DBS
Dublin
Business
School

Dublin Business School

Institutional Profile

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1.   Executive Summary

Dublin Business School, or DBS as it is known, is almost fifty years old. It is a private Higher Education Institution (HEI) with approximately 8,500 students per year. It is the largest private HEI in Ireland, based on student volumes and revenue. Up to the start of the amalgamation of Institutes of Technology to form Technological Universities, DBS was around the 10th largest HEI – public or private – in Ireland, measured by graduate numbers.

DBS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kaplan, the Education Division of the Graham Holdings Company. It was acquired by Kaplan in 2003 and now forms an important part of the global education organisation that Kaplan is. DBS has grown substantially since its launch, mostly in the last five years.

This document sets out much more detail about DBS. When you have finished reading it, you should have a clear view of what DBS is, what it sets out to do, how it works and what it has achieved. The document is written under several headings, all of which contribute to the picture of the College. It starts with a short summary of the corporate ownership and history of the organisation. The vision, purpose and values of the College are set out, as are the strategy and strategic objectives. The systems and structures for corporate governance and academic governance are detailed, and a comprehensive profile of students, and their outcomes, is presented. Our approaches to teaching delivery and research are set out, as well as the infrastructure and resources, including people, to support them. We outline the supports we provide to students, inside and outside the classroom, and our work for the community. Given the importance of international students to DBS, there is a section outlining our international provision. The document finishes with a short summary of the College finances. As a substantial member of the higher education sector in Ireland we are also members of relevant organisations, which are also detailed here.

Associated with this document is a folder of additional information that is available to the panel but is confidential. Where additional information is available, it is referenced at the appropriate point in the document.

By the time you reach the end of the document, we believe we will have presented a strong, confident HEI with the vision, strategy, systems and resources, to continue to educate and train others long into the future. We thank you for reading this document and for participating in this Institutional Review.

2. Introduction to DBS

Dublin Business School is a private Higher Education Institution operating out of Dublin city centre. It was established in 1975 to provide training and professional courses in business and, predominantly, accounting and finance subjects. It mainly provided evening courses for students preparing for the examinations of the professional accounting bodies. Since then, the range of disciplines has expanded greatly. Typically, DBS has over 8,500 active students every year, and in the last academic year, 2022/23, there were 8,527 students registered on programmes at DBS across a broad range of disciplines including accounting, business, computer sciences, film and creative media, finance, law, marketing, psychology, counselling and psychotherapy, and social science. Enrolments so far in 2023/24 suggest that the total student population will be in the region of 8,500 again.

Approximately three quarters of the student body is enrolled on QQI-validated programmes, specifically full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at National Framework of Qualifications (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 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 one programme that is on the UK Ofqual framework. This is awarded by Kaplan Professional Awards (**https://kaplanpa.co.uk/**).

The DBS teaching and administration buildings are located in Dublin city centre, with premises on Aungier Street, South Great George's Street, Bow Lane and Digges Lane. The College does not have a dedicated campus, as many other HEIs do; however, the College location in the city centre has proven to be particularly attractive to students. We access sports and other facilities around the city to support student engagement and student life.

DBS operates a number of transnational and collaborative agreements with other institutions. In Ireland, we have a collaborative agreement in place with Sound Training College (**https://soundtraining.com/**) for the provision of validated undergraduate programmes in music production. Overseas, we have a long-standing transnational validation agreement in Malaysia with Kolej Poly-Tech MARA (KPTM) (**https://bangi.kptm.edu.my/**) for the provision of an undergraduate programme in Accounting and Finance. In Germany and the Czech Republic, we have recently validated undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in business and computing at the EU Business School in Munich (**https://www.euruni.edu/**) and at the University of New York in Prague (**https://www.unyp.cz/**).

a. Corporate ownership

DBS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kaplan (**https://kaplan.com/about**), which is the Education Division of Graham Holdings Company (**https://www.ghco.com/company-profile**), a listed company on the NYSE.

DBS itself is the trading name of Accountancy and Business College Ireland (ABCI), which is the original name of the College. ABCI is a company incorporated in Ireland with six directors. Four of the directors are DBS or Kaplan employees and two are fully independent non-executive directors (NEDs), one of whom brings higher education knowledge and experience – a former President of an Irish Institute of Technology. The other brings industry knowledge and experience – a senior manager from a commercial organisation operating in Ireland.

Kaplan is a global education company, serving more than one million learners per year in over 400 locations in 26 countries. Kaplan's programmes include higher and professional education, language instruction, test preparation and services to primary/secondary learners and schools. In 2022, Kaplan provided courses to over 1.2 million students worldwide. It had turnover in 2022 of over $1.42 billion and represents 36% of the overall Graham Holdings company business. The 2023 outturn figures are not yet available.

Graham Holdings Company is a diversified holding company whose operations include educational services (Kaplan), home health and hospice care, television broadcasting, online, print and local TV news, automotive dealerships, manufacturing, hospitality and consumer internet companies. In 2022, it had a turnover of €3.9 billion.

b. History of DBS

After the College started in 1975, its early years of growth came from increasing student volumes preparing for professional body examinations. In 1989, the College introduced its first undergraduate degree programme under a franchise arrangement with Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). The academic relationship between the two institutions grew over the years and DBS became an institution with accredited provision status of LJMU in 1995. The collaborative partnership worked very well for 24 years. In 2013, following a strategic review and with mutual agreement with LJMU, DBS decided to seek accreditation of all of its higher education programmes by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

In 1992, DBS became a designated institution with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). The early programmes accredited by HETAC led to awards at National Certificate level while now, as outlined earlier, DBS offers programmes across Levels 6 to 9 on the NFQ.

The programme portfolio of DBS was expanded both organically and through acquisition of other colleges. In 2000, DBS acquired LSB College in Dublin, which brought a range of Arts and Humanities programmes. The College expanded further in 2006 when the European Business School (EBS) in Dublin was acquired as a means of entry into a broader European market. In 2007, DBS acquired Portobello College which brought law and other business programmes to the portfolio.

In 2003, DBS was acquired by Kaplan.

DBS currently employs 466 people. Of these, 309 are directly involved in teaching delivery while 157 are non-faculty staff.

3.   Profile of Students

a.   Student Volumes

As outlined above, DBS had 8,527 enrolled students in the 2022/23 academic year. As Figure 1 shows, there has been some movement in the total student population in recent years, but the trend has generally been upwards, from 7,655 students in 2019/20 to 8,527 students in 2022/23. At the time of writing, the College has enrolled 7,395 students and at that level the expected outturn for 2023/24 will be approximately 8,500. The slight dip in student numbers in 2020/21 is the result of COVID-19 restrictions which impacted international student numbers at that time.

Figure 1: Student Volumes
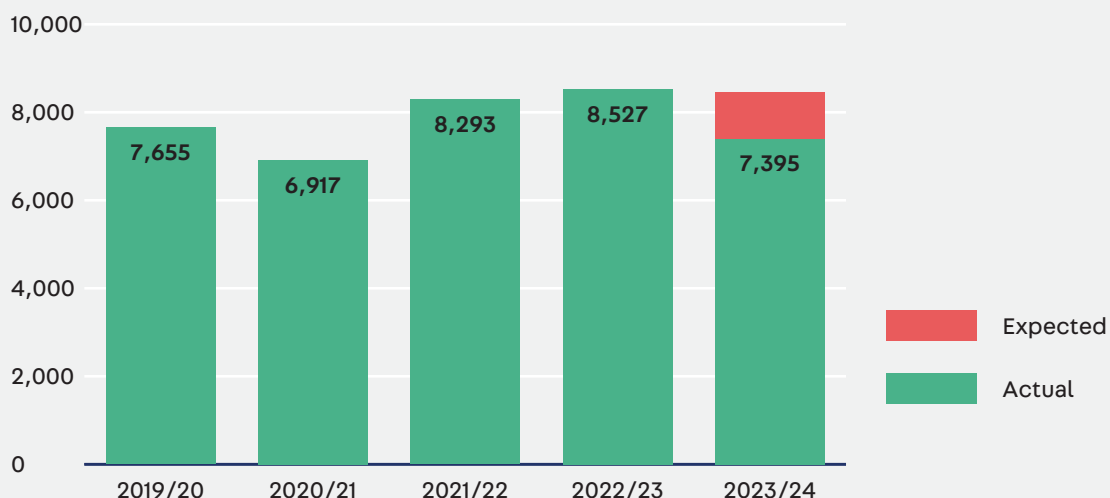
b.   Student Demographics

Nationality

The premise of DBS as a business is that strong international growth is built on the back of a solid domestic business. DBS has a strong domestic student base and its international base has grown substantially in recent years. Figure 2 shows an increase in the proportion of students coming to DBS from outside Ireland in the period 2019/20 to 2023/24 (year to date), and a corresponding decrease in students entering through the domestic system. The stacked bars in the graph are presented as 100% even though the actual volumes for each year are different.

Figure 3 provides greater granularity on the main global regions that students come from. Again, this is a stacked bar graph presented as 100%.

To note, the proportion from Ireland in Figure 3 is not the same as the volume for Domestic in Figure 2. Ireland refers to students who are Irish. Domestic refers to students who enrolled through the domestic system, but their nationality is not necessarily Irish.

The growth in the Asia/Australasia region mainly relates to students who come from the Indian subcontinent. Document IP1 in the associated information folder provides more detail on the breakdown of students by country.

Figure 2: Geographical Markets

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
US	1%	0%	2%	3%	2%
International	33%	35%	35%	48%	57%
Europe	9%	8%	17%	14%	8%
Domestic	57%	57%	46%	35%	33%
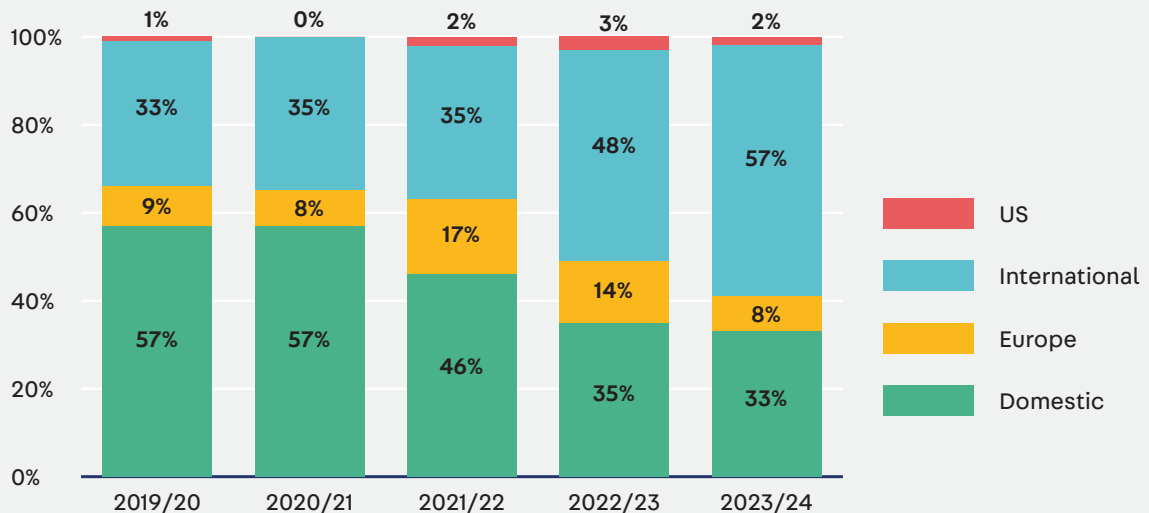
Figure 3: Students by Region

Legend:
- Americas
- Asia/Australasia
- Africa
- Europe
- Ireland

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Americas	6%	8%	9%	9%	8%
Asia/Australasia	26%	25%	34%	40%	48%
Europe	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Africa	24%	21%	18%	19%	13%
Ireland	40%	41%	35%	28%	27%
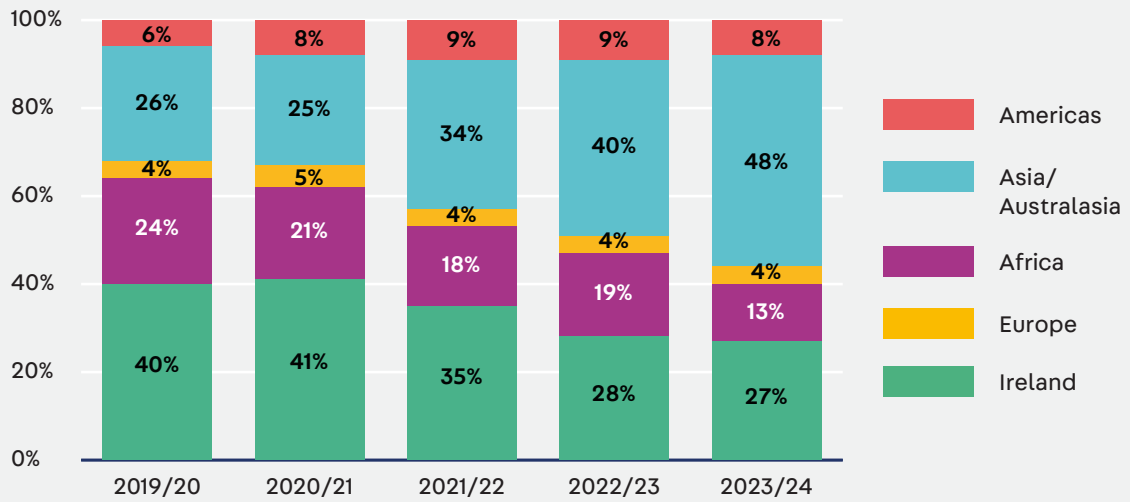
Figure 4: Programme Level

Legend:
- Unaccredited
- Professional
- L9 and PG L8
- L8
- L7
- L6

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Unaccredited	18%	18%	23%	19%	13%
Professional	8%	4%	2%	2%	2%
L9 and PG L8	35%	39%	39%	48%	50%
L8	29%	33%	29%	26%	31%
L7	8%	5%	4%	3%	2%
L6	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%
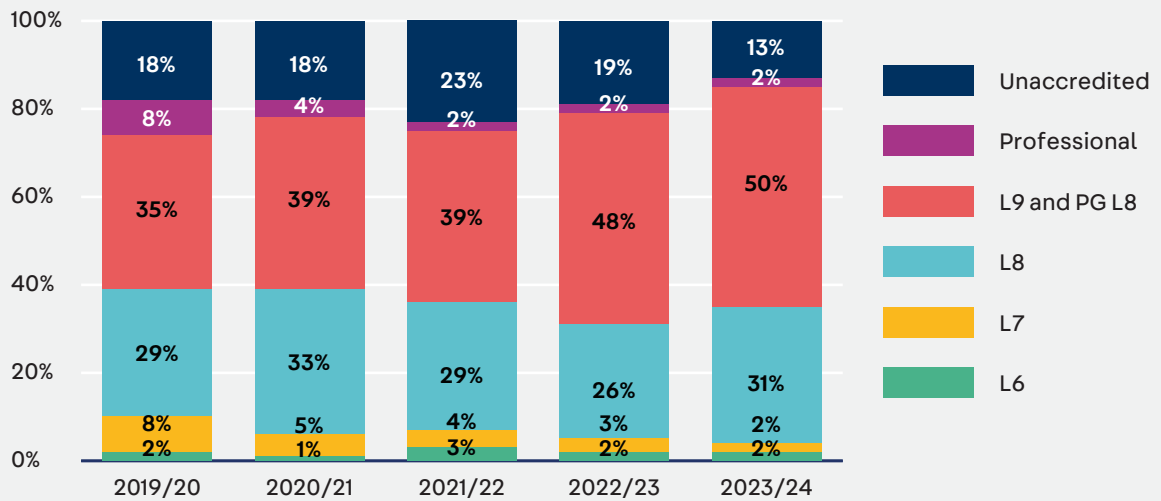
Programme Level

DBS offers programmes from Level 6 to Level 9 on the NFQ, as well as programmes that are not on the NFQ. Figure 4 shows the spread of programmes across the different levels and the change over time. Each year is presented as 100%.

The data shows that Level 8 and Level 9 programmes are what the substantial volume of students study. As is the case in other HEIs, there has been a decrease in the volumes taking Level 7 with more students opting to take a Level 8 course if available to them. The volume of students taking professional programmes, which at DBS was typically students studying ACCA or CIMA, has dropped substantially.

The professional ACCA and CIMA training market is very competitive, with low barriers to entry. We took the decision in 2016/17 to move away from classroom-based tuition for these professional programmes and access the very substantial online and distance learning portfolio available through Kaplan. Most of our professional students are now taking online programmes.

The volume of students taking unaccredited programmes has also decreased over the last five years as competitive, commercial offerings began to emerge in Ireland. We have a strategy and plan to address this and should be in a position during 2024 to launch a new proposition to the market.

Academic Disciplines

As outlined earlier, DBS offers programmes in a wide range of disciplines. We manage our programmes through a group of academic leaders (Academic Directors, supported by Assistant Academic Directors and Programme Level Managers), each of whom has responsibility for a set of programmes. Based on 2022/23, the proportion of students studying in the different disciplines are:

- Business, Marketing and Law – 35%

- Computing – 15%

- Accounting and Finance – 19%

- Human and Social Sciences – 14%

- Film, Creative Media and Study Abroad – 16%.

Figures 5 and 6 show the top five most popular programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level, respectively, in 2022/23. The Figures show the volume of students registered on these programmes in that year and not just the intakes for the year, i.e. they include students continuing to the next stage on these programmes.

