

January 2025

Institutional Review Report 2025

Dublin Business School



CINNTE 



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Contents

Foreword	5
The Review Team.....	6
Section 1: Introduction and Context	10
Section 2: Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER).....	14
Methodology used to prepare the ISER	16
Section 3: Quality Assurance/Accountability	18
<i>Objective 1 – Governance and Management</i>	20
Structures for the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance.....	20
<i>Objective 2 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment</i>	26
The Learning Environment.....	26
Assessment of Students	27
Student support.....	31
<i>Objective 3 – Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review</i>	34
Introduction	34
Self-Evaluation	35
Monitoring	36
Review	36
Programme Monitoring and Review	37
Other Parties involved in Education and Training	39
Section 4: Conclusions.....	42
Commendations.....	44
Governance and Quality Management	44
Teaching, Learning and Assessment.....	44
Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	44
Recommendations	45
Governance and Management	45
Teaching, Learning and Assessment.....	45
Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	47
Section 5: Top 5 Commendations and Recommendations.....	48
Commendations.....	50
Recommendations	50
Section 6: Institutional Response.....	52
Appendices.....	56
Appendix A: Terms of Reference	58
Background and context for the review	58
Purposes.....	59
Review Objectives, Outputs and Criteria	60
Objectives (including indicative matters to be explored).....	60
Review Outputs	66
The Review Process.....	66
Appendix B: Main Review Visit Schedule	71
Glossary	78

We build
futures
One success story at a time



Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important functions is to ensure that the quality assurance (QA) procedures that institutions have in place are effective. To this end, QQI carries out external reviews of higher education institutions on a cyclical basis. This current QQI cycle of reviews is called the CINNTE cycle. CINNTE reviews are an element of the broader quality framework for institutions composed of Quality Assurance Guidelines; each institution's Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Quality Reports (AQR); and Dialogue Meetings. The CINNTE review cycle has been extended by one year i.e. from 2017-2024 to include the larger and mature independent/private higher education institutions (HEIs) operating in the Irish higher education sector. These HEIs have been prioritised on the basis that they have indicated their intention to seek the delegation of authority (DA) when it becomes available¹. During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of these HEIs.

Each CINNTE review evaluates the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures and processes in the institution. It also measures the institution's compliance with European standards for quality assurance, having regard for the expectations set out in QQI's quality assurance guidelines, as well as adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures.

For independent/private providers, CINNTE reviews also explore how these institutions have enhanced their teaching, learning and assessment strategies and their quality assurance systems and how well institutions have aligned their approach to their own mission, quality indicators and benchmarks.

The CINNTE review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG 2015) and based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to reviews, including:

- the publication of Terms of Reference;
- a process of self-evaluation and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);
- an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers;
- the publication of a review report including findings and recommendations; and
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This institutional review of Dublin Business School (DBS) was conducted by an independent review team in line with the terms of reference in Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the review team.

¹ The process for DA requires a statutory instrument detailing the ministerial regulations of the conditions to be met by institutions seeking DA.

The Review Team

Each CINNTE review is carried out by an international team of independent experts and peers. The 2024 institutional review of Dublin Business School was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. The review team received training from QQI on 4 April and the Chair and Coordinating Reviewer attended a planning visit with DBS colleagues on 15 May. All initial and preparatory meetings were held via Microsoft Teams. The main review visit (MRV) was held on-site from 24 June to 27 June and was attended by the full review team.

CHAIR

Sander Svaeri is currently serving as the Rector at Oslo New University College, bringing over two decades of extensive experience within the academic sector, with over a decade dedicated specifically to rectoral roles. Holding the position of Associate Professor in Service Management, Sander has assumed various responsibilities throughout his career, encompassing roles such as lecturer, researcher, and overseeing study programmes in hospitality, tourism, and service management.

His journey within academia has seen him take on pivotal roles, including Head of Department for Tourism and Hospitality, Vice Rector, and his current position as Rector. Sander has played a key role in spearheading significant organisational transformations, including the development and implementation of robust quality assurance systems, restructuring university colleges, and facilitating campus development initiatives. Moreover, he has played a pivotal role in orchestrating mergers between various university colleges and departments.

In recent years, Sander has been at the forefront of leading and participating in review teams across Norway and Denmark, collaborating with national accreditation councils such as NOKUT and Akkrediteringsrådet. He has provided valuable

assistance to NOKUT in strategising the sector's review framework for higher education over the forthcoming six years.

COORDINATING REVIEWER

Aoife McCormack has over 25 years' experience of working across further education, local government, local development and in the community and voluntary sector. In 2021 she was appointed Quality Assurance Manager for Kerry Education & Training Board (Kerry ETB) with responsibility for the management and development of Kerry ETB's quality assurance and enhancement processes and systems, including academic governance and programme development. She also acted as the Kerry ETB coordinator for the inaugural review of quality assurance in Kerry ETB.

Previously Aoife worked as a Further Education Standards Officer contributing to and leading a number of policy and procedural developments across the ETB sector and being actively engaged in the establishment of quality assurance governance structures. This included supporting the work of campuses and centres in preparing for external authentication of assessment and results approval. In this role she led a partnership process to develop procedures and policies to support staff and learners in quality assuring assessment. She also previously (2009 – 2018) managed Kerry ETB's Adult Literacy and Basic Education Programme which provided quality tuition to adult literacy learners across 8 locations in Co Kerry.

Prior to working with Kerry ETB Aoife worked with local government (2000 – 2009) on strategy development and social inclusion initiatives and led the implementation of the performance management systems.

Aoife has also worked supporting the community and voluntary sector to engage in public consultation processes and the establishment

of key collaborative and partnership initiatives to support local communities, sporting organisations, environmental groups and local development groups.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Associate Professor Ramita Tejpal is Dean of Academic Quality and Policy at BPP University.

Ramita has significant experience across both the higher and further education sectors and has held advisory roles across the sectors on strategic and policy-based matters, additionally working closely with statutory and regulatory bodies as a reviewer and inspectorate.

She is also a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of her extensive work in, and contributions to, the sector. In addition to her professional roles, Ramita is also pursuing a Professional Doctorate in Education at the University of Glasgow.

LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

Andrew Conlon is a final year Bachelor of Arts in Business student at the National College of Ireland and a part-qualified accountant with the Institute of Chartered Accountants Scotland (ICAS) following an 11-month placement with PwC (UK) in audit.

In the National College of Ireland Andrew is class representative, liaising between fellow students and faculty to ensure a high-quality experience for all parties. Upon completion of his degree this summer he will return to PwC (UK) to pursue his chartered accountant qualification.

Andrew takes a keen interest in social and political topics and was involved in several meetings of the Citizens' Assembly on a directly elected mayor for Dublin and on drug use.

As a mature student, Andrew has over 4 years' experience in civil aviation security operations with the Dublin Airport Authority. His role as a coordinator developed his ability to work effectively in a team, in a pressurised and highly regulated

environment ensuring operational efficiency and compliance.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HE SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVE

In his current role as the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance in the Registrar's Office, **Dr Brendan Ryder** has responsibility for the development and continuous improvement of all aspects of Dundalk Institute of Technology's (DkIT) quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) system which includes activities relating to approval, monitoring and periodic review (internal and external reviews) and the reporting of same (internally and externally).

Dr Ryder has and continues to work extensively with the higher education sector, including Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), on various aspects of quality assurance and enhancement. He is the DkIT institutional representative on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN).

Dr Ryder has over twenty-five years' experience working in higher education having held positions as Head of Department of Visual and Human-Centred Computing, Assistant Registrar and e-Learning Coordinator at Dundalk Institute of Technology.

NATIONAL PRIVATE HE SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVE

Professor Jane Alexander is Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences (ICHAS). She joined ICHAS in 2010. Prior to that she was a lecturer, Trinity College Dublin, senior research fellow, Derby University, UK, lecturer and research assistant, City University, London.

As an educator Jane has a continuous record for teaching and is involved in the development of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Her contribution to teaching also includes the supervision of many PhD and Masters' students to successful completion.

She began her academic career in 1998. Her PhD in Mental Health Studies, funded by the Trustees of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, is a qualitative sociologically-based study investigating the experiences of acutely ill patients and staff in two acute mental health hospitals in London. Parts of her studies were completed at the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands.

Her MA in Counselling Psychology is in psychodynamic psychotherapy and her thesis investigated the close relationships of depressed men. Her main research interests are in acute mental health care and the relationship between severe life events and depression. She worked on several major research projects at City University, London. Additionally, her research career included work on NHS-funded projects as a senior research fellow at the Centre for Academic and Workforce Innovation (CAWI) at Lincoln University. Also, at Trinity College Dublin on the accommodation of diversity in the Irish maternity services.

She held several clinical and managerial posts in the UK. Her main experiences, prior to academia, was in primary mental health care, working directly with GP's and liaising with community mental health teams. She completed major research projects while working in this field including an investigation of counselling provision in GP practices and an evaluation of the placement of community mental health staff in GP practices for SCM (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health).



Dublin Business School

To Let

Retail Unit

Ground Floor 27 sqm

Basement 8 sqm

View Listing

seavills

618 1300

Let the Streets Festival



LETTERS



09

Section 1

Introduction and Context





Introduction and Context

Dublin Business School (DBS) states its purpose is to inspire and nurture every student to realise their career ambitions.

It was established in 1975 and is now the largest independent third-level college in Ireland providing third-level full-time and part-time education to over 8000 students per year. DBS offers over 100 programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), which are accredited through Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and by other awarding bodies. Students are recruited from over 50 different countries to a range of undergraduate, postgraduate and 'study abroad' programmes.

DBS is located in Dublin City Centre with premises on Aungier Street, South Great George's Street, and Bow Lane. Facilities include lecture theatres, PC laboratories and tutorial rooms, a library including study rooms, study areas and PC terminals, canteen facilities and student services, including student welfare and counselling, and careers services.

DBS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of [Kaplan Inc.](#), the education division of the [Graham Holdings Company](#), having been acquired in 2003. Kaplan Inc is a global education company, serving more than one million students per year in over 400 locations in 30 countries.

DBS's vision is to be the most respected, diverse and progressive higher education institution in Ireland, renowned globally for making a difference and creating successful careers.



Section 2

Institutional Self-Evaluation
Report



Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

METHODOLOGY USED TO PREPARE THE ISER

The ISER was developed by DBS in early 2024. DBS saw the ISER as an “*opportunity to pause and reflect and do an honest self-evaluation of work and processes*”. At the initial meeting with the review team chair and co-ordinating reviewer, DBS leaders and staff described the ISER development process. They outlined that at the early stages there was consensus that the ISER would not just be descriptive but also evaluative and solution- focussed. A critical reflection process commenced internally through the establishment of an ISER Working Group. The ISER was developed by a “*cast of many*” with writing of various sections of the ISER taking place across the organisation, including at discipline level. An editorial team completed the editing. The Registrar led the process and worked closely with the President and Academic Dean. They reported to the DBS Academic Board. At the initial meeting and review visit, the President outlined that DBS viewed this process as an important milestone in its evolution, particularly in the context of its effort to move towards delegation of authority. The ISER is set out across three main chapters in accordance with guidelines provided by QQI in the Institutional Review Handbook:

Chapter 1: Governance and Management of Quality Management

Chapter 2: Teaching Learning & Assessment

Chapter 3: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Each chapter provides an evaluation of DBS’s own performance against the objective, draws conclusions and documents areas for improvement.

In all there were 90 areas for improvement identified in the ISER (see Appendix C). The review team also received additional confidential information related to the ISER to provide context and further information.

ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

The ISER Working Group was the primary driver of the ISER development and was established after a general call to staff to volunteer for membership. Those who volunteered to be part of the process and the Working Group included staff from Faculty, Exams Office, Registry, Library, Content Production, Student Experience, Student Supports, Faculty Management, Admissions, Academic Management, Reception and the Leadership Team. The document was written by a number of contributors and edited by an editorial team on completion. It was approved by the DBS Academic Board.

Students were not directly involved in the development. However, information from student focus groups and programme reviews informed the process.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ISER

The ISER provided the review team with clear information to commence an assessment of the effectiveness of quality assurance (QA) in DBS. It addressed the core themes required by QQI in the Core Statutory Guidelines of Quality Assurance. It provided a comprehensive and clear description of DBS’s approach to and enhancement of quality assurance. It also demonstrated evidence of a reflective and evaluative quality culture in DBS, generating many recommendations for future action. The ISER aligned with the Annual Quality Report (AQR), both of which assisted the review team to prepare for the main review visit (MRV).

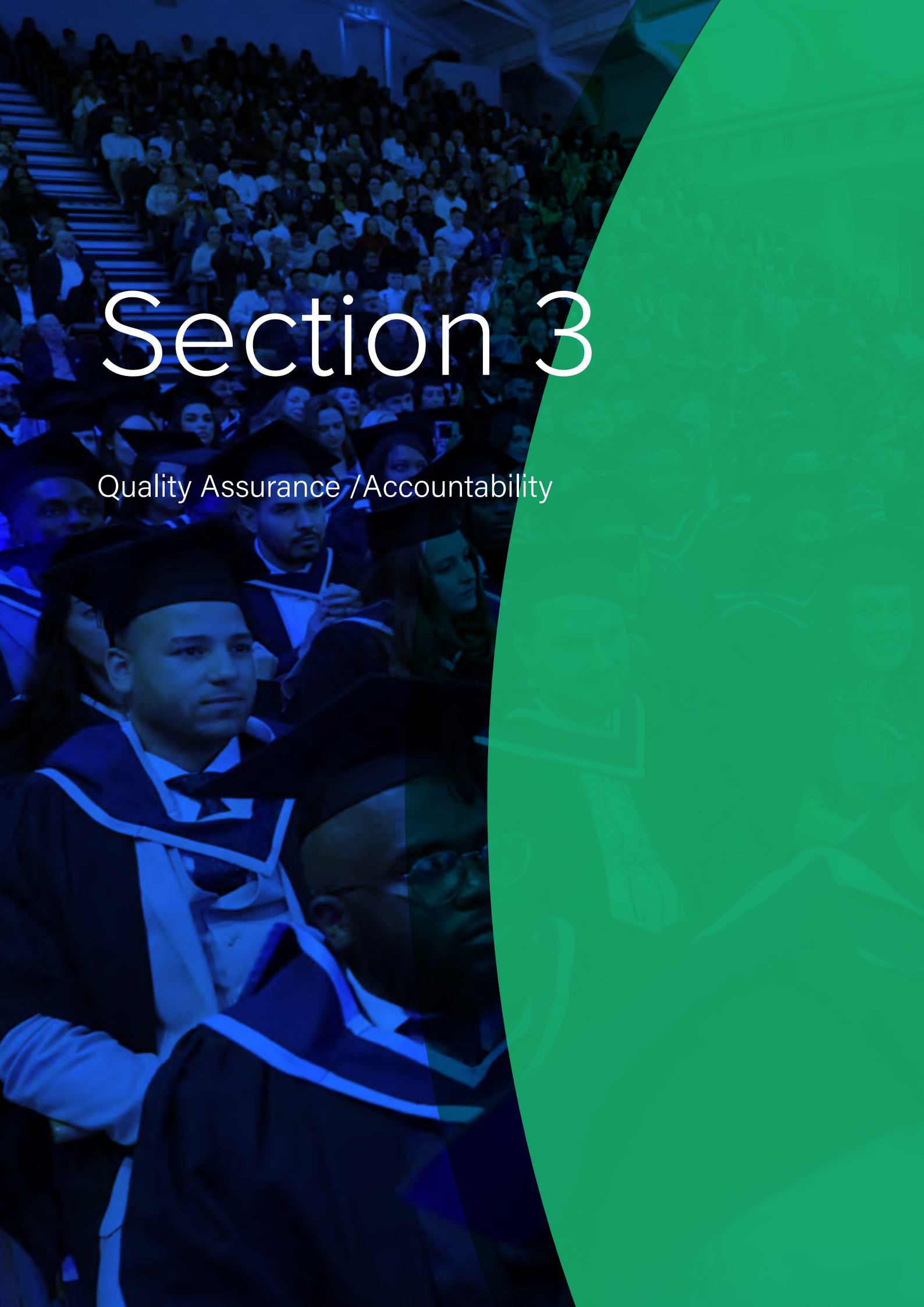


DBS
Data
Business
Services

Overall Data
Studies of the Year

EMER BRENNAN

DBS Overall Data Studies of the Year
award is presented to the student who
has achieved the highest grade in their
subject in the overall data studies of the year.



