

Dublin Business School

2026

**Annual Quality Report
(Dublin Business School)
Reporting Period 2024-2025**

Annual Quality Report
(Dublin Business School)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2024-2025

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

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

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

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

AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management

<i>7.0 - Public Information and Communication</i>	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information	
<i>2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development</i>	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes	
<i>8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes	
<i>9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties</i>			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes	
<i>2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery</i>	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance	
<i>8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review</i>					
<i>4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes</i>	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes				

Table 1

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for **Dublin Business School** for the reporting period **1 September 2024 - 31 August 2025**. It is to be submitted by **Friday, 27 February 2026**.

The AQR has been approved by the DBS Academic Board and Senior Leadership Team, with the Board of Directors having been informed at its meeting in January 2026 that it is being submitted. The AQR is submitted by Darragh Breathnach.

Introduction to the College

DBS was established in 1975 and over the following 50 years has increased its range of programmes and specialisms. Currently, programmes span a broad range of disciplines including accounting, business, film and creative media, finance, humanities and social sciences, law, marketing, and the computer sciences. Typically, DBS has over 9,000 active students every year, over half of which are full-time day students (c.60%) and the remainder are part-time, evening students. In the academic year 2024/25 the number of registered students at DBS was 9,337.

Over three quarters (80%) of the student body was enrolled on QQI validated programmes, specifically full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at NFQ Level 6 to Level 9, including Higher Certificate, Higher Diploma, BA, BA Hons, BSc Hons, Postgraduate Diploma, MA, MBA and MSc programmes. The remaining students take programmes that are not on the NFQ, some of which are accredited by professional bodies such as the Project Management Institute or ACCA. DBS also offers one programme that is on the UK Ofqual framework. These are awarded by Kaplan Professional Awards (<https://kaplanpa.co.uk/>).

The DBS campus is located in Dublin city centre, with premises on Aungier Street, South Great Georges Street and Bow Lane. Facilities include lecture theatres, PC labs and tutorial rooms, a library including study rooms, study areas and PC terminals, canteen facilities and student services, including student welfare and counselling, and careers services.. The Marconi House premises on Digges Lane accommodate many DBS administrative departments, in addition to providing ample space for faculty.

In the 2024/25 academic year the majority of classes were delivered from the campus. The expectations of learners have changed significantly with many requesting that classes be delivered online as well as on campus so as they can have the choice of delivery. The College has adopted a more structured approach of blended delivery, where classes are scheduled to be either on campus, or online, but not both simultaneously. This generally applied to all classes except those that are more practical in nature and

where face-to-face interaction in the classroom is required. All classes are also recorded and made available on Moodle, shortly after the lecture is finished. There are exceptions in some Human and Social Sciences subjects where recording is not permitted due to the personal or confidential nature of some of the content.

DBS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kaplan Inc. (<https://kaplan.com/>), the education division of the Graham Holdings Company (<http://www.ghco.com/company-profile>). Kaplan is a global education company, serving more than one million learners per year in over 400 locations in 30 countries. Kaplan's programmes include higher and professional education, language instruction, test preparation and services to primary/secondary learners and schools.

DBS currently employs 445 people. Of these, 298 are directly involved in teaching delivery while 147 are non-faculty staff. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Darragh Breathnach was appointed to the elevated role of Chief Operating Officer & Registrar. This appointment reflects DBS's commitment to operational excellence by creating clear ownership of all aspects of the students' experience whilst also continuing to oversee regulatory compliance.

During 2024, DBS went through Institutional Review with the final report published in January 2025. We were the first private HEI to go through this process with QQI. From this review, we received 12 commendations and 17 recommendations. The 17 recommendations were broken down into 48 sub actions. At the time of writing, 42 of these are complete. The remainder are due for completion throughout 2026. We are due to report to QQI on progress during 2026.

DBS continues to operate its current Strategic Plan which has been reviewed in 2022, although we are currently in the process of revising this Strategic Plan. The updated plan will be launched in January 2026. That plan can be found **here**. For the Academic Year 2024/25 DBS also prepared an Academic Plan that was approved by the Academic Board in July 2025 and presented to the Governance Board for information.

