of openness, transparency, trust and mutual respect.
- The interests of the learner will be paramount in all collaborative programmes, transnational programmes and joint award activity.
- All agreements will have clearly articulated and binding arrangements to ensure adequate provision for the protection of learners.

DBS currently has transnational and collaborative provision as detailed in Section 9.2 below. DBS has had an on-going relationship with KPTM in Malaysia for many years and as such has an established track record of successful transnational provision. In the period 2020/2021 two additional programmes were validated for transnational provision with EU Business School, from their Munich campus.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Please refer to:
QAH Part C Section 2 Programme Development and Review

Overview of DBS Programme Development and Review

Programme Development and Review occurs in DBS through a number of internal mechanisms. For existing programmes, programme monitoring occurs through formal discussion and feedback received through programme team meetings (held every 4-6weeks approximately), Programme Boards (held once a semester), biannual Board of Studies and Annual Programme Reports . If any proposed changes to a programme are identified (within the scope of the validation) these are formally discussed at a programme team level, sanctioned and agreed across the programme team and formally brought to the Board of Studies for review and approval. This process is laid out in more detail below. For new programme development, there is a defined process established which is also detailed below.

Programme Monitoring

Programme team meetings (4-6 weeks approximately)

Academic Directors have successfully established regular and ongoing programme team meetings and these occur at both a programme and discipline level. Programme team meetings are an important mechanism for the two-way flow of information, feedback and discussion on programmes at a team and discipline level. They are internal-facing with an invitation extended to all Faculty (full-time and part-time), Programme Coordinators and Faculty Managers. The Academic Dean may also attend. Agendas are fluid and meetings are minuted.

Programme Boards (once a semester, Terms of Reference QAH Part A Section 1.3.7)

The Programme Board monitors and reports on the constituent aspects of the learner experience and formally captures the progress/development of a programme over time, which in turn feeds into cyclical review. DBS positions these as an important quality assurance and reporting mechanism into the higher academic functions in the College, such as the Board of Studies and Academic Board. They capture the totality of the learner experience on all of the programmes which a discipline offers. Programme Boards occur once a semester, are attended by Faculty, library and learner representatives.

Programme Boards have a standing agenda which requires reporting on qualitative and quantitative data at programme level and also learner, team meeting and external examiner feedback. They also involve a Library report at programme level, and Class Rep input at programme level. The minutes of the Programme Board are then presented to the Board of Studies, with key highlights and issues noted at this board. Once a year the minutes and reports from the Programme Boards and Board of Studies feed into the Academic Dean's Annual Report to Academic Board.

In the 2020-21 academic year, DBS successfully held Programme Boards across all disciplines.

Board of Studies (twice yearly, Terms of Reference QAH Part A Section 1.3.6)
The function of the Board of Studies is to ensure academic quality across all programmes and appropriate implementation of the five year strategic plan in programme delivery. The membership of the board consists of the Academic Dean (Chair); the Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee; the Chair of the Research Committee; the Registrar; all Academic Directors; the Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production; the Head of Student Experience; a Library representative; the School Administrative Officer and other attendees as required by the agenda. The Board of Studies meets twice a year (November and April/May). The Board of Studies:

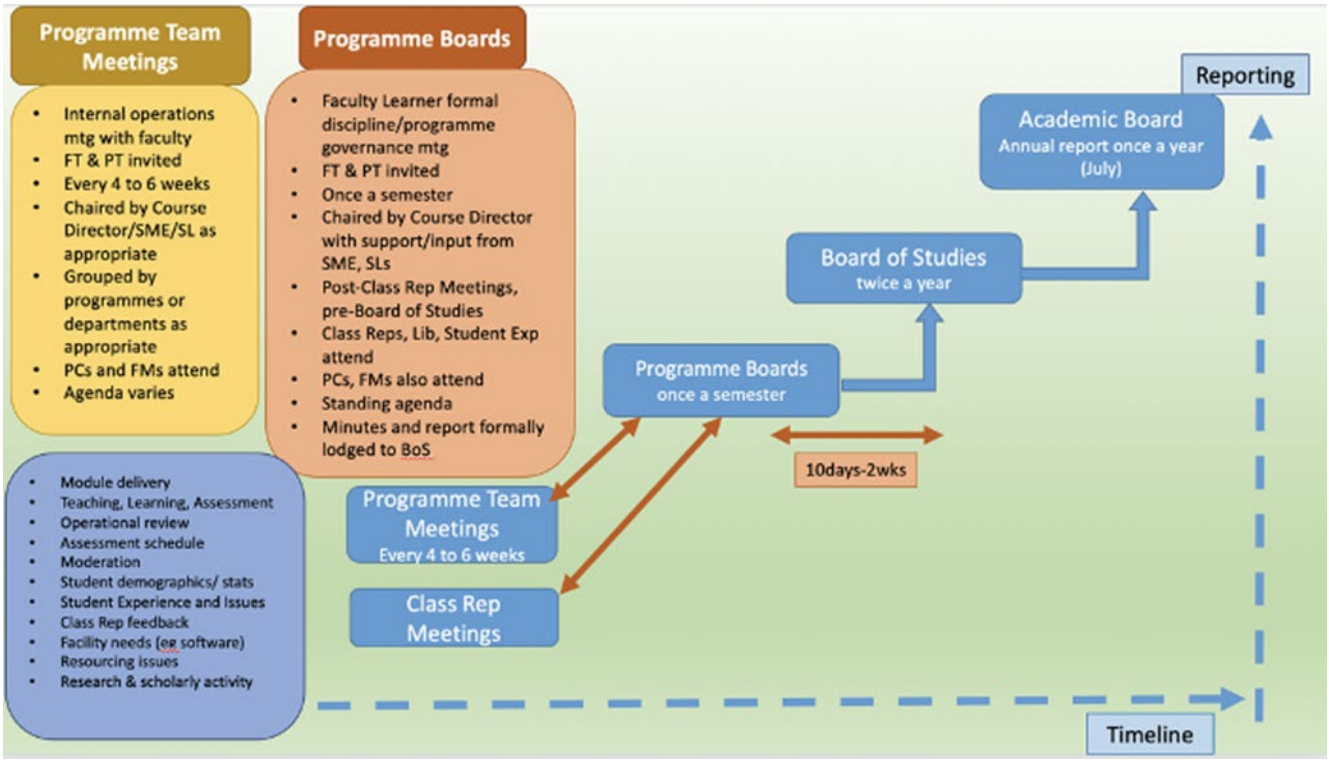
- Monitors programmes and suites of programmes to ensure consistency of approach in teaching, learning and assessment across the schools
- Reviews and approves updates to teaching, learning and assessment for programmes or modules, within its scope, referred from Programme Boards.
- Agrees the implementation of new initiatives in teaching, learning and research identified by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, Research Committee and programme teams, for deployment through Programme Boards.
- And approves programme changes (within scope) and implementation of learning, teaching, assessment and research strategies.

Where required, an extraordinary Board of Studies may be convened. This is most likely to be the case where updates to programme modules are identified arising from feedback during the academic year.

Annual Programme Reports (APRs)
The basis for the refined Annual Programme Reports in DBS is the information collated and reported on at the semesterised Programme Boards. The information from each semester is brought together into a standardised template for the Annual Programme Reports and presented by Academic Directors to the April/May Board of Studies. The Academic Dean will then report on the Annual Programme Reports in the Academic Programmes Annual Report at Academic Board in July each year.

This process was trialled for one discipline area in 2020 and brought forward for all programmes in 2020/2021 with reports presented in all discipline areas. Given the volume of detail and content in the reports, a dedicated session on this was held on 10 September 2021 with all Academic Directors and key members of academic management as well as the President of the College. Academic Directors presented detail of each of their reports at this meeting.

For APRs in the academic year 2021/22, timings are currently under consideration to ensure the process is fully optimised to bring the maximum benefits of the process in addressing issues and making enhancements in the most timely manner. DBS has three standard intakes of students annually, in September, January and April, as well as other smaller non-standard intakes. This can make the reporting cycle challenging.



Review of Certification of Validation periods

Through an ongoing review of programme reports, retention data, consultation with executive management and market needs, the Academic Dean keeps under constant review any DBS programmes which require review and revalidation. As a minimum all programmes undergo a full review once every 5 years as per statutory requirements, but programmes may be brought forward for early review where a need is identified. Once these are agreed for review, programme teams commence the programme development process. This is further outlined in the next section.

Programme Review

The Academic Dean is responsible for overseeing the formal review process for all programmes. This is carried out under the academic leadership of Academic Directors and in conjunction with programme teams. It is a collaborative and iterative process that involves input from a wide range of stakeholders: employers/industry feedback; Industry Advisory Boards; professional bodies; learners; internal stakeholders, e.g. finance, marketing, etc.; as well as analysis of qualitative and quantitative data (enrolments; retention; module grades; module semester surveys; programme team and programme board minutes). This information informs any refinements or changes to the programme construct, module weighting, syllabi and the teaching, learning and assessment for the programme. All documents are submitted to the Registrar's Office for internal approval before release to the programme review panel. Final approval is through application to QQI for Re-validation following the full review process.

New programmes

Development of new programmes follows the process laid out in the QAH Part C Section 2. This process was developed as part of the review of policies and procedures for Re-Engagement with QQI, and updated in 2021 with the approval for Devolved Responsibility by QQI. The process is a staged process whereby any proposed

new programme must be approved at various checkpoints in its development by a Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC):

- Programme proposal
- Developed programme approved to proceed to independent evaluation (mock panel)
- Updated programme approved for submission to QQI

The independent evaluation (mock panel) mirrors the QQI panel event with a small panel comprised of an experienced QQI Chair and a minimum of two subject experts (academic and/or industry), and involves a review of documentation and a site visit/meeting.

The PASC had been convened in pilot form on a number of occasions in 2019/2020. The membership of the PASC was reviewed by the President and Registrar with input from the Head of Academic Programmes in late 2020/early 2021 to allow for particular considerations around the construct of the committee based on the size of the College and roles therein, to ensure robust and independent review in a timely manner. The construct of the PASC was re-defined to comprise of a Chair appointed from an internal panel drawn from managers and QA/Regulatory functions and two nominated members of Faculty from a different department/area to the programme under consideration. The updated Terms of Reference were presented to Academic Board and approved on 23 February 2021. The PASC has since convened a further three times between mid-2021 and early 2022 to review new programme proposals.

Employer Engagement

In addition to the above processes outlined, DBS has increasingly put a focus on industry and employer engagement feeding into development of programmes. DBS has identified 7 strategic objectives for 2019-2023 and 2021-2025, and the first of these is to 'Create Work-ready Graduates'. This objective shapes the approach both inside and outside the classroom, with the College dedicated to creating graduates who are able to realise their full potential, are attractive to employers and ready for employment. To achieve this DBS:

- Creates and maintains strong links with employers for programme development
- Leverages associate faculty to bring practical experience to teaching
- Operates an innovative and best-in-class careers support service to students.

Employer Engagement Board

In September 2018 DBS formally launched its Employer Engagement Board. The membership of this board is cross-functional across the College, including Academic Faculty, Academic Directors, Careers Coaches, Sales and Marketing and Senior Management.

This board has been set up to develop an integrated plan of action that increases the engagement with employers and contribute to the DBS objective of having employer-led programmes. It monitors ongoing performance against this plan and ensures full sharing of information across the College on all engagement with employers. The Terms of Reference of the Employer Engagement Board are to:

- Provide institutional guidance to the work of Industry Boards and other employer related activities
- Provide a platform to share relevant employer related information across the College

- Enable the Industry Boards to work effectively and enabling effective engagement with employers
- Ensure the proper collection and storage of all relevant documentation on employer engagement for institutional purposes.

Industry Boards

Industry Advisory Boards also have an important role to play in DBS achieving its vision and have been set up across functional discipline areas in DBS. They support and feed into programme development and review, learner career development, and access to real life projects/case studies and guest speakers.

The DBS Industry Advisory Boards are chaired by a non-DBS industry representative, and consist of the Academic Director in the relevant area, DBS Careers Coaches, and a number of outside industry and academic experts. They meet on a quarterly basis, and support DBS Faculty in staying up-to-date with developments in industry, and ensure that programmes meet the trends and needs of the current environment. They also shape future programme development and evolution. Industry Boards feed into and are governed by the Employee Engagement Board where minutes and outcomes are formally recorded for future reference and use.

DBS currently has four industry boards:

- Marketing and Business, in existence since April 2020 (25 members)
- Computing, in existence since September 2019 (16 members)
- Accounting and Finance, in existence since September 2018, reformulated from an original FinTech basis (9 members).
- Human and Social Sciences, in existence since January 2022 (16 members)

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Please refer to:

QAH Part B Section 1 Learner Admissions:

- *1.1 Information for Applicants Policy*

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- *2.9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*

QAH Part B Section 6 Examination Boards and Award Classifications:

- *6.3 Progression and Classification of Awards*

Access, Transfer and Progression

Details regarding DBS Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression are found in the Quality Assurance Handbook as linked to above.

The entry criteria are provided on a dedicated webpage for each programme, and a link to the prospectus in pdf form is provided in each case. See https://www.dbs.ie/courses

Admissions Office

DBS Admissions Team deals with all admissions to all programmes, including undergraduate, postgraduate and Springboard programmes, direct entry applications into programmes from Year 2 onwards, and domestic and international students.

The application process varies according to the programme of study and the level of the student's prior learning. CAO and Springboard applications are made directly to those bodies, and all other applications are made directly to the College. Ninety-eight percent of applications are completed online.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Applications are accepted from those who may not hold the standard required entry qualifications but who may have demonstrable relevant experience. Information on how to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning is available on the website.