Section 3

Quality Assurance /Accountability



Quality Assurance/ Accountability

OBJECTIVE 1 – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURES FOR THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

DBS's QA governance structure comprises of a Board of Directors, an Academic Board, a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and various subcommittees of the Academic Board. The Board of Directors oversees the institutional activities and includes members from Kaplan, the parent company, and independent non-executive directors. The Academic Board is the highest academic authority, ensuring compliance with academic regulations and quality assurance standards. The institution has multiple quality assurance committees under the Academic Board to oversee various academic and operational aspects. These include sub-committees for specific areas like programme development and student assessment. The inclusion of independent non-executive directors and the establishment of sub-committees such as the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) enhance the effectiveness of QA procedures. The comprehensive governance structure ensures robust oversight and continuous improvement in quality assurance. DBS recently reviewed and restructured its governance structures, clearly demonstrating an appetite for continuous improvement. The review team encourages DBS to continue to be alert to over-complexity and duplication within its governance structures.

DBS's vision, as set out, is to be a diverse, innovative, and collaborative institution, recognised globally for excellence in teaching and learning, and supporting every student to build a successful career. Its mission is to help individuals achieve their education and career goals as is reflected in its Strategic Plan 2021–2025, which includes detailed objectives and plans that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound

(SMART). These plans guide the institution's actions and ensure alignment with the overall mission supported by the Strategic Plan, The Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE) and other related plans, which ensure alignment with the overall framework and continuous performance review. This systematic approach to strategy is both relevant and transferable to QA work. There appears to be broad agreement on the definitions of quality assurance and enhancement in the context of strategic action planning. However, the review team noted that there are indicators already being used for strategy purposes which may also be relevant to monitoring quality. For example, much data exists around the student journey so that, there is great potential for DBS to build a clear understanding and definition of quality during the student journey. It was evident to the review team that there are many interactions between the student and DBS, and that the systems, activities and entities all play a key role in a successful student journey at DBS and can all provide mechanisms to DBS for monitoring its own quality in this domain. Equally, data about programmes, emanating from programme review processes, is underutilised.

Faculty and professional staff at DBS show a drive and inner motivation to help students to succeed. Strengthening formal QA processes, at an institutional level, by systematically providing faculty with relevant data based on pre-defined quality indicators, would enable staff to monitor their own performance and further improve the institution's ability to govern QA, identify gaps and fill such gaps quickly. The review team believes that DBS would benefit from more systematic, data-driven monitoring and follow-up work to identify failures and gaps in quality (i.e. delayed results and feedback from examinations and complaints about lectures). Implementing a 'warning system'

using available data in the learning management system (LMS) could help alert relevant people when non-conformance occurs. In addition, DBS could also better align the actions outlined in the Annual Quality Report (AQR) (specifically Part B) with the actions identified in quality assurance and enhancement activities, as per the Quality Framework, and the Academic Plan as appropriate.

It was not clear to the review team whether DBS could clearly define quality in its own context or whether it has identified its main quality dimensions (areas of quality), indicators within those areas, or thresholds for quality (the minimum standard before action must be taken) for each indicator. Clear, measurable quality indicators, based on data, must inform decision-making and can provide quick and easy insight for the governing body, senior management, and faculty to ensure the embedding of quality assurance and enhancement. The review team concurs that both DBS management and staff would benefit from a clear definition of quality at an institutional level. Clear expectations derived from a common definition and agreement as to what aspects of quality should be followed up regularly and the reporting of such data through DBS governance could support the institution in continuing to strengthen its quality framework. Recommendation 13, detailed in the report under Objective 3, will support DBS's work in this area.

Documentation of QA Policies and Procedures

DBS has formalised its procedures and processes to enable systematic quality assurance. The Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) contains the institution's academic policies and procedures, structured into sections on governance, the student journey, and programme quality. These policies are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure relevance and effectiveness. This reflects the institution's commitment to maintaining high standards. Additionally, DBS has developed comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for non-academic activities, enhancing operational efficiency and staff training. These SOPs are stored in a centralised repository accessible to all staff. The QAH is comprehensive and provides clear guidelines on policy implementation and compliance, ensuring that QA

processes are standardised and transparent, and regular updates to QA policies ensure they remain current and effective, reflecting the latest best practice in quality assurance.

The review team noted that DBS has formalised its procedures for ensuring and maintaining quality. However, even with the QAH and SOPs, the MRV revealed that in some areas students' experiences differed in practice based on individual circumstances rather than the system. Some examples included the handling of how groupwork challenges are resolved, and how student anonymity is handled. Easily accessible and clear procedures and guidelines would reduce the risk of deviating practices. Students, faculty and staff at DBS would benefit from clearer processes and guidelines that enable them to close feedback loops. The MRV confirmed that there are still feedback loops to be addressed. Some students reported waiting months for feedback while others claimed that they do not receive an answer when addressing issues relevant to their student journey. There were no indications that this was intended, it was, rather, examples of human or system errors that were not systematically identified and addressed.

DBS acknowledges that actions in response to staff and student feedback can lack transparency. The review team believes that DBS could be more proactive in closing the feedback loop. The review team found that students had no clear views on changes being instigated in response to their feedback. While feedback findings are presented to the Student Council, the analysis and implementation of changes at programme level is not highly visible. Nor are these reports consolidated with other reports, such as those received from external examiners. It also appears that such consolidated reports are currently not considered for actions at programmes and organisational level. The development of more structured approaches to the early resolution of student feedback would enable students to raise their concerns informally, with the reassurance that they would be followed up in a timely way and resolved as early as possible. DBS could provide development opportunities for staff who have day-to-day contact with students to ensure that they

understand the appropriate responses to make if students raise concerns or complaints. It is worth noting that DBS acknowledges inconsistencies in responses to informal issues raised by students and discusses them under Areas for Improvement in the ISER.

The review team advises that DBS identify the feedback loops to students, faculty and staff that are relevant but are currently not being systematically closed. For instance, the SOPs should be updated with these feedback loops. As identified by the institution in its ISER, DBS should ensure that all staff are thoroughly familiar with the QAH and its contents through mandatory training sessions and particularly at points when updates are made. This will promote a deeper understanding and adherence to QA policies across the institution. DBS should formalise a feedback mechanism for staff to suggest improvements to QA policies and procedures, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. **The review team recommends that DBS improve its system for internal and external communication and feedback, with a particular emphasis on student feedback, to ensure a consistent student experience and enhance the learning experience.**

Staff Recruitment, Management, and Development

DBS follows stringent recruitment policies to ensure candidates meet the required qualifications and experience. The recruitment process includes competency-based interviews and verification of qualifications and references where required. Interviews revealed that both management and staff believed that comprehensive training was given, not only to regular, but also to part-time lecturers. A student-centred culture seems evident, and in the MRV it was apparent that DBS did a good job in integrating new faculty into its student-centred culture. A broad representation from the industry is consolidated by a large number of part-time lecturers from the industry. However, when the review team pointed out that of 317 faculty members, only 69 are full-time, and the remaining 248 part-time, it was agreed that the percentage of full-time employees should be higher. During the MRV, the review team noted that many part-time faculty staff have been associated with the

institution for a long time and contribute to the long-term and strategic efforts to achieve high work relevance.

The review team noted the limited diversity among the teaching staff in the institution in comparison to the large ethnically diverse student body. DBS acknowledged the need for improvements in the diversity of faculty from a teaching and learning perspective. Engagement in initiatives such as ATHENA SWAN demonstrate DBS's commitment to develop Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) priorities and ensure that these are included as foundational elements in DBS quality assurance processes. These initiatives will provide the institution with important data on its progress against such quality indicators. The review team encourages DBS to develop this area further and ensure that its EDI policy is aligned with quality indicators, where relevant.

It was noted that all staff, both professional and teaching staff, undergo a thorough induction process. Continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities are also provided, with policies to support staff growth and recognition of and adherence to EDI requirements.

The review team commends DBS for the way in which it has succeeded in creating a quality culture with faculty and staff who care for their students and a willingness to go to lengths for their students. The review team was convinced that DBS has a trustworthy work environment with a common goal of helping students to succeed. The strong connection with industry that links students' future careers is also enhanced by part-time faculty who have relevant work-related experience. Both faculty and professional staff expressed satisfaction with the opportunities for professional development.

It was evident that faculty and professional staff showed drive and inner motivation to help students to succeed, thus demonstrating a strong informal quality culture within the institution. Both faculty and professional staff also expressed satisfaction with the opportunities for professional development. However, the review team considered that this should be more formalised and **it recommends**

that DBS strengthen staff development by ensuring that the more informal aspects of quality culture are embedded in procedures and supported with relevant data to monitor their effectiveness. This would strengthen DBS's evidence-based approach to supporting quality assurance.

Additionally, DBS would benefit from more systematic and data-driven monitoring and follow-up on failures and gaps. Examples of these have included delayed results and slow feedback following examinations and assessments, and complaints in relation to lectures. Both students and lecturers acknowledged that certain breaches of DBS standards have not been identified and addressed, and therefore are not solved as quickly as expected. DBS should routinely use data available in the LMS as a 'warning system' to alert relevant people when a non-conformance occurs (See further discussion under Objective 3).

Programme Development, Approval, and Submission for Validation

DBS has a large portfolio of programmes that have been the subjects of a rigorous process comprising seven stages whereby programme development is mapped from initiation to implementation stages. The initial stages focus on the development and review of potential new programmes and include external reviews undertaken by the institution using mock panels to ensure they meet academic, industry and regulatory standards before being submitted to QQI for validation (ISER, p. 33). Internal review includes assessments by the Academic Programmes Committee (APC) and the Board of Studies, followed by external reviews that involve independent experts in the discipline area. The involvement of stakeholders, including students, faculty, and industry partners, in the programme development process help to ensure that programmes are aligned with market needs and student expectations. The feedback from stakeholders is systematically gathered and incorporated into the programme design and development process.

The Quality Assurance Enhancement and Sustainability Committee (QAESC) plays a crucial

role in monitoring and reviewing the programme development process and ensures that all programmes meet the institution's quality standards and strategic objectives. The Committee is aided by the procedures and guidelines documented in the QAH, which are regularly updated to reflect best practice as well as statutory and regulatory requirements.

The review team would especially commend the comprehensive validation process in DBS that includes both internal and external panels. Another commendable element is the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders who are encouraged to engage fully in the programme development and decision-making processes thus fostering greater transparency and inclusiveness (See further discussion under Objective 3). This ensures that programmes are aligned appropriately with the needs and demands of industry. Regular reviews and updates of the programme development procedures indicate a commitment to continuous improvement and adherence to best practice.

However, the review team noted that staff involved in programme development would benefit from more regular training opportunities to ensure that programmes were consistent with best practice, met statutory and regulatory requirements as well as current industry standards and expectations. Examples of previous challenges with regulatory bodies were shared with the review team and it was acknowledged that more structured mechanisms to ensure timely and systematic feedback from all stakeholders would ensure that DBS is better equipped to address any potential issues as they arise. It was also suggested that DBS consider how technology platforms could better support and streamline the feedback emerging from the review processes to ensure that all inputs are efficiently gathered, analysed, and integrated into the programme development process. Therefore, **the review team recommends that DBS continues to enhance its decision-making criteria by establishing appropriate mechanisms for training stakeholders involved in one or all stages of programme development.**

Access, Transfer, and Progression (ATP)

Inclusive access policies at DBS promote diversity and ensure fair admission processes. Pathways include standard entry, non-standard entry, CAO applications, direct applications, and mature applications, ensuring opportunities for a wide range of applicants. During the MRV, the review team heard that students applying through the non-standard entry route typically access information on the DBS website. This information includes entry requirements, credits, modules, fees, delivery modes. These applicants are subject to rigorous assessment by admissions staff and their applications are then referred to the Admissions QA Officer to confirm their eligibility. In circumstances where these students are not eligible to apply for certain programmes, they are offered alternatives. Revised English language requirements, completed recently by the Admissions Committee, ensure that students can participate fully in the learning environment. The review team heard that applicants may be interviewed, and additional procedures may be employed.

Governance and Oversight Processes for Learner Assessment and Results Data

DBS places great importance on the integrity of student assessment and the accuracy of results data. Comprehensive governance and oversight processes ensure that assessments are fair, transparent, and aligned with learning outcomes. Regular audits and reviews of assessment processes are conducted to maintain high standards of academic integrity and reliability of results data, ensuring accurate and fair assessments.

Student assessment processes include internal and external examination boards, ensuring transparency and fairness. External examiners provide feedback, and results are ratified by the Academic Board. DBS employs advanced information systems, including a student information system (SIS) and customer relationship management (CRM) system, to manage and safeguard student data. Regular reviews and updates ensure data integrity and security.

Public Information and Communications

DBS ensures clear and transparent communication

with stakeholders through various channels. Public information, including policies and procedures, is made accessible to ensure stakeholders are well-informed. DBS uses external examiners to quality assure its assessment standards and ensure transparency in the assessment process. This helps maintain fairness and consistency.

DBS holds regular meetings with various stakeholders, including faculty, students, and external partners, to discuss updates, gather feedback, and make decisions. The Student Union is actively involved in governance and decision-making processes, providing a platform for students to voice their concerns and feedback. DBS uses Moodle VLE and other digital tools to facilitate communication and information sharing. Course materials, announcements, and feedback are regularly posted on these platforms, making it easier for students and staff to stay informed. Regular emails and newsletters are sent to students and staff to keep them updated on important announcements, events, and changes in policies. The QAH is accessible to all stakeholders, ensuring that everyone is informed about the standards and processes in place at DBS.

DBS has established several effective practices to ensure clear and transparent communication with stakeholders. However, there is room for improving and enhancing communications and actions that could be considered include: (i) the implementation of more structured mechanisms for gathering and addressing feedback from all stakeholders; (ii) the introduction of appropriate timeframes to not only gather feedback but communicate the actions to be taken in response to the findings; (iii) increased transparency in decision-making processes and criteria used by various committees through publication of minutes from meetings and summaries of key decisions where appropriate; (iv) the introduction of a centralised communication platform where all important announcements, documents, and updates are posted; (v) the use of real-time communication tools, such as chatbots or live chat features, to provide immediate responses to common queries and issues raised by students and staff. **The review team recommends that DBS review its current communication strategies to improve feedback mechanisms, increase**

transparency in decision-making, improve ICT capabilities to enhance communication, where appropriate, and provide regular training to staff and students.

Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

DBS collaborates with various educational and professional bodies to enhance programme offerings and ensure they meet industry standards. This includes partnerships for programme delivery and professional accreditation. DBS collaborates with professional bodies such as ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants), IAHIP (Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy), and PSI (Psychological Society of Ireland) to ensure that its programmes are accredited and meet industry standards. These partnerships provide external accreditation and enhance the credibility of DBS's programmes. Additionally, DBS engages with industry advisory boards for each discipline area. These boards consist of industry professionals who provide insights and recommendations to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and up to date with industry trends (See further discussion under Objective 3).

DBS also has partnerships with educational institutions across the globe. These collaborations involve student and faculty mobility, joint research projects and transnational programmes. DBS collaborates with international institutions to map and recognise prior learning, facilitating student transfers and ensuring that students' previous academic achievements are acknowledged and credited appropriately.

Regular engagement with industry advisory boards and professional and regulatory bodies ensures that the curriculum is aligned with industry needs and standards. This engagement includes regular meetings, feedback sessions, and collaborative projects. The involvement of external examiners from professional bodies and other educational institutions helps maintain high standards of

assessment and ensures impartiality and fairness in the evaluation process.

Work experience, placements and relations to the industry can especially be helpful for students to get their first job in Ireland. The review team observed that for some students, especially those from different cultural backgrounds, getting a job on course completion can be challenging. Implementing digital credentials and badges, to recognise students' achievements and skills, in collaboration with professional bodies, can enhance students' employability and provide them with a competitive edge in the job market. **The review team recommends that DBS continue to build strong partnerships with industry to increase opportunities for internships and placements for students, especially for international students.**

Research, Enterprise, and Innovation

Research, innovation, and enterprise is supported through dedicated policies and initiatives. These efforts are aimed at fostering a research culture and encouraging innovation among faculty and students. The Applied Research and Practice Committee oversees research activities, ensuring that they align with the institution's strategic goals and ethical standards. This Committee provides guidance and support to researchers throughout the research process. DBS supports research, enterprise and innovation in several different ways. The institution offers internal funding and supports applications for external research grants to encourage faculty and student to engage in and undertake research projects. Financial support helps to advance research initiatives and foster a research culture within the institution. **The review team recommends that DBS continue to build research capacity and further encourages faculty and students to publish their research findings in reputable journals and conferences.** There are monetary incentives and support for publishing, which motivates researchers to contribute to their fields (See further discussion under Objective 2).

OBJECTIVE 2 – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

DBS delivers a range of framework and non-framework programmes across five discipline areas as follows:

- Accounting and Finance
- Arts and Study Abroad
- Business, Marketing and Law
- Computing
- Human and Social Sciences.

The Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE) drives teaching and learning in DBS and was launched initially in 2020 and reviewed and relaunched as SLATE 2 in 2024. The focus of SLATE 2 is on increasing flexibility and authenticity in the learning environment, having greater integration between all partners pertinent to the education experience (students, faculty and industry) to allow for a holistic student-centred experience.

The goals set out in SLATE 2, and the associated Action Plan are integral to the approach to teaching, learning and assessment in DBS. The Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee has the scope and function of supporting and developing innovative learning and teaching practices, linked to assessment of programme and module outcomes. This action plan is viewed by DBS as a live document and assists them in ensuring accountability. It also allows for monitoring and capturing of continuous improvement activity. For example, the execution of SLATE 2 involves the setting of strategic objectives which include promotion and support for the implementation of current methods of teaching and innovation in pedagogy, learning and assessment across all faculties and departments. SLATE 2 also promotes a culture of continuous professional development (CPD) of faculty in educational, technological and discipline-specific areas. There is monitoring of the quality of the learning experience of students such as those engaged in work-integrated activities.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

DBS is located in the heart of Dublin city centre and has campuses in three locations. Each location provides students with access to learning spaces supported by an integrated Information Technology (IT) infrastructure. There is a student cafeteria, a library, wireless access and IT laboratories. In line with innovations in forms of delivery DBS has invested considerably in the enhancement of learning areas to align with its teaching modes of live classroom, live online, hyflex and asynchronous delivery modes. DBS provides induction for new students and faculty which ranges from access to timetables, the library and assessments. A recorded learning step-by-step guide is also provided which is available on Moodle VLE. Teaching sessions are recorded and made available to students.

Standards are met in terms of online accessibility. Students are provided with a single login and one username and password. There are multiple labs around the college where students can use any college device to access and connect to DBS. The IT Department works closely with Kaplan and therefore has access to ONETRUST which ensures adherence to compliance and data protection regulations. DBS follows a documented data retention policy (GDPR) with all data retained only as long as necessary. There are comprehensive policies covering GDPR in place. The review team heard that the IT system provides 'early alert' reports about student library usage and a track is kept of the circulation of books, student footfall and their engagement with various types of resources. This assists with supporting students on their academic journey. However, staff reported that the management of data from the student management system has been complex while DBS is adapting a US-based system. It was voiced that a new data strategy is required but consistent oversight by Kaplan is of enormous benefit.

The enhancement of the learning environment is increasingly informed by research activities in applied research. A research grant is available for all staff, both part- and full-time, who wish to apply, which entails 37.5 hours of their teaching contracts. The DBS Applied Research and Practice Committee, in meeting with the review team,

referred to socialising their research, while faculty are not paid for their research but are still research active. Typically, senior lecturers conduct 400 hours teaching (out of 500) as part of their role, allowing some time for research. In terms of innovation, entrepreneurship and community projects, research is applied to teaching and informs module development and assessment. A research journal is in place, the DBS Applied Research and Practice Journal, which is peer reviewed. The library staff monitors support for research and is in contact with research active staff. An open access repository is available. **The review team commends DBS's encouragement of both faculty and students to take an active part in applied research. This encourages faculty to be alert to current research developments in the discipline fields in which they teach, and ensures students have the appropriate knowledge and skills.**

In addition to supporting faculty, DBS supports student research. Assistance is available for postgraduate students who wish to submit their research to the Applied Research and Practice Journal. There is a prize of €250 for the best student submission. Students are also encouraged to create a conference poster to exhibit at the DBS research conference. While this is commendable, during the MRV the review team heard that a reputational risk arising from insufficient ethical oversight of research proposals had been identified. The identification of this risk led to the instigation of a filter committee, and the reconstitution of an effective oversight committee was due at the end of 2023. The ISER refers to a seminar that prepares students for placement during which ethical approval for the proposed research with the research placement provider, along with feedback is provided prior to commencement of the research placement. However, during the MRV, the review team did not receive sufficient clarity on these processes.

The review team recommends that DBS should review and update the formalised guidance provided to students on applications for ethical approval for placements and on the role of the placement coordinator.

Postgraduate students who met with the review team stated that they needed more help with research methods and design and claimed that information on their dissertation is required earlier in the year. However, they praised library staff who make themselves available for one-to-one sessions to bridge this gap.

According to DBS, modes of delivery are determined by the needs of students and groups. However, the review team were unable to establish with sufficient clarity how modes of delivery and pedagogical methods are evaluated to meet the needs of students. Students increasingly require more flexibility in delivery, and this should be balanced with the optimum pedagogical approaches. Parity of experience for part-time, full-time, international and transnational students must be ensured and kept under review by DBS as it moves into its next phase of development. DBS is advised that when considering this area it is informed by recommendations made under Objective 1, earlier in the report.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

The goals set out in SLATE 2, and the associated Action Plan are integral to the approach to assessment in DBS. The key objective to *“Provide a variety of suitable assessment and feedback methods that are transparent, authentic and developmental”* arose from the Principles of Assessment set out in the QAH.

All assessments are managed through the institution's secure systems. Each iteration of a module has its own Moodle VLE page. All Moodle VLE pages include lecturer contact details; a module descriptor; assessment brief comprising a description of the assessments, accompanying marking scheme and deadlines; lecture notes; lecture recordings; Continuous Assessment (CA) submission links and links to the online examination platform, Mercer Mettl. Moodle VLE is protected using two-factor authentication for staff. Students can only access Moodle if they have a valid Active Directory account and will only have access to their relevant pages. The same applies to staff.

A number of approaches to quality assurance assessments was evident, including module descriptors, module guides, assessment schedules, samples of formal assessments, internal and external moderation. Feedback received from external examiners and from other stakeholders informs reviews of module descriptors and rubrics. This feedback also assists in mitigating risks of artificial intelligence (AI) and supports Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The Board of Studies plays an important oversight role and operationally programme managers and faculty have significant responsibility to assure quality of assessments.

DBS evaluates modes of delivery and pedagogical methods to ensure that they meet the needs of students. The aim is to increase flexibility of delivery in all programmes through programme review and development. This will involve the design of more flexible programmes that will facilitate students to devise personalised learning paths. The review team finds it appropriate that DBS involves students more in assessment planning processes as they develop and design more flexible programme paths.

Since 2019, when DBS was approved for blended delivery by QQI, modes of learning and teaching have undergone considerable change from 100% on-campus delivery to blended provision, which embraces on-site classroom delivery, online synchronous delivery, Hyflex delivery with students both in the classroom and online, and online asynchronous delivery. DBS stated that a review will be undertaken of the capacity to deliver programmes and services against QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes.

DBS noted increases in academic impropriety and associated commentary on assessment strategies overall with the arrival of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). To counter this, DBS reports the promotion of constant communication through educational campaigns to enable understanding of policies on the appropriate use of GenAI. Throughout the MRV the review team heard many references to discussions amongst staff in relation to GenAI and the challenge to support

and maintain understandings of academic integrity. When academic impropriety occurs it is reported, and individual investigations take place to confirm or deny intent. Clear communication was noted as central to dealing with academic impropriety. However, staff report that given new developments in GenAI, it can feel as though processes to deal with academic impropriety have taken a step backwards. To assist with this, DBS Student Services ran sessions in 2024 to tackle instances of academic impropriety and followed with written and email communication to all. Students reported the receipt of many emails on academic impropriety and that faculty can tell when GenAI such as ChatGPT has been used. During the MRV the review team heard that these actions, organised by the SU Education Team, with collaboration with the relevant areas of the institution such as exams, have already shown positive early results.

There is still evidence of the impact of COVID restrictions on assessment methods, such as the move to online examinations and favouring continuous assessment, but these are being reconsidered with the arrival of GenAI. There is a clear commitment by DBS to ensure the best approach to mitigate against academic impropriety during assessment. Some courses, specifically those with professional body exemptions such as Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA) accredited courses are required to be examined in the traditional, closed-book format and this is adhered to by DBS. A number of other processes exist to mitigate this risk and to inhibit improper use of GenAI, such as an adapted examinations process to avoid students inadvertently plagiarising and vivas to verify student knowledge. Additionally, during the MRV, the review team heard of innovative practices using AI, for example its use during assessment to engage students in the critique of AI production. Such practices appeared to have positive impacts.

DBS is also planning further changes in light of GenAI influences. Data on student engagement with DBS learning platforms and academic supports will help in this effort. In this regard **the review team recommends that DBS continue to monitor the effective use of GenAI in assessment**

strategies and provide formalised guidance on GenAI to staff and students with explanations of acceptable and unacceptable uses. The review team also noted that not all cases of academic impropriety related to the use of GenAI and advises DBS to consider the impact of academic impoverishment (Eaton, 2022) on breaches of academic propriety by students. Following meetings with students the review team concluded that students may benefit from more guidance on academic writing. This is discussed further under Objective 3.

During the MRV, both undergraduate and postgraduate students raised issues on the timeliness of receipt of results and receipt of feedback. The review team concluded that there appears to be a variance in how processes are applied across DBS. Issues such as some student submissions not receiving a grade on time was attributed to human error or where papers were not submitted to examination boards on time. Historically there have been approximately 450 cases per academic year, however in 2022/23 this number surpassed 1000. This issue requires immediate action by DBS, to ensure faculty can account for every submission and not adversely impact student experiences and their ability to progress through their course.

Contradictory information around assessment feedback given to students was shared during the MRV. However, many students expressed dissatisfaction with the feedback process, stating it is difficult to receive feedback from lecturers even when correct channels are explored. During the MRV, the review team heard that even after the release of grades, feedback was not received by some students. They regretted the loss of feedback but were told this was due to updates to Moodle VLE.

The review team asked management and staff about delays in the release of grades and feedback and received a number of explanations for these errors, including staff response that delays were due to part-time faculty workloads rather than full-time faculty. They referred to the need for auditing, risk mitigation and establishing the reasons for the existence of these issues. Moreover, there was a

need for training, motivation and coaching and an understanding of the feedback system. A need for improvement in these areas was recognised by Management and additional faculty has been recruited to help with feedback and grading for assessment. During the MRV, the RT heard some suggestions to address feedback and grading issues such as an update to Moodle VLE to include functionality to allow the lecturer to see if all students are graded and have been given feedback. Under areas for improvement in the ISER, it is acknowledged that there is a need to develop and implement marking rubrics to support timely and constructive feedback to students. Additionally, that there is need for a review of IT systems to facilitate optimisation of the workflow for assessment processing to support the quality assurance function. DBS is revising its assessment framework to enable a consistent application of assessment principles and practices under the auspices of the Academic Support Community (ASC). The framework aims to support the development of critical, research-led and creative competencies. Nevertheless, the review team identified inconsistencies in assessment systems across DBS.

The review team concluded that clear policy and guidelines for lecturers when students request feedback on assessments were not evident. Such clarity would eliminate the variance that exists across DBS and would ensure student satisfaction and enhance their ability to improve on their next assessment. The review team recognises that DBS has policies and procedures in place to support students in the receipt of feedback, however it was noted that these processes are not explicitly monitored or enforced. DBS acknowledged that actions resulting from staff and student feedback can lack transparency.

Following the last major review and revalidation cycle, recommendations were submitted to the Academic Board so that that assessment is equitable, rationalised, actively curated and holistically scheduled by the Programme Team to constructively assess programme and module learning outcomes and ensure that student workload is well managed. Despite this, students stated that the communication of assessment

deadlines and dates could be better, to allow them to plan their academic work. The review team heard suggestions of a consolidated assessment schedule to help students plan assessment work. DBS acknowledges that there are inconsistencies in this area.

The review team recommends that DBS ensures that all policies and procedures relating to assessment are: (i) consistent and evident in practice across the institution and (ii) communicated to and easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders.

Future assessment policies should be mindful of assessment for and of learning. In developing such future consistency DBS should consider some of the following actions: (1) a standardised timeline for assessment activities as a whole, (2) standardised assessment briefs to include marking metrics, (3) consistency in type and quality of feedback on assessments by lecturers (4) consolidated assessment plans allowing for student input, (5) earlier information on dissertation requirements, (6) a mandatory development and application of grading systems to ensure regularity of grading across DBS (Feedback on assessment is vitally important for student learning.), (7) greater

involvement of students in assessment planning processes as they tend to develop and design more flexible programme paths, (8) development of consolidated assessment schedules to allow students to plan assessment work. This work would help address areas identified to the review team during the MRV.