Process for Development and Approval of the AQR

DBS welcomes the opportunity to engage with the AQR process. This has been an opportunity for the organisation to monitor developments, formalise monitoring and self-reflection activities around programmes requiring PSRB approval, as well as policy developments.

Briefings on compilation of the 2026 Report were provided by the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar at meetings of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Academic Board in September and December 2025.

The Assistant Registrar reviewed the 2025 AQR submission for any components of Section A that required updating for the 2026 submission, and transferred the corresponding components of Section B to the appropriate spaces for self-reflection and commentary or updates. The key stakeholders due to report back on progress since the 2025 submission were invited in November 2025 to provide their respective updates over the previous reporting period. The Chief Operating Officer & Registrar along with the Assistant Registrar completed this current submission.

A draft of the report was presented to the SLT at its monthly meeting on 14 January 2026 and Academic Board on 19 February 2026 for consultation and approval. The document was left open for review and comment before finalisation ahead of the QQI deadline on 27 February 2026.

1. Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Please refer to:

QAH Part A Section 1 Governance

1.2 DBS Governance and Organisation

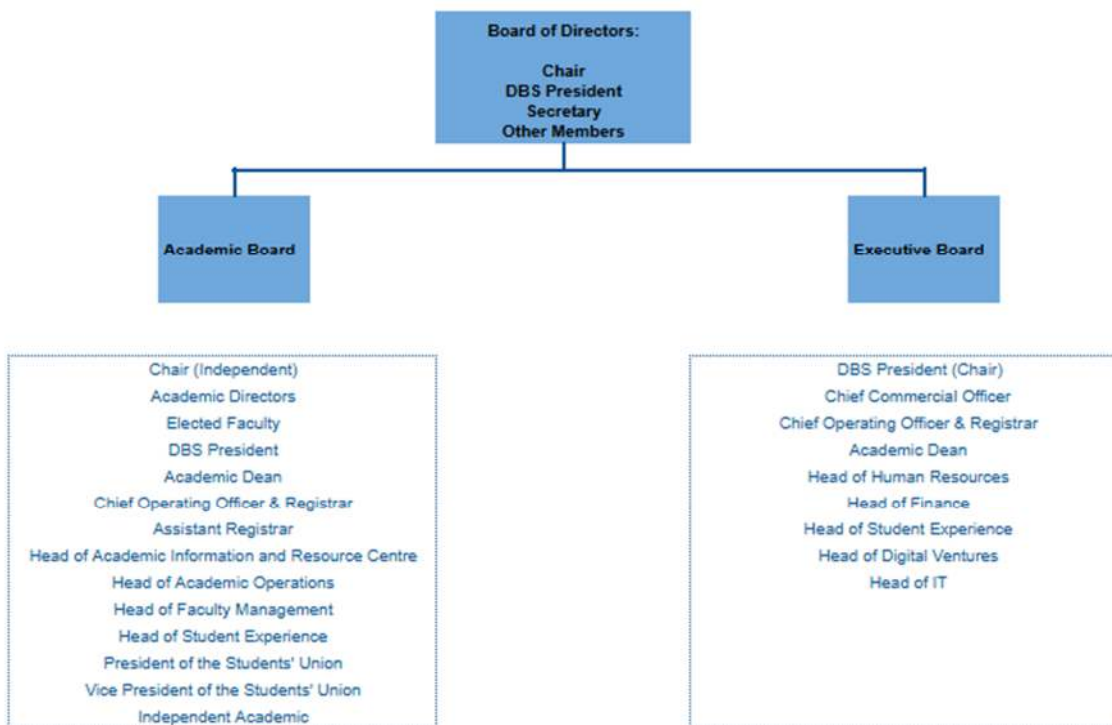
1.3 Terms of Reference for Governance Boards and Committees

1.4 DBS Leadership Structure and Roles

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

[See QAH Part A 1.2.2 Senior Governance](#)

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



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

- Chair, Andrew Conlan-Trant, Vice President, International Business Development, Kaplan International
- Secretary, Rachael Convery, General Counsel, Kaplan International
- Shareholder Non-Executive Director, Lisa Nelson, Director of Learning & Curriculum, Kaplan UK
- Independent Non-Executive Director (Academic), Dr Brendan McCormack, former President IT Sligo
- Independent Non-Executive Director (Business), Audrey O'Sullivan, Former General Counsel and Legal Director, SIRO.