The various application types and information on each is provided on our website as follows:

https://www.dbs.ie/application-form

https://www.dbs.ie/courses/full-time-undergraduate

https://www.dbs.ie/ftug-application-procedures

https://www.dbs.ie/entry-requirements

https://www.dbs.ie/international-students

https://www.dbs.ie/courses/springboard

Open Days

As part of information provision to potential applicants, DBS runs a significant number of Open Days annually. In 2020-21, eleven open events were held during the year, all taking place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Open Days provide prospective students with the opportunity to visit DBS and talk to our lecturers, admissions staff and students, and to discover what is available at DBS and how the student's interests can be met through our range of programmes. Usually Open Days give students an opportunity to explore the campus, visit the buildings and see the facilities as meeting with student services. In the online environment, this has been replicated as much as possible.

Information Sessions

DBS also runs a number of Information Sessions for applicants to specific programmes such as the BA (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy, MBA, MSc in Information and Library Management. Information sessions offer students the opportunity to experience courses first hand by getting more detailed information about the programme, meet the faculty and also meet with current students to hear their experience. Prospective students participate in a range of workshops and meet with lecturers and current students.

Scholarships

DBS offers three scholarships annually to local schools in the community based on hardship cases put forward by the schools themselves. All successful scholarship learners must meet the minimum entry requirements. The scholarship provides an opportunity to a student who in the normal course would not have had the opportunity to avail of Higher Education. The scholarship covers their tuition fees along with a monthly allowance to assist them during their time of study at the College in a full time capacity.

Information to Current Learners

The DBS Student website at https://students.dbs.ie is a one-stop shop for any information or resources that learners require during their time studying in the College. Functional and support areas of the College input into this including Academic Operations, Student Experience, Library, Exams, Student Engagement and Success Unit, and Quality Assurance.

Some features to note are:

- Learner Handbooks
  - Learner Handbooks are available on the student website and are updated regularly, allowing students to have easy access to the most up to date information at all times.
- News Updates
  - Regular news updates allow students to keep abreast of what is happening both in and outside the College.
- Student Help
  - The student help section links and advises on areas such as student well-being, accommodation, computer support, International Student Assistance and virtual student information and meet-ups.
- Timetables
  - All timetables (for classes and exams) are available and can be filtered by learner, lecturer, course or building.
- Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH)
  - The QAH is broken into sections to allow students to find the right information quickly when they need it.

- Student Self Service
    - Through the single sign-on facility linked from the website, students can access their personal DBS e-mail, library account, timetables and virtual learning environment (Moodle),update their personal details, log tickets and request a number of self-service letters which are automatically sent to the student's e-mail.
- Induction Material
    - All induction material is available via the site in easily accessible units which students can return to for future reference.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

N/A

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Please refer to:

QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:

- ***1.1 Staffing of Academic Programmes Policy***
- ***1.2 Learning and Teaching Policy***
- ***1.3 Academic Research Policy***
- ***1.4 Blended Learning Policy***
- ***1.5 Recording Learning Activities Policy***
- ***1.6 Group Work Policy***

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- ***2.9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy***
- ***2.10 Conflict of Interest Policy for Programme Delivery***

QAH Part B Section 5 Assessment Regulations:

- ***5.1 Assessment Overarching Policy***
- ***5.2 Learner Assessment Procedures***
- ***5.3 Continuous Assessment (CA) Word Count Policy***
- ***5.4 Late Submission Policy***
- ***5.5 Repeating a Failed Module Policy***
- ***5.6 Progression with ECTS Deficit (Trailing) Policy***
- ***5.7 Feedback on Examinations Policy***
- ***5.8 Access, Retention & Destruction of Examination Scripts Policy***
- ***5.9 Verification of an Assessment Result Policy***
- ***5.10 Online Exams Policy***

QAH Part B Section 6 Examinations Boards and Awards Classifications:

- ***6.1 External Monitoring of Programmes Policy***

DBS Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE)

Monitoring of Quality of Teaching and Learning

At a programme level, regular programme team meetings monitor the ongoing quality of teaching and learning, and an Annual Programme Report highlights reflections on the teaching and learning environment in the previous iteration of the programme.

Quality of the online learning environment is monitored via an audit of the module pages on the VLE, Moodle, which are assessed against a set of criteria. Lecturers are encouraged to engage in a peer-review of their online learning, in a process that is managed by the Academic Director, where lecturers assess a peer's online classes and Moodle page against a set of criteria.

Learner feedback on teaching and learning quality is captured via a module survey that is run once a semester, the results of which are examined by the Academic Dean. Learner feedback on teaching and learning quality is also captured via regular Class Rep meetings, details of which are fed back to the Academic Dean and the

Academic Directors. DBS also subscribes to StudentSurvey.ie, which allows for the comparison of learner views of the quality of teaching and learning at DBS against other HEIs and the sector as a whole.

Enhancing Teaching and Learning

Improving the quality of Teaching and Learning at DBS is guided by the institution's Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE). This three-year strategy (2020-23) has three objectives:

1. For DBS to be known as a learning-centred higher education institution;

2. To ensure integration of educators, learners and industry experts in the learning experience; and

3. To increase the flexibility of the learning environment.

The strategy, which contains a number of actions against each of these objectives, is reviewed annually. The Learning Teaching and Assessment sub-committee of the Academic Board is responsible for guiding and advising on the implementation of SLATE, teaching, learning and assessment policy development and academic training and development.

Areas for improvement that are identified by any of the ongoing feedback and monitoring mechanisms noted above are brought to the attention of the Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production, and Academic Dean. A bespoke plan is put in place to address the concerns that draws on the training and development resources and processes laid out in Section A.5 below.

Quality Assurance of Assessment

DBS policies and procedures for the monitoring of assessments processes are laid out in the *Quality Assurance Handbook* as per the links above. Of particular importance is independent monitoring through the External Examiner process. DBS seeks to appoint academic experts of high standing into the External Examiner roles for each programme. The Exams Office has increasingly been digitising its processes, and since 2019 External Examiner packs have been provided to Externs in electronic format, which has allowed for greater efficiencies. With COVID-19 restrictions in early 2020, DBS moved all Exam Boards online and also hosted a number of meetings with Externs online, in order to keep them appraised of contingencies arising around assessments. Online meetings and Exam Boards facilitated attendance for Externs and it is DBS's intent to continue with these.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Please refer to:

QAH Part B Section 2 Learner Supports:

- ***2.1 Information and Support for Learners***
- ***2.2 Premises and Facilities***
- ***2.3 IT Facilities***
- ***2.4 Online Learning Supports***
- ***2.5 Student Experience***
- ***2.6 DBS Library***

One of DBS's strategic objectives is to support student success and enhance the student experience. The College aims to provide the academic resources, student services, engagement supports and infrastructure to create an outstanding student experience and enable strong academic outcomes.

Academic Operations Team

The Academic Operations Department provides first-line supports and information to students from the point of registration through to final graduation. Programme Coordinators assigned to specific discipline areas manage information provided to students regarding their specific programme of study. Through the Programme Coordinator, students have a readily accessible point of contact they can approach with any queries they may have during their time with us in DBS. Alongside email, phone, instant messaging, and a ticketing system, Programme Coordinators also sit on the Service Desk on a rostered basis to assist students in person while they are on campus.

Student Experience Team

The Student Experience Team ensures that students have the best possible College-life experience and to promote a DBS community and culture that is focused on their wellbeing and success. The team was delighted to win the inaugural Education Award for Best Student Experience in 2017 followed in 2021 when they were recognised globally as a Kaplan Way Award Winner for Student Success. The Student Experience Team look after a number of areas including Student Services Hub, Student Welfare and Well-being, Disability and Inclusion, International Office, Clubs and Societies, Student Leadership Programme, and Careers Hub.

Student Engagement & Success Unit

The Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU) is a dedicated Unit to support all new DBS students in transitioning successfully into Higher Education. Support is provided to new students in the following ways:

- Support from staff within the Unit who also bridge to the collective supports provided by the College.
- A central knowledge-base about institutional supports.
- Individual and collective support provision. Where a student's needs are more specific, the Unit can link students into the relevant College support e.g. the learning centres, the counselling service or peer mentors.
- A student engagement and success areas of the website, which provides a toolkit of transition information for new entrants.

- The ‘First 100 Days’ programme is an initiative at DBS designed to provide strong, enhanced and targeted support to new students during their first weeks as DBS students. Recognising that successful early adjustment is linked to subsequent success, we provide a range of information, target resources, and interact with new students in ways that make them know we care about them and are interested in their successful adjustment. Each week over the First 100 Days has its own theme, designed to focus students’ attention on various issues that we know are important for settling in and thriving as a higher education student.

Peer Mentor Programme

The DBS Peer Mentor Programme is designed to give students across DBS the opportunity to represent and mentor students by sharing their stories and experiences of college life. Mentors act as positive role models throughout the year to their respective groups and are sources of information, from orientation through to the end of the year. The mentors help make coming to DBS a more welcoming, less daunting experience. As well as arranging informal meetings and social events with their mentees, the team assists with any queries or concerns that new students may have. Throughout the year this team of students is supported by the Student Experience Team.

In the academic year 2020/21 DBS has over 100 peer mentors divided across three areas – programme based, regional (by nation) based, and year-based mentors. Each student mentor is given continuous high quality training throughout the academic year to ensure they are fully engaged in the College experience and best prepared to support their mentees. The DBS Peer Mentor Programme has been recognised as best in class, and was presented at the ICOS Annual Conference in May 2018 and The USI National Forum in November 2018.

Student Council

The DBS Student Council welcomes all students appointed or elected to the role of Class Representative, Peer Mentors, Sports Clubs & Society Leaders and members of the Students Union. The Council acts as a platform for two-way communication between the College and the student body. Students who represent the Student Council are made aware that they are responsible for collecting feedback from the student body and notifying the College regarding any specific issues that are arise.

Class Reps

DBS was the first private college to engage with USI to train all Class Reps on the NStep Programme. This programme was launched in 2016 by the HEA, QQI and USI, and applies best principles of student engagement to enhance and enrich the College’s interactions with its Class Reps.

Blended Learning

As part of its strategic objectives, DBS has been looking towards more flexible learning offerings, and its Blended Learning Policy was approved by QQI in 2019 alongside the application for Re-Engagement. Since then, DBS has been incorporating options for blended delivery, including on-demand asynchronous content, into new programmes.

Development

Decisions over blends of learning modes are pedagogically based and are governed by the ABC Curriculum Design methodology. The creation of content for blended learning programmes is guided by the principles of Universal Design and is in keeping with DBS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. Materials and resources will be reviewed annually. DBS has invested in an audio-visual studio and recruited experienced audio-visual and instructional design staff to facilitate development. The blended module development process ensures that the learning resources are sufficient to cover the indicative syllabus in the module descriptor. The documented and validated process for ensuring the lecturer is qualified to teach the subject applies as it does across DBS. Additional training will be provided to ensure that all blended teaching staff are comfortable with the technology and understand the potential issues around moderating online discussions.

Before Learning

Learners are advised in advance of the blended nature of programmes, where applicable, through programme information provided on the DBS website, at open evenings and events, and through information such as the Learner Handbook.

All blended modules start with an orientation for learners, who are advised of the hardware and software requirements well in advance. During induction, learners are informed as to their responsibility to engage with the learning opportunities provided and to shape their own learning experience and DBS's approach to netiquette for online learning behaviour.

During Learning

The timetable distinguishes for learners the different modes of delivery on a blended learning programme, so learners are aware of in-class, online and on-demand learning from the timetable. All on-demand lessons for blended programmes are released a week in advance of the live tutorial that covers the on-demand content. Each on-demand lessons start and end with a summary of the learning covered in the lesson.

The use of the Course Progress Bar in the VLE allows learners and lecturers to see which activities have been completed and which are overdue, if applicable. Knowledge Check quizzes for all online study units will be used to affirm understanding of the topic. Forums will be used to provide asynchronous communication and questions. Online chatrooms can be scheduled for synchronous chat.

Use of the activity completion, progress bar, knowledge check quizzes and other formative assessments enable lecturers to monitor engagement from the start and contact those who are not engaging. All support mechanisms common to traditionally delivered (non-blended) modules will be provided to learners on blended modules, including monitoring and supports through SESU.

Online discussions and comments are monitored, and that any comments that are identified as or reported as disrespectful are managed through the standard Complaints or Disciplinary process. Validation of assessment and moderation of student submissions do not differ from standard documented processes which apply to traditional (non-blended) modules. Use of personal data will be in keeping with DBS Privacy Policy.

Programme Coordinators and IT Support are available to learners as with all programmes, as well as feedback mechanisms through student surveys and class rep meetings. DBS uses its virtual learning environment to host all blended learning content, which is secure and convenient for learners.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Please refer to:

QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:

- ***1.3 Academic Research Policy***

Research at DBS

Research in DBS is overseen by the Research sub-committee of the Academic Board. The Committee is made up of research active faculty from across the College, as nominated by the Academic Directors, and staff who support research, including the Research Librarian and a representative of the Ethics Committee. In February 2021 DBS appointed a dedicated Practice Research Coordinator to drive DBS's research strategy and as part of this role an exhalustive mapping of research activity across the College is taking place and resources are being allocated through the Library to facilitate further research. Coordination between the Practice Research Coordinator and academic disciplines is helping to focus these resources and encourage research in those areas.

Research in each of the disciplines is guided by informal research groups or industry advisory boards, which report back on research activity to the research sub-committee. DBS awards research scholarships to ten faculty each year. The scholarships finance time off the teaching timetable to conduct research. Applications for research scholarships are independently blind reviewed against a set of criteria by a 3-person panel of external reviewers. Scholarship recipients provide a six month report of their research activity.