In relation to monitoring the quality of the learning experience the review team noted the inconsistent communication of quality enhancement initiatives through the governance structures. The continual occurrence of day-to-day issues with other committees, offices, support services, and stakeholders as they connect to learning, teaching and assessment requires adroit response and action. Recording and reporting actions taken requires improvements in systemisation and formalisation. A more structured and systematic approach in this area would in turn lead to the development of more structured approaches to the early resolution of student feedback and could provide DBS with a dataset for analysis and review. The interviews revealed some frustrations at the slow actions in response to informal complaints. The review team advises DBS to prioritise this area to make it easier for students engage in these processes and to consider introducing a log of informal complaints to track progress.



It is worth noting, however, that there was also evidence of good practice in this area. During the MRV the review team noted a process where feedback was acted upon when staff referenced the work of Programme Boards. These Boards analyse data for their specific areas which can result in interventions and changes. For example, the Psychology Programme Board developed a focus group to look at assessments for first-year students which results in changes and improvements being made. More consistent faculty engagement at Programme Board level could be further supported by DBS to allow for continuous improvement year on year.

Work-integrated Learning

A primary focus for DBS is having students work-ready and skilled for the workplace. At the MRV, the review team heard that DBS has made considerable effort to achieve this objective through teaching, learning and assessment. Where a programme includes a placement element, each student receives a Placement Handbook. They receive formative feedback on a weekly basis as their hours for placement are recorded on a weekly basis. These reports go to their line managers and these records also inform programme development. In addition, DBS has appointed a number of Work Placement Coordinators to cover Business, Marketing and Law, Accounting and Psychology. This role is instrumental in enhancing the practical learning experience of students and aligning it with the academic objectives of their master's level programmes.

During the MRV, the review team spoke to representatives of professional bodies and DBS staff. The team noted that the institution had recently enhanced its approach to risk management following an issue that had emerged with one of its programmes requiring professional recognition. As a result, relationships with professional bodies were now overseen and centralised through the Registrar's Office. This ensures that programmes that require professional recognition in the areas such as Psychology, Counselling, and Psychotherapy are now included in the DBS risk register. This early warning system flags any potential issues that may emerge with these programmes and enables the institution to

take the corrective actions needed to mitigate any escalation of risk and thus protect the student.

STUDENT SUPPORT

The student support staff who met with the review team embodied a passion for student wellbeing and success. All activities and efforts named by these staff were corroborated by the student voice. The review team was impressed with the comprehensive structure of supports throughout the student journey, beginning on students' first day on campus, to ensure a smooth initiation into student life. The approach of the Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU) to monitoring student engagement at the initial stages of the academic year is a great example of DBS's commitment to each individual student and the way SESU handles its interventions with identified students highlights the respect and empathy of staff for students. The openness of staff responses to the review team was refreshing and collaborative in relation to teaching, learning, assessment and student support.

Following discussion with faculty and research staff **the review team commends DBS on its approach to creating a sense of community for all students, and a culture of collegiality wherein staff and students are responsive to each other and the staff in particular take pride in advancing a student-centred ethos within the institution.**

The Academic Support Community (ASC) is an impressive innovation. The overall aim of the ASC is to provide support for the student journey across the academic year including initiatives arising from the consolidation of staff-led supports for students, bringing together staff-led support through the library, through the Student Experience (SE) Team and targeted support for at-risk students by the Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU). The establishment of the ASC has also led to the implementation or planning of various good practices and initiatives that aim to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, student support, and academic governance. These supports include the provision of peer mentoring to students, where senior students help new students to adjust to the academic environment and offer academic and personal guidance. The ASC has used podcasting

for communication and dissemination, whereby staff members record and share audio messages on various topics, such as programme updates, good practice, and student success stories.

The review team commends the dedication and enthusiasm of the ASC staff and the comprehensive structure of supports throughout the student journey, including library support for both students and teachers.

DBS acknowledge that students may require strong academic supports and note in the ISER (p. 110) that “Many [...] first-year undergraduate students come to DBS [...] with increased academic and learning requirements. The increase in the number of international students means a larger volume of students at DBS have come from a different learning culture, so supports around academic elements such as academic writing, research and critical thinking are more important”. These student groups may require greater forms of academic support. The SESU provides targeted support for at-risk students. Interventions to improve academic performance, including My First Assignment, Formative and Summative Feedback library pages, as well as communication on study skills, time management and a dedicated Moodle VLE page on examination preparation were clearly communicated at the MRV. The students who met with the review team praised the supports available to them and mentioned the approachability of staff as a particular commendation. To the review team it was especially evident that DBS goes to great lengths to include students who would otherwise struggle. Amongst the students who met with the review team were some who shared stories on how they, with the support of DBS, had overcome their physical, mental or social challenges and with pride and openness shared their situation. International students highly commended the willingness to help that seems to be a part of the DBS culture amongst both faculty and staff. Quotes like, “*However I speak, they (lecturers) understood me so clearly*”, and “*We are encouraged to reach out if there is even the slightest thing we don’t understand*” illustrates that international students are pleased with the support available.

The review team also noted during the MRV that students appreciated the approachability and availability of library staff for a range of academic supports. The Information Literacy and Research Department (IL&R) team, through academic writing lectures, facilitate the Postgraduate Academic Writing Skills (PAWS) module each term. The IL&R team teaches the PAWS module every term for two weeks on the topics of referencing, plagiarism and finding academic resources that are provided by the library and academic hub. However, library staff report a decrease in the use of library facilities since COVID and those supporting students more generally reported the poor engagement of some students in seeking academic support. It is noteworthy that many students stated that faculty provide a great first point of contact for assistance with academic challenges. On the other side, some of the international students revealed that even with good systems and willingness to help, DBS still have some “*blind zones*”. During the MRV it emerged that international students are especially vulnerable on arrival and in the transition between being a student and employee. At these times there is a reliance on students of shared culture for inclusion and support.

In discussions with the ASC the review team gleaned that there was a tendency among international students not to avail of academic supports or to respond to outreach efforts from the ASC. Various cultural reasons for this were discussed with ASC staff and it emerged that avoidance might be due to the voluntary nature of academic support. In this regard DBS should consider a number of methods and approaches for inducting and supporting students transitioning to higher education. During the MRV, the review team heard suggestions such as the development of a module focused on study skills for higher education. In its ISER, DBS stated that it wishes to introduce a student-friendly Student Contact and Communications Management (SCCM) to give students a single channel through which to seek and receive support and advice. This innovation might overcome student reluctance to engage with the excellent academic support on offer. The review team considered that the poor engagement of some students in DBS, even with academic supports, may be influenced by ‘academic

impoverishment' (Eaton, 2022²) whereby a student's previous educational experience may not adequately prepare them for further study or work, particularly abroad. This lack of preparation is not due to the student's own efforts, but rather to the quality of their previous educational experiences in academic skills.

The review team encourages DBS to explore further and action its proposed installation of a new SCCM as this would provide a single channel for students through which to seek and receive support and advice. For example, in the case of international students, a focus on accommodation support, career support and information on next steps regarding visas is a priority and would assist them at all stages of their student journey.

The review team also heard that there are concerns amongst some international students in relation to the start of their student journey. It is acknowledged that the time between the students' arrival in Dublin and their registration as students can be seen as outside DBS control and responsibility. Having said that, this point is perceived as a critical stage in the student journey in DBS and was repeatedly mentioned by international students. The same could also be said about the period between when students end their studies and start to pursue a career. In this respect, **the review team recommends that DBS address the gaps in supports provided to students to fully align with the most critical stages of the student journey.** By taking this action and embedding student supports in the overall learning experience, DBS should also address some of the actions set out in the ISER.

COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The access for students to counselling is a noteworthy support, and the training of dozens of support staff to handle sensitive situations further reinforces the institution's commitment to mental health. International students spoke of their sense of community support and praised the Student

Union for being a key facilitator of this. In terms of mental health and wellbeing, DBS provides formal and informal supports, including the nightline chat partnership, events and campaigns based on common themes and mental health issues. DBS has an arrangement with My Mind – Centre for Mental Wellbeing to provide confidential counselling and students can access external counselling services in 16 different languages, either online or in person, within 72 hours of referral. The review team was impressed by the extent of mental health support but suggested that an increased emphasis on physical health and wellbeing would be beneficial to the student community.

A mental health charter was created, citing welfare actions and scenarios for staff reference together with red alert contacts. When faculty identify a suicide risk, this concern is escalated to the Head of Student Experience. Staff reported that if a crisis occurs within the 72-hour gap in waiting for counselling there is a critical incident policy in place. Thirty members of staff are trained in first aid for suicide (SafeTALK), and in First Assist (Suicide First Aid). However, it was noted that DBS has no 'duty to warn' policy regarding next of kin in the case of a mental health crisis and the institution is advised to incorporate this into the mental health charter.

Led by a member of faculty and supported by ASC, DBS has also initiated the Sunflower Disability Initiative, whereby staff and students work together to promote inclusion and accessibility for students with disabilities. The ASC has organised 'Tea and Talk' sessions, where staff and students meet informally to discuss various issues and concerns and offer support and advice. The review team spoke to some students who are neuro-diverse, who praised the institution for its support and spoke of their inclusion in student life and their pride as students of DBS.

In the ISER (p. 111), DBS identified as an area for improvement "*embedding student supports more effectively into the overall learning experience,*

2 Eaton, S. E. (2022). An overview of the international landscape: New challenges around academic impoverishment and naivety, and how we respond. Paper presented at the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) Academic Quality Enhancement Forum (HAQEF) Professional Development Series, Ireland.

communicating comprehensively with faculty to enable this". While the ASC is working to bridge this improvement, the review team noted, and this point was acknowledged by DBS, that the aims of the ASC are being obstructed by issues that conflict with the aims of supporting the student journey throughout the academic year. **The review team recommends that DBS continue to engage with both students and faculty staff to ensure that student supports are embedded more effectively into the overall learning experience.**

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

International students identified challenges in finding employment, despite the possession of relevant practical work experience and qualifications. They acknowledged the help of the careers support with CV writing and interview preparation but expressed significant frustration at their inability to secure employment. During the application process, they understood that work placements and internships would be available to them. They expressed a need for additional help with finding employment because they are overseas applicants. They perceived that the sales and academic management functions of DBS require alignment so that they could form clear expectations of what engaging in study in Ireland could provide in terms of future employment. The DBS career staff highlighted the low attendance by international students at career workshops and stated that despite strenuous outreach efforts there was no improvement in engagement. The SLT emphasised its determination to deliver skills and knowledge to students for their relevant industries including reviewing and enhancing programmes, assessments and tools used. It was stated that DBS is producing work-ready individuals with future employment guidance being integrated informally and formally into programmes.

ACCOMMODATION

International postgraduate students spoke about the scarcity of accommodation in Dublin and how they were vulnerable to scamming and overcrowding. One student described his negative experience of arrival in Dublin to find that his accommodation had fallen through and being unable to contact DBS. During the MRV, DBS described its role in making rooms available

on a temporary basis in cases of students who are experiencing longer struggles with finding accommodation. DBS also works actively with a host family arrangement (ISA) which provides an effective safety net for students. DBS also provides study rooms for students who share accommodation. The review team concurred that DBS needs to work towards a more transparent communication system about accommodation with students, and international students in particular, prior to enrolment. This suggestion should be considered alongside recommendation 10.

OBJECTIVE 3 – SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This section evaluates the arrangements that DBS has in place for the monitoring, review, evaluation and reporting on its education, training and related services, including third-party arrangements. It also includes an evaluation of the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning the arrangements. In this section the review team reflects on how these processes are used to complete the quality cycle by identifying effective practice and areas for improvement.

DBS has an effective quality assurance and enhancement system, including comprehensive policies and procedures, in place. These mechanisms support self-evaluation, monitoring and review. They are outlined in the QAH and underpinned by governance structures. The review team found evidence of these at an institutional and programmatic level and they were articulated in the ISER and Provider Profile. The review team notes the publication of a comprehensive ISER and the development of AQRs. The review team found the ISER to be a comprehensive document developed through systematic engagement with faculty and staff.

Quality assurance planning is a key process for achieving quality objectives and is incorporated into the DBS's Academic Plan which was introduced in 2021. The Academic Plan is integrated with DBS's Strategic Plan and sets out actions and timelines in the following categories:

student, academic, research, regulatory, central service.

There are well established processes and practices of self-evaluation, monitoring and review within DBS which are captured in DBS's Quality Framework that incorporates policy and procedures, internal monitoring (including annual institutional reporting), internal periodic review and institutional review to drive an institutional cycle of continuous improvement (DBS QAH). The Quality Framework is complemented by the DBS Schema which depict the relationship between the DBS quality assurance function and its governance structures. Self-evaluation, monitoring and review activities, which are evidence-based, enable DBS to identify areas for improvement and contribute to the development and maintenance of a quality enhancement culture. The review team also notes the various processes used to self-evaluate, monitor and review such as annual quality reports, academic plans, surveys, audits and reviews. The use of governance structures such as the newly formed 'Quality Enhancement and Risk Management sub-committee' of the Academic Board point to an appetite for quality self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

While there is evidence in the ISER, which was also confirmed during the MRV, that monitoring and review activities contribute to the identification of areas for improvement, through information and data analysis, it was not evident that systematic completion of the quality cycle for all monitoring and review activities is taking place. To assist DBS more fully implement a systematic quality cycle for each of the identified quality assurance activities the review team makes a recommendation later in the report.

SELF-EVALUATION

DBS routinely evaluates programmes, delivery methodologies and procedures to ensure that their offering remains current and relevant. This is conducted internally by gathering and analysing data and feedback and making decisions in appropriate governance structures. DBS also engages externally with a number of partners including collaborative partners and PSRBs.

Extensive internal reporting of quality assurance and enhancement activities takes place at DBS and through the DBS Schema. DBS also submits the AQR to QQI as part of its external annual institutional reporting obligations (i.e., annual monitoring activities). The AQR forms part of QQI quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with higher education institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements. Part A of the AQR should provide a succinct outline of the institution's internal quality assurance (IQA) system and include details of the governance and management structures and supports in place, and all policies and procedures underpinning quality across the organisation. Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. This is a tool enabling the institution to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities. The review team notes that DBS has submitted four reports in the years 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023 (as evidenced in the ISER).

The review team commends the ongoing self-reflection, articulated in the ISER, on the methodology adopted by DBS in relation to the compilation of the QQI AQR which involves a collaborative and inclusive approach by all DBS staff. This aligns with a general commendation relating to DBS's commitment to continuous improvement and to developing a quality culture across the entire organisation.

MONITORING

The review team heard that a number of information and data sources are used as part of DBS's monitoring processes including

Student surveys;

- Employee engagement surveys;
- Staff and student focus groups;
- Annual retention reports;
- Department audits;

Other data generated from a variety of sources e.g. Moodle VLE Audit reports; library services and student support services.

DBS has policies and procedures relating to student conduct, appeals and complaints (evidenced in the DBS QAH, Part B, Section 3, specifically a learner code of conduct policy, disciplinary policy, academic integrity policy, complaints policy and an appeals policy). Complaints and student disciplinarys are monitored on an annual basis.

The review team found that the efforts of DBS to monitor activities of academic and non-academic student misconduct were less systematic. **The review team recommends that DBS establish an appropriate system for managing and reporting academic misconduct across the institution that is consistent with national and international best practice.** DBS is advised to ensure that these are aligned with national and international best practice by reviewing the resources provided by the QQI National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), particularly the "*Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management*" (See further discussion under Objective 2).