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

Two sub committees of the Board exist. One is the Delegated Authority Committee (DAC) whose purpose is to provide oversight and assurance to the Board of Directors that there is an effective process for continuous improvement in the preparations for and the state of readiness of DBS to apply for Delegated Authority from QQI and to guide the Executive of the College, as appropriate, in its preparations. The membership of the DAC is the DBS President (Chair of the DAC), the Chair of the overall Board, the

Independent Non-Executive Director (Academic), the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar and the Independent Chair of the Academic Board. Following the previous pausing of this committee, the DAC will continue to be a formal sub-committee of the Board but that it will not become more active until either i) a DA application process can begin, following regulation, or ii) more time passes and the next cycle of IR is coming around again.

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

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

The Academic Board is chaired by an independent external member of high standing within the higher education sector; currently the Chair is Donna Bell, an experienced Higher Education Consultant in Ireland and internationally, with extensive experience as a QQI Chair and external adviser to the HEA. Donna Bell became Chair in December 2023, taking over from Brian Bennett, former Registrar and Acting President of IT Carlow. The Academic Board also comprises the DBS President, Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Academic Dean, Head of Academic Operations, Head of Faculty Management Head of Student Experience, Head of the Academic Information and Resource Centre, Academic Directors, six elected Faculty representatives, (four from the Accounting, Business, Computing and Law disciplines and two from the Humanities, Social Sciences and Creative Media disciplines), the President of the Students Union and the Vice President(s) of the Students Union.

The Academic Board delegates some matters relating to quality management to subcommittees, including the Academic Strategy Planning and Performance Committee, the Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee, the Learning and Teaching Committee, the Academic Programmes Committee, the Student and Graduate Experience Committee, and the Applied Research and Practice Committee.

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

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

The Executive Board, also known as the Senior Leadership Team, comprises all senior managers within the College, and operates in tandem with the Academic Board to ensure the effective operation and quality delivery of academic programmes alongside commercial viability of the College, given the private status of the institution and therefore the requirement to generate all its own student fees revenue. The Executive Board holds responsibility for the character, mission, values and strategic development of the College. The Executive Board is chaired by the President of the College, and comprises the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Chief Commercial Officer, Academic Dean, Head of IT, Head of Human Resources, Finance Director.

The Executive Board is a decision-making entity.

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

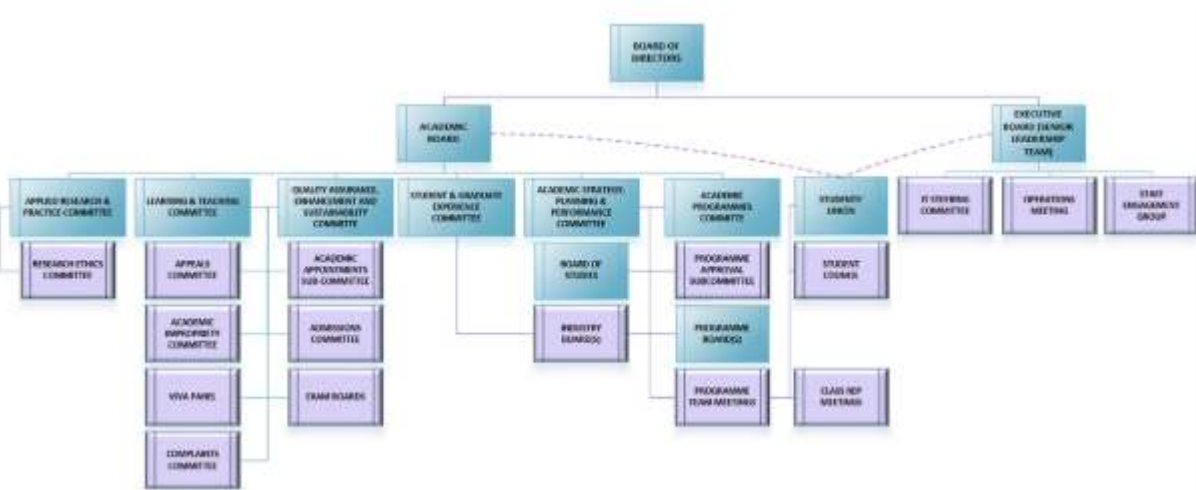
- Compliance Committee
- IT Security Committee
- Corporate Audit Services Committee
- Compensation Committee