Figure 5: Top 5 Most Popular UG Programmes
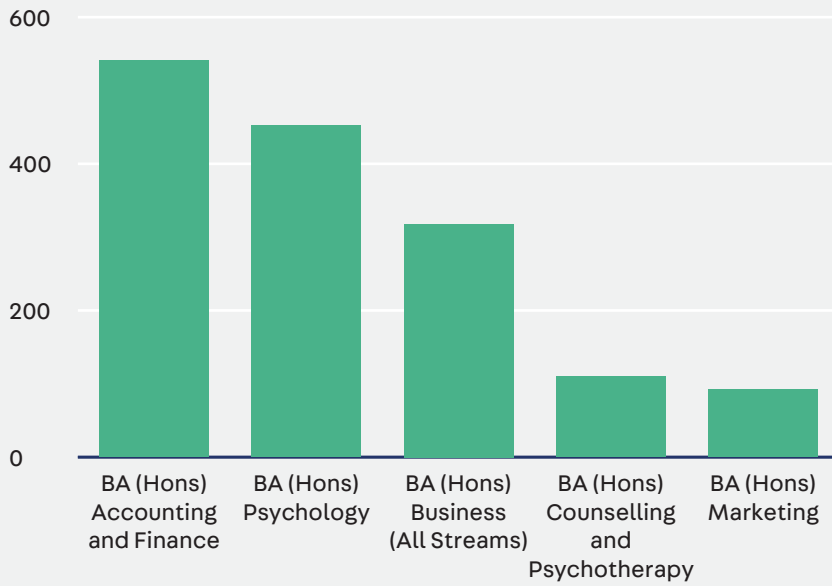
Figure 6: Top 5 Most Popular PG Programmes
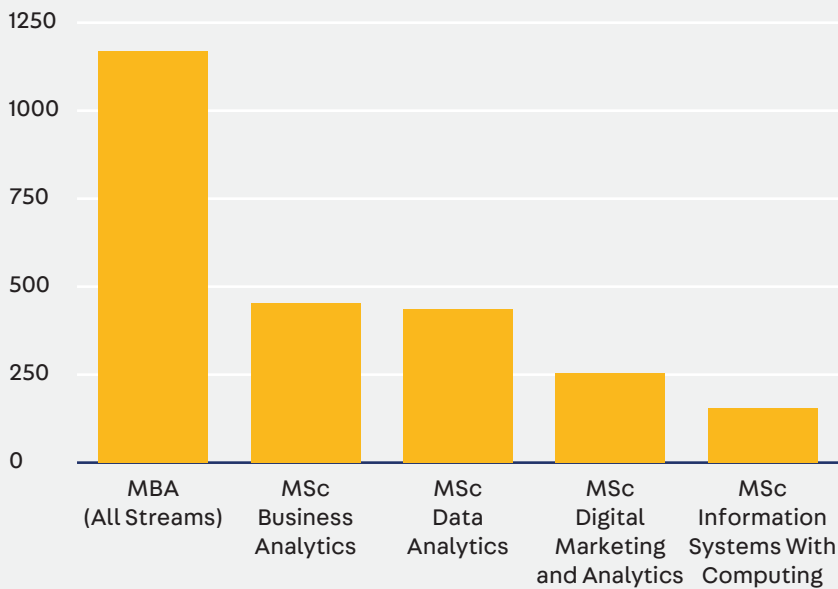
The heritage of the College is still evident in the volumes of students taking the BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance at undergraduate level and the MBA at postgraduate level. However, the Human and Social Science programmes in Psychology, and Counselling and Psychotherapy are also very strong, as are the recently introduced postgraduate programmes in Analytics.

Figure 7: Student Volumes by Discipline

Legend:
- Human and Social Sciences
- Film and Creative Media and Study Abroad
- Computing
- Business, Marketing and Law
- Accounting and Finance

Discipline	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Human and Social Sciences	12%	16%	15%	14%	15%
Film and Creative Media and Study Abroad	11%	8%	18%	16%	12%
Computing	18%	15%	18%	15%	15%
Business, Marketing and Law	35%	36%	30%	36%	37%
Accounting and Finance	24%	25%	19%	19%	21%
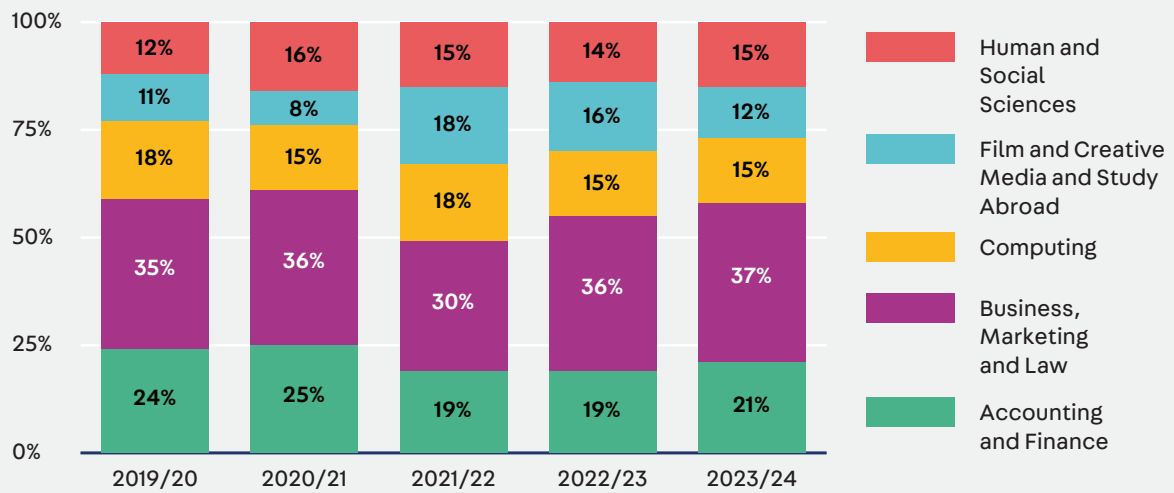
Undergraduate versus Postgraduate

Figure 8 shows the split of validated programmes between undergraduate and postgraduate. As outlined above, the percentage of postgraduate (Level 9 and Level 8 Higher Diploma) students enrolled on framework programmes has increased over time from 2019/20 to 2023/24 (year to date). This increase in postgraduate students is directly attributable to the increase in international students, who, for the most part, take postgraduate programmes.

Figure 8: Undergraduate versus Postgraduate Students
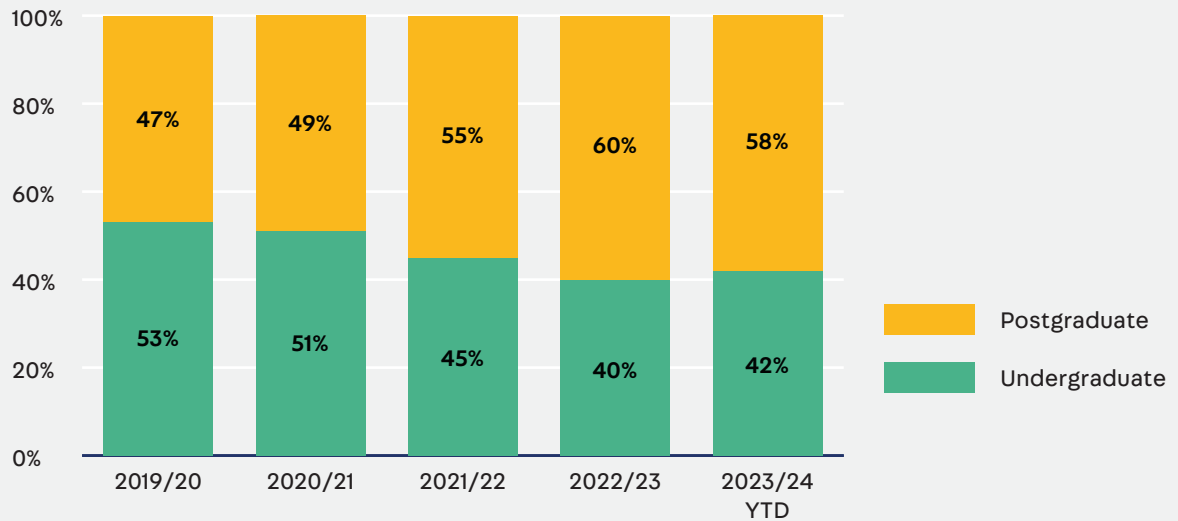
The changing profile of students and programmes in recent years has also contributed to a change in the daytime versus evening time delivery. For the most part, daytime delivery is full-time and evening delivery is part-time. Figure 9 shows how that has evolved in the past five years. During 2019/20, 2020/21 and into 2021/22, part time figures held very steady, mainly because of an influence from COVID-19. During lockdown, as students could not travel, there was an increase in the number of domestic students enrolling on programmes, particularly those with a health-related focus such as Psychology, and Counselling and Psychotherapy. These subsequently declined once COVID lockdowns no longer prevailed and the normal patterns of business, finance and analytics programmes returned.

Figure 9: Full-time versus Part-time Students
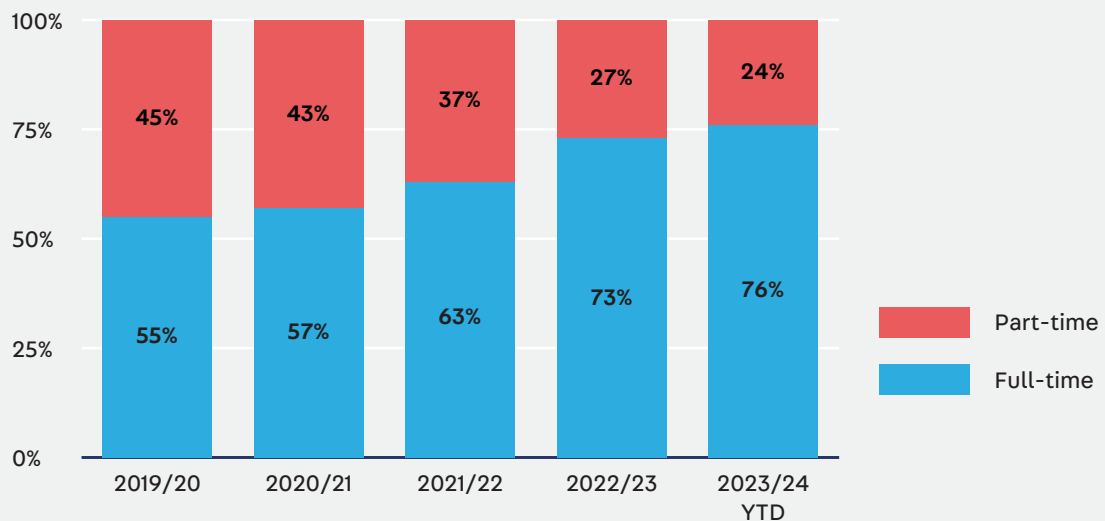
Gender

The final graph in this section is the split of students by gender. Figure 10 is based on the proportion of students who stated their gender. It also shows the proportion of those who said they would prefer not to say or identified as Other. This number is very small but has been increasing.

Figure 10: Students by Gender
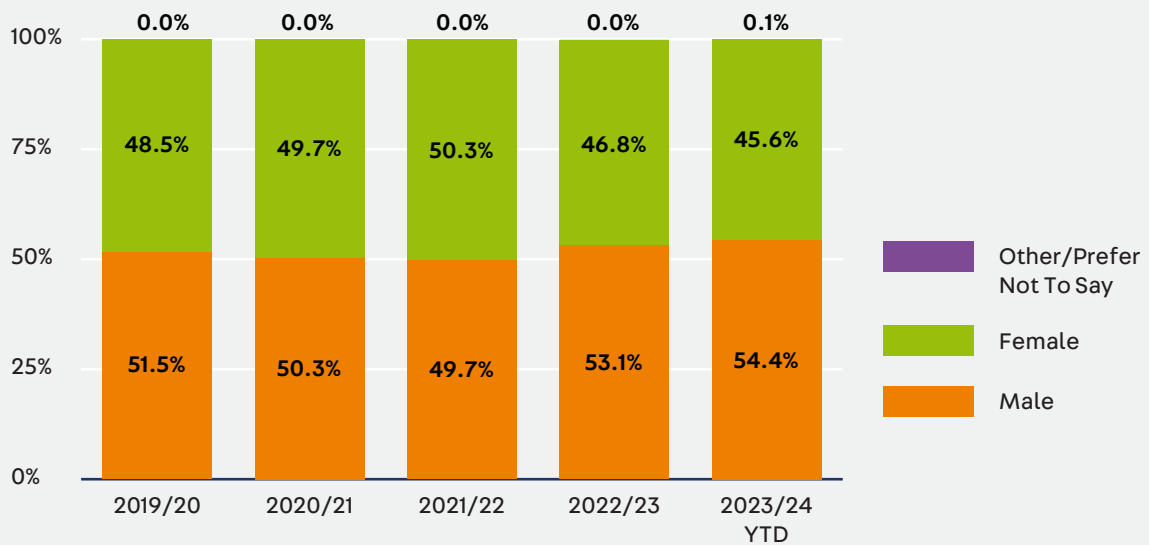
The split across male and female has been fairly even with an increase in males in the last two years. This is attributable to an increased demand for analytics and computing programmes which typically attract more males than females, and the cessation of our undergraduate social care programmes which had mostly female students.

Across all the figures in this section the main message is that the profile of the student population has changed noticeably in the past five years. The increase in international students requires more supports than would be needed for mainly domestic students, for example visa support and accommodation support. The increase in full-time students, most of which are international and therefore need to be on campus, means that the physical capacity of our premises has been reached this year and, as a consequence, we have taken additional space in the city centre. The increase in online teaching, particularly for evening, part-time students has also decreased the requirements for teaching space in the evening. The profile of the College's teaching delivery, including online delivery, is covered later in Section 11, Teaching Provision.

Labour Market Activation Programmes; Springboard+ and HCI

DBS has been successfully tendering with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on the Springboard+ Initiative since 2011, and HCI initiatives since 2020, and has been designing relevant and innovative programmes to meet the skills gaps in Ireland. Each year, DBS offers a number of tailored programmes based on skills gaps in the Irish labour market, as awarded through the tender process. All of these programmes are validated by QQI and are included in the portfolio of programmes managed by Academic Directors. Over 6,000 students have graduated to date from Springboard+ and HCI programmes at DBS and it aligns with our strategic objective to support the national agenda on skills, citizenship and the environment.

SPRINGBOARD➕
www.springboardcourses.ie

HCI Human Capital Initiative

Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1 are co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Arna chomhchistíœ ag an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the European Union

HEA HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

EUROPEAN YEAR OF SKILLS

Domestic School Leavers – CAO

All domestic school-leaver applicants are recruited through the Central Applications Office (CAO) on which DBS has been listed since 1998. Currently, there are 27 listings on the CAO for the College at Level 6, 7 and 8. DBS has a School Liaison Officer who works with Principals and guidance counsellors in secondary schools and colleges of further education in Ireland, making them aware of DBS programme offerings on CAO.

CAO
www.cao.ie

4.   Corporate 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). Figure 11 shows the composition and relative position of each Board.

Figure 11: Governance Structure

Board of Directors

Chair (Kaplan Appointee)
DBS President
Company Secretary (Kaplan Appointee)
Shareholder Non-Executive Director 1
Independent Non-Executive Director 2

Academic Board

Chair (Independent)
Academic Directors (x6)
Elected Faculty (x6)
DBS President
Registrar and Director of Campus Operations
Academic Dean
Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre
Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production
Head of Student Experience
President of Student Union
Vice President(s) of Student Union
Independent Academic Member

Executive Board

(Senior Leadership Team)
DBS President
Registrar and Director of Campus Operations
Academic Dean
Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production
Head of Student Experience
Chief Commercial Officer
Chief Financial Officer
Head of Information Technology
Head of People and Culture

The **Board of Directors** is the most senior authority of DBS, 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. It is underpinned by the Articles of Government for the College, most recently revised in 2021 (see Document IP2 in the associated information folder). The Board of Directors is currently comprised of the following membership:

● Chair, Peter Houillon, CEO Kaplan Professional UK, Ireland and Middle East

● DBS Head of Institution, Andrew Conlan-Trant, DBS President

● Secretary, Rachael Convery, General Counsel, Kaplan International

- Shareholder Non-Executive Director, Lisa Nelson, Director of Learning and Curriculum, Kaplan UK

- Independent Non-Executive Director (Academic), Dr Brendan McCormack, former President IT Sligo

- Independent Non-Executive Director (Business), Audrey O'Sullivan, General Counsel and Legal Director, SIRO.

Please note that during this Institutional Review process the current President, Andrew Conlan-Trant, will retire as President and will be replaced by Tim Bicknell. This change has been in planning since early 2023.

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

There are two sub-committees of the Board. One is the Delegated Authority Committee (DAC) whose purpose is to provide oversight and assurance to the Board of Directors that there is an effective process for continuous improvement in the preparations for and the state of readiness of DBS to ultimately apply for Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and to guide the Executive of the College, as appropriate, in its preparations. The DA application process will follow this Institutional Review process but the preparation work done by the DAC and the Executive has contributed hugely to preparations for Institutional Review. The membership of the DAC is the DBS President (Chair of the DAC), the Chair of the overall Board, the Independent Non-Executive Director (Academic), the Registrar and the Independent Chair of the Academic Board.

The other sub-committee is the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The purpose of the ARC is to review and advise the Board on i) the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's arrangements for risk management, internal control and governance; ii) arrangements for ensuring sustainability, promoting economy and value for money, efficiency and effectiveness; iii) the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's data management and quality assurance of data management; and iv) the provision of external and internal audit for the College. The ARC is chaired by the Independent Non-Executive Director (Business). The other members are the DBS Chief Financial Officer, a Legal Counsel from Kaplan and another member of the DBS senior leadership team, other than the President. (Currently this is the Registrar and Director of Campus Operations who also has responsibility for risk management at the College).

The **Academic Board** is the senior academic authority of DBS, and ultimate guardian of the academic integrity and quality of its provision of education programmes. 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 has ultimate decision-making power and authority on academic matters, with responsibility to advise the Executive Board and Board of Directors accordingly. Further detail on the Academic Board is included in Section 5, Academic Governance.

The **Executive Board**, also known as the Senior Leadership Team, comprises all senior leaders 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, given the private status of the institution and therefore the requirement to generate all its own student fees revenue. The Executive Board holds responsibility for the character, mission, values and strategic development of the College. It is chaired by the President of the College, and comprises all other senior leaders as outlined in Figure 11 above. The Executive Board is a decision-making entity.

The interaction of these three Boards at the most senior level 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 and Graham Holdings. 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 practices is achieved through the following structured engagements across the Kaplan group:

- Quarterly Financial and Business Reviews with the CEO and CFO of Kaplan Inc.
- Bi-annual IT reviews with the CEO and CFO of Kaplan Inc.
- Annual Learning Reviews with the CEO and other senior academic leaders of Kaplan Inc.
- Annual Balance Sheet review with CFO, or designate, of Kaplan Inc.
- Monthly financial review by Head of Finance, Kaplan UK and Ireland
- Annual review of Employee Engagement with the CEO and Chief People Officer of Kaplan Inc.
- IT Steering Group chaired by Chief Information Officer, Kaplan UK and Ireland
- Legal and compliance support from Kaplan Legal Counsel
- HR support and oversight from Director HR, Kaplan International
- Learning and product development support from Director of Learning and Curriculum, Kaplan UK.

Where papers are submitted or slide decks used for these reviews, samples are included in Documents IP3 to IP7 in the associated information folder.

5.   Academic Governance

Academic Board

The Academic Board is the supreme academic authority of DBS. This authority is given by the overall Governance Board as is written in the Articles of Government for DBS, referenced in Section 4, Corporate Governance.