As part of its strategy, the DBS Annual Research Day has been reconstituted as the Practical Applied Research Conference. This will be a multidisciplinary conference that celebrates the value of applied research and will be held over two days in May 2022.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Please refer to:

QAH Part A Section Governance:

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

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- *2.9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*

QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:

- *Staffing of Academic Programmes Policy*

DBS Recruitment Policy

DBS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (HR)

DBS Policy on Staff Members Attending Internal Courses

Staff development has been a key focus for the College and there have been significant advances since 2018/19.

HR Governance, Policies and Processes

DBS Policies cover a wide range of topics from recruitment and selection to performance management and working from home. These are regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with the employment law legislative changes and political/environmental changes as and when required.

Recruitment, Development and Support of Staff

DBS takes responsibility for the quality of its staff providing staff with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. The accountability of this is through the Senior Leadership Team and the DBS HR function. The HR vision is to be a trusted resource and strategic business partner by engaging in value-added initiatives across all facets of HR that are aligned to the vision, mission and purpose of DBS.

In respect of the recruitment, management and development of DBS staff, DBS HR has focused on seven core areas, namely:

- Recruitment/selection and induction
- Culture and engagement
- Effective talent management and development
- Performance management
- Health and wellbeing
- Reward and recognition
- HR governance, policies and processes

Recruitment and Selection

The fundamentals around the DBS recruitment process is to be fair and transparent. DBS is committed to Inclusion and Diversity, and working towards a better and more inclusive future for everyone. DBS has created a programme of activities to help the new joiner to find their way around the organisation, and understand the culture and DBS ambitions to help equip them with everything they need to create success and be successful.

The guidelines and principles of the DBS Recruitment Policy and DBS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy are followed in recruiting staff. The end-to-end recruitment process is managed through the digital platform Workday.

Where appropriate and relevant, jobs are advertised both internally and externally through a variety of media. Applicants apply for the vacancy via the Workday platform. Applicants are screened on the basis of meeting the qualitative and technical criteria of the role through competency-based interviewing. In some instances, where appropriate, applicants are further screened by utilising relevant psychometric tests, for example the Saville Wave personality and aptitude tests and the PRISM neuro linguistic test. Other screening tools include standard reference checking and Garda vetting.

Induction

New hires are required to undertake an induction programme that covers pre-boarding to their first day, their first week and through to their three-month and six-month milestones. The induction and training programme is a combination of online and face-to-face provision, and covers on-boarding to information about DBS, Values and Behaviours, training modules, payroll, benefits etc. Included in this onboarding program is the appointment of a 'buddy' to each new employee prior to their commencement to support them in their introduction to DBS.
The pre-boarding includes:

- Ensuring all contractual details are accurate and the necessary steps in the on-boarding process is complete on Workday to gain access to all relevant DBS systems

The first day includes:

- Introduction to team and colleagues and a tour of DBS
- Introduction to the DBS Values and Behaviours
- An understanding of the role and responsibilities

The first week includes:

- Discussing individual and team goals and KPIs
- Role specific training and development
- Familiarisation with DBS policies and benefits

The first three months includes:

- Understanding team goals and KPIs
- Completion of mandatory compliance training modules e.g. Code of Conduct, Information Security and Privacy, GDPR

At six months – probation

- Successful completion of probation period and ongoing training and development and management.

Culture and Engagement

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

The DBS values are:

- ★ Act with Integrity
  - Do everything to the highest ethical standards
- ★ Empower and Support
  - Share and Solve problems for the greater good of DBS
- ★ Create Opportunity
  - Encourage new ideas and look for new ways of doing things
- ★ Grow Knowledge
  - Encourage the development of our colleagues
- ★ Drive Results Together
  - Have a 'can do will do' attitude

As part of enhancing the Vision and Values of DBS, the 'Making a Difference' programme was launched in 2019. This programme was developed with the objective to bring together a number of simple initiatives that would have a positive impact in different ways and on different people, such as DBS staff, students and society. Some of these initiatives include: the Sustainable Environment Initiative, monthly newsletters, charities of choice and a formal staff suggestion mechanism.

Also under the 'Making a Difference' banner was the creation and distribution of a set of DBS behaviours derived from the DBS Vision and Values.

In relation to assessing staff engagement, each year DBS employees are invited to participate in the Global Kaplan Annual Survey. This survey covers the following areas: continuous improvement, diversity and inclusion, manager relationship, growth and development, intention to stay and, teamwork and collaboration. DBS has participated in this programme for four years. Over this period the overall employee engagement has continued to increase incrementally.

Talent Management and Development

DBS is focused on the talent management and development of its staff. A training needs analysis was conducted in December 2019, and in response to this DBS launched a training calendar inviting staff to participate in a range of online courses covering Microsoft Office courses and soft skill courses such as time management, communication skills and workshops in relation to health and wellbeing. DBS also offers staff and their families the opportunity to study Dublin Business School programmes. Details of this are in the Policy for Staff Members Attending Internal Dublin Business School Courses.

Staff are also required to undertake mandatory courses which are included in the online induction programme, including GDPR requirement, Information Security and Privacy and Code of Conduct training.

The Kaplan Group also offers training courses. Most recently managers completed an Inclusion and Diversity course. The 'Great Place' Leadership Programme consisting of three modules was also launched in 2020.

Over the course of the year regular 'Lunch and Learn' sessions include topics such as Cybersecurity, Learner Engagement and Research Support.

Performance Management

Of particular note is DBS's focus on performance management which is an annual process with appraisals conducted in the last quarter of the year, and goal setting conducted in the first quarter of the year. This involves the management and review of staff against a number of criteria, namely: communication, learner/customer focus, problem solving and execution, result focus, teamwork, behaviour, change agent, leadership, developing people, analysis, student focus, research and professional development, individual development plan and attitude and behaviour.

This process is currently being digitised on the Workday HR platform.

Health and Wellbeing

DBS offers a wide range of support services to its staff members. An Employee Assistance Programme is offered through Laya Healthcare and most recently due to the pandemic and our operations and teaching moving online, the DBS HR department launched a series of packs focused on mental and physical well-being.

Reward and Recognition

Each year, the Kaplan Group celebrates the Kaplan Way Awards. Through the Kaplan Way Awards staff nominate colleagues who have exemplified resilience and brought 'The Kaplan Way' to life. This includes those who have gone above and beyond to further Student Success, helped make Kaplan A Great Place, introduced improvements to Continuously Transform the business, or modelled the Shared Values.
Each year DBS also runs an 'Above and Beyond' awards programme to recognise employees whose work and results best exemplify DBS's priorities and values. This is celebrated via a launch event and a recognition award.

In addition to this, to recognise those staff who have made a commitment and valuable contribution to DBS over the years, and to celebrate their important service anniversary of 10, 20 and 25 years, DBS recognises this through an annual event and a 'Long Service' award and gift.

Recruitment and Onboarding of Faculty

Recruitment of faculty commences with the advertisement of the specified discipline vacancy on via the DBS LinkedIn account and on the DBS website. The advertisement must include the requisite academic qualifications, business experience and person specification. Only candidates that satisfy the minimum criteria specified are considered for interview stage. Applications are screened by the Faculty Manager and Academic Director and a short-list of qualified candidates is drawn up and invited to present for an interview. An interview panel is constituted which is normally chaired by the Faculty Manager or Academic Director or Subject Expert. For all

lecturer appointments, candidates are required to give a 10-15 minute presentation on an allocated topic within their subject area.

As detailed in the *Quality Assurance Handbook*, it is DBS policy that all candidates for academic positions are presented to the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC) for review prior to an offer and contract being issued. This committee comprises members of academic management of the College and the Quality Assurance Officer is Secretary to this committee. The Committee reviews CVs and interview notes of all candidates and will make recommendations for appointment. Where appropriate, the AASC may set conditions on an approval, such as the requirement for an Advanced Pathway with additional Teaching or Supervision training and supports, or a specific limitation to a particular role or subject area, depending on the candidate's academic and professional experience, to ensure the quality of the teaching is maintained. Once the candidate is endorsed by the AASC, a certificate is issued. The AASC certificate is sent to the HR department.

In advance of a contract being issued HR ensures:

- Reference checks are completed
- Identification is provided
- Evidence of academic qualifications is provided
- Garda Vetting is completed

All contracts include a probation period of 6 months.

Induction and Orientation of New Faculty

All new members of academic staff undergo an induction process which is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Manager, Academic Director and the Academic Mentor, with input from senior academic management. The induction is to ensure that new starters gain an understanding of the learning environment they are entering and to introduce them to the operational practicalities of delivering programmes at DBS.

During the academic year 2019/2020 the Head of Academic Programmes, the Head of Faculty & School Operations and the Head of Quality, Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning developed a new faculty 'pathway' induction programme which comprises three parts. As part of this process, the new lecturer meets with the Faculty Manager, Academic Director and EdTech team to cover key functional and teaching, learning and assessment areas:

1. Faculty Manager:
    - Confirms timetable
    - Introduces the new starter to the 3 month and 6 month probation meetings
    - Arranges a meeting with the relevant Academic Director
    - Takes the lecturer through the process of how they get paid
    - In conjunction with the Academic Director, assigns a mentor/buddy
    - Provides information on HR policies, such as the lecturer absence policy
    - Arranges an operational induction (e.g. an introduction to academic calendars, the central academic noticeboard and timetabling in Celcat)
    - Ensures that the IT Department has contacted the lecturer to arrange an IT induction
    - Arranges induction with the EdTech team
    - Provides a campus tour

- Arranges a staff ID card
- Arranges induction with the Exams Team
- Arranges induction with the Library Team

2. Academic Director:
   - Introduces the lecturer to the Lecturer Handbook, *Quality Assurance Handbook* and Learner Code of Conduct
   - Provides a programme overview, including how the module(s) fit in to the programme(s), number of ECTS and indicative syllabus
   - Provides a Module Guide
   - Introduces the lecturer to previous Moodle pages from the module
   - Provides an introduction to preparing for a class, including what to cover in the first few classes
   - Gives an overview of learner-centred practices in DBS
   - Outlines the module assessment strategy and associated marking rubrics
   - Outlines the moderation process
   - Covers expectations and requirements for providing Student feedback
   - Details of reporting fora (programme team meetings, Boards of Studies)
   - Assigning and introduction of a buddy

3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Unit:
   - Shows the lecturer how to use Moodle and teaching tools (such as Zoom)
   - Directs the lecturer to asynchronous teaching and learning content on training and development Moodle page

The Management of Faculty

Faculty Managers have direct line management responsibility for a large number of staff within DBS, ensuring that all programmes are staffed correctly and appropriately. The Faculty Managers work with the Academic Directors in staff planning for their relevant programmes. The Academic Directors have ownership of a suite of programmes in a specific discipline and are responsible for the overall delivery and development of those programmes. They work with the programme teams to ensure that the modules are taught and assessed according to the Approved Programme Schedules.

Faculty Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff performance is reviewed regularly and perform formal and informal reviews with lecturers throughout the year. Informal student feedback is acted upon as it comes in, whereby the Faculty Manager and Academic Director will work with Faculty to resolve any issues. During the formal annual appraisal both the lecturer and the Faculty Manager will review the lecturer's performance against competencies and provide comments to support the ratings assigned. The performance appraisal is informed by data that is collected throughout the academic year:

- Student feedback from the formal student questionnaires
- Class representative feedback
- Feedback from Academic Directors
- Attendance at relevant meetings such as programme team meetings, faculty meeting and examination boards
- Moodle audits (to ensure Moodle pages are populated with sufficient information and to the required standard)
- Engagement with training sessions and CPD events

- Timely submission of exam papers/submission of marks to Moodle and submission of the necessary supporting documentation
- Engagement with new technologies and new methods of teaching
- Contribution to curriculum development

Faculty Training & Support for Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Introduction

DBS provides a multi-faceted approach to teaching and learning training and support for faculty. Formal and informal training is provided, in multiple modes, covering both technical and pedagogical issues. Some aspects of the training are mandatory, while some is voluntary, although most of the pre-2020/21 training is mandatory

Ongoing Training and CPD

Training and Support Site

All faculty have access to an area on Moodle with asynchronous training content on teaching and learning and 'how-to' practical instruction on using education technology. The site is regularly updated with new content. Currently, its focus is specifically designed to support the transition to synchronous online teaching and learning, such as designing and delivering an online class, technical guidance for online teaching, designing online assessments and exams and applied online teaching. This asynchronous content is complemented with synchronous sessions.

Topics on the Training and Support Site:

- Design and Delivery
  - Multimodal Delivery
  - Hybrid Delivery
  - Module and Lesson Planning
  - Engaging Delivery
- Technical Guidance
  - DBS Moodle Essentials
  - Practical Guidance for Hybrid Teaching
  - Using Zoom for online classes
  - Creating groups in Moodle
  - Using Mentimeter in the Digital Classroom
- Applied Teaching Online
  - Teaching practical skills online
  - Using remote PC control in Zoom
  - Using Zoom's Remote Control Feature
  - Sharing Multiple Screens in Zoom
- Assessment
  - Guide to Online Exams
  - Lecturer Guide to Revision
  - Guide to Post-Exam
  - Guide to Online Assessment and Writing Online Exams
  - Continuous Assessment - Preparing an online in-class test
  - Using Moodle Quiz for an In Class (Summative)
  - A Guide to Marking and Grading in Moodle

Drop-in Sessions

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Unit and the Assistant Registrar host a drop-in session (currently online) every Wednesday from 5-6.30pm. All faculty are welcome to attend to ask any questions or raise concerns at these sessions, which are often followed up by one-to-one training at a later date.

