Institutional Review

Dublin Business School

Review Process: Overview

Institutional Review Report 2025
Dublin Business School

01

Critical Reflection Opportunity

Institutional Review served as a chance to reflect critically on institutional practices.

It allowed us to evaluate and identify areas for improvement.

02

Strengthening Quality Assurance

It was an opportunity to enhance QA frameworks and overall practice.

03

Constructive Peer Feedback

The process was constructive and supportive, and an opportunity for peer feedback from extremely experienced panelists.

04

Positive and Worthwhile Experience

It is a beneficial process for institutional growth.

DBS: Context and Capacity

Institutional Scale

Dublin Business School is quite a large institution with many staff and students across multiple intakes and a wide range of programmes.

~400 staff, ~9000 students, ~100 programmes

Resource Constraints

Despite our size, we face resource constraints - no downtime between intakes and limited spare capacity for additional projects.

Focused Efforts

But…these challenges are common across providers in the education sector.

The necessity to focus efforts carefully arises due to these constraints.

Timeline and Key Milestones

Initiation of Review

December 2023: Formal communication from QQI initiating the process.

Institutional Profile

February 2024: Submission of the DBS Institutional Profile.

Self-Evaluation Report

April 2024: Submission of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER).

Panel Site Visit

Week of 24 June 2024: Panel site visit at DBS.

Implementation Plan

April 2025: Implementation plan finalised and underway.

Process

Formation of Working Group

A dedicated Working Group was formed to oversee the process.

It included representatives from various departments and teams - we looked for volunteers and got as many people involved as possible.

Representation in the Group

The final Working Group comprised members from Management, Quality Assurance, Faculty, Library, Admissions, IT, Student Experience, HR, Finance, Student Engagement and Success Unit, Learning Unit...and more.

Collaborative Decision-Making

The group decided on the review format and approach collectively.

They developed a project plan and assigned responsibilities.

Information Gathering

One of the tasks was to gather information and data for the review.

Consultation and Research Approach

Whole-Institution Approach

The review adopted a whole-institution approach despite limited time for specific focus groups.

Integration into Core Business

The review was integrated into the core business of DBS to maximise available resources effectively.
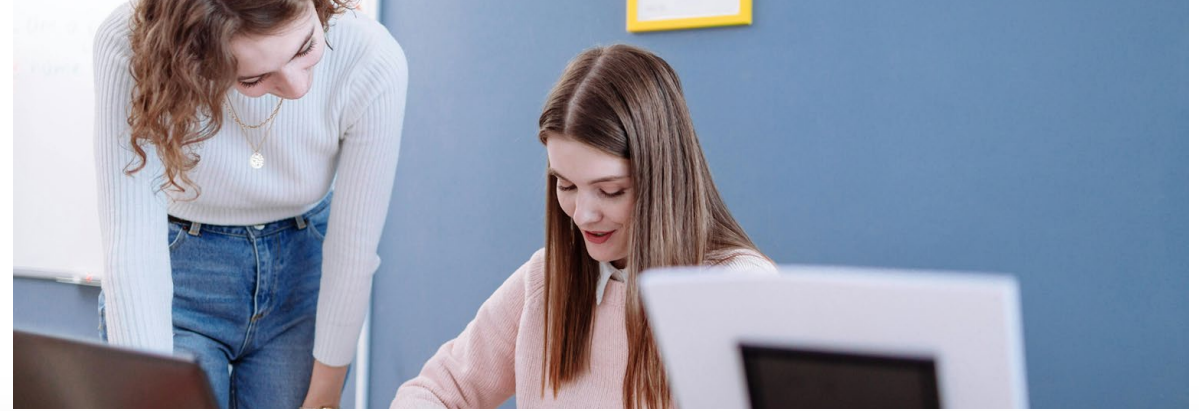
Leveraging Existing Work

Existing work such as Annual Quality Reviews, internal reviews, and programme validations were utilised to streamline and build on prior efforts.

Utilising Feedback and Data

Prior feedback and data were used to identify areas needing attention.

Data Sources and Evidence Used (examples...)

01
Governance Documentation

The review utilised governance meeting schedules and minutes.

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02
Staff Demographics

Data on staff numbers, demographics, and qualifications were analysed.

This information helped in understanding workforce composition and dynamics.

03
Appeals, Complaints Records & Student Feedback Records

Appeals, complaints, and academic misconduct data formed part of the evidence base. Also information such as additional supports offered to students, number of students on disability register, etc.