Membership is comprised of members of the Senior Leadership Team, Academic Directors, members of the Registrar's Office, elected members of faculty, and learner representatives. The Academic Board is chaired by an independent member of high standing in the Higher Education sector. As of January 2024, the position of Chair is held by Ms Donna Bell. Ms Bell has international experience in quality assurance, governance and wide expertise in external review for QQI and ENQA, among other international quality assurance agencies. There is a second independent member of the Board position, previously held by Ms Bell and currently vacant since she became Chair. The College is in the process of filling the independent vacancy left by Ms. Bell. From 2020 to 2023, the Chair's role was held by Brian Bennett, former Registrar of the Institute of Technology Carlow (as was). From 2017 to 2020 the position was held by Dr Richard Thorn, President Emeritus, IT Sligo (as was).

The Academic Board meets a minimum of five times per year as per the Terms of Reference. Additional planning or extraordinary meetings are held as required.

Subcommittees of the Academic Board

There are a number of sub-committees of the Academic Board:

- Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee
- Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee
- Academic Programmes Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Applied Research and Practice Committee
- Student and Graduate Experience Committee.

These core committees report to the Academic Board. The Terms of Reference, setting out membership and remit are given in Document IP8 in the associated information folder. The committees are supported by the work of other bodies that in turn report into them:

- Admissions Committee

- Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC)

- Programme Approvals Sub-Committee (PASC)

- Board of Studies

- Programme Boards.

It should be noted that a review of the subcommittees of the Academic Board was carried out in 2021/22 and recommended changes implemented across 2023. Therefore, some structures are relatively new and still bedding down.

Across a full academic year, the full cycle of academic activity is reported to the Academic Board. Taking the last academic year as an example, Figure 12 shows the topics covered at each Academic Board meeting. Standing agenda items are presented to the Academic Board at regular intervals scheduled across the year, with other items as identified and required.

Figure 12: Topics on Academic Board Meeting Agendas 2022/23

October 2022	December 2022	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	June 2023
• Applied Social Care update • QA/Governance Report • PRR and NPV[1] • Exams Report, Ratification of Results • Academic Appointments Sub-Committee Report • Library Report • Learning and Teaching Committee Report • Review of Boards and Committees Report • QAH update on Sectoral Convention 3 • Athena SWAN Update	• Applied Social Care update • Academic Plan update • Review of Boards and Committees Report • Governance and Delegated Authority • PRR and NPV • Board of Studies End of Year Report • Retention Report • Review of Graduation • Policy/QAH updates • Review of Boards 2022 and Meeting Plan 2023	• QQI Focused Review – Provider Statement, Panel Visit • AQR	• Applied Social Care update • Student Voice on Academic Board • Academic Plan update • Review of Boards and Committees Report • Admissions Committee Report • PRR and NPV • PSRBs: IACP and PSI applications • Learning and Teaching Committee Report • Library Report • Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Report • Exams Update and ChatGPT • Policy/QAH updates	• Applied Social Care update • Academic Plan update • SU President update • Analysis of Retention Report Data • Implementation of new AB Committee Structure • Policy/QAH updates • Complaints and Disciplinary policy • Artificial Intelligence software policy update • PRR and NPV • Learning and Teaching Committee Report, noting Review of Grading Criteria • Membership of AB	• Applied Social Care update • QQI Focused Review update • Membership of AB • SU President update • Implementation of new AB Committee Structure • PRR and NPV • Programme Approval Sub-Committee proposal • Board of Studies Interim Report • Learning and Teaching Committee Report • PSRBs • New Student Information System

6. Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance Handbook

It is the responsibility of all parts of the College to ensure the quality of provision is maintained and academic compliance requirements are met. The Registrar's Office has responsibility for maintaining and developing the system that assures academic QA, including the development and updating of policies and procedures, and the oversight of the implementation of those policies and procedures.

Academic quality assurance in DBS is underpinned by the policies and procedures set out in the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH). The policies and procedures cover all programmes, whether on the NFQ or not, and whether having PSRB accreditation or not.

The QAH was reviewed extensively, including comparison with other providers in Ireland and other jurisdictions, as part of the re-engagement process with QQI in the period 2017-2019 (pilot and full process). Further updates have been done since then. The QAH is divided into three parts:

- Part A: Governance and Policies

- Part B: Learner Journey

- Part C: Programme Quality.

Within these, it is further subdivided into sections. The QAH is a living document which is reviewed annually. Any new policies or changes to policies are presented to the relevant committees for input and approval and are required to be approved by both the Senior Leadership Team and the Academic Board. The QAH is available publicly on this **link**.

Academic Plan

The Academic Plan, which is aligned to the DBS Strategic Plan, is owned by the Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee, and sets out objectives and a detailed action plan for the academic year under core areas as follows:

- Students

- Academic

- Research

- Regulatory

- Central Services.

The Academic Plan in its current format was instituted in 2021 for the 18-month period December 2021 to September 2023 and reviewed for the academic year 2023/24. The plan is reviewed on an on-going basis by the owners under each area and it will be updated prior to the commencement of each academic year going forward. Document IP9 in the associated information folder shows the most recent Academic Plan.

Audit and Compliance

In 2022, a dedicated role for Academic Audit and Compliance was created by the College. This was filled by an individual in the Registrar's Office as an additional Assistant Registrar post. The remit of the role is to assure compliance of the activities of the College with respect to all aspects of the learner journey. An audit plan was developed and each department in the College is currently undergoing the audit process. A final report will be brought to the Senior Leadership Team.

7. Vision, Mission and Values

DBS is guided and directed by an agreed purpose and a set of values.

DBS Mission	Our mission is to help individuals achieve their education and career goals. We build futures, one success story at a time.
DBS Vision	Diverse, innovative and collaborative. Recognised globally for excellence in teaching and learning and for supporting every learner to build a successful career.
DBS Purpose	We're here to inspire and nurture every learner to realise their career ambitions.

Values

Our values inform everything DBS does and underpin the behaviours and actions of us as an organisation and our people. They are the foundation upon which we develop and grow as an institution, and are aligned with the values of Kaplan. They are to:

1 Act with integrity

2 Empower and support

3 Create opportunity

4 Grow knowledge

5 Drive results together

We have set out how these values should be translated in the internal employee context and the learner context.

We act with integrity…

which means we are honest and fair

For DBS

Integrity is ingrained in the way we work, and everything we do is consistent with our purpose and values. We build clarity around how we will create success. And by being honest and fair, we also build trust between all of us to create a strong, dynamic and close team with clear roles and responsibilities.

For learners

Our relationships are built on fairness and trust. We do what we say we'll do. We deliver excellence in learning material and programmes. We provide the best in teaching. This integrity inspires learners and partners to continue engaging with us.

We empower and support…

which means we are nurturing

For DBS

We're in it together and we remember to stand in the other person's shoes. Yet we never stand still. We nurture our people to ensure they have the space and tools they need to work together to continuously improve how and what we deliver, directly or indirectly.

For learners

From delivering outstanding learning experiences to helping people, we genuinely care about empowering learners with the right tools, personal support and encouragement, to nurture them towards their individual successes.

We create opportunity…

which means we are innovative

For DBS

Opportunity doesn't just happen – we make it happen. From truly understanding the individual needs of learners to exploring exciting new approaches, we keep DBS personal, relevant and progressive. A place where we can become inspirational educators, grow into experts in our specialist fields and build leadership careers. Those who drive DBS' success, find their success at DBS.

For learners

By innovating and increasing quality, we actively help each learner to succeed and help them realise their personal ambitions. This in turn develops earning power – for them and the businesses they are part of.

We grow knowledge …
which means we are inspiring

For DBS

Learning is in our DNA. Investing in knowledge of our ever changing markets, and our individual fields, creates success for our learners – and for ourselves. It all starts with thinking "How can we all keep learning and making a difference, to help DBS grow?"

For learners

Through excellence in service and learning environments, we are totally focused on delivering successful outcomes for every learner. This is how we help businesses grow the knowledge, quality and potential of their staff – and the future talent of tomorrow.

We drive results together…
which means we are agile

For DBS

Whatever our role, we all play an active part in helping our learners, and our organisation, consistently achieve success. Focusing on what matters most, we collaborate and partner with colleagues, setting targets and measuring progress to turn ambition into outcomes, which we all celebrate.

For learners

We are passionate about the shared success of helping all our different learners to qualify and progress – and making businesses thrive. Our blend of traditional methods, innovative use of technology and seamless administration means we drive outstanding results and futures for every learner.

8.   Strategic Plan

The current DBS Strategic Plan runs from 2021 to 2025. Later in 2024, the President and Senior Leadership Team will develop the next plan which will cover the next three to five years. It will be influenced by the vision of the new President and the outcomes of the Institutional Review process.

The current strategic plan, available on this **link**, is based on circumstances that prevailed at the time and a view of the future through certain lenses.

The restrictions caused by the spread of COVID-19 were influential. In higher education terms, and at DBS, we are fortunate that the technology enablers were, for the most part, in place and teaching, learning and assessment were able to move online with relative ease. This was enabled further by the ubiquitous use of digital technology in everyday life, so for many learners, accessing their education through technology was a welcome alternative in an otherwise restricted life. As a consequence, COVID-19 accelerated many changes that were going to happen in higher education. We were already seeing changes arising from the increased availability and use of digital technology; people were seeking greater flexibility in how and when they learned; and particularly because of the impact of COVID on employment, there was a growing demand for skills-focused education and training.

Our strategic plan for 2021 to 2025 was influenced by these expected changes, and others. It set out guidance on many elements of the running of the College saying, for example, that our teaching delivery would be developed taking account of how people want to study, at their own pace or in their own time, and would be focused on the outcome for the learner. Our programmes would recognise changing work patterns and the need for lifelong learning and upskilling, as influenced by employers and government policy on skills requirements. Our programme portfolio would evolve to the changing international education market where many international students will continue to travel to Ireland to experience the culture as well as the education, others will remain at home and take an international course online, while some will remain at home and take an international course on their home campus. Our teaching would provide a learning experience that would be entertaining, immersive, experiential and guided.

With this direction set out, we agreed on seven core strategic objectives, as follows.

1.   Create work-ready graduates

We will create graduates who have the skills, knowledge and attributes sought by employers in their sector such that they can successfully progress to employment or further education.

2.   Deliver outstanding learning

We will deliver high-quality, teaching and learning that engages students and helps them to achieve their best academic outcome. Our teaching will be agile, using multiple modes that are best suited to the way our students learn and it will leverage digital technology. We will feed scholarship through employer-led practice-research by students and academic staff.

3.   Support student engagement and success outside the classroom

We will create an engaging experience for students that embeds them in the College, helps form lasting friendships, supports their learning achievement and helps create well-rounded citizens.

4.   Be independently sustainable

We will invest in growth, programme viability, the quality of our academic delivery, our customer service and our efficiency with the purpose of ensuring our future sustainability, expanding both our national and international footprints.

5.   Support the national agenda on skills, citizenship and the environment

We will contribute to the Irish national objectives of meeting skills gaps to enhance the economy, advance the green agenda and enable people to understand what being a good citizen means.

6.   Be distinct

We will differentiate ourselves and stay ahead of competitors by leveraging new technologies, innovation and student experience initiatives that develop and deliver propositions that engage and excite learners and clients.

7.   Develop a strong international ethos to build further on our international reach and reputation

We will enhance our global presence by attracting increased numbers of international students to DBS and by expanding our teaching footprint abroad. Our success will be a function of the relevance of our programmes to international learners, the ease a learner has interacting with DBS and the quality of the support we provide to international students.

The strategic plan is an anchor that supports all other plans and functional strategies across the College. It is also used as the basis for the President's report to each Board meeting, and an example can be found in Document IP10 in the associated information folder.

Figure 13 is a map of how the Strategic Plan directs other plans and reporting, both internally and externally, and is a demonstration of how the strategic plan is the central anchor of everything the College does. Other plans identified on the map are discussed later, such as the Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE).

Figure 13: Map of Plans

Plan	Description
A) Strategic Plan	A) Sets out i) the corporate vision and purpose, ii) the values influencing how we behave and iii) the strategic objectives for 3-5 years including sub-objectives that give more detail on what will be done
B) Academic Vision and Strategy (SLATE)	B) Sets out the academic vision for DBS and the strategy for learning and teaching enhancement (SLATE)
C) SMART 3-Year Plan	C) A more detailed SMART plan including performance measures (KPIs) showing milestones, timelines and responsibilities
D) 3-Year Business Plan	D) Sets out in financial terms the revenue and operations plan over the coming three years
E) Annual Academic Plan · · · · **AQR**	E) Sets out the academic actions to be taken during the forthcoming academic year. Is a significant input to the Annual Quality Report submitted to QQI
F) Annual Plan and Budget — **Annual Risk Review**	F) Sets out the revenue and costs for the coming year, the key assumptions behind them and the risks. In addition, a risk review is done annually with "red risks" reviewed at SLT meetings. The BCP is also updated annually and used as needed during the year
G) SLT Annual Goals — **Business Continuity Plan**	G) Derived from the preceding plans this sets out the high level goals for each SLT functional area for the coming year
H) Local/Functional Plans	H) Developed by each SLT member, this sets out the functional plan for the coming year

9. College Management

DBS is led by the President with a team of Senior Leaders, each managing a function of the College. During this Institutional Review process the current President, Andrew Conlan-Trant, will retire and will be replaced by Tim Bicknell.

Senior Leadership Team

The President is supported by eight senior leadership team members. The full organisation structure of the organisation can be seen on this **link**.
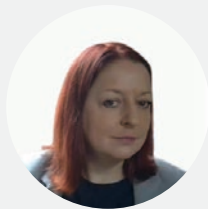
Figure 14: Senior Leadership Team

Andrew Conlan-Trant
President

Darragh Breathnach
Registrar and Director of Campus Operations

Lori Johnston
Academic Dean

Emma Balfe
Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production

Shane Mooney
Head of Student Experience

Cliona O'Beirne
Chief Commercial Officer

Edward Ormonde
Head of IT

Dee Roche
Chief Financial Officer

Julie Sharp
Head of People and Culture

Academic Leadership and Management

At Senior Leadership level, the academic leadership comes from the President and three senior leaders reporting to him, the Registrar and Director of Campus Operations, the Academic Dean and the Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production. A slight change to academic leadership was made in December 2023 with the resignation of the then Academic Dean, and his subsequent move to another HEI. The opportunity was taken to tighten the academic leadership and consolidate from four into three departments.

Across these three departments reporting to the President, all academic functions are performed, as the following table summarises.

Registrar and Director of Campus Operations	Academic Dean	Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production
Registrar's Office Exams Office Academic Systems Academic Calendars and Timetabling Academic Administration Campus Operations	Academic Disciplines • Human and Social Sciences • Computing • Accounting and Finance • Arts and Study Abroad • Business, Marketing and Law Library and Academic Hub Learning Unit Student Engagement and Success Unit	Faculty Management • Recruitment • Contracting • Performance Management • Timetable Staffing • Issue Management Production of asynchronous content

Management Practice and Culture

The management of the College is a mix of formal structures and a collegiate culture. Senior Leadership Team meetings take place every month and are agenda driven with notes and actions minuted. Senior Leaders have structured meetings with their own teams at the most appropriate frequency and other teams meet at a more local level.

Every quarter, a meeting of all managers is held, i.e. the Senior Leadership Team and the next level of Manager, to update progress and discuss issues. At least once every year, there is an all-staff meeting (like a townhall), usually held in December where a review of the year takes place and the goals for the following year are set out. At that meeting, we also recognise the effort of staff going above and beyond through the Global Kaplan and DBS local awards as well as recognising key milestones of staff tenure.

In addition to the structured approach to management, there is also much informal engagement around the organisation, with work relationships enabled and encouraged as a basis of getting things done. However, accountability is very important and, as much as is practical, every project or goal is assigned to one person, with the organisation having learned over the years that without this, progress towards a target can sometimes be delayed.

Work practices within the College are supported by an agile working environment based on the role a staff member occupies and the amount of engagement that the role requires with staff and students. This is supported by a strong communications programme enabled by monthly staff newsletters, family-sensitive policies (e.g. fertility treatment, pregnancy loss, domestic abuse), wellbeing and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programmes and initiatives.

Policies and Procedures

The College has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that govern
how it operates. Academic policies and procedures have been discussed earlier in
Section 6: Quality Assurance, and are available in the Quality Assurance Handbook.
Non-academic policies and procedures are treated separately and are available in
a college-wide shared drive, available to all employees (see this **link**).

All new policies and procedures, once developed at the local level, are submitted to
the Senior Leadership Team for approval. Every SLT meeting agenda includes an item
for the approval of policies and procedures. Every policy has a review date on it and
is reviewed by the policy owner at the appropriate time.

In April 2022, the consulting firm BDO completed a report on the adequacy of the DBS
policies and procedures for the College functions that support the academic purpose
of the college. BDO reviewed the existence and use of both policies and procedures,
and identified gaps that needed to be filled. Over the following year, these gaps were
addressed and a substantial body of policies and procedures, as referred to above,
now exist and are being used as part of normal practice of management.

10. Academic Management

It has been noted by people coming from outside DBS that the DBS structure for academic management is different to many other HEIs. We do not organise in the more typical academic departments, where programme management and teaching have the same line management. That was the academic management system in operation at DBS up to ten years ago but it was noted at the time that the skills and attributes required to effectively manage both programmes and staff were difficult to find in one manager. At that point it was decided to separate programme management from faculty management, and with some evolution of the concept in the years that followed, we now have two departments, each headed by an appropriately skilled SLT member, with appropriate responsibilities. Figure 15 shows graphically a simple split of these responsibilities.