Training by request

The EdTech team is available to meet Faculty by appointment to discuss any and all aspects of teaching and learning, including the use of educational technology, such as using the VLE or other tools.

Faculty Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

DBS offers CPD on three levels:

- Informal 'Lunch and Learn' sessions and workshops dedicated to a particular theme. Last year, the theme was assessment and feedback; this year the theme is engaging learners. DBS aims to host eight Lunch and Learn sessions and three workshops per year. The Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee (LT&A) approved a programme of LT&A podcasts featuring internal and external faculty, in March 2021.
- Formal short courses designed by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The first short course facilitated in 2020 was on Getting Started with Online Teaching. The next short course will likely be on Assessment.
- Access to AdvanceHE fellowships through institutional access membership.

Programme-Based Training and Support

DBS is developing a programme-based approach to enhancing the quality of the learning environment. There are two aspects to this enhancement: bespoke targeted training to address identified quality issues in the delivery of a programme and a peer-based teaching observation and feedback scheme under the guidance of the Academic Director. The peer-based teaching observation invites participants to consider the quality of each other's learning environment against criteria and devise actions to enhance the learning environment. Both these initiatives are at the nascent stage of development.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Please refer to:

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- *2.5 Student Records and Data Retention Policy*
- *2.8 Learning Analytics Policy*

Student Guide to Learning Analytics

Student Engagement Dashboard User Guide

Information about learners enrolled with DBS is currently held on the internal Student Information System, Agresso. This includes all records around module enrolment, outcomes at each stage, final award and any additional supports needed. In addition, DBS uses the Virtual Learning Environment Moodle for programme delivery, Celcat timetabling software, Koha the library management system, and, between January and May 2021, the Mercer Mettl online exams proctoring platform has been piloted.

DBS is in the process of implementing a new Student Information System which is due for deployment in the second quarter of 2022, and which will replace the current system, Agresso.
Collection and use of data complies with GDPR and privacy legislation at all times. DBS Privacy Policy is available on the website here: https://www.dbs.ie/privacy-policy

DBS uses learning analytics to provide accurate and actionable insights into the learning process through the exploration, modelling and aggregation of relevant data sources and to provide an evidence base for optimising the conditions in which learning can flourish.

Students are informed of the Learning Analytics Policy at induction, and a copy of the policy is made available in the *Quality Assurance Handbook* as above. In addition, a Student Guide to Learning Analytics is made available on the home page in Moodle.

At the student level, DBS puts the data that is drawn from the information sources outlined above into a 'dashboard' which allows the student or their lecturer to view student data and identify any anomalies, risks, or concerns. If issues are identified, interventions may be put in place for individual learners. The Student Engagement Dashboard is available via Moodle or the student portal. A Student Engagement Dashboard User Guide is also made available via Moodle.

At the institution level, DBS puts the data that is drawn from the information sources outlined above into an 'early alert report' which allows the Data Analytics and Reporting Manager and the Student Engagement Officer to view student data and identify any anomalies, risks, or concerns. The data which comprises the early alert report is at a more granular level than that of the student engagement dashboard.

Data is used throughout the student life cycle, but a particular focus is placed on a number of key 'touch points':

- Week 1 – Has the student logged into Moodle and are they attending lectures?
- Week 3 – Has the student has taken out a book from the library?
- Week 6 – Has the student submitted their first Continuous Assessment?
- Week 9 – Has the student has logged into Moodle, attended lectures, submitted their CAs to date, and paid fees?

Interventions then may be put in place which take the form of the following series of contacts:

- E-mail
- Phone call
- Face-to-face talk
- Tea & talk
- Walk & talk

The aim of the interventions is to help students find a solution to their problems in a sustainable manner.
An executive summary of 'engagement' data is provided to the Academic Dean and Academic Directors, which in turn feeds into Programme Boards and other fora as necessary.

Retention

DBS defines retention as the percentage of students who successfully complete all modules on which they are enrolled within an academic year. Each year, a Retention Summary Report is compiled and published, which summarises retention across programmes in Arts, Business and Law delivered by DBS:

- All full-time Levels 6-9 programmes
- All part-time Levels 6, 8 and 9 programmes
- Labour market activation programmes (Springboard, ICT, and HCI)
- Non-framework programmes (Study Abroad and Professional Diplomas).

This data allows a comparison, where appropriate, with retention data published by the HEA in 'A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education' (2010) or 'A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education' (2018). Note: The 2018 publication does not provide a breakdown of progression for years 2 and 3 at Level 6, 7 and 8 in the same way as the 2010 publication. The reporting is intended to underpin a constructive and collective engagement with the challenges presented in retaining not only our traditional undergraduate and postgraduate students, but also our non-framework students and students on labour market activation programmes. The report is provided to the Academic Dean and Academic Directors, Faculty, Academic Board, and Board of Studies, which in turn feeds into Programme Boards and other fora as necessary.

Completion

DBS defines completion as the percentage of students who successfully complete a programme on time or plus one year. To date, DBS has not reported on programme completion. However, following feedback from the Re-Engagement process with QQI, a completion report has been developed and is currently in user testing and will be brought into full use for programmes completed in the academic year 2021/2022.

Student Feedback at DBS

Students have a major contribution to make in ensuring the quality of higher education and training provided in DBS. Regular and structured student feedback on their engagement with their studies and with broader College life, and on the quality and relevance of teaching, learning and other services, is important in contributing to this process. Students can also play an important role in influencing the design of curricula, and in reviewing and providing feedback on the use of these curricula.

Student representatives sit on various committees in DBS, including the Academic Board and Programme Boards.

Student feedback is gathered through a variety of mechanisms:

- Class Representative Meetings
- First Destination Survey
- Module Survey
- StudentSurvey.IE
- INDEX Survey – National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
- Focus Groups
- Compliments and Complaints.

Once student feedback has been gathered, a report is produced and circulated to the Academic Dean, Faculty Managers, Academic Directors, Faculty, Academic Board, Student Council and Board of Studies (as appropriate), which in turn feed into Programme Boards and other fora as necessary. Note: Not all feedback may find its way into a report but may be discussed and actioned at a local level.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Public Information and Communication

The College recognises it is responsible for the accuracy of the information that it puts into the public domain. Therefore, it must ensure the validity of such information to ensure transparency with its stakeholders. The main platform that the College uses for such communication is its website www.dbs.ie

The website is the primary vehicle for the provision of information about the programmes and services of the College to potential students and other interested stakeholders. The website presents detailed information about the background to the College, its staff, mission, aims and values.

The site also includes information on all programmes, detailing modules, duration of programmes, NFQ level, entry requirements, fees and application procedures.

Provision of Information for Prospective Learners

Published information on programmes for learners includes:

- Programme and Award Title
- Accrediting Body
- Level and type of the award on NFQ
- Programme content
- Application process and entry requirements
- Fees
- Details of the arrangement for PEL in accordance with Section 65(4) of the 2012 Act

Examples of the College's main publications include:

- DBS Strategic Plan
- DBS Quality Assurance Handbook
- Programme Review and Validation Reports
- DBS Student Handbooks
- DBS Undergraduate Prospectus
- DBS Postgraduate Prospectus

Other platforms DBS use to disseminate information and updates:

Social Networking Sites

DBS communicates with the public across a number of social media platforms. The current social media channels that used on a regular basis include: Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Other channels including YouTube are used intermittently. A social media calendar is planned out by the Marketing and Admissions Department, detailing which channel will feature each communication and when it will be scheduled.

Social media is used for information such as notification of open evenings, information evenings and other events such as partner events. Any new courses or imminent application deadlines are communicated and relevant educational news from DBS or other educational bodies is also shared. Social media inboxes are monitored regularly so that queries connected to any communications are promptly followed up.

College e-Newsletter

Newsletters are e-mailed to all College contacts available through the database on a regular basis. This includes current and past students and staff, agents, contacts in employer agencies and relevant professional bodies and associations. The purpose of this e-newsletter is to maintain contact with all stakeholders and provide updates on College activities and achievements and developments in relation to programmes and services.

College Prospectuses and Marketing Materials

A number of prospectuses and publications are produced by the Marketing Department, containing all marketing materials relevant to the recruitment of new students into programmes. These are also hosted on the website as well as been distributed to prospective students at fairs, schools, open evenings, reception areas and by post, if requested.

College Open Days and Information Sessions

The College runs open days and information sessions at which potential students and other interested parties can meet with College staff and receive information about the programmes and services available and opportunities available through the College.

Participation in Conferences, and Educational Recruitment Fairs

The College participates in conferences and educational recruitment fairs locally and internationally to provide information to potential students and other interested parties about the programmes available and to promote the College.

School Visits

DBS has a dedicated School Liaison Officer who works closely with Career Guidance Teachers and schools in ensuring provision of correct information about the programmes on offer through the CAO system. A number of school visits are carried out annually around Ireland.

Corporate Development Manager

DBS has a dedicated Corporate Development manager who works with employers, the corporate sector and other stakeholders. They have responsibility for coordinating tenders through e-tenders.ie for programme development.

In respect of other information, the DBS website provides details on upcoming events, job vacancies, exam timetables (when applicable), policies and procedures related to quality assurance, staff and students and a wide variety of other information.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Please refer to:

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- *2.2 Quality Assurance Policy*
- *2.3 Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Policy*
- *2.4 Risk Management Policy*
- *2.5 Student Records and Data Retention Policy*
- *2.8 Learning Analytics Policy*

QAH Part B Section 6 Examination Boards and Awards Classifications:

- *6.1 External Monitoring of Programmes Policy*

QAH Part C Section 2 Programme Development and Review

Dublin Business School's Self-Evaluation Principles

DBS's approach to Quality Assurance is informed by QQI's *Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines* (QQI, 2016). In accordance with Section 4.4.1, *The Provider-Owner QA Principle*, DBS takes primary responsibility for the quality provision of educational programmes and assurance of quality therein. DBS also supports *The Externality Principle* (Section 4.4.6) that '*A provider-owned quality assurance system makes appropriate use of external persons who are independent of the provider and who are expertly qualified to make national and international comparisons*'. This principle is reflected in day-to-day operations through the contribution of External Examiners in the assessment of learners, and in governance through an external independent Chair of the Academic Board. External independent input is also a key part of the process for new programme validation, programme revalidation and institutional review.

- All programme validation activity is currently managed and overseen by QQI, with new programmes assessed by an independent panel of experts.
    - DBS has additional internal processes relating to programme validation prior to submission of a proposed programme to QQI, which includes approval of a proposed programme though the Programme Approval Sub-Committee and an independent panel review (i.e. mock panel event).
- DBS is responsible for the management of the processes for Programme Review, including the management of external evaluation and reporting, subject to agreed Terms of Reference with QQI, prior to application for Revalidation to QQI.
- In June 2021 DBS was approved by QQI for Devolved Responsibility for Validation of New Programmes, thus assuming responsibility for the management of external evaluation and reporting for new programmes, subject to approval and final sign-off by QQI.
- External evaluation of QA processes and procedures is undertaken by QQI through Institutional Review.

Changes to QA policies and procedures, where those changes can be made by DBS, are made via the Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Committee, and approved and ratified by the Senior Leadership Team and the Academic Board. Minor changes to programmes, where those changes do not impact on the Approved Programme Schedule, Programme Learning Outcomes, special regulations or entry requirements, may be proposed and approved at meetings of the Board of Studies. All other changes require the approval via QQI, and may entail a Differential Validation or Programme Review.

Self-Evaluation and Monitoring

DBS's programmes are routinely monitored throughout the academic year and at the end of the academic year to ensure that:

- Programmes are progressing satisfactorily both operationally and academically.
- Teaching schemes are appropriate to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes of the module and programme.
- Assessment methods are appropriate to determine the achievement of the learning outcomes for the different modules and are distributed appropriately throughout the academic year.
- Academic staff remain current and relevant and engaged in scholarly activity and/or research as appropriate.
- Academic procedures are being followed.
- The suitability of existing programmes to meet the current and future needs of learners is assessed.
- The programmes remain current and relevant to employers.
- Future requirements for programmes, and hence future programme development, to allow the institution to continue to meet the needs of the learner, to encourage learner progression and to appeal to prospective learners in the future are identified.

Feedback is collected through a variety of mechanisms, to feed into Programme Boards, held three times per academic year. In addition to Programme Boards, Boards of Studies are held twice annually to review proposed changes to assessment and delivery, raised by the Programme Boards.

Reporting from these and other review mechanisms feed annually into the Academic Board, and subsequently into Programme Review events with QQI, and Institutional Reviews.

External Independent Experts

As described in Section A1.1 above, the DBS Board of Directors includes an external member from high office in the education sector, and the Academic Board membership includes an independent Chair and independent academic, both with significant experience in higher education.

Proposed External Examiners are nominated by members of the programme team and endorsed by the relevant Academic Director based on the criteria as indicated in this policy. The nominating Academic Director completes the form 'Application for Appointment of New External Examiner', which is accompanied by the candidate's Curriculum Vitae. This nomination is then reviewed/approved by the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee on behalf of the Academic Board. Conditions imposed by professional bodies, such as The Honourable Society of King's Inns, must also be met.

Criteria for the appointment of an External Examiner are set out in the *Quality Assurance Handbook*, Part B, Section 6.1.3.