The review team also recommends that DBS further review its Complaints Policy with the aim of removing redundant and/or duplicated material as appropriate. For example, the Complaints Policy currently deals with issues relating to learning activities, academic or support services and facilities, difficulties with staff and enrolled students. Quality assurance monitoring

activities gather feedback on the student experience including learning activities, academic or support services and facilities. The logging of informal complaints was noted earlier in the report (Objective 2). It is evident that work needs to be done in this area and DBS should be cognisant of this when addressing this recommendation.

REVIEW

DBS presented many examples of engagement in review processes at the MRV and also documented them in the ISER. Some of the tools noted by the review team include:

Academic Plan which is used to set and track goals (and their achievement) for the organisation.

- **Risk Register** which exists at an institutional and departmental level and details a number of risk areas including academic risks.
- **Annual Policy Reviews** place the QAH central to academic delivery.
- **Periodic Reviews** are discussed in more detail in the Programme Monitoring and Review section.
- **Programmatic Review** processes are set out in the QAH which will be discussed in more detail in the Programme Monitoring and Review section.
- **Kaplan Learning Review** is a process required by the DBS parent company Kaplan. It includes data from a variety of sources and is presented to Kaplan by the President and Academic Dean.

DBS completes an annual review of policies contained in the QAH. There is an established process where the Registrar's Office maintains a register of new policies that are required to be developed or updated. These policies are developed in consultation with the relevant boards and committees and are ultimately approved by the Academic Board and the SLT.

DBS has also engaged the services of external reviewers to focus on particular areas to help in making decisions on future directions. For example, in early 2022 [BDO](#) was contracted to review DBS's academic policies and procedures with a view

to identifying gaps which DBS reported as now addressed.

DBS actively engages in a wide variety of review processes and has followed up on the outcomes of those reviews using the organisations governance structures as appropriate to inform decision making and implement enhancements. This included running a simulated internal review process on delegation of authority (DA) to help the institution identify any potential gaps or challenges that would need to be addressed in advance of any formal application to QQI for DA when it becomes available. The review team also noted that DBS was subject to a statutory focused review undertaken by QQI in 2023. The review concentrated on the underpinning quality assurance system in place in the institution for programmes requiring professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) approval, as a result of the withdrawal by DBS of its application to CORU for recognition of its social care programmes. In addition to a QQI focused review, DBS also commissioned an internal report into the cause and consequences of the withdrawal of its application to CORU. An implementation plan was developed in response to the QQI focused review and is considered periodically at meetings of the SLT and Academic Board to ensure progress towards addressing the recommendations.

The review team commends DBS on its approach to developing and supporting a strong culture of self-evaluation, review and monitoring across the institution which includes engagement with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders.

To continue to support this **the review team recommends that DBS further develop its QA system by including specific and measurable quality indicators that are informed by quantitative and qualitative data. This information should be tracked and monitored consistently in line with DBS's strategic priorities and inform both reporting and continuous improvement activities.** This will assure DBS that its QA practice continues to be relevant, accessible and understood by all stakeholders,

as well as benchmarked against international best practice. The review team noted some duplication across processes and encourages DBS to avoid unnecessary complexity in its effort to maintain and improve quality. A clear set of quality indicators will assist DBS in monitoring, reviewing and evaluating quality across its institution. A key aspect of quality provision is having equal, diverse and inclusive delivery and in this regard **the review team recommends also that DBS ensure that its QA processes are mindful and cognisant of its equality, diversity and inclusion policy to ensure continued equitable treatment of students and staff, as well as inclusive learning and working environments.** In this regard it is important that DBS ensure that the student experience for domestic, EU and non-EU students is equitable and supported for all.

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

In accordance with best practice, DBS monitors and periodically reviews its programmes to ensure that they are achieving the objectives set for them and are responding to the needs of students, industry and society. DBS has policies and procedures for the annual monitoring of all programmes which are used to assure the quality of provision and maintain the highest academic standards, as evidenced in the *Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Policy* (DBS QAH Quality Assurance Handbook). Also, DBS's *Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards Policy* (DBS QAH) includes specific arrangements for the monitoring of such provision.

Individual programmes are monitored on an ongoing basis at programme team meetings and by programme boards. Programme team meetings take place every 4 to 6 weeks comprising all faculty (full-time and part-time), programme co-ordinators and faculty managers. Programme boards occur at discipline level i.e. one programme board deals with multiple programmes making up the discipline and operate in accordance with defined terms of reference. Programme boards take place once per semester or three times per academic year and are chaired by the relevant academic director and attended by academic faculty, Programme Co-ordinator and other

representatives as appropriate, as evidenced in the ISER (and associated appendices), and confirmed during the MRV.

Programme board reports are the primary output of the annual programme monitoring activities. They are presented to the Board of Studies, where they are approved and summarised for ratification by the Academic Board. An evidence-based approach to the compilation of programme board reports is clear with a number of data sources/inputs being used to inform the reports including admissions data, student feedback surveys including Moodle VLE surveys, StudentSurvey.ie, Net Promoter Score (NPS), class representative feedback, programme progression/retention statistics, external examiner reports, alumni feedback surveys, industrial liaison and employer feedback, professional body feedback and academic staff feedback. DBS can continue to explore and exploit technology to assist with the analysis and presentation of student feedback to further facilitate the identification of areas for improvement. A systematic student feedback loop closure process should be considered as DBS moves to enhance its feedback processes. Any such process should take account of a recommendation made under Objective 1 in this report relating to feedback and communications.

Annual programme reports, collated from the monitoring activities of programme boards at discipline level, are produced by the academic directors. They are presented to the Board of Studies and at SLT meetings. The information captured in the annual programme reports facilitates the identification of emerging trends/themes which are used subsequently to inform enhancements to programmes and/or modules. Aggregation of external examiner reports, facilitated by the adoption of an online system, has facilitated broader oversight and analysis of the reports. **The review team commends the multi-layered approach to identifying areas for improvement at programme level (programme board reports) which when aggregated (annual programme reports) can effect systematic change under particular themes at discipline level.** However, a variance across the institution was evident to the review team. For example, the

review team noted that the 'Business Marketing Law' exemplars provided did not use the DBS template while the 'Psychology Social Sciences' exemplars provided did (as evidenced in Additional Documents 2 Programme Board Minutes and Reports). **It is recommended that the Academic Board ensure that the Programme Board Reports template is adopted consistently and systematically across all programmes and that actions are followed up on, as appropriate, within an agreed reporting period.** The Academic Board is best placed to address this recommendation as the primary governance structure with academic authority. In doing so the Academic Board will be in a position to ensure that the Programme Board Reports are analysed regularly to identify possible organisation-level areas for improvement, complementing areas identified by individual Programme Boards at the programme and module levels. Specific actions relating to the identified themes could then be implemented systematically across DBS, as deemed appropriate. Furthermore, DBS should attempt to achieve greater alignment between the Programme Board Reports/Annual Programme Reports and the Kaplan Learning review report to avoid un-necessary duplication of effort.

Work-integrated learning activities are monitored as part of programme monitoring by the Placement Co-ordinator (See further discussion under Objective 2). Students are provided with a programme specific Placement Handbook and DBS monitors and supports students as appropriate. The review team also notes the QQI focused review that took place in 2023 and resulted in a number of enhancements to student supports and oversight mechanisms, all of which have enhanced placement monitoring activities (as confirmed during the MRV). The monitoring of programmes also gives due consideration to the requirements of PSRBs.

Programme Amendments

DBS has robust policies and procedures and processes in place for amending programmes post-validation. Programme changes are implemented in accordance with DBS's *Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Policy*, which is informed by the *QQI Policies and Criteria for Validation of Programmes*

of *Education and Training (2017)* as DBS's programmes are QQI-accredited programmes. The review team notes that this may change should DBS be granted delegation of authority (DA) status by QQI. Proposed changes to programmes emerging from Programme Boards, outside of full validation, are referred to the Boards of Studies which are chaired by the Academic Dean.

Periodic Review

Policy and procedures in relation to the periodic review of programmes (Programme Review and Revalidation) are comprehensively documented (as evidenced in the *Programme Review and Revalidation Policy* (DBS QAH). Also, DBS's *Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards Policy* (DBS QAH) includes specific arrangements for the periodic review of collaborative provision programmes. The review team notes the "Partnership Review Report" provided for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance* and *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production* and *Certificate/Higher Certificate Sound Engineering*.

All programmes are periodically reviewed on a five-year cycle where DBS has devolved responsibility for the process of external assessment of its programmes under agreed terms of reference with QQI. For programmes that are innovative or pertain to a rapidly evolving field or industry, DBS undertakes a programme review sooner than the standard five-year interval to maintain the currency and relevance of the programme. The periodic review of programmes also gives due consideration of the requirements of PSRBs.

The review team commends the effective practice of centralising in the Registrar's Office the monitoring/tracking of conditions and/or recommendations that arise from programme validation and revalidation activities. Conditions and/or recommendations are monitored by the Registrar's Office in consultation with the Academic Dean and Academic Directors to ensure compliance at programme level and to ensure that no changes in policy or process, or module changes made through the Board of Studies, are contradictory to any conditions and/or recommendations set. Centralised tracking of

conditions and recommendations allow for the identification of emerging organisational themes recurring across programmes.

The review team noted that DBS does not currently conduct periodic reviews of its non-academic services, i.e., professional support services, but acknowledges that evolutionary enhancements in this area are underway, particularly in the context of DBS aspiring to achieve DA from QQI, when this becomes possible from a legislative perspective. As previously mentioned, **the review team commends DBS's development of SOPs (commenced in 2022 and extended in 2023) for non-academic services including central services such as Finance, Human Resources (HR), Marketing and Information Technology (IT) and the operations of all other departments.** This action was recommended following an independent review of all departments at DBS by the consulting company, [BDO](#). This independent review was commissioned by DBS as part of its preparation and self-evaluation process in advance of an application to QQI for delegation of authority (DA). This self-evaluation was undertaken in March 2021 using QQI (2016) *Procedures and Criteria Relating to Delegation of Authority*. The operational benefits of the SOPs included improved student record management and query resolution, additional resources for training new staff, all contributing to an enhanced student experience. The SOP work undertaken promoted greater cross-functional engagement and heightened recognition of its importance among stakeholders. **The review team recommends that DBS implement a periodic review cycle for professional support services (i.e., non-academic supports).**

OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DBS has third-party arrangements which enable it to enhance its educational offerings, facilitating student mobility and developing a strong international profile. These arrangements take various forms including formalised partnerships and collaborations with other educational institutions, professional bodies, awarding bodies and local industry. These third-party arrangements are designed to enhance the educational experience and provide students with valuable opportunities.

Across a number of publications, DBS clearly sets out the broad range of external partners that they collaborate with, to ensure that DBS students are supported in their learning journey and that their graduates exit with qualifications that are accredited and recognised. In the ISER, Institutional Profile and during the MRV, DBS described the structured process engaged in prior to any formal agreement with a partner. Clear steps are identified starting with the informal discussion stage through to the formal submission of applications and documents to QQI, validation of the programme and an agreed start date for programme delivery. In addition, the QA Handbook outlines the importance for DBS of building and maintaining strong relationships as well as the adoption of best practice in line with Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) and the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

The main types of partnerships are summarised as:

Articulation partners

DBS enters into agreements with partner institutions with similar scale, values and reputation

to allow international students advanced entry to DBS Dublin-based programmes. Formal articulation agreements allow students entry through a recognition of prior learning process which is administered by the Admissions Office.

Transnational and Collaborative Partners

DBS has entered into a number of formal collaborative arrangements with international and domestic partners to provide programmes of education and training that are validated by QQI, (underpinned by DBS's *Collaborative National and Transnational Provision and Joint Awards Policy* (DBS QAH, Part C, Section 3)). The review team found that the early and continued engagement processes were clearly outlined during the MRV by DBS leaders involved in such partnerships. Senior management outlined the importance of due diligence in determining the suitability of any new partner along with continued engagement during delivery of programmes. A due diligence process is undertaken to satisfy DBS that the collaborating provider is a good match in terms of values, mission and scale. Partners also reflected the importance of this as well as the priority given to continued



monitoring and engagement for programme enhancement. The use of the same IT systems, assessment and monitoring processes as well as buddy systems were presented to the review team as mechanisms to sustain continued suitability.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

A number of DBS programmes require accreditation or professional recognition by relevant PSRBs in addition to validation by QQI. DBS also emphasised to the review team during the MRV the importance of building strong relationships with PSRBs in the context of having students ready for the specific needs of the professions they are entering. It was noted that interactions were also enhanced with PSRBs in relation to the approval and validation of programmes. During the MRV visit, strong governance and alignment was evident and articulated by PSRB partners who told the review team that “*it is working on the ground*”. DBS should consider an annual review process of compliance with PSRB accreditation/recognition and continue engagement with PSRBs in preparation for any further regulatory changes that may emerge.

Industry Engagement

In the Institutional Profile DBS sets out its engagement with industry in the context of creating work-ready graduates. There are five Industry Advisory Boards (IAB) across various disciplines. The benefit of these boards was clearly identified by faculty, staff and industry during the MRV. One real benefit identified is the availability of relevant work placements for students and in many cases continued relationships that lead to employment. However, DBS should be cognisant of gaps identified during the MRV and captured as a recommendation under objective 1 in this report.

The review team commends DBS for its standardised process of due diligence, particularly in developing transnational partnerships. DBS practice in engaging with all its partners ensures that the institution is connected well to support student placement, student employment readiness and ongoing programme development and review. In addition, **DBS must**

be commended for its strong governance of the arrangements in place for all types of partnerships across its provision. The continued buddy system and a continued closer alignment of Dublin faculty with partner institutions’ faculty will assist in teaching delivery and assessment of students, and it will also assist in the ongoing development of faculty in both DBS and its partner higher education institutions.

The review team evaluated the arrangements that DBS has in place for the monitoring, review, evaluation and reporting on its education, training and related services. In doing so, it considered effective practice and the areas for improvement that were identified by DBS in the ISER. The review team also identified areas for improvement and detailed these as recommendations.

Overall, the review team found evidence of implementation of effective QA procedures and very real effort in and culture of quality enhancement activity. The review team recognised that the QA procedures are aligned with DBS’s mission, and effective practices of monitoring and reviewing were readily identifiable. A number of commendations were also identified and these centred on clear evidence of evaluation, monitoring and review of the quality assurance system and procedures. The team has also made recommendations to assist DBS in strengthening its evaluation and review processes.

Section 4

Conclusions

Work
Readiness Training



SCAN ME

DBS

Batteries

General Waste

Dry-Mix Recycling



Realise
Ambition

DBS
Dublin
Business
School



Section 4: Conclusions

The review team acknowledges the wholehearted engagement of colleagues at DBS in preparing for and hosting the MRV for the CINNTE review. Hard work, enthusiasm and openness were evident throughout the process. The planning and main review visits were well organised and DBS was responsive to requests for further information and clarifications sought by the review team.

During the MRV the review team found a culture of self-reflection and an appetite for continuous improvement. Strong governance underpins the work at DBS, characterised by a quality culture. DBS is responsive to the needs of students and partners. The student voice appears strong, well supported and heard. The institution is open to monitoring and review, both internally and with external assistance.

The review team evaluated the arrangements that DBS has in place for the monitoring, review, evaluation and reporting on its education, training and related services. In doing so, it reflected on the effective practice in place and considered the areas for improvement identified by DBS in the ISER. The team also identified other areas for enhancement and detailed these in the recommendations.

COMMENDATIONS

The review team makes the following commendations under the following three thematic headings.