Figure 15: Academic Leadership and Management
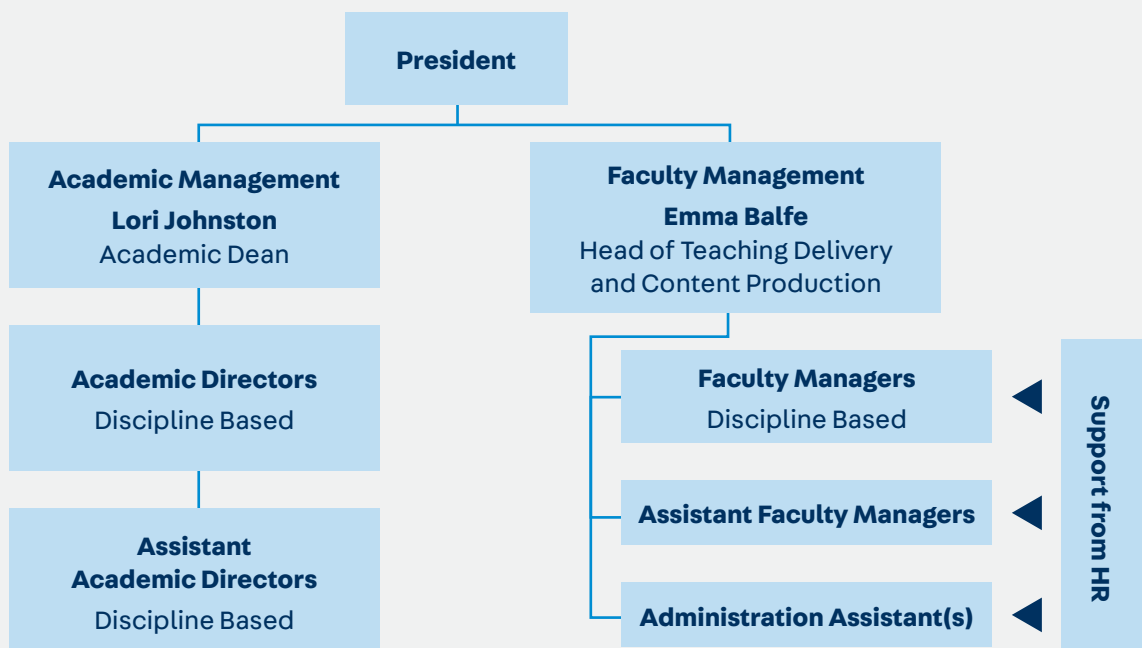
The management of programmes is done through Academic Directors, reporting to the Academic Dean. Each Academic Director has responsibility for a discipline, which includes all programmes related to that discipline. The disciplines are

- Accounting and Finance
- Arts and Study Abroad[2]
- Business, Marketing and Law
- Computing
- Human and Social Sciences, which covers the disciplines of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy, and Social Science.

The Academic Director who heads up each discipline area is responsible for the suite of programmes and ensures programme offerings are current, employment-focused and academically robust and coherent in construct. They lead on programme development and review, specifically developing programmes that strategically, and commercially, add to the suite of DBS programmes. They are acutely aware of the viability of programmes.

The Academic Director also has responsibility for programme governance and management in the discipline area, including the appointment of external examiners. They report on their discipline area at Boards of Study, the Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

Academic Directors also work very closely with Faculty Managers who have responsibility for recruiting and retaining faculty members who are suitably qualified and experienced to teach at DBS. The Faculty Manager also ensures that the timetable is staffed appropriately and that faculty members are performance managed, as appropriate.

Profile of Programmes

Section 3, Profile of Students, has set out a summary of the College's programmes in the context of the student profile across the College. A complete list of programmes, those on the NFQ and others not on the NFQ, can be found in Appendix A1. Figure 16 sets out the levels of programmes across each discipline area. These figures include exit awards from programmes as well as some programmes that have been recently retired or subsumed into other programmes, but which would have had some recent graduates, as well as some newly validated programmes that have not yet had intakes.

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2   The academic lead for Arts and Study Abroad programmes is titled a Head of Department. This is a legacy title. The role incorporates the functions of an Academic Director.

Figure 16: Programmes per Discipline
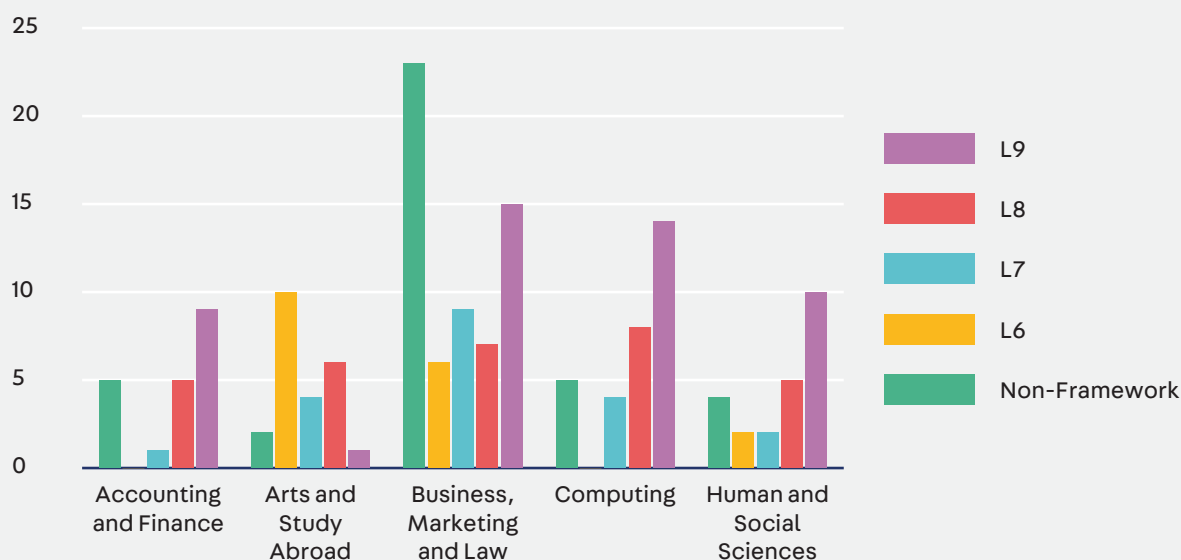
The distribution of programmes across levels varies by discipline area based on a number of different factors. In the area of Arts and Study Abroad, it should be noted that the graph does not capture bespoke programmes for learners who come as Study Abroad students taking a selection of modules for one or two semesters.

Since 2017, DBS has expanded its offerings at Level 9 considerably. New masters programmes validated in this period include:

- Master of Science in Data Analytics
- Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics
- Master of Science in Financial Technology
- Master of Science in Business Analytics
- Master of Science in Financial Analytics
- Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence
- Master of Science in Cybersecurity
- Master of Science in Human Resource Management
- Master of Science in Health Psychology
- Master of Science in Supply Chain Management
- Master of Arts in Film and Creative Media
- Master of Arts in Contemporary Criminology.

These Level 9 programmes have been developed in response to demand from students and industry and reflect the contemporary environment in the subject area. These new programmes at Level 9 also reflect DBS' focus on growth in research.

A number of programmes are recognised or accredited by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRB's) other than QQI, as set out in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Programmes with PSRB Recognition

Programme	PSRB
BA (Hons) in Psychology	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy	Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP)
Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy	Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP)
MA in Psychotherapy	Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP)
MA in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy	Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland (APPI)
BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Bachelor of Laws (Honours)	King's Inns
MSc in Information and Library Management	Library Association of Ireland (LAI)
MSc in Human Resource Management	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

As can be seen from Figure 16 above, DBS has a significant portfolio of non-framework programmes which are offered as professional diplomas. These are typically one or two semesters in duration and are offered entirely online. Some, such as the Diploma in Psychology, are positioned to provide a taster for learners who may want to consider progressing to framework programmes. Appendix A1 also includes non-framework programmes.

11. Teaching Provision

Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE)

DBS launched its Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE) in 2020. SLATE2, the subsequent update, was approved by the Senior Leadership Team and Academic Board in Q4 2023.

SLATE (2020) emerged from bringing together the reported experiences of DBS learners, staff and partners within the context of DBS' Strategic Plan for 2019-23. In this, its first iteration, the strategy had three objectives for DBS to:

● Increase the flexibility of the learning environment

● Greater integrate educators, learners and industry experts in the learning experience

● Be known as a learning-centred higher education institution (HEI).

When SLATE was reviewed towards the end of its period, it was evident that the actions associated with the first two objectives were, to a great extent, completed. The third objective – being known as a learning-centred HEI – proved more difficult to achieve. There has been considerable work done at programme development and revalidation, programme team meetings, increased academic oversight and the Learning Unit to drive focus on the behaviours and activities that generate learning. However, outstanding actions under this objective suggest that the learning-centred concept has not yet become ingrained in DBS, despite considerable improvement in the focus on good teaching practice. This proved an important review finding that contributed to the development of SLATE2.

SLATE2, which will be formally launched in Q2 of 2024, sees the next formal iteration of DBS' objectives in continuing to enhance the learning experience and outcomes for all our students. In formulating this updated strategy, a review of current literature and best practice was conducted, as well as extensive consultation with learners, staff and industry advisors. A core tenant of the strategy is the recognition of 'the challenge of change', whereby in the past number of years we have seen the expectations and needs of the sector evolve. As such, SLATE2, sets out revised goals for the achievement of:

- Outstanding learning
- Immersive learning
- Ecosystem of learning.

SLATE2 maintains a focus on areas such as the creation of authentic learning experiences, engagement with industry and flexibility but reframes the strategy towards a holistic approach to learning and teaching whereby learners are prepared for employment through active engagement with their own learning and prior experience. Learners increasingly have the need to be able to engage with their studies seamlessly and conveniently wherever they are, balancing with other commitments. DBS aims to continue to expand flexibility in its offerings through embracing innovation in programme design and delivery, and new technologies, including on how best to leverage the benefits of artificial intelligence. As with SLATE (2020), SLATE2 sets out a series of action points under each objective with owners assigned and deadlines. Progress will be monitored on an on-going basis. Document IP11 in the associated information folder contains SLATE2.

Modes of Teaching

While we are by design and by practice a college that is based around classroom delivery, we deliver teaching in different modes. As we validate and revalidate programmes we set out to teach most modules in a multimodal fashion.
The modes we offer are outlined below.

Live Classroom

This mode of delivery is a dynamic and interactive component of multimodal delivery. In this mode, the lecturer conducts real-time face-to-face classes with students in a physical classroom. This mode enables and fosters social interaction among learners and lecturers. These sessions are recorded and made available to learners, providing flexibility for those who may miss a class.

Live Online

This mode of delivery enables learners to participate in real-time classes online through Zoom. This is where learners and lecturers are not physically present in the same location. Through this mode lecturers and learners interact synchronously online allowing for lecturers to present content, share materials and interact with learners virtually.

Hyflex

Hyflex learning is both hybrid and flexible. Hyflex delivery combines elements of both face-to-face and live online learning providing learners with the option to attend classes in a physical classroom or participate remotely through Zoom. This type of mode aims to offer flexibility and accommodate various learning preferences and circumstances. All learners, whether on-site or remote, have access to the same materials and resources.

Asynchronous/On-Demand

Asynchronous or on-demand delivery refers to educational materials or resources that are not delivered or assessed in real-time but which allow learners to access course content and engage in learning activities at their own pace and time. Our Content Production Team works with the Faculty to design learning modules and create online lessons that may include explanations, instruction, demonstrations or presentations. This material and resources are made available for learners to access on Moodle. Learners can revisit content or discussions as needed for better understanding or for revision purposes. This mode provides a comprehensive learning experience for learners.

Asynchronous Content Production

As referenced above, the production of our asynchronous content is guided by the teaching and learning strategies of our programmes. Within the mix of modes, asynchronous content is typically deployed to explain theory and concepts that contextualise the practical aspects of the learning outcomes.

We have a dedicated content development team that works closely with the relevant Academic Director and faculty members at the design stage of programme development. This team comprises:

- Content QA Editor
- Two Junior Content Editors
- Three Instructional Designers
- Learning Content Designer
- Junior Content Developer
- AV Technician
- Project Manager

All of these people are managed by the Content Production and Relationship Manager.

The development process utilises the ABC Learning Design Methodology to create a roadmap representing the type and sequence of learning activities required to meet the module's learning objectives. The team then works closely with members of faculty to develop the textual and multimedia content of the asynchronous lesson. Instructional designers leverage learning methodologies and apply a creative treatment to create storyboards for each lesson. Once development is complete, each lesson is subject to a rigorous QA process, prior to its release to students through Moodle. For recording to camera the College has a soundproof recording booth, managed by the AV Technician.

12.   Research Profile

At DBS, research has always been an integral part of what we do. Research-informed teaching underpins everything we do and we also facilitate an active research community across staff in all of our disciplines.

DBS assists impactful practice research outputs through the office of the Practice Research Coordinator (PRC), Applied Research and Practice Committee (ARPC), Practical Applied Research Conference (PARC), Research Librarian and the *DBS Applied Research and Theory Journal*. Through the PRC role, research is tracked and supported across all disciplines. This role answers to the ARPC and the Academic Dean. The role has grown every year and will continue to develop. PARC 22 and PARC 23 were major, international and hybrid conferences at the College and the third event is in planning for 2024. The College will continue to grow and develop this conference. The Library works closely with the PRC to add specific support for research active staff. A dedicated Research Librarian continues to work with the PRC, as does the Head of Library and Academic Hub and other staff. Recently, four discipline-specific Senior Lecturers with a research remit have been appointed and they are actively part of a new, wider DBS Research Office.

Over the last few years, significant research outputs and reporting have been documented at the College. In 2022, there was over a 28% increase in reported research outputs, while 2023 saw a 53% increase. DBS staff were also integral in the inaugural HECA[3] Research Conference 2022, while the 2023 event was held at DBS and opened by the DBS President. Research has been highlighted through monthly newsletters and a dedicated Research Intranet. Significant research groups have been established across the College with wider international and industry connections. Funding application mechanisms are in place through the PRC office and the library where staff are encouraged and aided to seek collaboration and funding through these mechanisms.

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3   Higher Education Colleges Association, the member organisation for private HEIs.

The College has developed an updated Research Strategy: *Research, Innovation, Practice and Enterprise 2023* (RIPE 23). Through this strategy three main pillars are recognised within the research direction of the College:

1. Excellence: Advancing Research and Innovation for Societal Impact (General research)

2. Research-Led Teaching and Staff Enhancement: Promoting Research Excellence and Impactful Outcome (Research-led teaching and staff)

3. Industry-Focused Research: Fostering Innovation and Driving Enterprise Success through Research (Industry-focused research).

We see these as the three important pillars of our College. It is the vision of the strategy that we will see a further increase in the research activity over the three-year lifetime of this plan (Jan 2024 – Dec 2026). Document IP12 in the associated document folder contains the Research Strategy.

13. Industry Engagement

As outlined earlier, DBS' first strategic objective 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 have the skills, knowledge and attributes sought by employers in their sector such that they can successfully progress to employment or further education. A key component of that approach is engagement with industry through a number of channels, the most important being Industry Advisory Boards.

Industry Advisory Boards (IAB)

There are five IABs across the Finance, Marketing, Business, ICT, and Creative Media and Sound disciplines. Each IAB is chaired by an independent industry expert and consists of the Academic Director, DBS Careers Coaches, and industry and academic experts. These meet on a quarterly basis and their purpose is to:

- Include employer needs and ideas in our programmes
- Develop a network of employers who become advocates of DBS programmes
- Establish work placements for DBS students amongst our network of employers
- Increase the proportion of DBS graduates in employment
- Establish a system whereby staff/student projects or dissertations are taken from live industry needs.

14. Student Supports

DBS is committed to supporting student success and enhancing the student experience. We enable student success through high-quality services and support. This is delivered with an eye to developing attributes that will be beneficial in the workplace, and beyond. The College provides academic resources, student services, engagement support and infrastructure to provide an outstanding student experience and enable strong academic outcomes.

These supports are organised across four areas: Academic, Health and Wellbeing, Student Life and Careers. This model of support is further explained in the DBS Student Supports Handbook (see this **link**) with some explained in this section.

a. Academic Supports

The Academic Support Community (ASC) is a collaboration between the Library, the Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU), the Learning Unit, and student-led support (student leader and mentor programmes). Its focus is to provide additional academic support to students, in particular targeting and assisting those who are at risk academically.

Library and Academic Hub

The Library and Academic Hub comprises the physical library at Aungier Street and an extensive online library that is accessible via the library website (**https://library. dbs.ie/**). The Library is fully RFID enabled. Ninety-five percent of library circulations are carried out on self-issuing stations, freeing up staff time to assist students with their more complex research enquiries. The DBS Library is an institutional member of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI).

The physical library is open six days a week. During term-time the library opens at 9am every day except Sunday, and closes at 10pm Monday to Thursday, 9pm on Friday and 5pm on Saturday.

The online library is available 24/7 on and off campus. The Library has more than 40,000 print books, over 30,000 e-books and 35,274 full-text e-journals. Off-campus access to the Library's digital resources is facilitated using a single login via access authentication software. The online collection is supported by an instant messaging service (*Ask a Librarian*) and an extensive range of subject guides which collate into one place books and e-books, journals, databases, referencing guides and exam papers related to a subject. The Library also manages the institutional repository eSource for research produced in DBS, including examples of previous students' dissertations.

To ensure equitable access to print books, they are placed across a number of lending categories; reference only, three-day, one-week and two-week lending. E-books facilitate multiple concurrent users. Material on reading lists is available on the Loughborough Online Reading List System which provides real-time availability and live links.

The Library delivers standalone, programme-embedded and programme-integrated information literacy classes which include classes on finding books, articles and other information resources; advanced database research; planning, writing and referencing assignments, using Zotero reference management software; and preparing a literature review. The Library answered an estimated 15,000 queries in 2023 while its users issued and renewed 39,441 books. This data is used to inform the development of new library services and guides.

The Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU)

DBS welcomes and supports all new students transitioning to third-level education. As part of this commitment, DBS has established a Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU), which aims to help all students transition to their new environment.

As part of SESU, a number of student learning supports are offered to both new and continuing students. These include drop-in sessions, including "Tea & Talk", workshops on topics such as numerical skills, academic writing, economics and digital/IT skills, as well as research skills and referencing delivered by the Library team.

SESU also keeps abreast of developments in the field of student engagement, learning analytics, curriculum design and UDL to enable DBS to provide best-in-class academic supports.

Peer Mentor Programme

The DBS Peer Mentor Programme is designed to give students the opportunity to represent and mentor other students by sharing their stories and experiences of college life. Our mentors act as positive role models to their respective groups and are sources of information throughout the student journey. 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 have. This team of students is supported by the Student Experience Department. Mentors are divided across three areas: programme-based; region (by nation) based; and year-based. Each of our student mentors is given continuous high-quality training throughout the academic year to ensure they are fully engaged in our college experience and best prepared to support their mentees.

b.   **Health and Wellbeing Supports**

Counselling Services

DBS offers a free confidential counselling service for all students. This is provided through our counselling partners, MyMind.ie, ensuring confidentiality and a guaranteed appointment with a counsellor within 72 hours. These can be in person or online, depending on the student preference.

Disability and Inclusion

DBS has a dedicated Disability and Inclusion Officer who works closely with other areas of the College including Faculty, the Library and Exams Office to ensure that any student's particular needs are appropriately met.

The Disability Supports service ensures that programmes and facilities are accessible to students with disabilities, long-term medical conditions, and long-term mental health conditions, thereby helping them to achieve their educational goals.

Student Wellbeing Programme

The student calendar focuses on health and welfare early in the academic year, with themed weeks on Mental Wellbeing, Disability Awareness, and Consent, within the first five weeks of college. These weeks specifically make incoming students aware of the support they have, both at an institutional and peer level. DBS facilitates regular student wellbeing and mental health workshops in conjunction with Jigsaw, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health. These workshops are compulsory for all student officers and club or society officers, and are open to all other students. We also run regular dyslexia workshops.