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

- Quarterly Financial and Business Reviews with Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer of Kaplan Inc.
- Annual Risk review with the Chief Executive, Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Financial Officer
- Bi-annual IT reviews with the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer of Kaplan Inc.

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

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



DBS Governance Structures

The teal Boards and Committees are Governance bodies, with degrees of delegated authority to make decisions under the remit of the Academic Board or corresponding body. The purple Committees, Boards and Sub-Committees are more operational bodies with limited decision-making powers within the scope of their remit.

Sub-Committees of the Academic Board

- The Academic Board is supported by six subcommittees that report directly to it. These subcommittees serve to inform and guide the Academic Board on various key areas of the College. The six subcommittees are: Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee

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

Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee

The Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee oversees the strategic academic direction of Dublin Business School, holding a College-wide perspective to inform, develop, and sustain an annual Academic Plan. Its primary function is creating and maintaining a coherent Academic Vision and Strategy for DBS, which guides the framework for the Annual Academic Plan. This ensures alignment of academic aims and strategy with the overall College strategy.

Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee

The Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee (QAESC) formally monitors quality assurance audits and reviews, and identifies and follows up on QA and Quality Enhancement (QE) matters arising. It is responsible for reviewing and approving policy before raising it to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Academic Board for final approval. The committee ensures alignment with all regulatory requirements from QQI and other Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

Academic Programmes Committee

The Academic Programmes Committee function is to ensure that the policies, standards, processes and procedures associated with new programme development, programme review and programme amendment have been followed.

Learning and Teaching Committee

The Learning and Teaching Committee owns the College Strategy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (SLATE). Its function is to develop and devise a plan to implement SLATE through strategic objectives. This committee promotes and supports the implementation of current pedagogies and innovation in teaching, learning, and assessment, while fostering a culture of Continuous Personal Development (CPD) for faculty.

Applied Research and Practice Committee

The Applied Research and Practice Committee monitors and assesses the effectiveness of the policy and strategy which promotes, encourages, and supports Applied Research and Practice activities across the College. It works to develop, promote, and maintain a robust applied research and practice ethos across

DBS, positioning the college as a significant actor in this field within the Higher Education sector in Ireland. The committee also engages with DBS Industry Advisory Boards to find suitable and sustainable applied research and practice collaborations.

Student and Graduate Experience Committee

The Student and Graduate Experience Committee monitors and reports on the effectiveness of student supports (for student health, wellbeing, and additional needs) and learner supports (for academic activities) across all college academic and support activities. Its function is to receive reports on student supports and activities, submit these reports to the Academic Board, and identify deficits and areas where student and learner supports can be improved. The committee also acts as a platform for disseminating information on library developments to academic staff and learners

In addition to the above structures, the following committees/boards reporting into these:

Board of Studies

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

Programme Boards

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

Admissions Committee

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

Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC)

Following a review of the committee functions throughout 2025, The Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC) processes have been reviewed and updated. This committee rigorously evaluates proposals for new programmes for suitability against institutional quality standards and regulatory expectations. Its function is to ensure due diligence has been carried out with respect to research, stakeholder input, and

curriculum design. The PASC conducts internal reviews of programme documentation and assesses the revised programme following an Internal Review Board for final approval to proceed for external validation.