04
External Examiner Insights

Reports from External Examiners were included in the review as well as module changes.

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05
Training and Development Records

Staff training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) records were reviewed.

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Critical Reflection

🔍 The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) should ideally be a reflective document, to critically and honestly assess institutional strengths and weaknesses.

🏆 Identify areas for improvement and development.

Fairly represent achievements – don't under-sell your successes.

⚖️ Maintain balance.

Teaching and Learning

Asynchronous Content Production

1. Evaluate and deploy new technologies that provide the best authoring environment relevant to the programme domain under development.
2. Improve the engagement across programme development and review teams with the Content Development Team to ensure all relevant stakeholder feedback is captured and shared.

Work-Integrated Learning

1. Continue to work with Industry Advisory Boards to ensure high-quality placement offerings in the College.
2. Include more placement options in programmes through the programme development process.
3. In the revision of the MSc in Information and Library Management programme, ensure the work placement component is appropriately reflected in the programme schedule.
4. For Higher Diploma learners selecting the placement elective, review the information provided before commencement to ensure full awareness and understanding of the value of completing the programme rather than exiting once a work opportunity has been secured.

Faculty and Staff Support and Training

1. Consider mechanisms to improve tracking of faculty engagement with training, supports and interventions.
2. Ensure outcomes of training and supports are followed up and the feedback loop is closed.
3. Continue to keep training needs under review and respond proactively, particularly with respect to emerging technologies.

Site Visit

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	*Discuss student engagement and student role in QA, Strategic Planning and decision-making processes within the institution.*
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	*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.*
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	*To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement.*
15:35 - 15:45	Comfort break		

1 Duration of the Visit

The QQI panel site visit at DBS lasted 3.5 days, from Monday to Thursday.

An initial meeting was held on Sunday evening to kick off the process.

2 Stakeholder Engagement

Scheduling multiple sessions with the full range of stakeholders was a key logistical consideration.

This ensured that diverse perspectives were included in the evaluation process.

3 Facilities for Staff

Providing suitable meeting and holding rooms for staff was essential.

This arrangement supported the smooth execution of the visit.

4 Panel Welfare

Ensuring reliable wifi, meals, and refreshments for the panel was a priority.

These provisions were crucial to facilitate the panel's work effectively.

5 Intensity of the Visit

The visit was intense but necessary given DBS's size.

Attention to panel welfare played a significant role in managing the demanding schedule.

Outcomes: Key Findings and Themes

🔍 In the process of compiling the ISER, DBS identified over 90 individual areas for improvement from DBS's own findings.

The QQI panel provided 17 Recommendations for DBS.

Theme	Focus Areas	Key Actions
Communication, Transparency, and Feedback	Communication systems, transparency, reporting	Improve feedback mechanisms, streamline policies, standardise reports
Quality Culture and Governance Structures	Quality assurance, governance, stakeholder training	Embed quality culture, develop indicators, review non-academic services
Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Consistency	Assessment policies, ethics, AI usage	Standardise assessments, provide ethical/AI guidance
Student Support and Experience	Student support, inclusion, EDI alignment	Address transition gaps, integrate support into learning, ensure EDI compliance
Industry Engagement and Research Development	Industry partnerships, research culture	Strengthen partnerships, promote faculty/student publications
Integrity and Risk Management	Academic misconduct, complaints handling	Systematic misconduct management, transparent complaints processes

Overall Reflections

Initial Perception of the Review

The institutional review was daunting and involved a significant workload.

However, it turned out to be more manageable than initially anticipated.

Support from QQI

QQI provided regular meetings and guidance throughout the process.

This support was instrumental in navigating the review effectively.

Constructive Feedback

The review process offered valuable peer feedback.

This feedback was seen as constructive and beneficial for the institution.

Fostering Reflection and Improvement

The review ultimately fostered institutional reflection and improvement.

It was deemed worthwhile despite the challenges faced.

Positive Impact of the Review

These reflections highlight the review's positive impact.

The process proved to be beneficial in the long run.

Recommendations

01

Keep It Simple

Avoid overthinking the process; keep it within your capacity.

02

Leverage Existing Resources

Use existing reporting and data; do not reinvent the wheel.

03

Focus on Improvements

Identify clear areas for improvement early on….and don't forget about the implementation phase.

04

Engage with QQI

Engage with QQI regularly and use their support.

05

Involve Stakeholders Broadly

Involve as many stakeholders as possible for broad ownership.