The External Examiner reporting process entails four main review stages and checks:

- Exam Paper approval (in advance of exam sittings, a review of exam papers to ensure appropriate setting and standard for the academic level, and that they assess the module's Learning Outcomes)
- Assessment Sample review (following final assessments, a review of a sample of assessed material, both coursework and examination scripts, to determine whether the grading awarded is appropriate and valid, and the Learning Outcomes are being appropriately demonstrated in the assessment strategy)

- Exam Boards (attending the ratification process to observe and contribute to consideration of borderline awards, and have sight of the overall performance of modules and individuals in the larger context of their programmes and cohorts)
- Annual Reporting (following the final Exam Board of the academic year, a summary reflection and commentary on all assessments and material viewed, in addition to College processes and performance of facilitating external review and ratifying grades).

Programme Validation and Review

The process and underlying principles of Programme Validation and Review are set out in the *Quality Assurance Handbook* (Part C, Section 2.1 and 2.2 respectively).

The stages of a New Programme being proposed, reviewed, and submitted for validation are set out in the following diagram:

As noted above, in 2021 DBS gained approval from QQI for Devolved Responsibility for validation of new programmes within its scope of delivery. While the overall process remains the same, the Quality Assurance Handbook, Part C Section 2 sets out the distinct elements where Devolved Responsibility or the QQI-led validation applies. QQI-led validation remains in place where programmes constitute a change of scope and for other categories such as transnational delivery. In all cases, DBS submits a programme application, including Terms of Reference, to QQI before convening a panel, and approval is sought to proceed.

Programme Review similarly proceeds through a series of stages:

- Phase 1 – Self-Evaluation Process (a self-evaluation of the existing delivery, and consideration of developing sectoral and industry factors and best practice and learnings from the earlier iteration(s) of the programme)
- Phase 2 – External Evaluation and Reporting (review of the programme's reporting, and proposed delivery, by an Independent Review panel)
- Phase 3 – Applying for Revalidation (submitting the earlier reporting and review findings to QQI).

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	0
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	IAHIP (Irish Association of Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24189 Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling & Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24185
Date of accreditation or last review	30/11/2017
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	APPI (Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master in Arts in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24065
Date of accreditation or last review	28/07/2020
Date of next review	28/07/2025

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	PSI (Psychological Society of Ireland)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24168 Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24169
Date of accreditation or last review	12/12/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2025

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Counselling & Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24188
Date of accreditation or last review	13/12/2019
Date of next review	13/12/2025

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Law Society, King's Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Laws (Honours) https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24186
Date of accreditation or last review	15/12/2009
Date of next review	

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Library Association of Ireland (LAI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Information and Library Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24214

	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24215
Date of accreditation or last review	04/06/2019
Date of next review	

7. Type of arrangement	**QA body**
Name of body:	ACELS (Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services), QQI
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Business & English Language https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24180
Date of accreditation or last review	28/02/2020
Date of next review	28/02/2022

8. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Accounting & Finance https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166
Date of accreditation or last review	31/01/2020
Date of next review	

9. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	PMI (Project Management Institute)
Programme titles and links to publications	Advanced Diploma in Project Management https://www.dbs.ie/course/professional-evening-diploma/part-time-evening-diploma-in-advanced-project-management-dublin-business-school
Date of accreditation or last review	03/03/2021
Date of next review	

10. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	KPA (Kaplan Professional Awards)
Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma in Accounting & Finance https://kaplanpa.co.uk/docs/default-source/pdfs/kpa-level-4-diploma-in-accounting-and-finance-rqf.pdf?sfvrsn=f2bab25_4
Date of accreditation or last review	06/01/2021
Date of next review	

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	KPTM
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166
Date of last review	11/09/2019
Date of next review	30/08/2024

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	EU Business School
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166
Date of last review	23/06/2021
Date of next review	30/08/2024

3. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	EU Business School
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Business Administration https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24549
Date of last review	23/06/2021
Date of next review	30/08/2024

4. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Sound Training College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production and Music Project Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG23892
Date of last review	24/09/2018
Date of next review	30/08/2023

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Sound Training College
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG23890 Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG23891
Date of last review	24/09/2018
Date of next review	30/08/2023

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements - Total number	0

1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	FH Aachen, Germany
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in International Business Studies https://www.fh-aachen.de/en/course-of-study/international-business-studies-b-sc
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	13/05/2019
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	FH Aachen is a public university in Germany. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 120 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance degree. Their programme is three years duration and they will come to DBS after year two at their home university. The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.

2. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Daqing Normal University, China
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Economic & Finance
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	02/05/2019
Date of next review	30/08/2024

Detail of the agreement	Established in 1965, Daqing Normal University is a Higher-Education Institution located in the metropolis of Daqing, Heilongjiang. Officially recognized by the Department of Education of the Heilongjiang Province, Daqing Normal University is a medium-sized (uniRank enrollment range: 8,000-8,999 students) coeducational Chinese Higher Education Institution. Daqing Normal University offers courses and programmes leading to officially recognised higher education degrees such as bachelor degrees in several areas of study. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to join DBS with an equivalent of 60 ECTS credits and gain direct entry into year 2 of the following programmes: · BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance · BA (Hons) in Financial Services The mapping between both programmes was prepared by the Academic Director outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits.

3. Articulation agreement	**Articulation agreement**
Name of body (/bodies):	FAE Centro Universitie, Brazil
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor in International Business https://fae.edu/cursos/66724642/negocios+internacionais.htm
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	15/04/2020
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	The FAE University Centre is a Higher Education Institution which is part of the Educational Group Bom Jesus. It offers more than 20 undergraduate courses across about 30 specialization courses, five MBA programmes together with Executive Education and Distance Education. It is one of the most reputable Higher Education Institutions in Paraná, Brazil The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. Students are permitted to join DBS in year 3 of the BA (Hons) in Business general and are only permitted to choose the following electives: - Human Resource Development - Creativity, Innovation & Entrepreneurship

4. Articulation agreement	**Articulation agreement**
Name of body (/bodies):	Euroaula

Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma in Marketing and Advertising https://www.euroaula.com/en/diploma-digital-marketing-advertising-barcelona
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/04/2019
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	Established in 1987, it specialises in training for the Travel & Tourism Industry. It is affiliated with the University of Girona, with a recognised Bachelor's Degree in Tourism. It is recognised by the Department of Education of the Generalitat de Catalunya to teach higher education vocational training cycles. This RPL agreement allows students from Euroaula to join DBS with 120 ECTS and they are permitted to enter year 2 of the following programmes: • Bachelor of Business in Marketing, Level 7 – Year 3 • BA (Hons) in Marketing, Level 8 – Year 2 The mapping between both programmes was prepared outlining where the college's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits.

5. Articulation agreement	**Articulation agreement**
Name of body (/bodies):	Universidad Europea Del Atlantico
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Psychology https://www.uneatlantico.es/en/faculty-of-health-sciences/degree-in-psychology
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	21/11/2019
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	The European University of the Atlantic (UNEATLANTICO) is a higher learning institution that offers students a well-rounded education based on academic excellence and personal commitment. The University is an integral part of the Spanish university system and as such offers official degrees. The educational model is classroom based and places particular emphasis on information technology and communication along with a practical orientation. This learning model encourages student autonomy as well as skill acquisition associated with professional fields. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to join DBS with 120 credits and they are permitted to entry year 3 of the following programme: BA (Hons) in Psychology, Year 3 The mapping between both programmes was prepared by the Academic Director outlining where the

	University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. As there is no psychoanalysis within the Spanish degree, students in year 3 are not permitted to choose psychoanalysis electives. They will also be required to get additional coverage in Lab Report writing and Quantitative Statistics. It could be suggested that they take a level 7 Experiential Psychology which takes place in Semester 1.

6. Articulation agreement	**Articulation agreement**
Name of body (/bodies):	Asia Metropolitan University, Malaysia
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) in Business Administration (Marketing major) https://www.amu.edu.my/bachelor-of-business-administration/
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30/11/2021
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	From their inception in 2004, AMU has grown into a fully fledged University offering a wide range of programmes which bears testimony to their impressive track record within the Malaysia private higher education industry. Students from this University who have completed 88 Malaysian credits are eligible to join the final year (Year 3) of the BA (Hons) in Marketing (General Degree) at DBS. In year 3, students are only permitted to choose the following electives: - Creativity, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, AND - International Marketing

7. Articulation agreement	**Articulation agreement**
Name of body (/bodies):	Shenyang Normal University, China
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Computing (Data Analytics)
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	24/03/2021
Date of next review	31/12/2025
Detail of the agreement	Shenyang Normal University comprises of 18 colleges, divided into 30 departments, some of which include the Liaoning Provincial Basic Education Teaching Research Training Centre and College of Educational Science, the Science and Information Software College and the International Commercial College. This RPL agreement allows students coming from this University admission to year 3 or year 4 of the BSc (Hons) in Computing based on the information provided. Differences arise in the study of Web Development, Cloud Computing and

	Database Systems which DBS students will cover from year 1 or 2, but students in the partner institute would only cover in year 3 (with cloud computing not being part of their curriculum at any stage). However, this would not be an inhibitor to the success of these students joining DBS in year 3 as perhaps DBS could run support classes for these modules during the semester. If students are coming to DBS for year 4 only, they would be strongly advised to take the data science stream, and choose the following two modules: Data Mining & Big Data Analytics and Big Data: Achieving Scale, as these provide the closest match to their previous studies. For that reason, the software development stream would not as suitable for these students as they will not have the underpinning in Cloud computing and less exposure to web development. The mapping between both programmes was prepared by the Academic Director outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits.

8. Articulation agreement	**Articulation agreement**
Name of body (/bodies):	MBA Business School, Canarias
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business Administration https://cibs.es/en/bachelor
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	04/05/2021
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	MBA Business School is a non-profit Foundation dedicated to development, training and research in the business world in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Founded in 1986, it is a Private Institution that offers Bachelor Degree programmes as well as programmes for executives (MBAs and other specialised programmes). They also offer summer campuses for business training for high school students as well as programmes for international companies and executives. With a markedly international vocation, their mission is to provide their students with versatile and up-to-date knowledge and skills in the business world that will allow them to develop as future leaders, managers and prestigious professionals. Students who have completed 120 credits of this programme will be eligible to join year 3 of the following programme: - BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance

9. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	IPAG, France
Programme titles and links to publications	Masters in Management (3+2) https://www.ipag.edu/en/grande-ecole-programme?tab=onglet2
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	12/10/2021
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	The IPAG Business School (formerly Institut de préparation à l'administration et à la gestion) is a French private business school founded in 1965. Their degree awarding programmes are delivered in both Paris and Nice, and students can also choose to study in California and Kunming in China. IPAG is a state-recognised school: As a not-for-profit institution, IPAG is EESPIG-accredited. (Ministry of Higher Education and Research.) A respected high profile business school, IPAG is noted for top-tier research. Since 2017, IPAG has been the 3rd ranked French Business School for research in economics and finance according to the Shanghai rankings. IPAG is also a member of The Conférence des Grandes Écoles (CGE). Students will join DBS from IPAG with 120 credits and will be eligible to join the following: - BA (Hons) in Business (Law), Year 3 - BA (Hons) in Business (HRM), Year 3 - BA (Hons) in Business (General), Year 3, however students are only permitted to choose the following electives in year 3: · Human Resource Development · Performance Management (Accounting) · Creativity, Innovation & Entrepreneurship · Contemporary Performance Management · Data Management & Analytics · Corporate Law & Governances - Advanced Business & Commercial Law

10. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	HS Worms, Germany
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in International Management https://www.hs-worms.de/en/studyprogrammes/im-bachelor/
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	02/02/2021
Date of next review	30/08/2024
Detail of the agreement	The University of Applied Sciences Worms is a public university located in Worms, Germany. It was founded in 1978 and its predecessor in higher education dates back to 1949. The

	University of Applied Sciences Worms comprises faculties of business, tourism/transportation, and computer science. HS Worms is in the heart of the industry triangle with good job opportunities for students. There are approximately 3000 students, 3 faculties i.e. Computer Sciences, Tourism & Travel and Management & Business Administration. Some programmes are taught through English with 20% of their students being international. The University has excellent links with big business corporations. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to join DBS with 120 ECTS credits and they are permitted to entry year 3 of the following programme: - BA (Hons) in Business (Management)

Dublin Business School

2022

Annual Quality Report
(Dublin Business School)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2020-2021

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **Part B** of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**.

Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR submission were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact[2] of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to illustrate IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

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[2] The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf.This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

DBS Strategic Plan Updates

In Q4 2020 a review of the current DBS strategy was initiated through the Board of Directors. The previous DBS strategy ran from 2019 to 2023, and it was deemed timely to undertake a progress review at its mid-point, and also because of changes required to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Areas of focus for the remainder of the plan were identified and a revised Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 was developed in consultation with the SLT over the period from January to July 2021. Some amendments were made to the strategic objectives; the full strategic plan and objectives are accessible on this link. Arising from the update strategy a number of projects were identified. These are listed below.