Academic Appointments Sub-Committee (AASC)

All new Faculty/teaching staff in DBS are reviewed by the AASC before appointments are made. The AASC reviews qualifications and professional experience of proposed teaching staff, and may make recommendations or conditions of appointment such as specific training or mentoring.

In addition to the above governance structures, there are operational/functional committees captured in the organisational chart, as well as committees convened to deal with specific issues or requirements, including:

- Examination Boards
- Appeals Committee
- Academic Impropriety Committee
- Complaint Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- Viva Panel
- etc.

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

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

lease refer to:

AH Part C Section 3 Transnational Collaborative and Joint Awards

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

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

DBS currently has transnational and collaborative provision as detailed in Section 9.2 below. DBS has had an on-going relationship with KPTM in Malaysia for many years and as such has an established track record of successful transnational provision. DBS also has a recent relationship with EU Business School in

Munich where two programmes (Master of Business Administration and the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business) were validated for transnational provision during the 2020/21 academic year. During 2022/23 DBS validated the MSc in Business Analytics and MSc in Digital Marketing & Analytics for transnational delivery with the University of New York in Prague (UNYP) with QQI. Following receipt of local approval, enrolment began in 2024.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

Please refer to:

[QAH Part C Section 2 Programme Development and Review](#)

Overview of DBS Programme Development and Review

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

Programme Monitoring

Programme team meetings (4-6 weeks approximately)

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

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

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

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

The meeting schedule for Programme Boards in 2024-25 is set out in Part B 1.3.1 of this Report.

Board of Studies (twice yearly, Terms of Reference QAH Part A Section 1.3.6)

The function of the Board of Studies is to ensure academic quality across all programmes and appropriate implementation of the five year strategic plan in programme delivery. The membership of the board consists of the Academic Dean (Chair); the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee; the Chair of the Research Committee; the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, Assistant Registrar all Academic Directors; the Head of Faculty Management; the Head of Student Experience; a Library representative; the School Administrative Officer and other attendees as required by the agenda. The Board of Studies meets twice a year (November and April/May). The Board of Studies:

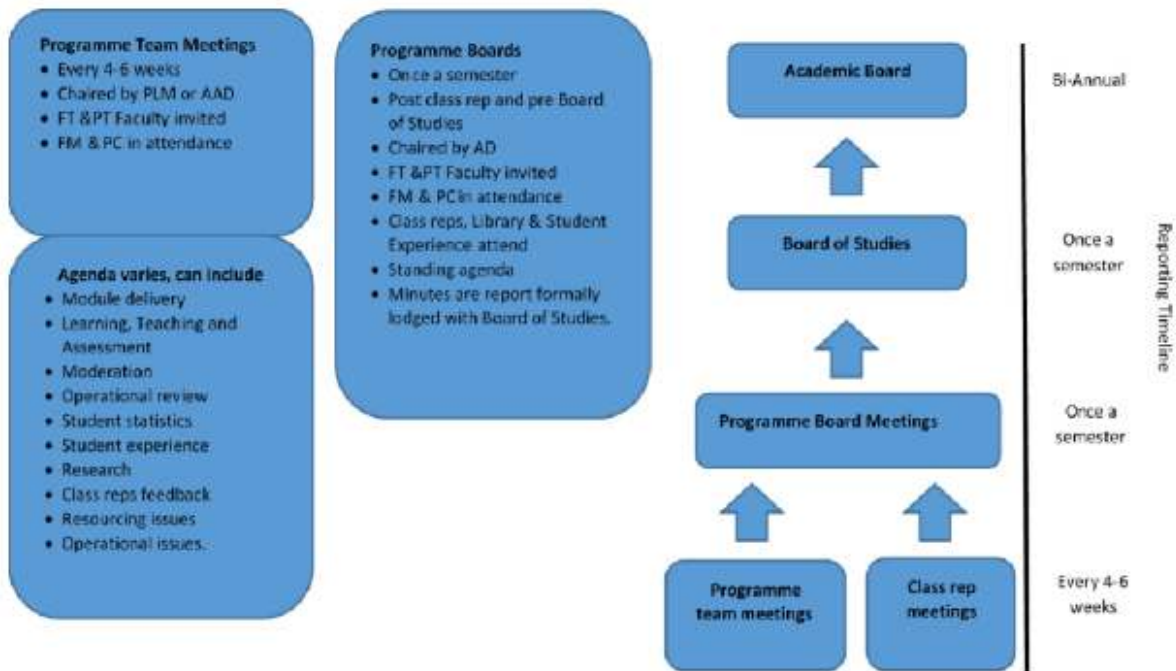
- Monitors programmes and suites of programmes to ensure consistency of approach in teaching, learning and assessment across the schools
- Reviews and approves updates to teaching, learning and assessment for programmes or modules, within its scope, referred from Programme Boards.
- Agrees the implementation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