International Office

DBS recognises that its international student body has specific requirements in addition to the needs of domestic students. The International Office provides pre-arrival advice and guidance, accommodation advice services, visa advice and fulfilment, welfare supports and pastoral care to all international students.

c.   **Student Life Supports**

Student Council

The Student Council welcomes all students appointed or elected to the role of Class Rep, Peer Mentors, Sports Clubs and 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 about any specific issues that arise throughout the term.

Class Reps

DBS was the first private college to engage with USI to train all of our 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.

The class reps, chosen by each class, take a holistic class view and have the interests of the rest of the class as their guide; they fairly and purposefully represent all the other members of the class. The main purpose of being a class rep is to gather views from peers regarding various aspects of the course, student learning experience and wider college experience, feeding this information to the members of staff in DBS for attention.

Student Entertainment

The Student Experience Team, along with our Student Union and societies, organises a full and varied schedule of social and cultural events throughout the year. From Freshers Week in September, RAG Week, weekly film screenings, cultural excursions and day trips, to the Student Awards in May at the end of the academic year, there are many opportunities for students to socialise and engage. We also celebrate important cultural and national events such as Holi, Chinese New Year, Eid, St Patrick's Day, Fourth of July and other national holidays appropriate to our student body profile.

Clubs and Societies

We present college life as being about more than just academic learning. We have a broad range of clubs and societies through which students get to enjoy the full experience beyond lectures and exams. We position the DBS Campus as Dublin city centre, and we use all of the extra-curricular and recreational opportunities that this location offers. We encourage all of our students to get involved. Besides doing something that they love and enjoy, they will meet new friends with similar interests, meet fellow students on different programmes, and develop as a person. For club and society leaders it is an opportunity for personal development, and demonstrating key skills to potential employees.

All club and society officers take part in a comprehensive training programme which covers areas such as leadership, event management, teamwork and conflict resolution. They feed into a strong support network, led by the Student Experience Team and Student Union Officers. On successful completion of their tenure the leaders receive a digital badge which gives recognition to what they have completed and can be displayed on their LinkedIn profile. The College has over 50 clubs and societies across different interests, activity based, special interest, religions, international and cultural and volunteering and social.

The clubs and societies that are already active in the current academic year are listed on this **link**.

d.   Careers and Employment Supports
The DBS Careers Hub

The DBS Careers Hub is the College's career service, and consists of a number of Career Coaches.

The Careers Hub is dedicated to ensuring that students are equipped with the right skills to achieve their career goals upon graduation. The team constantly keeps focus on what is needed to create a work-ready graduate, what skills does a work-ready graduate need to succeed, and how can we equip our students with these skills.

Graduate Readiness Programme

During a student's time at DBS they will be given the opportunity to complete a graduate attributes self-assessment quiz that has been created by the Careers Hub. They complete the quiz multiple times during their programme. It assesses the student against the skills employers look for in graduates, and by following the advice given, students can improve their score throughout their time at DBS. To help develop skills, students are asked to complete the Graduate Work Readiness programme of asynchronous modules, also developed by the Careers Hub, which will enable students to improve across all of the skills areas. By working with the Career Coaches a student will understand their individual careers pathway and by following the pathway they will enhance their employment prospects.

Weekly Careers Events and Podcasts

The Careers Hub hosts weekly career events and information sessions during the academic year, where students meet with company representatives and graduates to find out what it is like to work in that industry or company. For the companies it is an opportunity to meet with prospective employees and to highlight the advantages of joining them after graduation. Organisations who have been on campus recently include Focus Ireland, Ibec, Fexillon, Jameson, HSE, Vodafone, Accenture and Mastercard.

The Careers Hub also runs a weekly podcast with important insights from industry leaders. These podcasts are recorded and made available to all students. A sample podcast is available on this **link**.

Industry Visits and Guest Lectures

Across the academic year, the Careers Hub organises a number of industry visits where students can explore company culture and the working environment within their area of study. Host companies in 2022/23 included LinkedIn, Microsoft, Hubspot, IBM, ServiceSource, Novartis, Vodafone Red Edge, Accenture, Mastercard and LinkedIn.

Guest lectures are also a key component of the DBS Career Strategy. Every module has a minimum of two guest speakers through a semester, bringing theory into practice for the student.

15. DBS Academic Outcomes for Students

After an amount of discussion some years ago, DBS came to settle on three categories of measurement of academic outcomes for learners:

- Academic performance
- Student satisfaction
- Student advancement.

These three areas speak to two of DBS' strategic objectives to:

- create work-ready graduates and
- deliver outstanding learning.

The academic performance measure offers data on stage and assessment pass rates, programme completion and graduate award classification.

The student satisfaction measure gives a more interpretive student view on the extent to which DBS is meeting their expectations.

The final measure, student advancement, ultimately addresses the question of whether or not DBS has created work-ready graduates.

a. Academic Outcomes
Assessment Pass Rate and Stage Completion

Assessment pass rates relate to all assessments on a module within a programme, including examinations. Stage completion refers to the completion of a defined stage on a programme. For example, completion of the first year of a three-year programme is referred to as the completion of a stage.

DBS assessment pass rates and stage completion rates in general show healthy results. Figure 18 shows these outcomes for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22. DBS has an internal benchmark of 85% pass rate and 85% stage completion rate, which were exceeded in both 2019/20 and 2020/21. In 2021/22, the assessment pass rate exceeded the benchmark while stage completion was a little below.

Figure 18: Assessment Pass Rates and Stage Completion
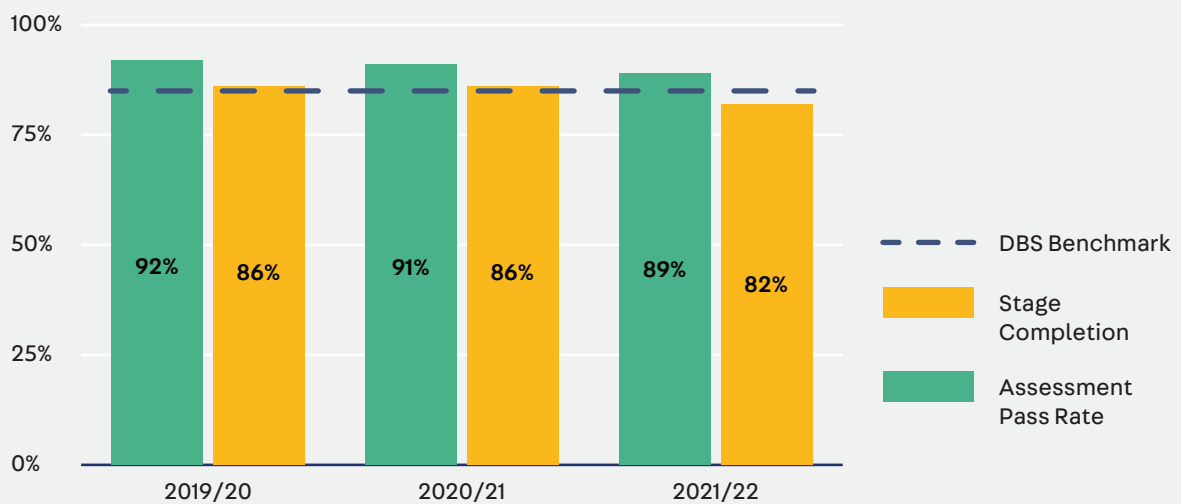
Graduate Classification

Graduate classification relates to the level of award a student achieves, e.g. 1st class, 2nd class, etc. Figures 19 and 20 show our graduate classifications at L8 undergraduate and Masters level from 2018 to 2023 compared to the national benchmark[4], taken from QQI award data. An analysis of the data shows that the undergraduate students achieving 1st Class Honours is above the sector benchmark, 2nd Class Grade 1 is below, 2nd Class Grade 2 is noticeably below, and Pass is about the same.

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4   Data provided by QQI: HET Award Classifications 2018-2023 – **https://docs. google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Kw5hJ_RSPXFW-YQKp0CQkpDfG1MNz9xz/ edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117049394035682524145&rtpof=true&sd=true**

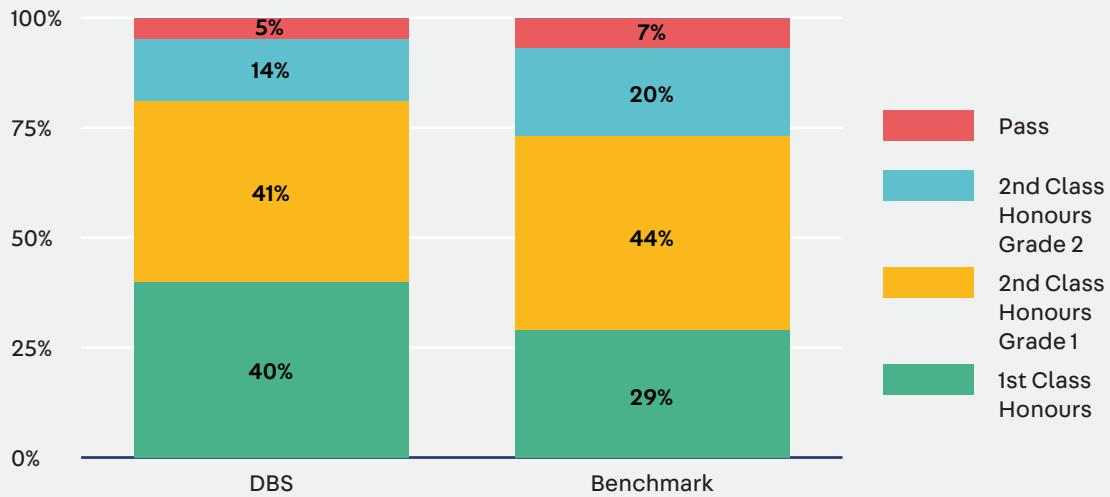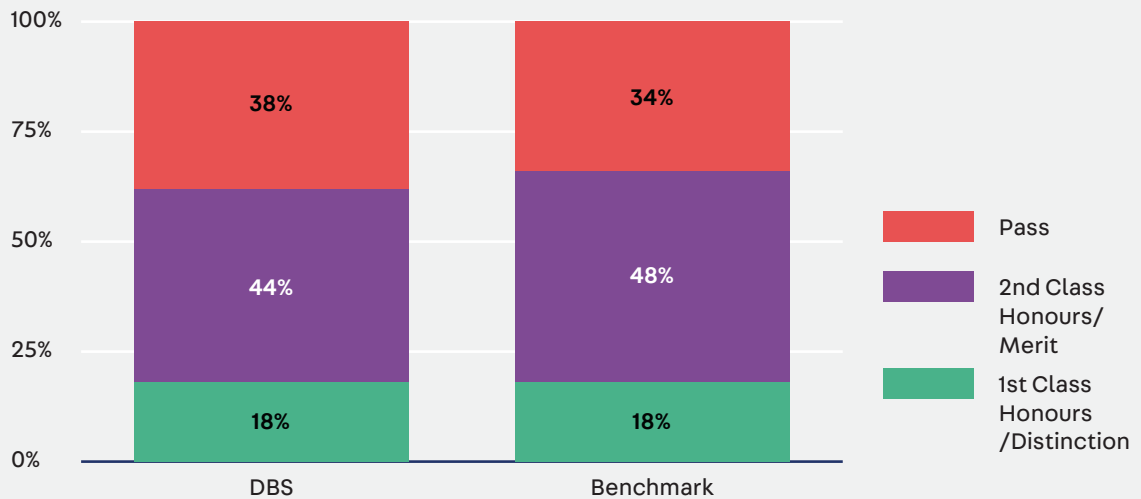**Figure 19:** Graduate Classification Level 8 Honours Bachelor Award

**Figure 20:** Graduate Classification Masters Award

While this will be discussed further in the ISER, our analysis of this suggests that our results are appropriate to the profile of our students. Specifically, the final year of our undergraduate programmes have large intakes of students from European partners who come to DBS to complete their undergraduate degree. From there, they return to their home country to progress to a Masters programme. The students are very motivated to achieve high academic results and are very capable of achieving it.

Our Level 9 Major Award student profile is roughly in line with the sector.

Programme Completion Rates

Programme completion refers to the number of students who, having started on a programme, successfully remain on the programme until it is completed, which for a first year undergraduate student would be three or four years later, depending on the programme. Figure 21 shows completion on a DBS programme for the past four years (noting that students starting in 2018/19 would only have graduated 21/22 for a three-year programme and 22/23 for a four-year programme)

Figure 21: Completion Rates UG Intakes from 2015/16 Onwards
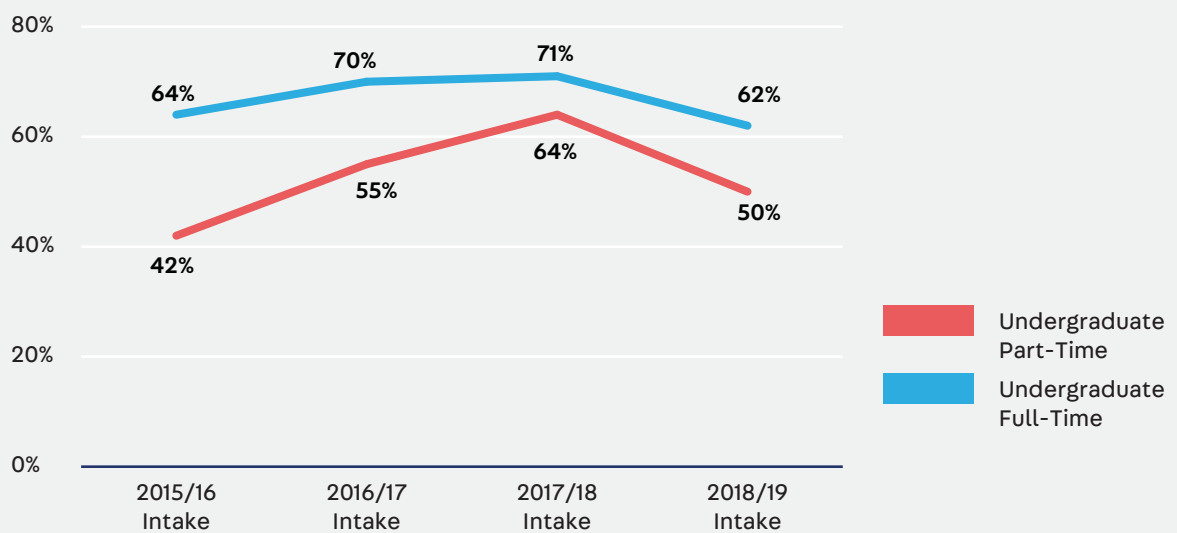
The data shows that even though completion rates at stage level remain relatively high, completion rates at programme level are lower.

Benchmark data from the sector is available for full-time undergraduate programme completion rates. It is divided across types of institution but overall the completion rate is 75%. This includes universities who only offer undergraduate programmes at Level 8. All other institutions, including DBS, offer undergraduate programmes at Levels 6, 7 and 8 so a closer benchmark comparison of 67.8% is provided if universities are excluded. Our part-time rates are consistently lower than this, though benchmark data is not available for part-time students.

Figure 22: Completion Rates PG Intakes from 2017/18 Onwards

Legend:
- Postgraduate Part-Time
- Postgraduate Full-Time
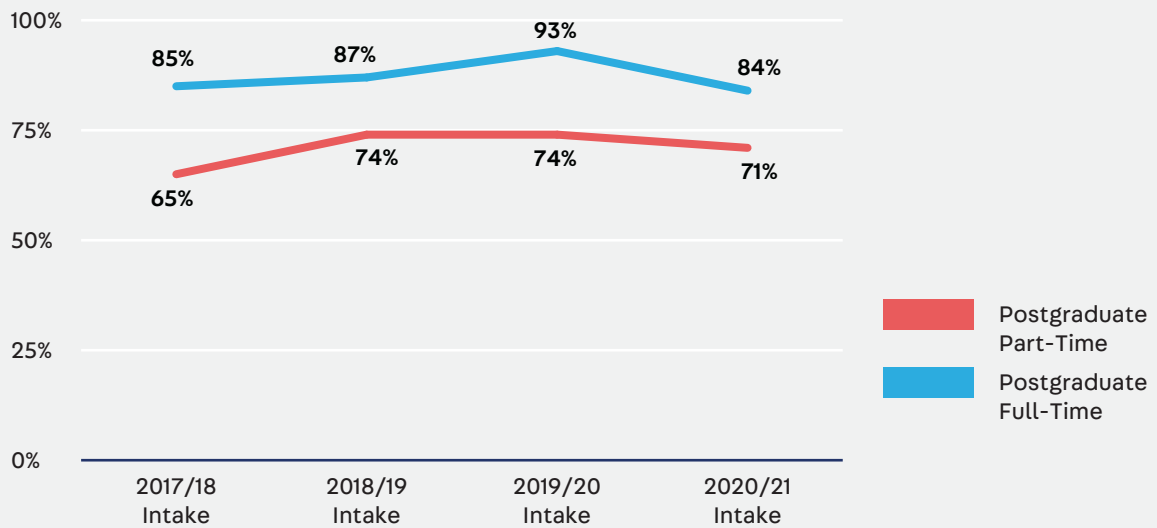
At Level 9, full-time postgraduate students show generally strong completion rates compared to part time postgraduate students, as outlined in Figure 22. Again, part-time rates are lower than full-time.

b. Student Satisfaction

DBS measures of student satisfaction are the internally conducted module survey and the nationally managed sector-wide studentsurvey.ie, the national survey of student engagement, which analyses student views across the sector.

Module Surveys

The module survey asks learners to rate their learning out of five, across multiple criteria grouped under four academic headings. Figure 23 shows the most recent results for overall satisfaction compared to the previous four years with satisfaction at 4.32 out of five, an increase on last year and a general trend upwards over the past five surveys.