No.	Project	Description
SP1	Alumni	Develop a plan to engage with alumni to i) increase placement and employer opportunities for learners and ii) to sell additional products to them
SP2	Programme Strategy	Prepare an academic programme strategy and plan covering the next 3 years to include i) an outline skills matrix to guide what we will develop, ii) incorporate WBL into programmes as standard, iii) incorporate environment/sustainability into programmes and iv) incorporate the values of good citizenship.
SP3	Careers Service	Define the “award-winning careers service” we want to have in place and prepare a plan to develop it, including the measures of its success, i.e. graduate outcome rates
SP4	Academic Delivery	Define and implement a new agile academic deli very resource with the skills and competencies to meet the needs of the future multi-modal delivery. Use this work as the basis of creating the desired faculty culture
SP5	Student Wellbeing	Establish a health and wellbeing service for students to incorporate the disability service previously managed through the Academic Information & Resource Centre
SP6	International Student Service	Develop a support proposition for international students taking account of their requirements arising from now living in a different country and learning in a different academic culture
SP7	Professional Academy	Develop a professional training business to take the opportunity for short courses and bespoke programmes aimed at individuals and businesses
SP8	Customer Service	Develop a customer service plan and charter covering all areas of the College that interface with students, customers and the public. In parallel, review and improve processes both within department and

		across departments so as we can establish credible targets that we are confident we will meet
SP9	Student Feedback	Prepare a more integrated and effective plan to seek feedback from students, analyse it, distribute it to the areas where action is necessary and monitor the implementation of actions
SP10	Internal Communications	Develop and implement an effective internal communications plan so as all staff are appropriately informed and have the opportunity to provide feedback locally and corporately
SP11	Environment	Build on the work of the sustainable environment group to create a sustainable environment policy and plan to i) reduce the carbon footprint of the College and ii) promote that face
SP12	Digital Capacity	Further expand our digital capacity for teaching and learning, and customer service. Expand the use of digital technology in teaching and enable automated solutions to service where appropriate, building on the theme that the learner or customer can access “however and wherever” they wish
SP13	Business Incubator	Launch and sustain a business incubator unit and leverage this in programmes to enhance innovation and develop entrepreneurial skills amongst students
SP14	Recognition	Achieve formal reputable recognition for the College which can be used to promote the brand and our programmes
SP15	Overseas Delivery	Pursue articulation agreements, international collaborations and transnational validation relationships to increase international business in-country as well as in Ireland
SP16	Cybersecurity	Review our IT networks and systems for vulnerabilities and take steps as necessary to minimise the risk associated with a ransomware attack
SP17	Financial Governance & Audit	Ensure the highest level of financial governance at DBS through audit and periodic checks to ensure compliance with government contracts and Kaplan/GHCO policies
SP18	Academic Standards	Establish a means of measuring and evaluating our academic standards and outcomes in the development, delivery and assessment of programmes to enable robust benchmarking internally and externally, and identify areas for improvement that will enhance our academic standards.

Terms of Reference for each project were developed by the responsible member of the SLT, with agreed timelines.

At its meeting in September 2021 the Board of DBS approved the revised strategy, presented by the President.

Membership of Board of Directors

As per DBS's previous AQR submission, the desire for additional independent expertise on the Board of Directors was identified as part of an independent review in 2020 and at the time of writing this report the Chair and President are in advanced discussions with a person with significant business experience at Director and Chief Executive level.

Devolved Responsibility for Programme Validation Application

DBS initiated an application to QQI for Devolved Responsibility (DR) in December 2020 and submitted the initial process documentation for QQI's review in February 2021. Following consultations on process with QQI this was approved at its June 2021 PAEC meeting with the formalities completed through a MOA with QQI signed in October 2021. DBS's first programmes for approval under DR were progressed in late 2021/early 2022 with QQI-approved panels scheduled for Q1 2022.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
From AQR 2021 Section 1.2		
1	Articulate a rationale for the proposed committee structure.	Completed at time of Re-Engagement Response. However, this will be continuously kept under review to ensure committee structures remain fit-for-purpose.
2	Consider the appointment of Programme Board Chairs who would report to the Course Directors	Senior Lecturers have been appointed working with Academic Directors, and, as such, chair Programme Boards.
3	Ensure that the changes made to governance documentation to address the Panel's proposed mandatory change are consistently represented throughout the College's QA documentation.	Completed at time of the Re-Engagement Response.
4	Review quality assurance documentation for any references to legacy language	Completed at time of the Re-Engagement Response.
5	Continue to plan towards formal accreditation of all offerings, prioritising programmes of one year's duration.	In 2020 DBS validated 3 awards as Kaplan Professional Awards and in January 2021 successfully completed the process for Centre Approval with Kaplan to manage and deliver assessments for these programmes. A review of Professional Diplomas was carried out in 2020 using an external consultant from another HEI. Validation of two microcredentials was successfully carried out with QQI in Q4 of 2020 and three more were submitted to QQI in February 2021. Further accreditation of unaccredited offerings will be pursued where an accreditation process suited to the purpose of the offering is available.
6	Ensure that qualifications recognised for advanced entry – accredited or otherwise – and including in articulation contexts, are subject or rigorous approval and continuous review.	Initial admissions review commencing March 2021 (postponed from 2020 due to COVID-19).
7	Further consider how the College's use of completion rates can increase the effectiveness and strategic capability of its quality assurance system	In progress in 2020/2021 academic year through the introduction of annual programme reports. Completion rates were not able to be included in the 2020/21 reports

		but the issue has now been resolved and these will be included in the 2021/22 reports.
8	Include further information for learners, in the College's offer letter and in its Learner Handbook, on the implications of the lack of recognition on the NFQ of its unaccredited programmes, including the extent of exemptions available for learners wishing to subsequently pursue accredited degrees at DBS	Completed at time of the Re-Engagement Response.
9	Ensure that agreements with other parties reflect the grievance, appeals, and disciplinary procedures that apply to these arrangements.	Collaborative provision is subject to DBS Quality Assurance policies and procedures.
From AQR 2021 Section 3.2		
10	Devolved Responsibility application	Approved June 2021.
11	Readiness for DA/institutional review	On-going. Internal panel for DA scheduled April 2022. Considerable work has been done towards this internally, including a mapping and evidence-gathering process against the QQI Criteria for Delegated Authority and a functional review carried out by external consultants. DBS aims to have an 'internal' (i.e. DBS organised) panel event, with a panel of experts of high standing in academia and QA, early in the second quarter of 2022. Following panel feedback, a second phase of the project will be initiated to prepare for the application to QQI. An independent external assessment is in process to review the effectiveness of the central (non-academic) functions of the College to determine how well they support the academic purpose of the institution.
12	T&L staff training and development	On-going.
13	Online proctoring	Pilots were successfully carried out in January and April 2021, in that exams for two cohorts of Masters students (September and January intakes across all programmes) were deployed with most students successfully completing exams via the proctoring platform, although a 'light touch' approach was taken with minimal security features utilised in order to minimise potential technical difficulties. The project was postponed following this due to internal capacity limitations to support this. This has since been re-initiated and a dedicated Project Leader assigned to bring this forward. Phase 1 of a phased deployment is scheduled

		for summer exams 2022. It is planned to continue with online proctored exams beyond the current academic year.
14	RPL Review	Review of Admissions articulation agreements completed 2021. Next steps to be determined through the Admissions Committee meeting in Spring 2022.
15	Review of strategic plan	Complete. Updated plan published 2021.
16	Appointment of a second independent director to the governing Board	Deferred from Q4 2021; on-going and as above post is likely to be filled by end of Q2 2022.
17	Academic Programmes Annual Programme Reporting evaluation	Completed June 2021. Follow up meeting held in September 2021. Process needs to be initiated and followed up for 2021/2022 period.
18	Postgraduate academic writing support – future enhancement based on findings and review of pilot	Supports rolled out on an on-going basis for intakes from September 2020. Adjustments have been made to the delivery for each intake to respond to feedback, engagement and emerging needs. This will be picked up and brought forward into 2021/2022 as per plans for development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Unit, SESU and Academic Information and Resource Centre.
19	Pilot of postgraduate academic learner support in computing	Commenced September 2021. Data and feedback will be gathered through the academic year and refinements made accordingly. As above, this will be picked up and brought forward into 2021/2022 as per plans for development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Unit, SESU and Academic Information and Resource Centre.
20	DBS review professional body possibilities for relationships and exemptions	On-going. This is included as a consideration for all new Programme development. An application was made in December 2021 to CIPD for recognition of the MSc in HRM.
21	Academic Programmes Development to include Graduate Skills Map/Matrices – i.e. what does a DBS graduate look like?	All new validations and re-validations going forward will include this. Programme development principles recently approved by the senior leadership team (8 February 2022) specifically address this2021. Head of Academic Programmes, Academic Directors. On-going.
22	Academic Programmes Assessment Review	On-going. Principles of Assessment and an updated policy on Marking Feedback and Moderation has been developed through a Working Group in 2021 and presented to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee at several meetings for comment and feedback. The final principles

		and policy were presented for agreement at the SLT meeting on 8 February 2022 and Academic Board on 14 February 2022. However further work on assessment best practice is required and will be part of actions for the 2022 into 2023 year.
23	Industry Advisory Boards established in Arts and in Health Sciences/reconstituted in A&F and Computing	Industry Advisory Boards are now established in all areas other than Creative Media which is planned for 2022Q3 2021. Head of Academic Programmes, Academic Directors.
24	Study Abroad and partner review	Decisions for students September 2021. Head of Academic Programmes, Academic Directors.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Board of Directors	4 November 2020 17 December 2020 22 April 2021 21 July 2021 4 November 2021
Academic Board	2 October 2020 1 December 2020 23 February 2021 20 April 2021 22 June 2021 5 October 2021
Board of Studies	11 September 2020 27 November 2020 30 April 2021
Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Committee (replaced by **Exams Contingency** and **COVID-19 Contingency** meetings from March 2020)	30 November 2020 22 January 2021 11 March 2021 14 May 2021 15 July 2021 20 August 2021 10 September 2021 1 November 2021 9 December 2021 20 January 2022
Exam Boards	11 August 2020 (January intake UG Internal) 28 August 2020 (UG Internal) 3 September 2020 (UG External) 11 September 2020 (PG Internal) 17 September 2020 (PG External) 3 November (Springboard/ICT) 10 November 2020 (Springboard/ICT) 3 February 2021 (PT & Continuing Internal) 10 February 2021 (PT & Continuing External) 17 February 2021 (FT UG year 1 & PG FT Internal) 24 February 2021 (FT UG year 1 & PG FT External) 10 June 2021 (UG & PG Arts, Springboard, Professional School Internal)

	11 June 2021 (UG & PG Business Internal) 17 June 2021 (UG & PG Arts, Springboard, Professional School External) 18 June 2021 (UG&PG Business External) 27 August 2021 (September intake UG & PG repeats Internal) 2 September 2021 (September intake UG & PG repeats External) 14 September 2021 (January intake PG Internal) 21 September 2021 (January intake PG External) 18 October 2021 (September intake PG Grad Internal) 22 October 2021 (September intake PG Grad External) *N.B. Additional boards in 20/21 due to staggered intake dates arising from COVID.*

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

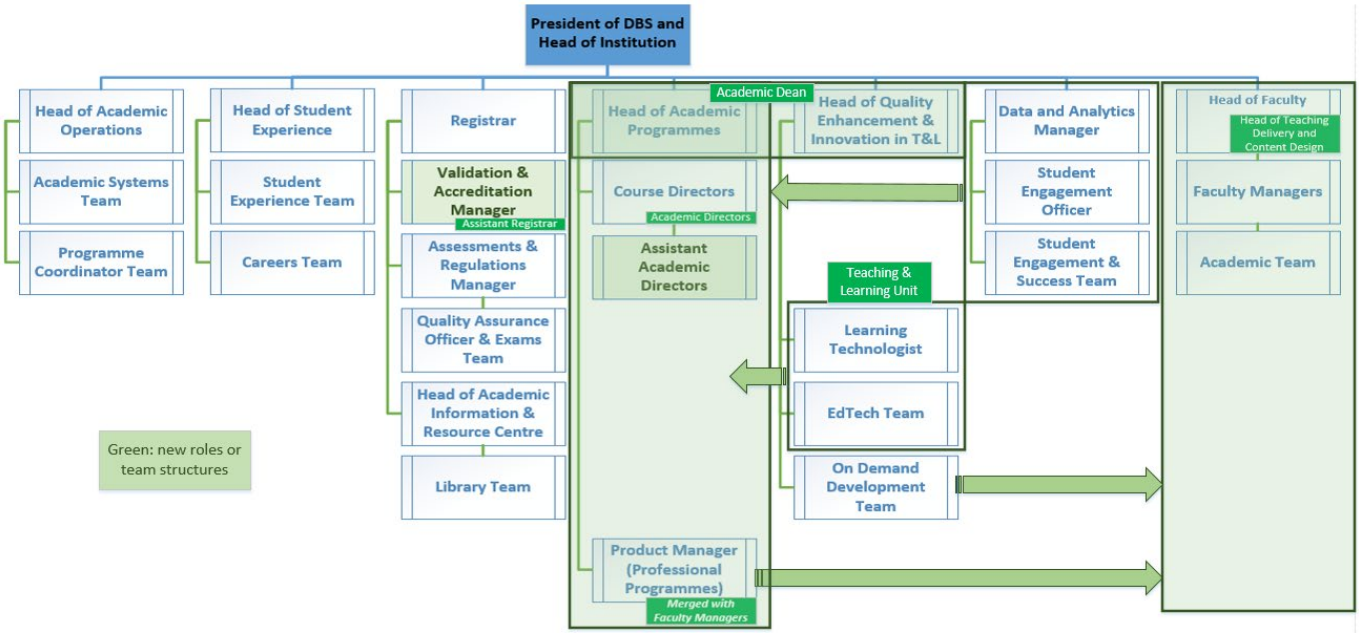
In February/March 2021 DBS created the role of Validation and Accreditation Manager, reporting to the Registrar to assist with all aspects of the validation process for new and reviewed programmes, as well as assist with preparation for delegated authority.