The review team commends:

Governance and Quality Management

1. DBS on its approach to creating a sense of community for all students and a culture of collegiality wherein staff and students are responsive to each other and the staff in particular take pride in advancing a student-centred ethos within the institution. (p. 22)

2. The comprehensive validation process in DBS that includes both internal and external panels. Another commendable element is the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders who are encouraged to engage fully in the programme development and decision-making processes thus fostering greater transparency and inclusiveness. (p. 23)

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

3. DBS's encouragement of both faculty and students to take an active part in applied research. This encourages faculty to be alert to current research developments in the discipline fields in which they teach, and it ensures students have the appropriate knowledge and skills. (p. 27)
4. DBS's approach to creating a sense of community for all students and a culture of collegiality wherein staff and students are responsive to each other and the staff in particular take pride in advancing a student-centred ethos within the institution. (p. 31)
5. The dedication and enthusiasm of the ASC staff and the comprehensive structure of supports throughout the student journey, including library support for both students and teachers. (p. 32)

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

6. The ongoing self-reflection, articulated in the ISER, on the methodology adopted by DBS in relation to the compilation of the QQI Annual Quality Report (AQR) which involves a collaborative and inclusive approach by all DBS staff. This aligns with a general commendation relating to DBS's commitment to continuous improvement and to developing a quality culture across the entire organisation. (p. 35)
7. DBS for its approach to developing and supporting a strong culture of self-evaluation, review and monitoring across the institution which includes engagement with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders. (p. 37)

8. DBS's multi-layered approach to identifying areas for improvement at programme level (Programme Board Reports) which when aggregated (Annual Programme Reports) can effect systematic change under particular themes at discipline level. (p. 38)
9. The effective practice of centralising in the Registrar's Office the monitoring/tracking of conditions and/or recommendations that arise from programme validation and revalidation activities. (p. 39)
10. DBS's development of SOPs for non-academic services including central services such as Finance, Human Resources (HR), Marketing and Information Technology (IT) and operations of all other departments. (p. 39)
11. DBS's standardised process of due diligence, particularly in developing transnational partnerships. (p. 41)
12. DBS's strong governance of the arrangements in place for all types of partnerships across its provision. (p. 41)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The review team has identified areas for improvement in an effort to support the vision and mission of DBS as it moves into its next phase of development. These recommendations are intended to support DBS in the growth and enhancement of its QA.

The review team recommends that:

Governance and Management

1. DBS improve its system for internal and external communication and feedback with a particular emphasis on student feedback to ensure a consistent student experience and enhance the learning experience. (p. 22)
2. DBS strengthen staff development by ensuring that the more informal aspects of quality culture are embedded in procedures and supported with relevant data to monitor their effectiveness. (p. 23)
3. DBS continue to enhance its decision-making criteria by establishing appropriate mechanisms for training stakeholders

involved in one or all stages of programme development. (p. 23)

4. DBS review its current communication strategies to improve feedback mechanisms, increase transparency in decision-making, improve ICT capabilities to enhance communication where appropriate, and provide regular training to staff and students. (p. 24)
5. DBS continue to build strong partnerships with industry to increase opportunities for internships and placements for students, especially for international students. (p. 25)
6. DBS continue to build research capacity and further encourages faculty and students to publish their research findings in reputable journals and conferences. (p. 25)

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

7. DBS review and update the formalised guidance provided to students on applications for ethical approval for placements and on the role of the placement coordinator. (p. 27)
8. DBS continue to monitor the effective use of GenAI in assessment strategies and provide formalised guidance on GenAI to staff and students with explanations of acceptable and unacceptable uses. (p. 28)
9. DBS ensure that all policies and procedures relating to assessment are: (i) consistent and evident in practice across the institution and (ii) are communicated to and easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders. (p. 30)
10. DBS address the gaps in supports provided to students to fully align with the most critical stages of the student journey. (p. 33)
11. DBS continue to engage with both students and faculty staff to ensure that student supports are embedded more effectively into the overall learning experience. (p. 34)

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

12. DBS establish a systematic approach for managing and reporting academic misconduct across the institution that is consistent with national and international best practice. (p. 36)
13. DBS further review its Complaints Policy with the aim of removing redundant and/or duplicated material as appropriate. (p. 36)

14. DBS further develop its QA system by including specific and measurable quality indicators that are informed by quantitative and qualitative data. This information should be tracked and monitored consistently in line with DBS's strategic priorities to identify gaps and inform both reporting and continuous improvement activities. (p. 37)
15. DBS ensure that its QA processes are mindful and cognisant of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy to ensure continued equitable treatment of students and staff, as well as inclusive learning and working environments. (p. 37)
16. The Academic Board ensure that the Programme Board Reports template is adopted consistently and systematically across all programmes and that actions are followed up as appropriate within an agreed reporting period. (p. 38)
17. DBS implement a periodic review cycle for professional support services (i.e., non-academic supports). (p. 39)




UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
Dischusses Arbeitstitel zum Othello
Higher Education and Training Award
BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS)
IN
PSYCHOLOGY
AWARDED TO
EVA DOWNEY
GRADUATION NUMBER
1234567890
12 March 2024
Peter Hill
Eva Downey


Section 5

Top 5 Commendations and
Recommendations

DBS
Dubai
Business
School



SPRING
GRADUATION
2024



Top 5 Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATIONS

The review team commends:

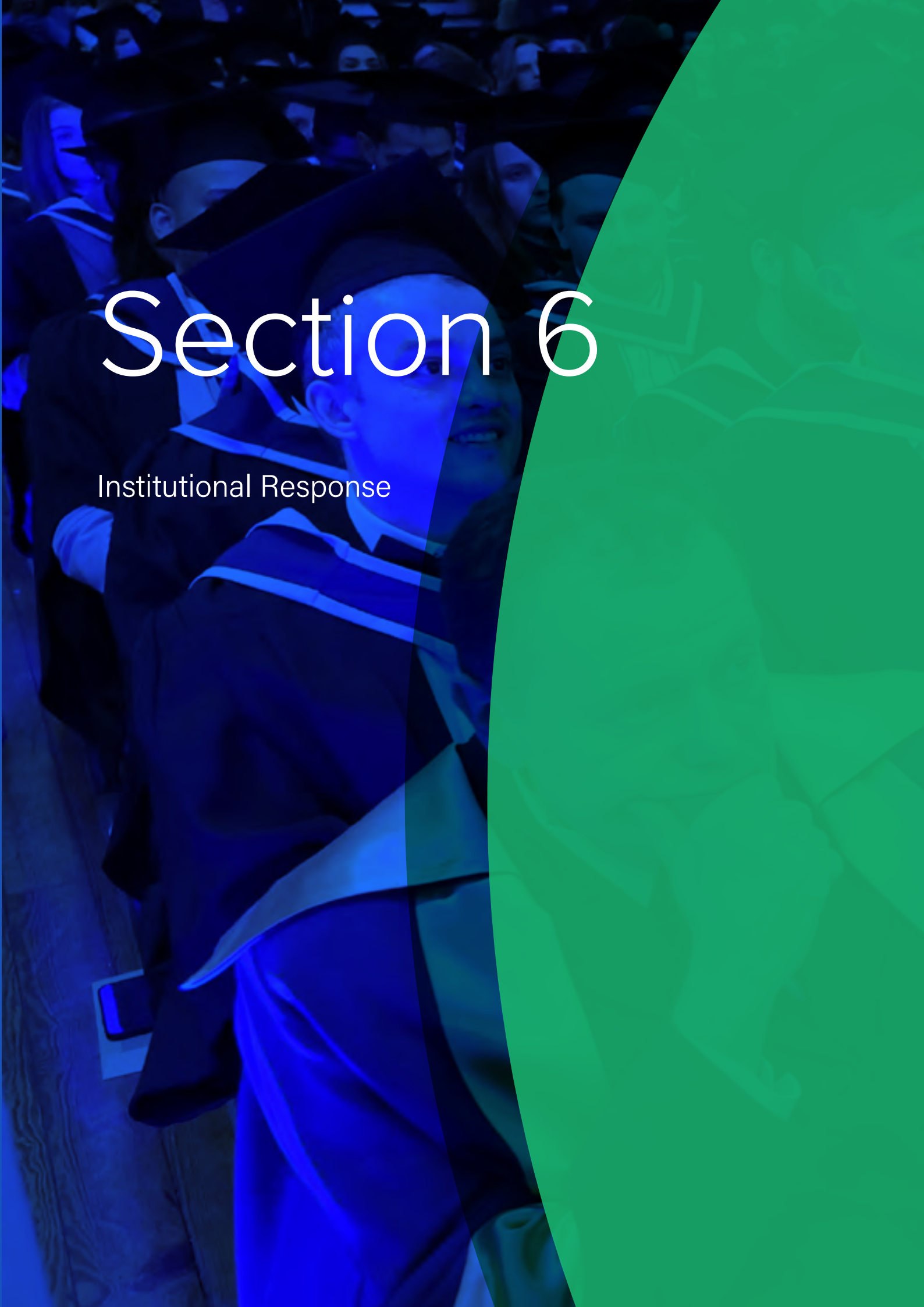
1. DBS on its approach to creating a sense of community for all students and a culture of collegiality wherein staff and students are responsive to each other and the staff in particular take pride in advancing a student-centred ethos within the institution. (p. 31)
2. The ongoing self-reflection, articulated in the ISER, on the methodology adopted by DBS in relation to the compilation of the QQI Annual Quality Report (AQR) which involves a collaborative and inclusive approach by all DBS staff. This aligns with a general commendation relating to DBS's commitment to continuous improvement and to developing a quality culture across the entire organisation. (p. 35)
3. DBS's multi-layered approach to identifying areas for improvement at programme level (Programme Board Reports) which when aggregated (Annual Programme Reports) can affect systematic change under particular themes at discipline level. (p. 38)
4. The dedication and enthusiasm of the ASC staff and the comprehensive structure of supports throughout the student journey, including library support for both students and teachers. (p. 30)
5. The comprehensive validation process in DBS that includes both internal and external panels. Another commendable element is the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders who are encouraged to engage fully in the programme development and decision-making processes thus fostering greater transparency and inclusiveness. (p. 38)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The review team recommends that:

1. DBS improve its system for internal and external communication and feedback with a particular emphasis on student feedback to ensure a consistent student experience and enhance the learning experience. (p. 22)
2. DBS address the gaps in supports provided to students to fully align with the most critical stages of the student journey. (p. 33)
3. DBS continue to monitor the effective use of GenAI in assessment strategies and provide formalised guidance on GenAI to staff and students with explanations of acceptable and unacceptable uses. (p. 28)
4. DBS ensure that all policies and procedures relating to assessment are: (i) consistent and evident in practice across the institution and (ii) communicated to and easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders. (p. 30)
5. DBS further develop its QA system by including specific and measurable quality indicators that are informed by quantitative and qualitative data. This information should be tracked and monitored consistently in line with DBS's strategic priorities to identify gaps and inform both reporting and continuous improvement activities. (p. 37)





Section 6

Institutional Response



Institutional Response

The publication of the CINNTE review is an important milestone for DBS. We will celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2025 and we were ambitious to ensure that this process offered a thorough and robust review of our Quality Assurance framework. The opportunity to engage our entire team, across the college in a process of self-reflection and analysis of the way we approach teaching, learning and assessment was powerful and created real insight. It also enabled us to look at the underpinning governance supports for Quality Assurance and, again, this has yielded valuable insights and an action plan to move forward.

I would like to offer my thanks to both QQI and the independent, expert team for a thorough, searching and constructive process. I would also like to thank the DBS team for the commitment, engagement and pride they demonstrated throughout the process.

We are ambitious to build further upon our position as Ireland's largest private higher education institution. We believe strongly that the way to achieve this is through an absolute commitment to our students and delivering high quality learning experiences. This ambition sits at the heart of the way we are developing our culture and our plans for the future.

I was particularly pleased to see the review team make the following observation of finding a *“culture of self-reflection and an appetite for continuous improvement. Strong governance underpins the work at DBS and this is characterised by a quality culture. DBS is responsive to the needs of students and partners. The student voice appears strong, well supported and heard”*.

We approached the review with an open mindset and encouraged a collaborative approach, providing all staff with an opportunity to be part of the process and to engage in an open, reflective and transparent manner. All the team were invited to participate in the preparation of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). We welcomed faculty, administrators, management and external stakeholders to feed into the documentation which provided a perspective across the whole institution.

The review team recognised our open approach from the start of the process. We were focused on ensuring we benefited from both our own self-evaluation and the insights from the independent team of experts.

I am also heartened by the review team's observation that we are *“creating a quality culture with faculty and staff who care for their students”*. They also observed *“a sense of community for all students and a culture of collegiality wherein staff and students are responsive to each other and the staff in particular take pride in advancing a student-centred ethos within the institution”*. As President of DBS, I am enormously proud of the team in DBS and their ongoing commitment to all of our students. This is absolutely central in our culture and our plans to continuously improve the experience for students.

The review team also noted the *“encouragement of both faculty and students to take an active part in applied research”*. Our research programme has grown in recent years and we are delighted with the progress being made. The focus on an applied approach is a strong endorsement of our philosophy that everything we do in this important space needs to be grounded and supportive of students bridging to industry and taking the next steps in their career.

We enthusiastically accept the recommendations in the report. We agree with the review team's ranking of the Top 5 areas for focus: (1) Improved system for internal and external communication and feedback, (2) addressing the gaps in supports provided to students to fully align with the most critical stages of the student journey, (3) the effective use of GenAI in assessment strategies and formalised guidance for staff on the acceptable use of GenAI, (4) ensuring that all policies and procedures relating to assessment are: (i) consistent and evident in practice across the institution and (ii) are communicated to and easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders and (5) to further develops its QA system by including specific and measurable quality indicators that are informed by quantitative and qualitative data.

We are committed to now mobilising a clear action plan to ensure all recommendations are addressed as a programme of change over the coming period. We will resource this programme effectively and use it as a means of further developing the team and organisation.

I want to thank QQI and the review team again for their support and constructive approach throughout this process. We have benefited enormously from their feedback and insight and I have no doubt this will support us to become a stronger and even more student-centred institution. The progress we have made over the last several years in developing a robust quality assurance framework has enabled us to scale our operation. It is the central pillar around which we maintain an absolute focus on all our students and ensure they receive the experience they deserve.

Tim Bicknell

President, DBS

October 2024



The image shows a library interior with white bookshelves filled with books. A large window is visible on the left, and a large green circular graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image. The word "Appendices" is written in white text across the center of the image.

Appendices

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

These are the terms of reference for the review of independent and private providers, including those that intend to request the delegation of authority³ (DA) when it becomes available.

[QQI's Core Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) have been established for all providers and collectively address the quality assurance responsibilities of those providers. The scope of the guidelines incorporates all education and training leading to QQI awards, other awards recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or awards of other awarding, regulatory or statutory bodies. The guidelines outline that quality, and its assurance, are the primary responsibility of the provider and review and self-evaluation of quality is a fundamental element of the provider's quality assurance system. [Sector-specific QA guidelines](#) have also been published and address the more specific requirements of independent and private providers. Reengagement⁴ by those providers confirmed that quality assurance procedures were approved by QQI in accordance with the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#).

A provider's external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI. The reviews relate to QQI's obligation under Section 27(b) of the 2012 Act (to establish procedures for the review by QQI of the effectiveness and implementation of a provider's quality assurance procedures) and to section 34 of the 2012 Act (the external review by QQI of a provider's quality assurance procedures).