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

Annual Programme Reports (APRs)

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

Annual Programme Reports are produced for each academic discipline on a bi-annual basis for the November Academic Board following the reporting period.



DBS Programme Reporting

Review of Certification of Validation periods

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

Programme Review

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

New programmes

Development of new programmes follows the process laid out in the QAH Part C Section 2. This process was developed as part of the review of policies and procedures for Re-Engagement with QQI, and updated in 2021 with the approval for Devolved Responsibility by QQI. The process is a staged process whereby any proposed new programme must be approved at various checkpoints in its development by a Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC):

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

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

Employer Engagement

In addition to the above processes outlined, DBS has increasingly put a focus on industry and employer engagement feeding into development of programmes. DBS has identified 7 strategic objectives in its

strategic plan for 2021-2025, and the first of these is to 'Create Work-ready Graduates'. This objective shapes the approach both inside and outside the classroom, with the College dedicated to creating graduates who are able to realise their full potential, are attractive to employers and ready for employment.

To achieve this DBS:

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

Industry Boards

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

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

In the 2024/25 academic year, membership of the IABs was reviewed under new Chairs appointed in 2024, with some below updates to the Board memberships

- Business, Marketing & Laws, in existence since April 2020: new Chair appointed 2024.
- Computing, in existence since September 2019: new Chair appointed 2024, with three new members appointed in 2024-2025.
- Accounting and Finance, in existence since September 2018: new Chair appointed 2024.
- Psychology and Social Sciences advisory board was established during the summer of 2025, with 9 new members representative of discipline areas.
- Counselling, Psychotherapy & Addiction; the industry advisory boards for this area are due to be reviewed in the 25/26 academic year.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Please refer to:

QAH Part B Section 1 Learner Admissions:

o 1.1 Information for Applicants Policy

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

o 2.9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

QAH Part B Section 6 Examination Boards and Award Classifications:

o 6.3 Progression and Classification of Awards

Access, Transfer and Progression

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

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

Admissions Office

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

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

Recognition of Prior Learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Open Events

As part of information provision to potential applicants, DBS runs a number of Open Events annually. Open Events provide prospective students with the opportunity to visit DBS and talk to our lecturers, admissions staff and students, and to discover what is available at DBS and how the student's interests can be met through our range of programmes. Usually Open Events give students an opportunity to explore the campus, visit the buildings and see the facilities as meeting with student services. In the online environment, this has been replicated as much as possible. DBS now runs a combination of online and in person Open Events.

Information Sessions

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

Scholarships

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

Information to Current Learners

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

Some features to note are:

- **Learner Handbooks**
 - Learner Handbooks are available on the student website and are updated regularly, allowing students to have easy access to the most up to date information at all times.
- **News Updates**
 - Regular news updates allow students to keep abreast of what is happening both in and outside the College.
- **Student Help**
 - The student help section links and advises on areas such as student well-being, accommodation, computer support, International Student Assistance and virtual student information and meet-ups.
- **Timetables**
 - All timetables (for classes and exams) are available and can be filtered by learner, lecturer, course or building.
- **Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH)**
 - The QAH is broken into sections to allow students to find the right information quickly when they need it.
- **Student Self Service**
 - Through the single sign-on facility linked from the website, students can access their personal DBS e-mail, library account, timetables and virtual learning environment (Moodle), update their personal details, log tickets and request a number of self-service letters which are automatically sent to the student's e-mail.