Figure 24 shows the feedback scores from the four academic areas in the survey.
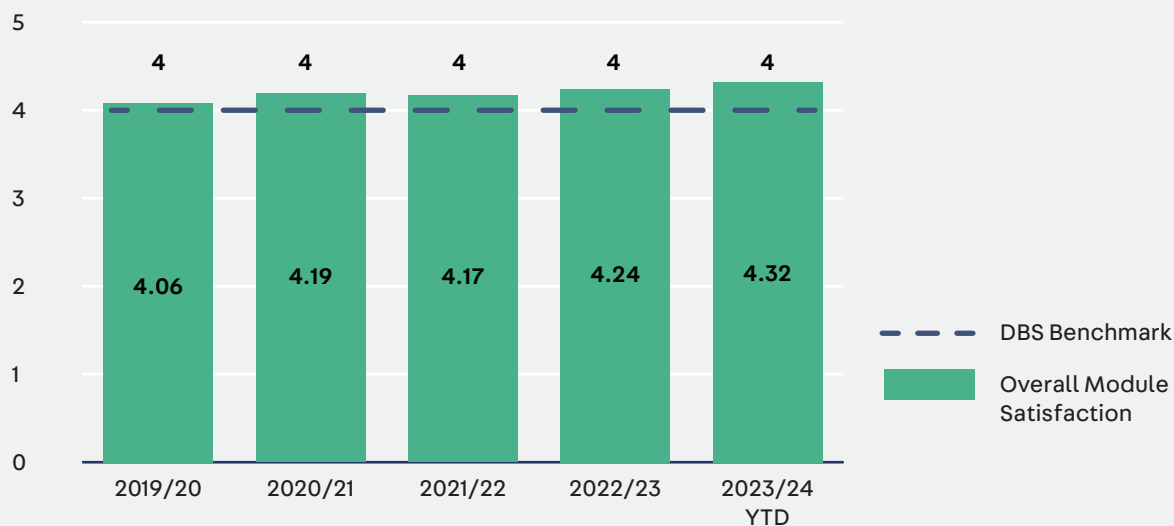
Figure 23: Module Satisfaction

Figure 24: Module Survey Results Across Survey Headings

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 YTD
Teaching and learning	4.23	4.29	4.22	4.21	4.36
Module content	4.06	4.11	4.26	4.25	4.36
Module support	4.19	4.13	4.26	4.24	4.41
Assessment and feedback	4.13	4.14	4.16	4.19	4.34

The module survey shows year-on-year improvement in how DBS students score our performance in assessment and feedback, a priority area of focus for the Learning Unit, which delivers support and CPD for Faculty. There is little movement in each of the other categories in the module survey but the performance overall is considered good.

## National Sector-Wide Student Feedback Survey – studentsurvey.ie

Studentsurvey.ie is the national sector-wide survey of student engagement. It surveys all universities, technological institutes (IoTs and TUs) and some other public colleges. DBS is the only independent for-profit HEI participating in the survey.

It asks learners to rate their college out of 100 in a number of criteria that are collated under ten headings:

- Higher-order learning
- Reflective and integrative learning
- Quantitative reasoning
- Learning strategies
- Collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Effective teaching practices
- Quality of interactions
- Supportive environment
- Learning, creative and social skills.

Figure 25 shows how students rated DBS in each of the ten categories in 2021, 2022 and in 2023. Figure 26 below shows DBS in each of the ten categories against the sector as a whole in 2023.

Figure 25: DBS Student Feedback Trend – National Survey
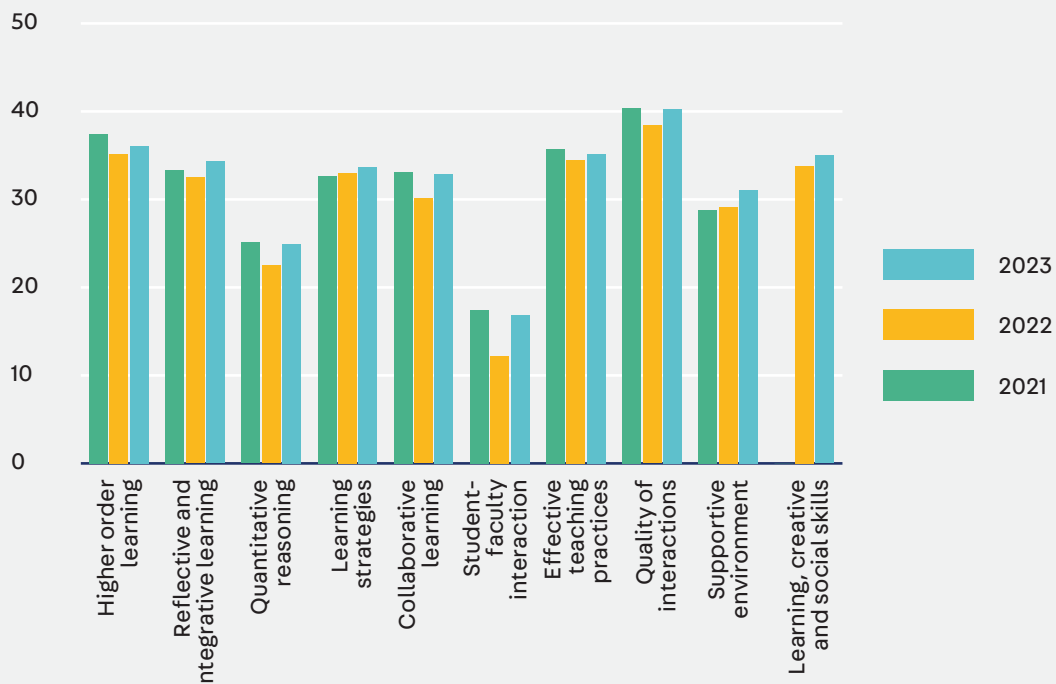
DBS continues to outperform the sector average in all but one of the ten categories of Studentsurvey.ie. The College also experienced year-on-year growth in scoring in all ten categories. The year-on-year growth is most notable in the two categories where DBS performed at our lowest last year, *Faculty-Student Interactions* and *Quality of Interactions*. It is also reassuring to see clear space between DBS and the sector in the collaborative learning and effective teaching practices categories, which are two focus areas for faculty support and CPD.

Figure 26: DBS Student Feedback versus Sector – National Survey
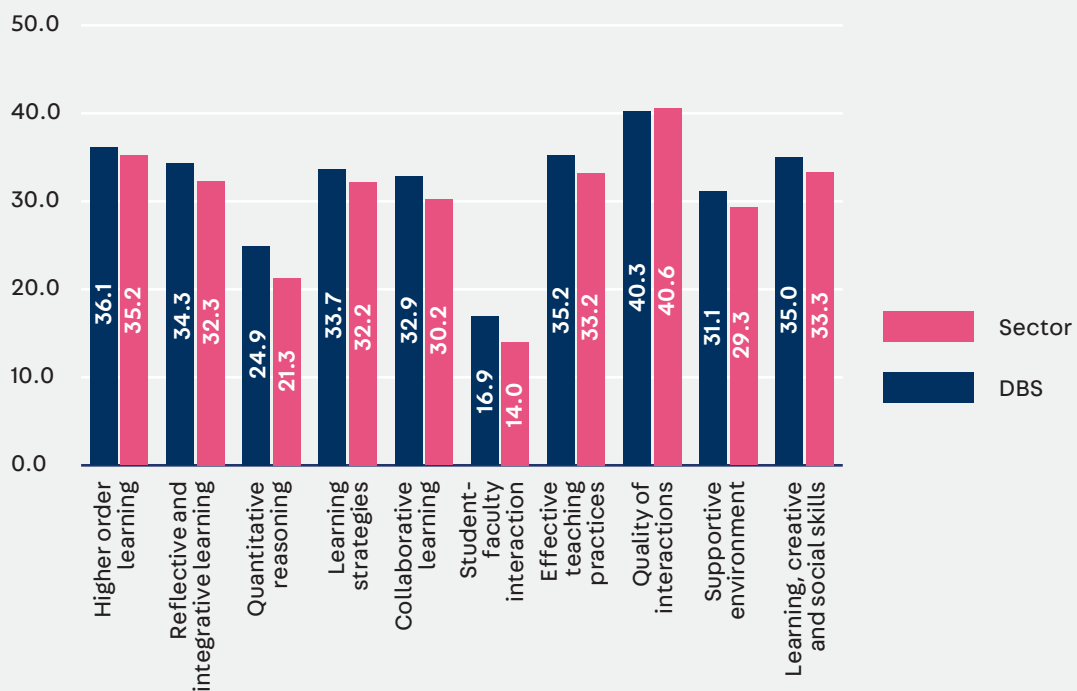
The annual survey finishes with two questions asking if the student would come back to DBS if they were to start again. The table below shows the response to these questions compared to the rest of the sector.

2023	DBS (%)	All (%)	Universities (%)	TU/IOTs (%)	Other (%)
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? **Good/Excellent**	68.9	78.5	76.7	76.4	80.3
If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending? **Probably/Yes**	73.6	83.0	80.7	80.1	85.6

Overall we are satisfied with our performance in student satisfaction but disappointed in the answers to the questions about starting over again or evaluating overall experience. It is difficult to reconcile this but from speaking with students directly we believe it has to do with the national providers having a higher profile and more desirable brand for students doing their first degree. Also, for full-time undergraduate students, they have had to pay full tuition fees with DBS while public HEI fees are two thirds lower than DBS fees.

c. Graduate Outcomes

Starting in 2021/22, DBS participates in the national graduate outcomes survey, which is run by the Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA). DBS is the first independent, for-profit HEI to participate in this survey. The graduate outcomes survey measures how many students have progressed into employment or further education nine months after graduating. Prior to 2021/22, DBS conducted its own graduate outcomes survey. Figure 27 shows our graduate outcomes for the past two academic years, since we have been participating in this benchmark study, for undergraduate students. This is considered to be the most important benchmark of graduate performance.

Figure 27: Graduate Progression – DBS
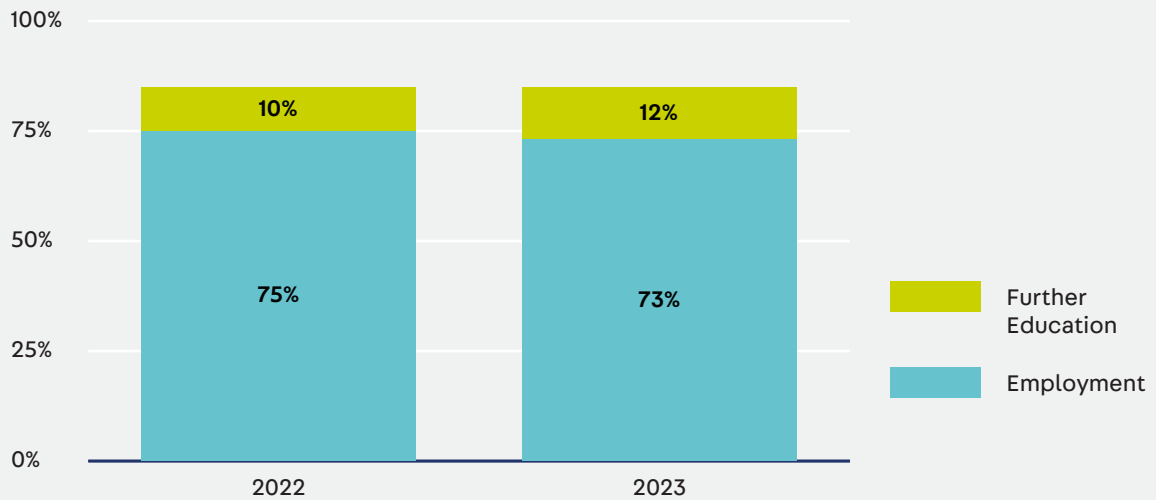
Figure 28 shows our performance for 2023 compared to the sector overall for undergraduates. Our performance is lower than the sector, which is disappointing, though it is understandable given the profile of our undergraduate students. Most undergraduate students who come to DBS do so because they have not got a place in a public HEI. We have found that in recent years students' needs are increasing and we have limited capacity, compared to public HEIs, to support such students.

Figure 28: Graduate Progression – DBS versus Sector
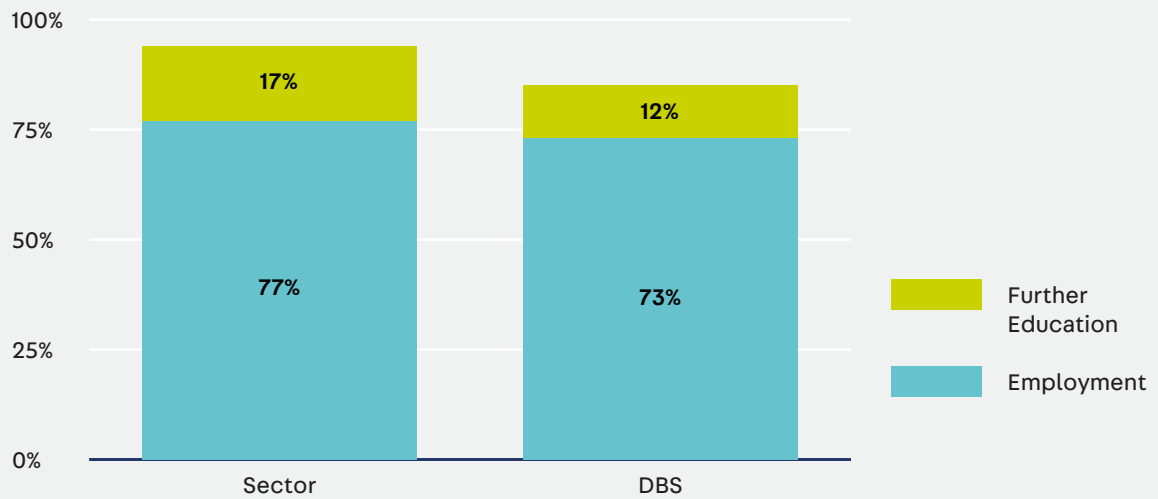
Notwithstanding this, we believe we have much more work to do to improve graduate progression to employment. The analysis also shows that employment is much stronger amongst domestic graduates than international graduates. The increasing number of international students means that this figure is also impacted. In the 2023 survey, the proportion of Irish domiciled graduates entering employment was 87% while the equivalent international proportion was 70%.

16. International Provision

One of our seven strategic objectives is to develop a strong international ethos to build further on our international reach and reputation. As can be seen from earlier data, we have performed well against this objective with a significant increase in international student numbers in recent years. We set out to achieve this objective by recruiting students to DBS programmes delivered in Dublin, and by delivering DBS programmes overseas through delivery partners.

In 2021, DBS was awarded four stars in the QS Stars Rating System. DBS joins an exclusive group of higher education institutions worldwide in the ranking, which is considered one of the most influential and credible ratings for HEIs globally. In addition to the overall rating, DBS earned a rating of five stars for online learning and inclusiveness and four stars in several other areas, including teaching, employability and academic development.

Recruiting Students to Ireland

From an international student recruitment perspective, DBS recruits international learners in a number of ways from all around the world. In some markets DBS works with student recruitment agents all of whom undergo a due diligence onboarding process. DBS currently has an agent network of over 300 globally. The main markets that DBS works in with agents are India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Mexico and Malaysia. DBS is also part of Education in Ireland and actively participates in fairs and events around the world supported by the national education brand and continues to recruit strongly from these markets.

DBS has also developed a network of partner HEIs over the years and now has an institutional partner network of over 100 globally. These are universities and other HEIs with which we have formed a partnership and typically involve study abroad students from Europe, US and some non-EU partners. France, Germany, Spain and the US are the main markets. DBS also participates in international Erasmus initiatives and holds an Erasmus+ Charter for Higher Education. The College has a partnership with the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce which brings learners from the Kaufmann International Certificate programme in Germany to study in Ireland through the Erasmus initiative.

DBS has been recruiting US Study Abroad students for over 20 years and the number of programmes and partners have been growing steadily. Typically these are semester or summer programmes via third party providers and/or partnerships with US institutions. A number of them are faculty-led programmes.

Delivering DBS Programmes Overseas

Transnational Collaboration

DBS has a number of formal, QQI-validated transnational collaborations with partners overseas. Currently there are three transnational collaborations in place and discussions are taking place with other potential partners. The current collaborations are:

- Kolej Poly Tech MARA (KPTM) in Bangi, Malaysia. There, we deliver the BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance through the KPTM campus in Bangi. The programme delivered is exactly the same as that delivered at DBS in Dublin other than local variants for two modules. The programme has been running with KPTM for ten years and is shortly going through a further revalidation

- EU Business School (EUBS) in Munich, Germany. This is a recent validation of two programmes, the BA (Hons) in Business and MBA. Both programmes are now running and in the build-up phase

- University of New York in Prague (UNYP), Prague, Czech Republic. This is the most recent transnational validation of the DBS MSc in Business Analytics and MSc in Digital Marketing and Analytics, that have just recently received local, Czech approval. UNYP has just now started marketing programmes for a September 2024 intake.

Other International Collaboration

For the past ten years DBS has had relationships with universities in China. Most recently DBS formed a relationship with Shenyang Normal University (SYNU) for a 3+1 programme. In this model, students study for three years in SYNU and then transfer to DBS to complete their studies. They transfer into the final year of the BSc (Hons) in Computing. Part of the arrangement includes DBS lecturers teaching on the programme in Shenyang. The programme is currently in its second year and DBS staff are shortly scheduled to attend in SYNU for a number of weeks.

Within the Kaplan organisation there are other higher education divisions or businesses. One such division is Kaplan Singapore (KS). KS is a HEI based in Singapore delivering programmes locally for global universities (one of which is UCD). During 2023, DBS formed an agreement with KS such that some of the content in our programmes is made available to KS as modules for programmes they would validate separately with their local regulator.

Collaborating with other Kaplan entities has been of good benefit to DBS and we plan to exploit opportunities as much as possible, particularly on new technology-based developments such as GenAI.

17.   Staff Profile

Staff Demographics

DBS has a workforce of 466 individuals which comprises 157 administrative staff and 309 academic professionals.

The gender distribution within the institution features 225 female employees and 241 male employees. Figures 29 and 30 show the split between academic and administrative staff, as well as the gender split of staff.
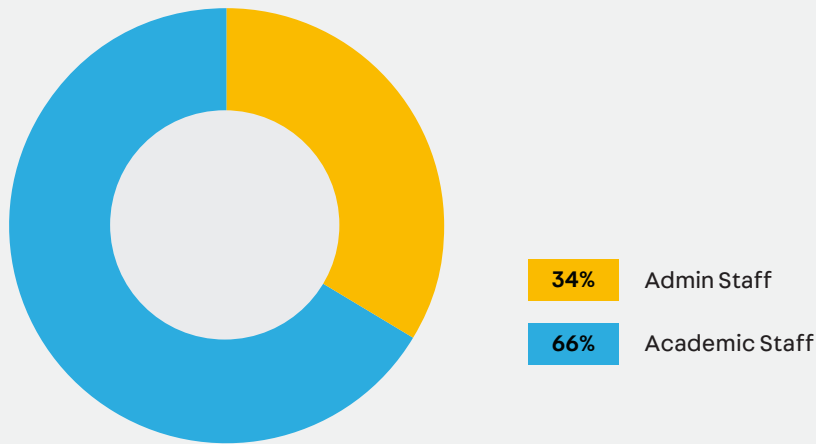
Figure 29: Academic and Administrative Staff

34%	Admin Staff
66%	Academic Staff

Figure 30: Gender Split

48%	Female
52%	Male
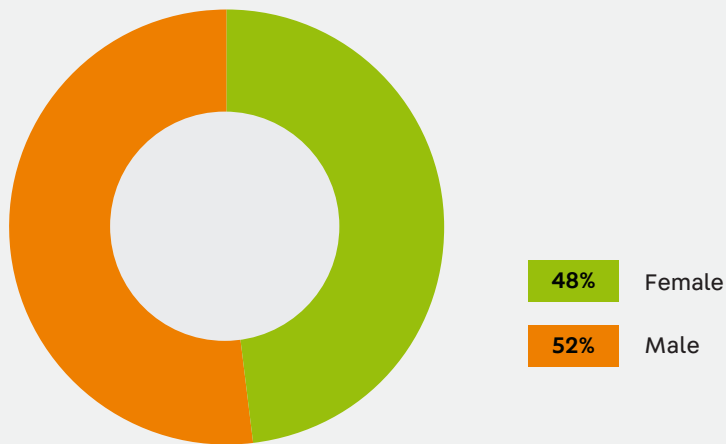
Qualifications within DBS' academic staff are excellent, with more than 90 (29%) lecturers holding Doctoral degrees and over 160 faculty members possessing Masters degrees.