QQI established its [Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions](#) in 2016 which sets out the scope, purposes, criteria and model for cyclical review.

For independent and private providers, the diversity, range and size of organisations varies significantly, and some have been subject to rigorous oversight by QQI regarding their internal quality assurance systems for a lengthy and sustained period. The outcomes of the review will inform the future development of quality assurance and enhancement activities within independent and private institutions and across the sector.

For those institutions that are planning to seek DA, the external institutional review will constitute a first step towards an assessment by QQI.

³ The delegation of authority (DA) to make awards is the legal mechanism to recognise a provider's growing autonomy and capacity to take on responsibility for academic quality. DA enables a provider to establish its own award brand and affords it autonomy to establish programmes, or classes of programmes of education and training, which lead to awards that are awards in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). DA is a recognition by QQI that a provider has the rigour, independence and consistency in its programme approval processes and can be entrusted with the responsibility to make reliable decisions regarding the standards of programmes subject to validation and revalidation.

⁴ Re-engagement was a one-off process for legacy providers to establish: (i) Quality assurance procedures approved by QQI in accordance with either Section 29 or Section 30 of the 2012 Act as relevant; and (ii) The provider's scope of provision i.e. the range of programmes for which quality assurance procedures and organisational capacity are deemed appropriate and within which future programme applications for validation can be made.

PURPOSES

QQI's Policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions highlights five purposes for individual institutional reviews. These are set out in the table below.

Purpose	Achieved and measured through
1. To encourage a quality culture and the enhancement of the learning environment and experience within institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasising the student and the student learning experience in reviews; • providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them; • exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures; • exploring quality as well as quality assurance within the institution; • piloting a new thematic review methodology.
2. To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasising the ownership of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution; • pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level; • evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards; • evaluating relative equivalence with institution-identified benchmarks and metrics; • emphasising the improvement of quality assurance procedures.
3. To improve public confidence in the quality of independent and private providers by promoting transparency and public awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent; • publishing a periodic review cycle; • publishing terms of reference; • publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences; • publishing brief, easy to read institutional quality profiles; • evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible.
4. To support systems-level improvement of the quality of higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publication of periodic synoptic reports; • ensuring that there is sufficient consistency in approach between similar institutions to allow for comparability and shared learning; • publishing institutional quality profiles.

5. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice.	using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution; ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence; facilitating institutions to identify metrics and benchmarks for quality relevant to their own mission and context; promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation.
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

REVIEW OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS AND CRITERIA

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the review are summarised under the following headings as follows:

1. Governance and Management – to review the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the governance and management of quality throughout the organisation.
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment – to evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the provider and a high-quality learning experience for all learners.
3. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review – to evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the provider’s education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them.

OBJECTIVES (INCLUDING INDICATIVE MATTERS⁵ TO BE EXPLORED)

OBJECTIVE 1 – GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

To review the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the governance and management of quality throughout the organisation.

This will include a review of:

- the oversight arrangements and transparent decision-making structures for the implementation of the QA procedures of the provider as set out in the annual quality report (AQR).
- the enhancement of quality by the provider through governance, policy, and procedures.
- the flexibility and adaptability of quality assurance procedures and quality enhancement with the provider’s own mission and goals or targets for quality. To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.
- the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.

The scope of this objective includes the procedures for reporting, governance and publication. It also incorporates an analysis of the ways in which the provider applies evidence-based approaches to support quality assurance processes, including quantitative analysis, evidence gathering and comparison. Consideration will also be given to the effectiveness of the AQR and ISER procedures within the institution.

The scope of this objective will also extend to the overarching procedures of the provider for assuring itself of the quality of its research activities, where applicable.

⁵ The indicative matters highlighted for each objective do not comprise the full range of areas that could be explored during the review. The review team has the capacity to expand this within the scope of QQI’s Statutory Core QA Guidelines and sector specific guidelines as appropriate.

The governance and quality management systems would be expected to address:

Indicative matters to be explored	
a) The provider's mission and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the provider's quality assurance arrangements contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and strategy? How? Is the learner experience consistent with this mission?
b) Structures and terms of reference for the governance and management of quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the arrangements sufficiently comprehensive and robust to ensure management and governance structures are proportionate and appropriate to support both the education and training activities and the general operations of the institution (e.g. separation of responsibilities, externality, stakeholder input)? Is governance visible and transparent? Has the provider ensured there are robust structures in place to identify, assess and manage risk? How effective are these arrangements? How does the provider ensure the system of governance protects the integrity of academic processes and has institutional wide oversight of its QA standards? Do the processes in place demonstrate the provider's confidence in its capacity for critical self-evaluation and remediation?
c) The documentation of quality assurance policy and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective are the arrangements for the development and approval of policies and procedures? Are policies and procedures coherent and comprehensive (i.e. do they incorporate all service types and awarding bodies?), robust and fit for purpose? Are policies and procedures systematically evaluated? Are there effective innovations in quality enhancement and assurance?
d) Staff recruitment, management and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective are the QA procedures in maintaining and managing a resource base that sustainably supports (i) the quality assurance system and (ii) the programmes of education and training, research and related services offered by the provider? How effective are the QA procedures for the recruitment, management and development of staff in the context of all education and training activities and related services⁶ offered by the provider? How does the provider assure itself as to the competence of its staff? How are professional standards maintained and enhanced across the organisation? How are staff informed of developments impacting the organisation and how can they input to decision-making?

⁶ This includes those education and training activities leading to awards of awarding bodies other than QQI, such as professional bodies and local provider provision, so that the overall commitments of staff are taken into account by the provider.

<p>e) Programme development, approval and submission for validation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arrangements are in place to ensure alignment of programme development activity with the provider’s mission and strategic goals, as well as learner needs? • Are the arrangements for the approval and management of programme development robust, objective and transparent? • What arrangements are in place to facilitate and oversee a comprehensive programme development process in advance of submission for validation (e.g. the conduct of research, inclusion of external expertise, writing learning outcomes, curricula etc., professional approval/accreditation)? • How does the QA system support the development of programmes requiring professional approval / accreditation? What additional measures are in place to support these programmes? • How effective are those arrangements in meeting and facilitating the standards required by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs), where relevant? • What impact has increased demand for (i) the use of online technology for programme delivery and assessment and (ii) the provision of short, standalone programmes had on the provider’s resource base? How effective are the QA procedures in supporting these programmes’ developments? • Are there effective structures in place to support and quality assure collaborative programme development with other providers, both national and transnational? • How does the institution assure itself that work-integrated learning⁷ is fully embedded within the structure and provision of educational programmes so that the taught and work-integrated elements constitute a coherent whole? • How effectively has the provider managed its responsibility of arranging independent evaluation reports under devolved responsibility (where applicable)? • What has the provider learned from its experience of devolved responsibility?
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

⁷ Work-integrated learning (WIL) may take place in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to, practice placement, apprenticeship, applied learning and profession-oriented further and higher education where WIL elements are integral to an educational programme leading to a qualification in the NFQ.

f) Access, transfer and progression (ATP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the provider measure and monitor access, transfer and progression systematically across all programmes and services? • How effective are the processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on learner progression and completion rates? • Are there flexible learning pathways, respecting and attending to the diversity of learners? • Are admissions criteria and processes clear, transparent and fit for purpose? • Are progression and recognition policies and processes in line with (i) the national policies and criteria for ATP and (ii) the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and (iii) any appropriate European recognition principles, conventions and guidelines including the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)? Are these implemented on a consistent basis?
g) Integrity and approval of learner results, including the operation and outcome of internal verification and external authentication processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What governance and oversight processes are in place to ensure the integrity of learner assessment and results data, which provide the basis for making and certifying QQI awards? • Have the provider's QA procedures evolved to combat emergent threats to academic integrity? How adaptable are they to continued threats and/or change? • How does the provider ensure that the processes in place provide for consistent decision-making and oversight across all services, centres, campuses?
h) Information and data management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arrangements are in place to ensure that data are reliable and secure? • How are data utilised as part of the quality assurance system? • What arrangements are in place to ensure the integrity of learner records? • How is compliance with data legislation ensured?
i) Public information and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is information on the quality assurance system, procedures and activities publicly available and regularly updated? • What arrangements are in place to ensure that published information in relation to all provision (including by centres) is clear, accurate, up to date and easily accessible?
j) Other Parties involved in Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the provider's integrated system of quality assurance to support collaborative arrangements and partnerships with third parties? • What arrangements are in place to ensure that the provider's QA policies and procedures are consistent with European commitments as appropriate?

k) Research, Enterprise and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arrangements are in place to ensure that the provider has an integrated system of quality assurance in place to underpin and support its research and enterprise activities? • How effectively does research education and training engage with peer review mechanisms used for research funding and publication?
----------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

OBJECTIVE 2 – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the provider and a high-quality learning experience for all learners. These will include:

Indicative matters to be explored	
a) The learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the quality of the learning experience monitored? How? • Are modes of delivery and pedagogical methods evaluated to ensure that they meet the needs of learners? How? • How is the quality of the learning experience of learners engaged in work-integrated activities assured? • Is there evidence of enhancement in teaching and learning?
b) Assessment of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the integrity, consistency and security of assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures and records ensured – including in respect of recognition of prior learning? • How does the provider assure that the standards regarding the assessment of learners engaged in work-integrated learning are maintained? • Do learners in all settings have a clear understanding of how and why they are assessed and are they given feedback on assessment? • How is the feedback analysis used to further enhance assessment methodologies? • Can the QA procedures in place support the management, integrity and retention of learner results data which provide the basis for making and certifying QQI awards?
c) Supports for learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are support services planned and monitored to ensure that they meet the needs of learners? • How does the provider ensure consistency in the availability of appropriate supports to all learners across different settings, including work-integrated learning? • Are learners aware of the existence of supports?

OBJECTIVE 3 – SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

Evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the provider's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them. It will also reflect on how these processes are utilised to complete the quality cycle through the identification and promotion of effective practice and by addressing areas for improvement. This will include:

Indicative matters to be explored	
a) Self-evaluation, monitoring and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the processes for quality assurance planning, monitoring and reporting? • Are the processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and review (including the self-evaluation report undertaken for the institutional review comprehensive, inclusive and evidence-based? • Is there evidence of strategic analysis and follow-up of the outcome of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring (e.g. review reports, external examiner reports, learner feedback reports etc.)? • How is quality promoted and enhanced?
b) Programme monitoring and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are mechanisms for periodic review and revalidation of programmes comprehensive, inclusive and robust? • How are programme delivery and outcomes monitored across multiple campuses (including collection of feedback from learners/stakeholders)? • How are the activities and processes associated with work-integrated learning monitored? • Is there evidence that the outcome of programme monitoring and review informs programme modification and enhancement? • Are the outputs of programme monitoring and review considered on a strategic basis by the provider's governance bodies to inform decision-making?
c) Oversight, monitoring and review of relationships with external/ third parties and other collaborative partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the provider ensure the suitability of the external parties with which it engages? • Is the nature of the arrangements with each external party published? • Is the effectiveness of these arrangements monitored and reviewed through provider governance?

REVIEW OUTPUTS

In respect of each dimension above, the review will:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the provider's quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of higher education, training, and related services;
- identify perceived gaps in the internal quality assurance procedures and the appropriateness, competence, prioritisation and timeliness of planned measures to address them in the context of the provider's current stage of development; and
- explore achievements and innovations in quality assurance and in the enhancement of teaching and learning.

Following consideration of the matters above, the review report will include specific and high-level qualitative statements on:

- the overall effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the provider and the extent of their implementation and enhancement.
- the extent to which the quality assurance procedures can be considered compliant with the ESG.
- the extent to which existing quality assurance procedures adhere to QQI's Quality Assurance guidelines and policies (as listed in section 3.4).
- identified effective practice and recommendations for further improvement. (These may also be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements.)

The review report may also include recommendations for conditions in reference to each of the objectives.

CRITERIA

The implementation and effectiveness of the provider's quality assurance arrangements will be considered in the context of the following:

- The provider's own mission and vision, including objectives and goals for quality assurance.
- [QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines](#)
- [QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Independent and Private Providers](#)
- [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\) 2015](#)
- [Section 28, Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#)
- [QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training](#)

Where appropriate and indicated by the provider, additional QQI guidelines may be incorporated:

- [QQI Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#)

THE REVIEW PROCESS

The primary source for the review process is the Cyclical Review Handbook for Independent and Private Providers.

REVIEW TEAM PROFILE

QQI will appoint the review team to conduct the institutional review. Review teams are composed of peer reviewers who are learners; leaders and staff from comparable providers; and external representatives including employer and civic representatives.

The size of the team and the duration of their visit will depend on the size and complexity of the independent and private provider.

QQI will identify an appropriate team of reviewers for each review who are independent of the independent and private provider with the appropriate skills and experience required to perform their tasks. Collectively, the review team will have knowledge of and expertise in:

- Higher education quality assurance processes;
- Governance;
- The advancement of teaching, learning and assessment methodologies;
- Managing research within or across institutions (where applicable);
- International reviews; and
- European standards in higher education and qualification frameworks, e.g. ESG, EQF and Bologna process; and

The team will include international representatives and QQI will seek to ensure diversity among the reviewers. The provider will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of its review team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. QQI has final approval over the composition of each review team. The roles and responsibilities⁸ of the review team members are as follows:

Chair:

The chair is a full member and leader of the review team. Their role is to provide tactical leadership and to ensure that the work of the team is conducted in a professional, impartial and fair manner, and in compliance with the Terms of Reference. The chair's functions include:

- Leading the conduct of the review and ensuring that proceedings remain focused.
- Organising the work of reviewers with the support of the coordinating reviewer.
- Fostering open and respectful exchanges of opinion and ensuring that the views of all participants are valued and considered.
- Facilitating the emergence of evidence-based team decisions (ideally based on consensus).
- Contributing to, and overseeing the production of, the review report within the timeline agreed with QQI, approving amendments or convening additional meetings if required.

Coordinating Reviewer:

The coordinating reviewer is a full member of the team and secretary of the review team. Their role is to capture the team's deliberations and decisions during the proceedings and express them clearly and accurately in the team report. It is vital that the coordinating reviewer ensures that sufficient evidence is provided in the report to support the team's recommendations. The role of the coordinating reviewer includes:

⁸ Further detail on the conduct of reviewers is outlined in QQI's Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators.

- Acting as the liaison between the review team and QQI; and, during the main review visit, between the review team and the institutional review co-ordinator.
- Maintaining records of discussions during the planning and main review visits.
- Coordinating the drafting of the review report in consultation with the team members and under the direction of the chair within the timeline agreed with QQI.

Student Reviewer:

The student reviewer is a full member of the review team and participates in all aspects of the review. The student reviewer represents the 'voice of the learner' and brings a valuable perspective which can inform and enrich discussions. They may have a particular focus on the learner experience and topics of interest might include, for example:

- Academic matters such as the curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning;
- Support services, such as library, IT, sports, societies, welfare and careers services etc.; and
- Learner input into decision-making and involvement in quality assurance.

External Reviewer(s):

The external representative reviewer is an equal member of the team and takes part in all aspects of review. The external representative may bring knowledge and expertise of the Irish Higher Education sector more widely and/or contribute to the 'third mission' perspective (i.e., represents the economic and social mission of the institution) which can inform and enrich discussions.