- Induction Material
 - All induction material is available via the site in easily accessible units which students can return to for future reference. Ahead of academic year 2025/2026 all induction materials were re-designed and reviewed and re-named “Your Student Guide” to allow for students to easily access and review content through their student journey.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

N/A

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Please refer to:

QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:

- *1.1 Staffing of Academic Programmes Policy*
- *1.2 Learning and Teaching Policy*
- *1.3 Academic Research Policy*
- *1.4 Blended Learning Policy*
- *1.5 Recording Learning Activities Policy*
- *1.6 Group Work Policy*
- *1.7 Policy on Staffing for Online Programme Development and Delivery*
- *1.8 Fully Online Learning Programmes Policy*

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- *2.9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*
- *2.10 Conflict of Interest Policy for Programme Delivery*
- *2.12 Policy on Gathering Learner Feedback on the Quality of Online Provision and Supports*
- *2.13 GenAI Policy*

QAH Part B Section 5 Assessment Regulations:

- *5.1 Assessment Overarching Policy*
- *5.2 Learner Assessment Procedures*
- *5.3 Examination Policy*
- *5.4 Repeating a Failed Module Policy*
- *5.5 Progression with ECTS Deficit (Trailing) Policy*
- *5.6 Feedback on Examinations Policy*
- *5.7 Access, Retention & Destruction of Examination Scripts Policy*
- *5.8 Verification of an Assessment Result Policy*
- *5.9 Assessment Marking, Feedback and Moderation Policy*

QAH Part B Section 6 Examinations Boards and Awards Classifications:

- *6.1 External Monitoring of Programmes Policy*

DBS Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE2)

Monitoring of Quality of Teaching and Learning

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

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

Learner feedback on teaching and learning quality is captured via a module survey that is run once a semester, the results of which are examined by the Academic Dean and reported on to the Academic Board, Senior Leadership Team and the Kaplan Learning Reviews. Learner feedback on teaching and learning quality is also captured via regular Class Rep meetings, details of which are fed back to the Academic Dean and the Academic Directors. DBS also subscribes to StudentSurvey.ie, which allows for the comparison of learner views of the quality of teaching and learning at DBS against other HEIs and the sector as a whole.

Enhancing Teaching and Learning

Improving the quality of Teaching and Learning at DBS is guided by the institution's Strategy for Learning, Assessment and Teaching Enhancement (SLATE). SLATE2, the strategy for was developed in 2023 and presented to the Academic Board at its meeting in June 2023. SLATE2 sets out the following overarching goals to deliver:

1. Outstanding Learning

'A measurable engaging transformative learning experience that ensures our graduates are prepared for employment.'

2. Immersive Learning

'A learning environment that learners can immerse themselves in totally anytime and anywhere.'

3. Ecosystem of Learning

'An effective and complex interconnected network of people, processes and activities that recognises that all members of DBS at all times are empowered and impacting the learning experience.'

SLATE2 is accompanied by a detailed action plan which is owned by the Academic Dean which sets out tasks and timelines for achievement of the objectives. This is kept under review and updated as required.

Quality Assurance of Assessment

DBS policies and procedures for the monitoring of assessment processes are laid out in the *Quality Assurance Handbook* as per the links above.

Exams continued to be held online for the duration of the academic year 2024/2025 to allow for planning and advance information to be provided to incoming and continuing learners regarding the nature of assessment. This was supported by the Online Exams Policy which had been created and implemented from February 2021. All online exams were proctored through an online invigilation platform to ensure integrity and security of the process.