Figure 31: Highest Level of Academic Qualification Amongst Faculty

Highest level of Academic Qualification	UG	HDip/PGDip	Masters	PhD
Accounting and Finance	–	–	15	6
Arts and Study Abroad	1	1	13	7
Business, Marketing and Law	4	4	56	13
Computing	3	3	35	34
Human and Social Sciences	11	4	51	32

DBS has a diverse mix of nationalities amongst staff, spanning 37 different countries. Figure 32 shows that the largest representation from outside Ireland is India, followed by Brazil. This reflects DBS' capability to draw talent from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds and is appropriate for the profile of students.

Figure 32: Primary Nationality of Staff

6%	Brazil	2%	Nigeria
9%	India	2%	Poland
73%	Ireland	4%	United Kingdom
2%	Italy	2%	USA
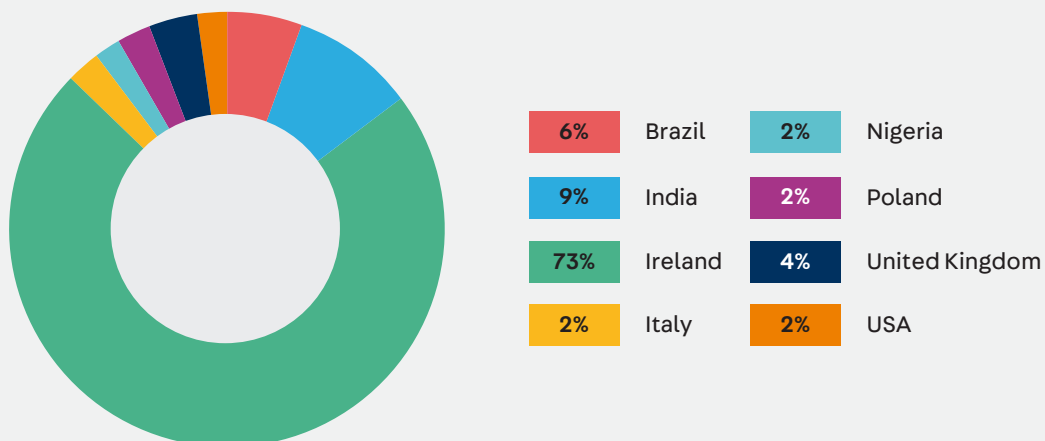
Within the Irish demographic at DBS, there is a range of ethnic backgrounds, with notable numbers identifying as *White Irish*, *Any Other White Background*, and *Asian* or *Asian Irish – another Asian background*. Additionally, the institution values privacy, as reflected in the 47 individuals who prefer not to disclose their background (Figure 33).

Figure 33: Ethnicity of Irish Staff

16%	Any Other White Background
9%	Asian or Asian Irish - any other Asian background
1%	Asian or Asian Irish - Chinese
3%	Black or Black Irish - African
6%	Other (including mixed background)
6%	Prefer not to disclose
59%	White Irish
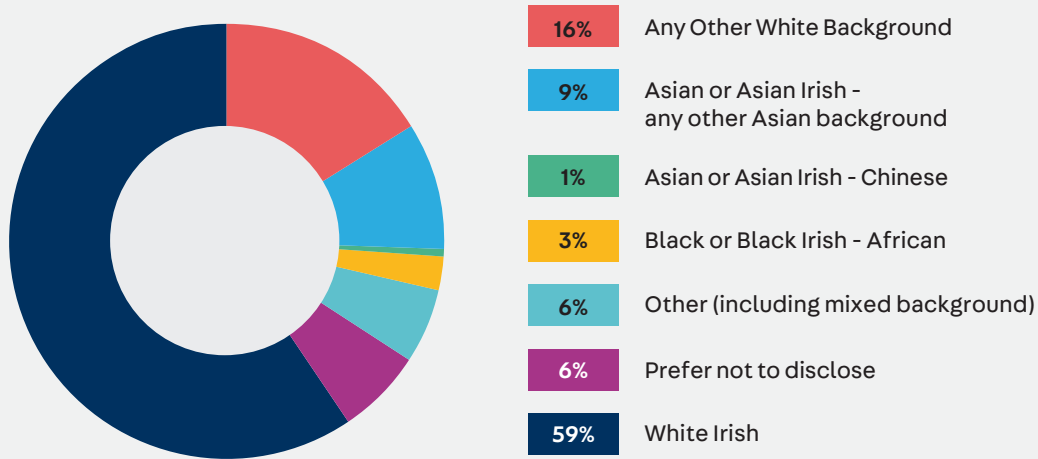
Gender Pay

DBS, in accordance with the Gender Pay Gap Information Act of 2021, has published its second Gender Pay Gap report in 2023. Figure 34 shows the results indicate a 2.4% rise in the mean gender pay gap, attributed to a greater representation of females in the lower quartile since the previous report. The median gender pay gap has seen a 10.7% increase, primarily influenced by heightened variance within non-academic teams (mean increase of 6.4% and median increase of 37.1% in 2023). These changes in our organisational structure reflect evolving skill sets, experience levels, and diversity across roles over the past 12 months. We acknowledge the need for more progress, particularly in talent acquisition and management, emphasising the necessity for tighter targets across quartiles to ensure a balanced gender representation. As we continue to develop as an organisation, it is important to maintain a focus on achieving a gender balance in specialised skills, experience levels and diversity within our roles.

Figure 34: Gender Pay Gap, 2022 and 2023

Gender pay gap	2022	2023
Mean	5.3%	7.7%
Median	25.1%	35.8%

## Staff Training and Development, Including Faculty Development

In 2023, DBS undertook a training needs analysis. Results showed a mix of soft and technical skills were required ranging from project management and leadership skills to more technical training for specific teams. The College has organised a number of courses to address training needs, which external experts have facilitated. Courses have included Change Management, Critical Thinking Skills, Conflict Resolution, Unconscious Bias, and DEI for Managers. Kaplan Group also rolls out mandatory annual or bi-annual training sessions to staff, including GDPR, Antitrust, Code of Business Conduct, Security Information Awareness, and Anti-Corruption.

For faculty development, DBS emphasises accredited CPD on Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, such as the Advanced HE Fellowship Programme and the National Forum for Teaching and Learning short course. DBS also provides faculty access to LinkedIn Learning, an online learning platform which provides video courses in software, creative and business skills. The Learning Unit (LU) in the Academic Dean's Department supports faculty in curriculum design, teaching strategies, assessment, and teaching delivery. The LU offers resources on Moodle, conducts workshops, and provides bespoke training plans activated by learner or stakeholder feedback. It collaborates with Academic Directors to address any learning, teaching, and assessment performance issues raised by Faculty Managers.

Staff Engagement and Feedback

DBS measures its employee engagement through the Annual Kaplan Employee Engagement survey. It is a survey conducted by an external specialist company, Perceptyx. Commencing in 2017, the College faced a significant challenge with an engagement score of 39.3%, prompting swift action to address cultural issues, redefine its vision and purpose, and enhance factors contributing to employee engagement.

Figure 35: Year-on-Year Comparison of Staff Engagement
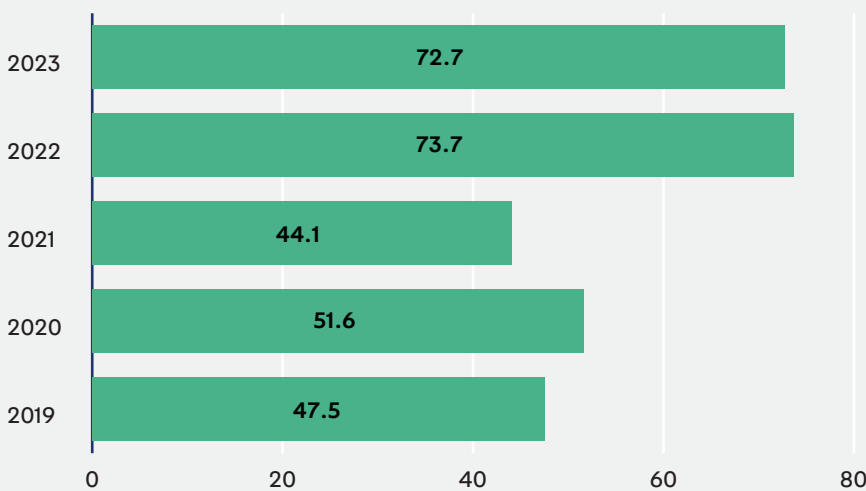
Over the subsequent five years (see Figure 35), with the exception of 2021 due to COVID-19, DBS experienced incremental yearly improvements in staff engagement, resulting in an impressive overall improvement of 13.2% from 2017 to 2022, with an engagement score at 52.5%, marking an 8.4% improvement on prior year.

In 2023, the methodology for calculating employee engagement was changed at Kaplan Group level. In previous years, the engagement score was derived from eight questions. Following feedback from across Kaplan business units, the measure has transitioned to the Core Engagement Score, focusing on four core questions. In that year the engagement score for DBS was 72.7%, which was an engagement approximately equal to the prior year, albeit on a different measure.

DEI Strategy and Plans

DBS believes diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are paramount to how we do business. These enhance our understanding of an ever-changing world, enabling us to explore new ideas and approaches. As an employer, we strive to create an equitable environment that attracts, retains and develops diverse talent and to promote a culture where everyone feels included, supported and empowered to do their best work.

To ensure each person feels part of the community, DBS has underpinning values driving its culture, as outlined in Section 7, Vision, Mission and Values. These values are supported by DBS behaviours; they inform everything the institution does and how it behaves, serving as the foundation for its vision and important for its development and growth.

The ambition is to **educate**, **embed** and **embrace** a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout DBS, facilitating an environment where both students and employees can bring their 'whole' selves to DBS. Aligned with this commitment, DBS has identified four key goals focused on:

i.   Data and governance

ii.   Equal treatment

iii.   Equal opportunity, and

iv.   Collaboration with external stakeholders and staff.

These goals are supported by a range of activities and initiatives monitored by the DEI Steering Committee and the DEI Board. In 2024, the primary objective is the application for Athena SWAN accreditation, marking a significant milestone in the journey toward fostering DEI at DBS. Work has already started on the preparation for application.

18. Infrastructure

Buildings and Classrooms

DBS operates from four buildings in the city centre, two of which have a very large footprint and two much smaller. The two main buildings, Castle House on South Great George's Street, and our building on Aungier Street provide 61,203 square feet of space together. We also have a building with classrooms only on Bow Lane, adjacent to our Aungier Street building, which is 3,981 square feet and a floor in Marconi House on Digges Lane, 5,608 square feet, on which we have just signed a 10-year lease.

Our Castle House building has four floors and comprises:

- 17 classrooms (including three mobile labs)
- 1 media studio
- 1 psychology lab
- 11 computer labs
- Recording pod
- 6 teaching pods
- Reception area
- Student common room and canteen
- Student experience hub
- Administration office space.

The Aungier Street building has four floors over basement and comprises:

- 10 classrooms (including four mobile labs)
- 1 auditorium
- 2 computer labs
- Reception area
- Library and Academic Hub across the 2nd floor

- Careers Hub

- Canteen

- Administration office space.

The Bow Lane building has four floors and comprises:

- 3 classrooms

- 1 health care lab.

The Marconi House premises is used exclusively for administration.

In total, this provides 1,669 seats in classrooms and 334 seats in computer labs at any given time.

Over the recent past, DBS has invested heavily in upgrading classroom space. We have introduced Zoom rooms, new modern furniture with varying room layouts. These layouts include more functional spaces, round tables for collaboration and engagement, and mobile furniture to allow rapid layout alterations within rooms. As a result of student feedback, we have been installing extra power sockets throughout our classrooms to cater for the increasing number of learners who bring their own devices to class.

Within the classrooms our investment has been significant in classroom technology over the past three years, with Zoom Rooms and associated audio visual technology, including roaming cameras. In the Zoom Rooms there are Neat Bars and Logitech Rally Bars. These are the new standard for video conferences in medium/large rooms and are a very effective all-in-one solution. The devices are user friendly and offer good quality microphones and video cameras. In two classrooms we also have a Shure Stem Wall Mic system which tracks the volume of the presenter and allows them to walk through the classroom detecting which microphone the lecturer is closer to allowing their voice to still be picked up by Zoom and not cause the students online to miss any audio from the class.

We have recently installed 21 new TV screens into classrooms which are 86" smart TVs, and have modern technology for Faculty to engage with.

Our student common area in Castle House is extremely popular with students and, in effect, is a hive of activity during the academic year and an area where learners can meet and mingle in a social space. Our Student Experience Team has invested heavily in making this a fun, friendly and engaging environment. They have installed games machines, pool and table tennis tables, a sound system and comfortable seating areas with charging points for devices.

We have two canteens, one in each of the main buildings, that cater for both staff and learners along with vending machines and microwaves for use by our learners.

As outlined earlier, there has been an increase in full time international learners. As a result, demand for our day time classroom space has increased. Taking additional space in Marconi House for administration staff to move from Castle House, means the space they vacate can be reconfigured as classrooms.

Information Technology

At DBS, IT is viewed as an integral part of the College operations and the achievement of its business objectives. We are currently in the process of updating our IT strategy for the next 3-5 years, but the overall objective will remain the same, which is to make a major contribution to DBS achieving its strategic goals through targeted investment in network, security, user interface and support. The target vision or end state for each element of IT, from systems to service, is to align with business priorities. As DBS is a subsidiary of Kaplan and Graham Holdings Company (GHC), our IT department is required to follow best practices and standards as set out by GHC. IT underpins the operations of the full student journey from admission to graduation, and is a key enabler for students to access their learning, for Faculty to prepare, deliver and assess learning, for administration staff to undertake their daily roles, and for management to review data for decision making.

Network

Internally DBS utilises Cisco and Juniper for all switching and firewalls, Dell and HP for servers and APC for our uninterruptible power supply (UPS) units, all of which are market leaders. For IT equipment, we follow recommended standards for our refresh policy which, in effect, sees all equipment replaced every five years on average.

DBS has invested heavily in virtual technology (Citrix) to ensure learners can access all the software needed for their courses dynamically at any PC in the College and from home. We provide an OpenStack environment, which is a private cloud for other elements such as Web servers, FTP servers, SQL servers, Linux, and any operating systems for teaching. As technology is ever-evolving, the platforms, software and resources are reviewed regularly to ensure learners are provided with up-to-date IT support, particularly learners studying programmes that have a heavy technology element to them, e.g. Computing and Analytics.

In line with a strategy to move to the Cloud, DBS has recently implemented SaaS solutions for CRM (customer relationship management), SIS (student information system) and ServiceDesk (an online service portal for students). We use Salesforce for both CRM and ServiceDesk and Thesis Student Management for the SIS, each, again, market leaders in their field.

Teaching Delivery

DBS has invested heavily in Zoom for live online lectures and, as noted earlier, has installed Zoom Rooms in all classrooms to help with the engagement of online learners. Mobile touchscreen devices are available for all lecturing staff for teaching both from home and from the classroom. These devices connect wirelessly to projectors or Smart TVs in the classroom to increase flexibility.

Working from Home

To support flexible working we have invested in Zoom phones to enable easier contact with the office for staff working from home. We also provide hardware to all staff working from home, including docking stations, keyboard, mouse and screen, all to connect to their device, all of which we ship to their home.

Support

The IT department provides support for all technology-based services throughout the College to lecturing staff and learners both on campus and off site. The IT Department's resources and expertise consist of a Support Team, a Networking Team, a Project Team and an external Development Team.

Security and Data Protection

Like most other HEIs, we experience almost constant attempts from hackers to gain access to our network. To date, we have been very successful in preventing unauthorised access. DBS currently uses Qualys, Security Scorecard, Orca and Mandiant security and compliance solutions, delivering critical security intelligence on demand, providing an automated range of auditing, compliance and protection for Internet perimeter systems, internal networks, and web application. This provides us with a global, college-wide view of our security and compliance. Crowdstrike and Cloudflare are our front line defence systems for websites and antivirus. We recently invested in Rubrik to protect our backups from cyber threats, and OneTrust is used for all GDPR related activities in collaboration with Kaplan UK. These products are all the market leaders in security and protection.

19. Community and Public Engagement

Community engagement is an essential aspect to our College's responsibility to its surrounding community. DBS is committed to active engagement with its local communities and will aim to do this in a constructive and mutually beneficial way to improve access to the College, its facilities and resources as well as engaging at a local level in community agendas. One of the strategic objectives is "Supporting the National Agenda on Skills, Citizenship and the Environment" and it is with this in mind that we are formally building on engagement locally. DBS is currently establishing a Community Engagement Committee in the College consisting of stakeholders from various departments that will develop a plan to achieve its goals in this area.

DBS currently carries out a number of activities in this area under the following headings:

Access

DBS currently provides three bursary scholarships to local disadvantaged schools in the Dublin area each academic year to incoming CAO students. The scholarship entails a bursary of the full tuition fees payable as well as a stipend to each scholarship student annually for the duration of their programme. This initiative has been in place since 2000.

We are also committed to access and widening participants on an international level and have been successful in conjunction with the HEA in offering the Government of Ireland International Education Scholarships (GOI-IES) programme on an annual basis for some years.

In addition, DBS participates in the Irish Fellows Programme offering bursaries on a number of fellowship programmes to students from developing countries to undertake full-time study at Masters level at an Irish higher education institution, with a focus on courses that are relevant to Irish Aid's development objectives.