There were no other changes in governance units or leadership during the 2020/21 academic year. However, during this period, an Academic Delivery Working Group (ADWG) was set up to review the work currently being done by lecturers, Course Directors and Subject Experts. This review in turn led to a reconsideration and refocus of the roles of Course Director and Senior Lecturer to ensure that these important academic leadership and management positions are better focussed and supported for discipline area development, oversight and programme management. The work of this Working Group has been on-going and will continue into 2022, but there were significant structural changes made in Q4 of 2021.

- The post of Course Director has been replaced by the post of Academic Director, with an updated job description which will more clearly underscore the academic leadership and nature of this role. A new post of Assistant Academic Director has been created to support the Academic Directors in providing academic management and oversight on programmes in their discipline area. They will work closely with both the Academic Director and programme teams to manage, develop and grow their discipline area and ensure high-quality learning opportunities for students.
- The posts of Head of Academic Programmes and Head of Quality Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning have been combined to form a new post, Academic Dean. The former Head of Quality Enhancement & Innovation in T&L, Dr Tony Murphy, has been appointed to the role of Academic Dean. The role of the Academic Dean is to lead, develop and manage all academic programmes, lead the evolution of teaching delivery through the adoption of digital technology and the introduction of innovation to the learning environment, thereby enhancing the quality of the academic experience for all learners. All the posts that reported previously to the Head of Academic Programme will now report to the Academic Dean.
- Consequent to the creation of the post of Academic Dean a new post of Head of Teaching Delivery & Content Production has been created, incorporating the previous role of Head of School and Faculty Operations, which, in itself, has been made redundant. The former Acting Head of Faculty & School Operations has been appointed to the new, expanded role of Head of Teaching Delivery and Content

Production. This new post will lead and manage all teaching delivery across the College, including delivery of live on-campus and live online classes as well as the production of asynchronous content, ensuring high-quality, timely and efficient teaching delivery.

- The Validation and Accreditation Manager role has been changed to Assistant Registrar to fully reflect the responsibilities of the role.



Mapping of the updates of the Management Structure outlined above.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing (NEW)	10/9/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24323
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science (REVALIDATION)	10/9/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24400
Bachelor of Business & Higher Certificate (REVALIDATION)	10/9/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24398
Bachelor of Arts in Film and Creative Media (REVALIDATION)	10/9/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24396
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film and Creative Media (REVALIDATION)	10/9/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24397
Certificate in Marketing Technology (NEW)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24320
Master of Arts in Financial Analytics & Postgraduate Diploma (NEW)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24328 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24329
Master of Science in Cybersecurity & Postgraduate Diploma (NEW)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24326 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24327
Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence & Postgraduate Diploma (NEW)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24324 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24325
Higher Diploma in Science in Aviation Finance (NEW)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24322
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (REVALIDATION) & Bachelor of Science (NEW EXIT)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24463
Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics & Certificate Exit (REVALIDATION)	15/10/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24461
Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management (NEW)	03/12/2020	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24321

MSc in HRM, Postgraduate Diploma & Certificate Exit (NEW)	4/02/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24393 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24394
Certificate in Marketing Essentials (microcredential) (NEW)	4/02/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24435
Certificate in Data Analytics (microcredential) (NEW)	4/02/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24444
Higher Certificate in Arts & Certificate in Arts Exit (REVALIDATION)	24/6/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24642
Master of Business Administration and Postgraduate Diploma Exit (transnational)	24/6/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24549
BA (Hons) in Business (transnational)	24/6/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24551
2021/22 Academic Year		
Certificate in Business and Digital Skills (microcredential) (NEW)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24522
Certificate in Social Care Skills (microcredential) (NEW)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24528
Certificate in Data Visualisation (microcredential) (NEW)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24527
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience (NEW)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24533
Certificate in International Business (REVALIDATION)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24666
MSc in Applied Psychology (REVALIDATION) & Postgraduate Diploma (NEW EXIT)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24663 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24716
MSc in Digital Marketing and Analytics (REVALIDATION) & Postgraduate Diploma (NEW EXIT)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24664 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24732
MSc in Data Analytics, Postgraduate Diploma & Certificate (REVALIDATION)	09/09/2021	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24665 https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24730

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[3] involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	14				6	6	
of those:							
On-site processes	0						
Desk reviews	2				2		
Virtual processes	10				4	6	
Average panel size for each process type*	6						

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

[3] QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

Guide

Details in respect of the composition of the panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below. Panel composition should be represented as whole numbers rather than as percentages.

'Similar institution' denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission – for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example.

Please delete guide text before submission.

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		*Male*	*Female*	*, or ecified*			*UK, incl. NI*	*Other European*	*Outside of Europe*	*Similar*	*Different*
Chair	12	7	5			11			1	3	9
Secretary	10		10			10				2	8
Academic/Discipline Specific	25	17	8			18	5	2		2	23
Student Representative	9	4	5			9				3	6
QA	2	1	1			2					2
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	10	4	6			9		1			10

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Policy Updates

New and updated Policies added to the *Quality Assurance Handbook* are outlined below. All are approved through Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team. Changes to the Handbook are recorded in the QAH Change Tracker.

New Policies:

- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy – new 2020 (QAH A.2.9)
- Learning Analytics Policy – new 2020 (QAH A.2.8)
- Group Work Policy – new 2020 (QAH C.1.6)
- Conflict of Interest Policy – new 2021 (QAH A.2.10)
- Marking Policy – in progress 2021-22
- Online Exams Policy – new 2021 (QAH B.5.10)
- Sexual Harassment and Sexual Consent Policy (QAH A.2.11)

Updated Policies Summary (material changes only listed):

- ***B.5.5.2: Repeat Lv9 Policy*** - clarification of the PG Repeat cycle and addition of Application to sit early: Prevent overloading repeat students in sem2, with application for exceptions where a resit can go early.
- ***B.3.4.2 Disciplinary Policy*** - Additional clause regarding repeat offences resulting in suspension or withdrawal.
- ***A.1.3.8 ToR Admissions Committee*** - Frequency of meetings from 3 to 2 times per year, now Nov and May.
- ***C.1.1.9 Dissertation Supervision*** - Clarity on number of students a supervisor can take on - Distinction needed between supervisors with full teaching schedule, vs supervisor-only capacity.
- ***C.2.1.6 New Programme Development*** - Updates to Phase 5, QQI review process - Amendments to recognise online panel events.
- ***C.2.1.6 New Programme Development*** - Updates to Phase 5 to reflect QQI-led validation versus validation under Devolved Responsibility.

A review of DBS's three-year *Strategy for Learning Teaching and Assessment Enhancement* (SLATE) (2020-2022) was completed in 2021, and during 2022 a new LT&A strategy will be developed for rollout in January 2023.

Enhancement/ Development	Details	Impact
Devolved Responsibility for New Programme Validation	As outlined in Section 1.1 above, DBS initiated an application to QQI for Devolved Responsibility (DR) in December 2020 and this was approved at the June 2021 PAEC. This allows DBS to undertake responsibility for managing panels and reporting for the validation of new	Increased ownership by DBS of QA processes and associated increase in institutional capacity as the College. This is seen as a key milestone for the College in working towards an application for Delegated Authority.

	programmes. While QQI retains close oversight, managing this responsibility gives DBS increased control over validation timelines. DBS has refined internal processes around increasing efficiency for the setting up of external panels.	
Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC) and Internal Review Process	The PASC process previously piloted has been fully implemented in 2020/21 for initial approval of new programmes. A review of the PASC panel construct was conducted in early 2021 and it was re-constituted as a peer-review process in a bid to ensure capacity to manage this and maintain as much independence of committees as possible when reviewing programmes. Committees have now been convened to provide feedback on three new programme proposals. Additionally, all new programmes developed since 2020 have been presented to an external panel constituted by the College before submission to QQI. These internal external/ mock panels have been robustly constructed and are usually Chaired by a QQI-trained Chair of high standing in academia. This process has been working well and has provided valuable feedback in the programme development process. DBS treats these panels as formal events and feedback is taken on board and changes made to programmes accordingly.	Robust internal QA processes provide confidence in the integrity of a programme construct and help to ensure that programme teams are well prepared going into real panel events.
Collection of Completion Data	This was identified through the Re-Engagement process as an objective to help inform programme evaluations. Due to technical limitations this was not able to be collected to date but a reporting function has been created and will be utilised in progamme analysis for the academic year 2021/2022.	Improved data for analysis of success and weaknesses of programmes.

Annual programme reporting	The need for detailed reporting at a programme level emerged through a large cycle of Programme Review in 2018/2019. A Programme report template was piloted in 2019/2020 and the inaugural Annual Programme Reports were delivered by Course Directors at the June Academic Board, with a follow-up presentation meeting in September. While onerous, the process was hugely beneficial in providing detail on strengthens and weakness of programmes, and to inform developments going forward.	Improved oversight of programmes at management and senior management level, to inform strategic decision making. This will also provide efficiencies for the Programme Review and Revalidation cycle by ensuring data and information is captured - and analysed - on an on-going basis for all programmes. Student-centred innovation in programme delivery.
Multimodal programme delivery	DBS has continued to introduce multimodal content into new and updated programmes throughout the period 2020/21. Specifically validated to include multimodal delivery were the MSc in HRM, HDip in Project Management, MSc in Data Analytics, MSc in Applied Psychology and MSc in Digital Marketing and Analytics. The blended/multimodal offer facilitates greater peer-networking and knowledge-sharing through smaller on-site and live online class groups, and the use of flipped classroom and learner-led reflection.	Enhanced pedagogy and better learner experience.
Zoom Rooms	DBS introduced Zoom Rooms into a third of its classrooms during 2021. Zoom Rooms offer the opportunity for an enhanced hybrid learning environment, where the lecturer is delivering simultaneously to learners in the classroom and online.	Enhanced pedagogy and better learner experience. Greater flexibility for learners and de-risking teaching delivery in the COVID environment but also future proofing delivery for the College.
Proctoring of Online Exams	As noted in the 2021 AQR submission, in January 2021 DBS piloted online proctoring for Master-level exams. A second pilot was complete for January intake Masters students in the summer exam cycle. The proctoring software was introduced as a 'soft' pilot without browser lockdown and other security/punitive	Integrity of online exams. Flexibility for learners completing exams going forward. Enabling larger sittings online (i.e. no need for room bookings) will reduce exam session timeframes and give more time for marking and QA if fully implemented.

	measures enabled, in order to test basic features of the system and build confidence. While overall the pilots were deemed successful, it did put significant strains on the College resources to support this. The project was paused and has been initiated in 2022.	
Delegated Authority Preparation	DBS convened a Steering Committee for Delegated Authority in March 2021 comprised of senior members of the team and Board of Directors and Academic Board level. Simultaneously a working group was put together to carry out preparation for this through a series of reviews across the College. Steering Committee meets quarterly for progress reports. DBS is using the preparation process to review all functions and to identify QA and QE-facing projects which will benefit and improve the organisation overall.	Improved institution.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

DBS is part of QQI's National Academic Integrity Network and took part in the National Academic Integrity week in October 2021, organising a series of internal events for students also:

- Mon 18th - launch of our Academic Integrity learning artefact
- Mon 18th 4:30pm – Library class for learners on Referencing
- Tues 19th 2pm - Library class for lecturers on Urkund/ Ouriginal
- Tues 19th 5pm - 'Beatdown: Why the music industry has become so aggressive in defending its intellectual property and what this means for your academic journey' - a presentation by Richard O'Callaghan (hosted on site and live through Zoom)
- Weds 20th 2:30pm – Library class for learners 'Using Ouriginal to Enhance Academic Writing'
- Weds 20th 5pm - RESq session, on looking at 'Evidence for Academic Impropriety, and spotting Suspected Ghost Writing'
- Thurs 21st 4pm – Library and Exams team, 'How to prepare for an Online Exam, with a Q&A with the Exams team'.
- Fri 22nd 1pm - Panel discussion, 'Creating Online Content - Copyright, Continuity, & Context'

DBS is constantly developing resources for students to support and guide them - see for example the recorded podcast on Essay Mills: https://students.dbs.ie/quality-assurance/academic-integrity#GhostWriting
There was limited engagement by learners and faculty with the October 2021 events. The Registrar's and Exams offices are reviewing this to establish strategies to improve future engagement.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
1	Strategic Project 2: **Programme Strategy**	Preparation of an academic programme strategy and plan covering the next 3 years to include i) an outline skills matrix to guide what we will develop, ii) incorporate work-based learning into programmes as standard, iii) incorporate environment/sustainability into programmes and iv) incorporate the values of good citizenship. Responsibility for this sits with the Academic Dean. **Timeline:** Ongoing with significant progress in programme development during 2022/23
2	Strategic Project 4: **Academic Delivery**	The aim of the Academic Delivery Working Group is to lead a process that will define the pedagogic roles for the Future DBS, identify the skills required and oversee the implementation of the plan developed. **Timeline:** Actions implemented from 2021/22 over a period of approximately one year
3	Strategic Project 12: **Digital Capacity**	Expansion of digital capacity for teaching and learning, and customer service. Expand the use of digital technology in teaching and enable automated solutions to service where appropriate, building on the theme that the learner or customer can access 'however and wherever' they wish. Responsibility for this sits with a working group comprised of heads of departments, Academic Directors and a student representative. **Timeline:** Actions implemented from 2021/22 and ongoing as technology develops and pedagogy evolves

4	Strategic Project 18: **Academic Standards**	Establish a means of measuring and evaluating academic standards and outcomes in the development, delivery and assessment of programmes to enable robust benchmarking internally and externally, and identify areas for improvement that will enhance our academic standards. Responsibility sits with the Registrar's Office with a working group comprised of all academic-facing heads of department. **Timeline**: Working Group in place by Q3 2022.
5	**Consolidation and alignment of all academic student support functions**, including bringing together the work of SESU, LT&A Unit and AIRC	DBS has longstanding experience in supporting the learner journey and the faculty journey. The intent is to see support for these two journeys as complementary and intersecting and devise plans for support learners and faculty that are complementary. During the upcoming reporting period DBS will be bringing together and aligning learner support with academic CPD and training.
6	**Discipline-based CPD**	Newly in position Academic Directors are developing discipline-based plans for calendar year 2022 that will include objectives and actions for discipline-based CPD. The plans are to be put forward to the Academic Dean on March 4th. From 2023, the intention is for each Academic Director to have a discipline plan for each calendar year in January.
7	**Review of assessment policy and practice**	Conduct reviews of the College's Principles of Assessment and revisit policies such as Marking and Feedback for renewed faculty engagement and updating to reflect the increased delivery of assessments online. **Timeline:** Marking and Feedback policy submitted to Academic Board in February 2022, further workshops and stakeholder feedback to be collected through 2022.
8	**Review of Learner Charter**	Undertake a formal review of the existing Learner Charter to incorporate the 'new' online environment for ongoing teaching and learning for learners, with emphasis on online behaviours, academic integrity and learner engagement. Consultation with learners, academic faculty, Student Services and Operations teams to underpin the final developments to this Charter. **Timeline**: Charter circulated for consultation Q4 2021 into Q2 2022, for final ratification at Academic Board in 2022.
9	**Student Success Project**	SESU is undertaking an exercise to define student success. The aim is to have a DBS definition of student success that includes 'metrics' so it can be determined if a programme is successful or not.