By way of example, they may have specialist knowledge of some of the following areas:

- External expectations of graduate skills and competencies;
 - Issues and trends in industry or the wider community;
 - Responsibilities of independent and private providers of education and training in the Irish HE sector;
 - The external perception of the institution and its activities;
 - Pedagogy, programme architecture, skills development, teaching, learning and assessment and related quality assurance activities.
 - Knowledge of the area identified in any specific enhancement themes for the review;
 - Quality assurance practices in other sectors; and
- Good management practices in other sectors.

All review team members:

The role of all review team members includes:

- Preparing for the review by reading and critically evaluating all written material.
- Investigating and testing claims made in the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and other material during the main review visit by speaking to a range of staff, learners and stakeholders.
- Contributing to the production of the review report, ensuring that their particular perspective and voice (i.e. learner, industry, stakeholder, international etc.) forms an integral part of the review.

REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINES

The key steps in the review process with indicative timelines are outlined below. Specific dates for each provider review will be outlined by QQI in accordance with the published Review Schedule.

Step	Action	Timeframe	Outcome
Preparation – Terms of Reference (ToR)	Consultation and confirmation of ToR with providers	9 months before the main review visit (MRV)	Publish ToR
Preparation – Institutional Profile (IP)	Preparation of an institutional profile by each provider (e.g. outlining mission; strategic objectives; local context; data on staff profiles; recent developments; key challenges).	6 months before the MRV	Publish IP
Preparation – Review Team (RT)	Appointment of an expert review team Consultation with the provider on any possible conflicts of interest	6-9 months before the MRV	Publish RT Profile
Self-evaluation – Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)	Forwarding to QQI of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and a repository of additional information (optional).	min. 12 weeks before the MRV	Published ISER (optional)
Desk review	Desk review of the ISER by the team	At least 1 week before the Initial Meeting	ISER initial response provided
RT Briefing (via MS Teams) – 2 sessions (half days)	<u>Session 1</u> : An initial meeting of the review team, including introductions, reviewer training and briefing. <u>Session 2</u> : RT discussion of preliminary impressions and identification of any additional documentation required.	c. 5 weeks after the ISER, c. 7 weeks before the MRV	RT training and briefing is complete. RT identify key themes and any additional documents required.
Planning visit (via MS Teams)	A visit to the institution by the chair and coordinating reviewer to receive information about the ISER process, discuss the schedule for the main review visit and discuss additional documentation requests.	c. 5 weeks after the ISER, c. 7 weeks before the MRV	An agreed note of the planning visit.
Main Review Visit	To receive and consider evidence on the ways in which the institution has performed in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference	12 weeks after the receipt of ISER	A short preliminary oral report to the institution

Report – drafting stages	Preparation of a draft report by the team Draft report sent to the institution for a check of factual accuracy Institution responds with any factual accuracy corrections Preparation of a final report	6-8 weeks after the MRV 12 weeks after the MRV 2 weeks after receipt of draft report 2 weeks after factual accuracy response	QQI review report
Report – institutional response	Preparation of an institutional response	2 weeks after final report	Institutional response
Outcomes	QQI considers findings of review report and the institutional response through governance processes. Review report is published with institutional response.	Next available meeting of QQI Awards and Reviews Committee (ARC)	Formal decision about the effectiveness of QA procedures In some cases, directions to the institution and a schedule for their implementation
	Preparation of QQI quality profile	2 weeks after decision	Quality profile published
The form of the follow-up will be determined by whether ‘directions’ are issued to the institution. In general, where directions are issued the follow-up period will be sooner and more specific actions may be required as part of the direction.			
Follow-Up	Preparation of an institutional implementation plan by provider	3 months after publication of report	Publication of the implementation plan by the institution
	One-year follow-up report to QQI for noting. This and subsequent follow-up may be integrated into annual reports to QQI	1 year after the MRV	Publication of the follow-up report by QQI and the institution
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through the annual institutional reporting and dialogue process	Continuous	Annual quality report Dialogue meeting notes

Appendix B: Main Review Visit Schedule

DAY 1: MONDAY, 24 JUNE 2024

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09:15 - 09:45	Institutional Coordinator		Preparatory meeting for Day 1
09:45 - 10:00	Private Review Team Meeting		
10:00 - 10:30	1. President and Academic Dean		<i>Private Meeting to discuss institutional mission, strategic plan, including roles and responsibilities for QA and enhancement.</i>
10:35 - 11:15	2. Senior Management Team (SMT)	President Academic Dean Registrar & Director of Campus Operations Chief Commercial Officer Head of Teaching Delivery & Content Production Head of IT Head of People and Culture Chief Financial Officer	<i>Discuss institutional mission, strategic plan, including roles and responsibilities for QA and enhancement.</i>
11:15 – 11:45	Private Review Team Meeting		
11:45 – 12:15	3. Governing Authority Representatives (corporate)	Chair of DBS Non-Executive Director Non-Executive Director	<i>Discuss strategic management and QA structures, including arrangements for QA across the institutions and within schools/ departments.</i>
12:15 - 12:25	Comfort break		
12:25 – 13:05	4. Academic Board	Chair, Academic Board Academic Dean Assistant Registrar Faculty Member of Academic Board & Practice Research Coordinator Lecturer Lecturer	<i>Discuss mechanisms employed by the Academic Council for monitoring QA & QE and how it ensures effectiveness.</i>
13:05 – 14:05	Lunch		

14:05 - 15:05	5 (a). Student Representatives (Undergraduates)	<p>BA Hons in Psychology, Year 2</p> <p>BA Hons in Law, Year 2</p> <p>Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production, Year 1</p> <p>BSc (hons) in computing 2nd year</p> <p>BA Hons in Business, Year 2</p> <p>BA Hons Psychology (part-time)</p> <p>BA Hons Social Science (part-time)</p> <p>Cert in Business and Digital Skills (part-time)</p> <p>BSc Hons in computing (Data Analytics and Big Data), Year 3</p> <p>BA Hons in Psychology, Year 1</p>	<i>Discussion with students from across the institution, to include representation from different years, disciplines and service users.</i>
15:05 - 15:15	Comfort break		
15:15 - 16:00	5 (b). Student Representatives (Postgraduates)	<p>Master of Business Administration</p> <p>MSc Business Analytics</p> <p>MSc Business Analytics</p> <p>MSc in Management Practice</p> <p>MSc Information and Library Management</p> <p>Higher Diploma Counselling and Psychology</p> <p>Master of Business Administration (Project Management)</p> <p>Master of Business Administration (Marketing)</p> <p>MSc in Cybersecurity</p>	<i>Discussion with students from across the institution, to include representation from different years, disciplines and service users.</i>
16:00 - 16:15	Private Review Team Meeting		
16:15 - 17:00	6. Faculty and research staff	<p>FT - Lecturer and Practice Research Coordinator, Dissertation Coordinator</p> <p>FT - Lecturer - Creative Arts</p> <p>FT - Lecturer - Business/IT</p> <p>FT - Lecturer - Accounting</p> <p>FT - Lecturer - Marketing</p> <p>PT - Lecturer - Marketing</p> <p>PT - Lecturer in Supply Chain Management</p> <p>FT - Lecturer - Marketing</p> <p>PT - Lecturer - Marketing</p> <p>FT - Lecturer and Programme Leader - Law</p>	
17:00 - 17:30	Private Review Team Meeting		<i>Day 1 debrief</i>

DAY 2: TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2024

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09:00 - 09:25	Institutional Coordinator		<i>Preparatory meeting for Day 2</i>
09:30 - 10:15	7. Members of the ISER development group	Registrar and Director of Campus Operations Academic Dean QA Officer Academic Director for Business Marketing and Law Chair, DBS Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production Academic Director for Psychology and Social Sciences	<i>Discussion on experience of implementing quality assurance throughout the institution.</i>
10:15 - 10:25	Comfort break		
10:25 - 11:10	8. Subcommittees of Academic Council: (i) Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee (ii) Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)	Registrar and Director of Campus Operations Assistant Registrar (Audit) Assistant Registrar QA Officer Exams Office Manager Admissions Manager Admissions QA Officer Academic Dean Head of Academic Information Resource Centre	<i>Discuss role of the relevant sub-committee in the governance of QA procedures.</i>
11:10 - 11:30	Private Review Team Meeting		
11:30 - 12:15	9. Subcommittees of Academic Council (i) Board of Studies (BoS) (ii) Academic Programmes Committee (APC)	Chair, BoS QA Officer Chair, APC Programme Director, Counselling and Psychotherapy Head of Dept, Arts languages and Study Abroad. Assistant Academic Director Film and creativity media lecturer Assistant Academic Director Marketing Assistant Registrar Lecturer, APC Lecturer, BoS	<i>Discuss role of the relevant sub-committee in the governance of QA procedures.</i>
12:15 - 12:25	Comfort break		

12:30 - 13:15	10. Student Union Officers	SU President (outgoing) SU Vice President- Education (outgoing) SU President (incoming) SU Vice President- Events SU Vice President- Wellbeing and Equality	<i>Discuss student engagement and student role in QA, Strategic Planning and decision-making processes within the institution.</i>
13:15 - 14:15	Lunch		
14:15 - 15:00	11. Heads of Schools / Department	Academic Director, Business, Marketing and Law Academic Director, Accounting and Finance Academic Director, Psychology and Social Sciences Academic Director, Computing Head of Department, Arts, Languages and Study abroad Academic and Clinical Director for Counselling and Psychotherapy Assistant Academic Director	<i>Discuss how the institution monitors the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.</i>
15:05 - 15:35	12. Staff supporting the subcommittees of Academic Council	Board of Studies and general support Academic Board and Academic Integrity Committee Academic Board and Board of Studies support Programme Approval sub committee	<i>To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement.</i>
15:35 - 15:45	Comfort break		
15:45 - 16:45	13. Managers and Officers of Student Support Services, including staff responsible for ATP (e.g. Careers Officer, Student Experience Manager, Counsellors)	Head of Student Experience Student Services Manager Careers Coach Student Experience Officer- International Office Student Experience Officer- Disability and Inclusion Student Experience Officer- Welfare Student Experience Officer SESU (Student Engagement and Success Unit) Admissions Manager Reader Services Manager Head of Academic Operations Academic Operations Team Manager	<i>To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement.</i>
16:45 - 17:30	Private Review Team Meeting:		<i>Day 2 debrief</i>

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2024

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09:00 - 09:25	Institutional Coordinator		<i>Preparatory meeting for Day 3</i>
09:30 - 10:15	14. Third party partnerships and collaborations (i.e. academic national and transnational)	Assistant Registrar Content Production & Relationship Manager Academic Director (Business, Law & Marketing) Chief Commercial Officer Head of Dept, Arts Languages and study abroad. Sound Training International School of Management GmbH, Germany KPTM Head of Business Development Europe	<i>To discuss arrangements re QA/QE including monitoring with collaborative providers and partners in industry.</i>
10:15 - 10:25	Comfort break		
10:30 - 11:15	15. External Stakeholders (i.e. ATP, industry, community, third mission)	Psychological Society of Ireland Psychological Society of Ireland CEO of Irish Council for Psychotherapy Education Relationships Lead (Head of Education) ACCA Ireland Chair, Industry Advisory Board (Business Marketing and Law) Chair, IAHIP	<i>To discuss arrangements re QA with PSRBs and other industry and community partners.</i>
11:15 - 11:35	Private Review Team Meeting		
11:35 - 12:35	16. Internationalisation: students	MBA (Project Management), Year 1 BSc (Hons) in Computing, Year 2 BA Hons in Business, Year 2 PPA00ACC ACCA BA Hons in Law, Year 2 MSc Business Analytics, Year 1 MSc in International Accounting and Finance, Year 1 MSc in Information Systems with Computing MSc in Marketing MSc in Management Practice	<i>Session on international student engagement in the institution, particularly the student learning experience.</i>
12:35 - 12:45	Comfort break		

12:45 - 13:30		Head of Student Experience Student Experience Officer- International Student Experience Manager Chief Commercial Officer Head of Business Development Europe Student recruitment Manager Admissions Manager	<i>To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement in International Education.</i>
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch		
14:30 - 15:10	18. Management and staff involved in IT, Library Services, Events, etc	Head of IT Head of Academic Information and Resource Centre Reader Services Manager Student Experience Manager Network Security Engineer	<i>To discuss relevant procedures that support QA & QE among all staff.</i>
15:10 - 15:20	Comfort break		
15:20 - 16:00	19. Management and Staff involved in HR and Staff Development, Careers.	Head of People and Culture Head of Teaching Delivery & Content Production Faculty Manager (Business & Marketing) Faculty Manager (Computing and A&F) HR Operations Manager Learning Unit	<i>To discuss relevant procedures that support QA & QE among all staff.</i>
16:00 - 16:10	Comfort break		
16:10 - 16:40	20. Management and Staff involved in Finance, Estates and Capital Investment	Financial Controller CFO (new) Head of facilities Service Desk Manager	<i>To consider funding prospects and opportunities to further develop the campus facilities to support teaching, research and the wider student experience.</i>
16:40 - 17:40	Private Review Team Meeting		<i>Day 3 Debrief</i>

DAY 4: THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2024

Time (GMT)	Session	Group	Purpose
09:00 - 11:00	Private Review Team Meeting		
10:30 - 11:00	QQI meets with Institutional Coordinator		<i>To gather feedback</i>
11:00 - 11:30	QQI meets with Review Team		<i>To discuss team's key findings</i>
11:30 - 12:00	Meeting with the President and Academic Dean		
12:00 - 12:20	Oral Report	President, Senior Management Team and invited DBS representatives	
13:05 - 14:00	Lunch reception		
14:00 - 17:00	Private Review Team Meeting		<i>Preparation for drafting report</i>

Glossary

Acronym/Term	Definition/meaning
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
APC	Academic Programmes Committee
AQR	Annual Quality Report
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
ASC	Academic Support Community
Athena SWAN	An equality charter framework and accreditation scheme
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression
CA	Continuous Assessment
CAO	Central Application Office (which processes applications for undergraduate courses in Irish HEIs)
CINNTE	Name/branding for QQI's first external HEI review cycle
CORU	Ireland's Regulator of Health and Social Care Professionals
CPD	Continuous/Continuing Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Manager
DA	Delegation of Authority
DBS	Dublin Business School
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ESG (2015)	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ETB	Education and Training Board
First Assist	Suicide First Aid (SafeTALK)
GenAI	Generative AI (Artificial intelligence) capable of generating text, images, videos, or other data using generative models, in response to prompts
HAGEF	HECA (Higher Education Colleges Association)'s Academic Quality Enhancement Forum
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
IAB	Industry Advisory Board(s)
IAHIP	Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy
I(C)T	Information (and Communication) Technology
IL&R	Information Literacy and Research Department
ISA	Host family arrangement
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
LMS	Learning Management System
MRV	Main Review Visit
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NPS	Net Promoter Score
PAWS	Postgraduate Academic Writing Skills
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PSRBs	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory and Bodies

PSI	Psychological Society of Ireland
QAESC	Quality Assurance Enhancement and Sustainability Committee
QAH	Quality Assurance Handbook
RT	Review Team
SCCM	Student Contact and Communications Management
SE	Student Experience
SESU	Student Engagement and Success Unit
SIS	Student Information System
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SLATE	Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
(Moodle) VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