Transition Work Experience Programme

We offer work experience placements to transition year secondary school students, providing to them the experience of what it is like to work in a higher education institution, or in a workplace generally.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

DBS has an established CSR Committee and it has six strands:

- Community Outreach

- Charitable Causes

- Social Engagement

- DEI Awareness

- Green Campus Awareness

- Healthy Campus Initiative.

The focus to date has been on the social side of CSR and campus initiatives. It is now beginning to expand into the local community which is a priority to progress for 2024. Some of the initiatives have included Workplace Wellbeing Day, Staff Charity Day, collections for the Capuchin Centre as well as a number of DEI events around Pride, Mental Health Awareness and International Women's Day.

Staff Volunteering Policy

Volunteering days are available and encouraged to all DBS staff for up to 15 hours per year. Staff are encouraged to undertake activities which support a worthy cause and have a positive social, environmental or economic impact.

Community-Based Learning

For our USA programmes in particular, community engagement is a curated series of co-curricular engagements that interact and intersect with communities relevant to the core curriculum. Often, this experience is created in conjunction with Faculty, partners and the groups themselves. This includes communities of artists, voluntary groups, NGOs and faith-based organisations. Some examples include

- **Irish Writers Centre** – engaging with communities of writers, poets and storytellers as part of our Irish Literature course

- **Coiste** – Irish Political Education Programme, a political exchange by former political prisoners who share their personal experiences of the British/Irish conflict with students for all our USA students

- **The Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland** – Educational talks on Islamic identity in Ireland and introducing Islam and its cultural values proactively adding to a multicultural Ireland, both as individuals and organisations for our College of Charleston and College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University students

- **Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland** – Educational talks on the origins, traditions and continued relevance of the Loyal Orange Institution and its role in society since it was formed in 1795, for our upperclassmen students from various universities

- **Totally Irish Live Tuesdays (TILT)** - a series of events for young aspiring musicians where our Audio Production students work with our Film students to showcase unheralded and up-and-coming musicians for six events

- **Dublin City FM** - TILT broadcasts a weekly radio show on Dublin City FM, a special interest radio community service.

DBS actively encourages culture to be leveraged and to support learning at local and national level. This includes student participation in events such as Culture Night, theatre nights as well as study trips to Northern Ireland and the West of Ireland as part of the module Irish Life and Culture.

20. Finance

a.   Financial Performance

Revenue

Revenues are generated from the fees paid by students or sponsors for the delivery of programmes, both in class and online. Revenue has grown substantially over the past five years, mainly from strong growth in international student numbers, as outlined in Section 3, Profile of Students. This is despite COVID and ongoing geopolitical risks. Document IP13 in the associated information folder shows revenues and costs of the College for the past five years.

Given the growth in international student volumes, it is not surprising that international revenue makes up the largest proportion of revenue, c.60% of the total. Figure 36 shows the split across the major markets.

Figure 36: Split of Revenue

19%	Domestic
5%	EU
60%	International
3%	US
9%	Overseas Business
4%	Other

Figure 37: Split of Costs

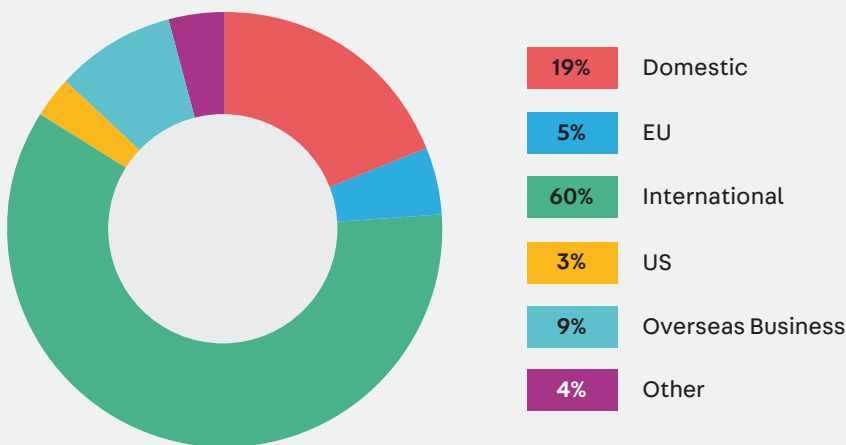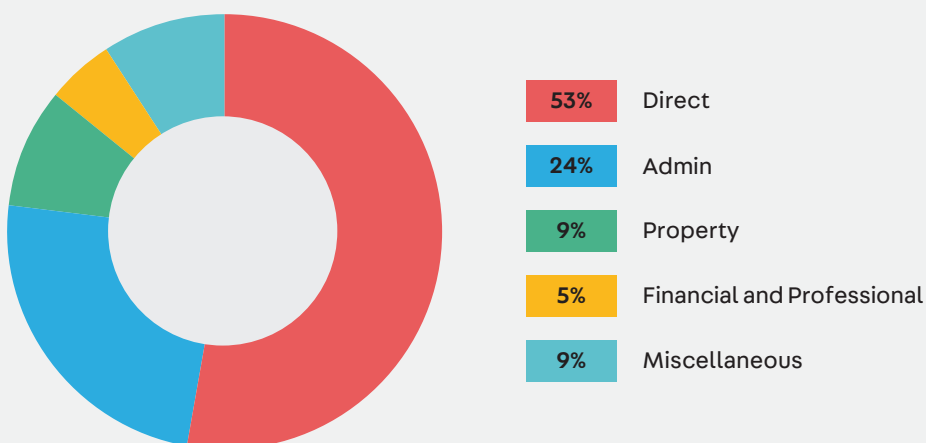|	
53%	Direct
24%	Admin
9%	Property
5%	Financial and Professional
9%	Miscellaneous

Expenditure

The majority of expenditure is accounted for by academic and student-related costs (Direct costs in Figure 37).

Further expenditure is utilised in the administration and running of the College including governance, regulatory and professional services functions. Significant spend is allocated to the cost of managing and maintaining the two main DBS city centre buildings and student teaching spaces.

Capital Expenditure

Significant capital expenditure projects are funded from cash reserves in line with DBS strategic objectives. Surplus cash is reinvested for the furtherance of DBS' strategic objectives and operating efficiency.

The company continues to invest in enablers of future growth including increased use of digital technologies in teaching and learning, and in student data and communications management (Software). The breakdown is shown in Figure 38. The increase in demand for flexibility in learning requires changes in the format of operational delivery, both in teaching and customer service.

Figure 38: Capital Expenditure

45%	Software
28%	Computer Equipment
23%	Fixtures and Fittings
2%	Property
2%	Library Assets
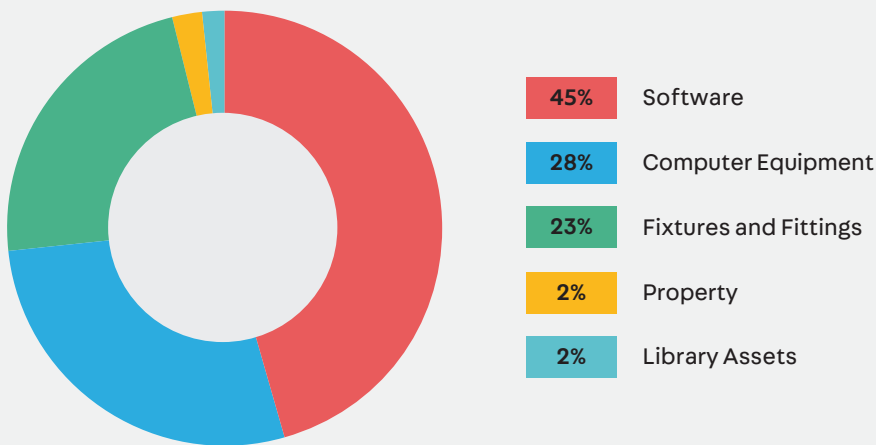
Financial Controls

The Board of Directors, as Governance Board, has responsibility for the College's financial affairs with certain functions delegated to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The Board and ARC meet a minimum of three times per annum.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* issued by the Financial Reporting Council and are subject to annual external audit.

Overall, the organisation's financial objective is to ensure robust financial stewardship in an increasingly competitive market with significant inflationary risks. As an independent, private, commercial, international institution, DBS is self-funded with significant revenue derived from international students.

DBS maximises the use of the most up-to-date management information systems in the management and control of its operations.

DBS reports monthly performance to the parent company, Kaplan, through the Kaplan International Division in the UK and onwards to Kaplan Inc, part of Graham Holdings Corporation (GHC), in the US. Annual budgets are prepared and signed off and performance against budget is monitored closely. A suitably qualified finance team is in place providing timely, accurate management information including insights and analysis, thereby ensuring the College, as a company, meets its legal, tax and regulatory reporting and filing obligations as they fall due, including those related to Sarbanes Oxley (SOX), applicable to GHC.

Annually, there is a strong focus on generating a cash surplus to enable the organisation meet its commitments as they fall due. These are both current and capital in nature, including funding day-to-day operations, working capital needs, and campus infrastructure investment. A level of reserves is maintained to provide for continued investment, provision for the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) and to enable responsiveness to general market volatility.

21. Institutional Partnerships

In addition to any partnerships referenced throughout this document, DBS has a number of institutional partnerships as outlined here.

Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)

DBS was one of the founding members of HECA in 1991. HECA is the representative body of Ireland's independent higher education sector. HECA serves as a representative voice for 12 established and state-accredited, privately-funded providers of higher education, advocating on behalf of, and supporting, its members to achieve their goals. It endeavours to increase awareness and understanding of the independent colleges higher education sector so as to influence policy on their behalf. The Chair of the HECA Board rotates amongst its members and DBS has held it a number of times, most recently in 2020 and 2021, having held the Vice Chair position before that.

Advance HE

Advance HE is a member-led charity of and for the HE sector that works with partners to improve higher education for staff, students and society. Advance HE are experts in higher education, with a particular focus on teaching and learning, governance, leadership development and equality, diversity and inclusion. Advance HE has run the Athena SWAN Awards in Ireland since 2015. As noted earlier, DBS is in the process of preparing for an Athena SWAN application, the first independent for-profit HEI in Ireland to do so. The achievement of an Athena SWAN Award will be a demonstration of impactful and sustainable gender equality work and the capacity for evidence-based equality work across the equality grounds enshrined in Irish legislation.

Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)

ICOS has 26 institutional members, including all of the universities and technological universities in Ireland, and all the major independent HEIs. Membership also includes USI. DBS has had continuous representation on the Board of ICOS since 2017, and has held the Chair of the organisation up to 2023.

Student Affairs Ireland (SAI)

Student Affairs Ireland is the representative body of student services and student affairs in Higher Education in Ireland, North and South. Membership includes all Universities and Technological Universities on the island of Ireland, along with some private HEIs. The DBS Head of Student Experience is currently an Executive Board member of SAI.

AHEAD

AHEAD is an independent non-profit organisation working to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. The main focus of AHEAD's work is further education and training, higher education and graduate employment. Membership of AHEAD allows DBS to network with peers and apply best practice, supporting a range of student needs in the College.

Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN)

DAWN is the professional organisation for Disability Officers who are primarily responsible for supporting learners with disabilities in higher education in Ireland. Membership of DAWN gives DBS access to a forum for the sharing of expertise and the development of knowledge and skills in the area of disabilities. DAWN also develops professional standards and best practices, which DBS, in turn, adopts.

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

DBS became a member of the AACSB Business Education Alliance in January 2024. This provides a platform for networking and collaboration among its members, through conferences, forums and online communities. Member institutions and industries can connect, to foster the exchange of innovative ideas, promote research collaborations and facilitate the development of strong relationships within the business education community.

Being a member presents opportunities for continuous professional development. DBS Faculty, staff and students now have access to a wealth of resources, including research publications, teaching materials, industry reports and case studies. This allows for enhancement of teaching methodologies, curriculum design and overall effectiveness in preparing business students for the evolving corporate landscape.

National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)

The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) was launched in April 2016 by the HEA, QQI and USI. NStEP aims to strengthen student engagement in decision-making across Irish higher education, supported by a framework of ten principles and four domains. The programme seeks to champion a strong culture of partnership between students and staff through practice-based projects, training and capacity building, as well as informing policy developments.

DBS was the first private HEI to sign up to the programme in 2017 and see it as key to our ambition to have students as partners and co-creators within the DBS learning community.

Appendix A1.
QQI Validated Programmes Offered at DBS

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
Accounting and Finance	7	Special Purpose	Certificate in Fund Accounting
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Financial Services
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Aviation Finance
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Financial Technology
	9	Minor Exit	Certificate in Financial Technology
	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Analytics
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Technology
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in International Accounting and Finance
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Trading and Investing (pending PAEC approval)
	9	Major	Master of Science in Financial Analytics
	9	Major	Master of Science in Financial Technology
	9	Major	Master of Science in International Accounting and Finance
	9	Major	Master of Science in Trading and Investing (pending PAEC approval)

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
Arts and Study Abroad	6	Special Purpose	Certificate in Arts
	6	Special Purpose	Certificate in Business and English Language
	6	Special Purpose	Certificate in International Business
	6	Special Purpose	Certificate in Sound Engineering and Music Production
	6	Major	Higher Certificate in Arts
	6	Major	Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production
	7	Special Purpose	Certificate in Global Business
	7	Major	Bachelor of Arts in Film and Creative Media
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production and Music Project Management
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film and Creative Media
	9	Major	Master of Arts in Film and Creative Media

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
Business, Marketing and Law	6	Special Purpose	Certificate in Business and Digital Skills
	6	Major	Higher Certificate in Business
	7	Special Purpose	Certificate in Digital Marketing
	7	Special Purpose	Certificate in Marketing Technology
	7	Major	Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies
	7	Major	Bachelor of Business
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing
	8	Major	Bachelor of Laws (Honours)
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Business
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Business in Project Management
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Financial Technology

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
	9	Minor Exit	Certificate in Human Resource Management
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Business
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Supply Chain Management
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Human Resource Management
	9	Major	Master of Business Administration
	9	Major	Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics
	9	Major	Master of Science in Human Resource Management
	9	Major	Master of Science in Management Practice
	9	Major	Master of Science in Marketing
	9	Major	Master of Science in Supply Chain Management

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
Computing	7	Special Purpose	Diploma in Big Data For Business
	7	Major Exit	Bachelor of Science in Computing
	8	Special Purpose Exit	Certificate in Data Analytics
	8	Special Purpose	Certificate in Data Visualisation
	8	Minor Exit	Certificate in Fundamentals of Data Analytics
	8	Minor	Certificate in Information Technology
	8	Major	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Computing
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
	9	Minor	Certificate in Data Analytics
	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Artificial Intelligence
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Analytics
	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Cybersecurity
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information Systems with Computing
	9	Major	Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence
	9	Major	Master of Science in Business Analytics
	9	Major	Master of Science in Cybersecurity
	9	Major	Master of Science in Data Analytics
	9	Major	Master of Science in Information and Library Management
	9	Major	Master of Science in Information Systems With Computing

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
Human and Social Sciences	6	Special Purpose	Certificate in Social Care Skills
	6	Major Exit	Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Social Studies
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology
	8	Major	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy
	8	Major	Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Addiction Studies
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Applied Psychology

Discipline	Level	Award	Programme
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology
	9	Major Exit	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Contemporary Criminology
	9	Major	Master of Arts in Addiction Studies
	9	Major	Master of Arts in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy
	9	Major	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy
	9	Major	Master of Science in Applied Psychology
	9	Major	Master of Science in Health Psychology
	9	Major	Master of Arts in Contemporary Criminology

Non-Framework Programmes

The following non-framework programmes are currently offered.

- Advanced Diploma in Legal Studies
- Advanced Diploma in Project Management
- Diploma in Accounting and Finance
- Diploma in Artificial Intelligence
- Diploma in Blockchain
- Diploma in Business Studies
- Diploma in Child Psychology
- Diploma in Cloud Computing
- Diploma in Coaching for Performance
- Diploma in Counselling Studies
- Diploma in Cybersecurity
- Diploma in Data Analytics
- Diploma in Digital Marketing and Strategy
- Diploma in Employment Law
- Diploma in Ethical Hacking
- Diploma in Event Management and PR
- Diploma in FinTech
- Diploma in Human Resource Management
- Diploma in Investment and Capital Markets
- Diploma in Journalism and Content Creation

- Diploma in Legal Studies
- Diploma in Management Studies
- Diploma in Marketing, Advertising, Sales and Public Relations
- Diploma in Negotiation
- Diploma in Office Administration and Technologies
- Diploma in Project Management
- Diploma in Psychology
- Diploma in Selling and Sales Management
- Diploma in Sports Journalism
- Diploma in Supply Chain Management and Logistics
- Diploma in Sustainability Management in Business
- Diploma in Taxation
- Diploma in Tourism Management, e-Marketing and Innovation
- Diploma in User Experience and Design
- Executive Diploma in Strategic Pharmacy Business Management

Appendix A2.
List of Documents in the Associated Information Folder

These documents are confidential and commercially sensitive and are available to QQI, panel members and DBS staff only

IP1. Breakdown of students by country of origin

IP2. DBS Articles of Government

IP3. Business and Financial Report to Kaplan

IP4. Learning Review Report to Kaplan March 23

IP5. Risk Assessment Summary Report to Kapla December 23

IP6. IT Report to Steering Group May 23

IP7. Employee Engagement Report to Kaplan, December 2022

IP8. Purpose and Membership of Academic Boards and Committees

IP9. Academic Plan 2023.24

IP10. President's Report to the Board October 2023

IP11. SLATE2

IP12. Research Strategy

IP13. Financial Performance of DBS 2018-2023

Appendix A3.
List of Links Included in the Document

Quality Assurance Handbook (Section 6, Quality Assurance)
https://students.dbs.ie/quality-assurance/qah

Strategic Plan (Section 8, Strategic Plan)
https://www.dbs.ie/about-dbs/strategic-plan

Organisation Chart (Section 9, College Management)
**https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/13qCFm4OfjGXikxlOHjW38fiBXLlj-2uk/
edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=109068525724738132665&rtpof=true&sd=true**

Policy Folder (Section 9, College Management, Policies and Procedures)
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AgDLcNGvhymNgQxInysIVRAj8jPXoNwj

Student Supports Handbook (Section 14, Student Supports)
**https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o_GUMcaZmS0sspRjAzy1XPAKaXKIgCYc/
edit#heading=h.gjdgxs**

List of DBS Clubs and Societies (Section 14, c, Student Life Supports)
**https://docs.google.com/document/d/19ejzmRfStc1ufTA1dao-
8DVBmbZAIoEhmYYr6BYFKGo/edit**

Careers Podcast (Section 14, d, Careers and Employment Supports)
https://shows.acast.com/dbs-careers-hub/episodes/podcast-series-2023-episode-4