		Timeline: The first draft has already been circulated for consultation with Academic Directors. The aim is to have a definition of student success ratified by the Academic Board in Q2 2022.
10	**Review of Boards and Committees**	A functional review of the existing Committee substructure of the Academic Board, to consolidate and align Committee functions to a reduced but more efficient model. **Timeline:** The basis for a Committee Review presented to Academic Board in Dec 2021, for feedback and the formation of a Working Group in Feb 2022. The Working Group will benchmark and map existing structures to proposed aligned structures and propose a transition strategy for Academic Board approval in 2022/23.
11	**Academic Plan**	Develop an Academic Plan aligning the College's Business Strategy with Academic projects to set out the academic direction of travel for the coming year. The Academic Plan would be reviewed and updated annually. The plan will set out Actions, Timelines and Milestones, Performance Measures and Stakeholders for each Goal. **Timeline:** The Draft Academic Plan is presented to the Academic Board on 15th February 2022, for feedback and commentary, with approval aimed for April 2022. The plan will be brought for review and renewal in 2023.
12	**Research Activity Enhancement**	Establishing a Research Practice Coordinator role in order to: • Improve the reliability of the data behind the research profile; • Illustrate a measurable increase in research outputs; • Work with Academic Directors to define a research strategy for their disciplines; • Conclude and publish an updated research section of the Intranet; • Continue to publish the newsletter bi-monthly but as a gateway into the Intranet; • Stage an online Practice and Applied Research Conference (PARC) in May 2022; • Define a research strategy for DBS with the Research Committee **Timeline:** The Research Practice Coordinator will report on progress with the Academic Dean regularly. The PARC in May 2022 will inform further developments and strategy.
13	**Readiness for DA and Institutional Review**	Establishing a working group, led by the Registrar's Office, to interrogate the Delegated Authority criteria and the evidence base and report structure required for such an application. Collation of the pertinent evidence, and the undertaking of a Professional Services Review

		through an independent body to evaluate the non-academic functions of the College. Following the collation of the evidence and this review, conduct a mock-panel event to evaluate the state of the College and its functioning capacity against the published Delegated Authority criteria. This panel feedback will feed into a further cycle of gap analysis, development and reviews, to prepare a final report for a Delegated Authority application. **Timeline:** Working group constituted in March 2021, Professional Services Review conducted between September 2021-February 2022. Mock Panel May 2022. Formulation of final Application Report December 2022.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
MSc in Financial Technology (PG23852)	April 2022	Validated September 2018 Last intake August 2023
Higher Diploma in Science in Financial Technology (PG23577)	April 2022	Validated December 2018 Last intake August 2022
Certificate in Fund Accounting (PG23231)	April 2022	Validated September 2017 Last intake August 2022
Diploma in Big Data for Business (PG23239)	April 2022	Validated September 2017 Last intake August 2022
Cert in Risk & Financial Analysis (PG23236)	January 2022 (for closure)	Validated September 2017 Last intake August 2022
Cert in Cloud Platform Development (PG23229)	January 2022 (for closure)	Validated September 2017 Last intake August 2022
BA (Hons) in Applied Social Care (PG23251)	January 2022 (for closure)	Validated February 2018 Last intake August 2023
Functional Reviews of all Professional Services Departments	October-December 2021	N/A
Institutional Review Preparation (alongside Delegated Authority Preparation)	On-going through 2021-2022	2009/2010

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
BA in Applied Social Care (PG23256)	2022/2023	Validated February 2018, Last intake August 2023 ** Extension to be sought to align with cross-taught PG23941 (March 2022)*
BA (Hons) in Applied Social Care (PG23941)	2022/2023	Validated February 2019, Last intake August 2024
BA (Hons) in Audio Production & Music Project Management (PG23892)	2022/2023	Validated September 2018, Last intake August 2023

Higher Cert in Arts in Sound Engineering & Music Production (PG23890)/ Cert in Arts in Sound Engineering & Music Production (PG23891)	2022/2023	Validated September 2018, Last intake August 2023
Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies PG24182	2022/2023	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2023

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

N.B. Due to the large number of reviews due in the period 2023/2024, consideration will be given in the next cycle to bringing work forward/scheduling to stagger workload.

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Certificate in Data Analytics (PG24444)	2022/2023	Validated February 2021 Last intake December 2023
Certificate in Marketing Essentials (PG24435)	2022/2023	Validated February 2021, Last intake December 2023
Certificate in Regulatory Technology (PG23960)	2022/2023	Validated December 2019, Last intake December 2023
Master of Arts in Addiction Studies (PG24066)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Addiction Studies (PG24067)	2023/2024	Validated April 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Arts in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy PG24065	2023/2024	Validated April 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Science in Business Analytics PG24049/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Analytics PG24050	2023/2024	Validated April 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Financial Services (PG24204)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Arts in Psychotherapy (PG24189)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy (PG24188)/ Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Social Studies (PG24190)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Laws (Honours) (PG24186)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy (PG24185)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Science in International Accounting and Finance (PG24183)/	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024

Postgraduate Diploma in Science in International Accounting and Finance (PG24184)		
Higher Diploma in Arts in Business (PG24181)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Certificate in Business & English Language (PG24180)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance (PG24166)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Science in Management Practice (PG24225)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice (PG24226)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Science in Information and Library Management (PG24214)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management (PG24215)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Science in Marketing (PG24206)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (PG24207)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology (PG24169)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology (PG24168)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG24239)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Business Administration (PG24237)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Business (PG24238)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Master of Science in Information Systems with Computing (PG24222)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information Systems with Computing (PG24223)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing (PG24208)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Certificate in Digital Marketing (PG24205)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (PG24224)/ Certificate in Information Technology (PG24230)	2023/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024
Certificate in Social Care Skills (PG24528)	2023/2024	Validated May 2021 Last intake August 2024
Certificate in Data Visualisation (PG24527)	2023/2024	Validated August 2021 Last intake August 2024
Certificate in Business and Digital Skills (PG24522)	2023/2024	Validated August 2021

		Last intake August 2024

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1: Zoom Rooms

DBS introduced Zoom Rooms into a third of its classrooms during 2022. Zoom rooms offer the opportunity for an enhanced hybrid learning environment, where the lecturer is delivering simultaneously to learners in the classroom and online. The system involves placing a wide screen TV, either on a wall or suspended from the ceiling, in front of the lecturer for displaying the online learners. A sound bar with an in-built tracking camera is underneath the TV. The sound bar is a powerful microphone/speaker that picks up all the sounds in the room and projects the sounds of the online learners throughout the class. The camera, which can track the lecturers as they move, has a sufficiently wide range to pick up a third of the room, or the whole room, depending on the size of the room and the placement of the TV and soundbar.

DBS introduced zoom rooms for the summer semester, when the college was running a limited number of classes. The system was piloted with around 20 lecturers, who were surveyed for their feedback. For September, the learning and teaching support staff created technical and pedagogical on demand guides to support the use of zoom rooms. It also facilitated six live support sessions a week for three weeks and provided brief one-to-one technical training that was available to all lecturers before they started using zoom rooms. This support continued into October on a less frequent basis.

Despite the training and support and incorporating lessons learned from the pilot, the use of zoom rooms was challenging during the autumn semester. There were two main issues. Firstly the sound bars proved “too powerful” in that they picked up all the sounds in the room, including noise from the streets. Secondly, the increased cognitive load on the lecturer of trying to engage learners while delivery was happening in two modes. The potential for an enhanced hybrid experience appeared to bring with it an increased pressure on the lecturers to better engage. Learners are also adapting to the hybrid learning environment and the increased responsibility to engage, which comes with the flexibility that hybrid delivery offers. These main issues came on top of technical and usage problems as lecturers came to use and adapt to the new system. An intense period of training and support continued through to half term, during which the learning and teaching support staff introduced an additional pedagogical guide to hybrid delivery using zoom rooms, which also covered classroom management to address issues of noise. These efforts were accompanied by a drive by the Students Union and Student Experience to encourage engagement among learners. A sound barrier system is being trialled in two classrooms, which excludes external noise by filtering it out, which should address the main issues with noise. The success of the sound barrier system will influence DBS’s plans to rollout zoom rooms across the rest of its classrooms in 2022.

Hybrid delivery offers a flexible environment for learners, but it also requires considerable investment in technology, and it requires lecturers to completely rethink their teaching and learning strategies and for learners to take on additional responsibilities for their learning environment. Throughout 2022, DBS will continue to look for ways to enhance the flexible learning environment, while supporting lecturers and learners technically and pedagogically.

CASE STUDY 2: DBS Library

The strategic challenge facing the DBS Library in 2021 was to transition from a traditional academic library service to an innovative academic support hub. The closure of the physical library due to COVID-19 lasted from March 2020 to September 2021. This 18-month duration demanded an accelerated change initiative of all the library services. The library could no longer rely on footfall for the discovery of services nor on face-to-face interactions for instruction.

The DBS Library took a strategic decision in 2021 to be 'digital-first' in response to DBS's continued commitment to hybrid and online teaching. While this initiative will influence collection development decisions in the future, the immediate need in 2021 was the review of 925 module reading lists and updating for digital availability. Where items were not available digitally, the team collaborated with faculty to find alternatives.

In order to coordinate and identify student academic support gaps, the library led the creation of the Learner Support Committee. This committee, Chaired by the library, consists of all departments providing student support and instruction outside of normal, modular teaching hours, including Library, Academic Operations, Student Experience, and Student Engagement. The committee led to a number successful interdepartmental collaborations. These include the first DBS all online new student induction, the first mapping of the student journey from the perspective of support offerings, as well as an on-going project to overhaul the current student information web portal.

The library also introduced two new online support programmes based on the needs identified working in collaboration with the Registrar, Teaching & Learning Quality Enhancement Department, Academic Programmes Office, and Course Directors. Once the needs were identified, the Library team partnered with academic faculty to develop the curriculum for both Postgraduate Academic Writing Support and Computing Applied Technological Support.

In 2021, the academic writing support was delivered to 1165 postgraduate students. The format of the programme was revised over time to respond to the patterns of engagement from students, but overall consists of six weeks of large group lectures followed by six weeks of small group workshops. One-to-one bookable sessions with academic faculty are also available. Due to the programme's unprecedented scale, it was the first non-credit bearing support ever in DBS to be formally timetabled despite attendance being entirely voluntary.

Computing Applied Technological Support was developed in collaboration with the Academic Director of Computing and the Computing faculty. It launched in June 2021 to support students in areas such as maths, statistics, and programming. The model of delivery was based on the successful Postgraduate Academic Writing programme. Each session was voluntary and attendance was capped at 15 students per session. Attendance averaged 82% of capacity with many of the sessions over-subscribed in 2021.

These highly successful collaborations, both internally and externally, prove the extraordinary efforts of the DBS Library team. Through their efforts, the DBS Library services have been transformed into a collaborative learning environment.

Achievements

These successes have been endorsed by student feedback; for example following an online Information Literacy support session, 100% of students answered 'Yes' to an anonymous survey asking if they would recommend the session to a friend. Further feedback around online services includes:

- 'I really appreciate that the library is so accessible. I have used both email and online chat. I have availed of various courses provided by the library as well. The service is second to none.'
- 'I was not expecting such a quick response and such support from a library service. I felt listened to. I was nervous and appreciated who was at the other end of the chat.'
- 'Helpful, good guidance and always flexible in helping remote learners like myself.'
- 'Keep up with the same helpful and swift service as you are providing. I am really very thankful to our Library staff and very satisfied with online services.'
- 'I am quite happy. I contacted the library a number of times as a remote learner and always got quick replies and issues resolved very fast.'
- 'I am greatly satisfied with the whole Library online service. Thank you team.'
- 'I was trying to access one article from DBS library resources, however I was not able to open it. I posted my query to the chat and got a response in less than a minute. Your efforts to provide required materials is much appreciated!!'

Following the above, the future for the DBS Library is to continue to evolve into an innovative academic support hub, with a focus on 'digital first' to ensure maximum flexibility for all learners, based on learnings from the past 18 months.

[End of Dublin Business School AQR 2022]