Of particular importance is independent monitoring through the External Examiner process. DBS seeks to appoint academic experts of high standing into the External Examiner roles for each programme. The Exams Office has increasingly been digitising its processes, and since 2019 External Examiner packs have been provided to Externs in electronic format, which has allowed for greater efficiencies. Since 2020, DBS moved all Exam Boards online and also hosted a number of meetings with Externs online, in order to keep them apprised of contingencies arising around assessments. Online meetings and Exam Boards facilitated attendance for Externs and it is DBS's intent to continue with these.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Please refer to:

QAH Part B Section 2 Learner Supports:

- *2.1 Information and Support for Learners*
- *2.2 Premises and Facilities*
- *2.3 IT Facilities*
- *2.4 Online Learning Supports*
- *2.5 Student Experience*
- *2.6 DBS Library*
- *2.7 Digital Wellbeing Policy*
- *2.8 Learner Acceptable Usage Policy for Facilities and Services*
- *2.9 Policy on Benchmarking the Learner Experience*
- *2.10 Policy on Student Pregnancy and Parental Support*

DBS is committed to supporting student success and enhancing the student experience. We enable student success through high quality services and support. This is delivered with an eye to developing attributes that will be beneficial in the workplace, and beyond. The College provides academic resources, student services, engagement support and infrastructure to provide an outstanding student experience and enable strong academic outcomes. These supports are organised across four areas: Academic, Health and Wellbeing, Student Life and Careers.

The Academic Support Community (ASC) provides academic support outside of the timetable for learners at DBS. This Community brings together staff-led support through the Library & Academic Hub, student-led support through Student Experience and targeted support for at-risk learners identified using learning analytics by the Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU). Collectively, the ASC offers a seven-phase programme of themed events and interventions over two semesters. The first four phases of the programme, which replaces the previous “First 100 Days Programme” offers the same topics of learner support but from both the learner and staff perspective, with the added layer of bespoke support for at-risk learners.

Semester One

- Weeks 1-3 Are you ready to learn?
- Weeks 4-6 Assignment Success
- Weeks 7-9 Applying Feedback
- Weeks 10-12 Exam Success

Semester 2

- Week 1-2 Refocus & Re-energise
- Week 6 Breathing Week
- Weeks 10-12 Exam Success

Academic Operations Team

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

Student Experience Team

The Student Experience Team ensures that students have the best possible College-life experience and to promote a DBS community and culture that is focused on their wellbeing and success. The Student Experience Team looks after a number of areas including Student Services Hub, Student Welfare and Well-being, Disability and Inclusion, International Office, Clubs and Societies, Student Leadership Programme, and Careers Hub.

Student Engagement & Success Unit

DBS welcomes and supports all new students transitioning to third-level education. As part of this commitment, in 2017 DBS established a Student Engagement and Success Unit (SESU), which aims to help all students transition to their new environment. As part of SESU, a number of student learning supports are offered to both new and continuing students. These include drop-in sessions, including “Tea & Talk”, workshops on topics such as numerical skills, academic writing, economics and digital/IT skills, as well as research skills and referencing delivered by the Library Team.

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

Peer Mentor Programme

The DBS Peer Mentor Programme is designed to give students across DBS the opportunity to represent and mentor students by sharing their stories and experiences of college life. Mentors act as positive role models throughout the year to their respective groups and are sources of information, from orientation through to the end of the year. The mentors support students by fostering a sense of belonging, easing the transition into college life and supporting students academic success. The mentors help make coming to DBS a more welcoming, and less daunting experience. The mentors arrange informal meetings and support sessions to assist students with academic and social integration throughout the year. This student programme is supported by the Student Experience Team.

In the academic year 2024/25 DBS had over 30 peer mentors divided across three areas - programme based, regional (by nation) based, and year-based mentors. Each student mentor is given continuous high quality training throughout the academic year to ensure they are fully engaged in the College experience and best prepared to support their mentees.

Student Council

The DBS Student Council welcomes all students appointed or elected to the role of Class Representative, Peer Mentors, Sports Clubs & Society Leaders and members of the Students Union. The Council acts as a platform for two-way communication between the College and the student body. Students who represent the Student Council are made aware that they are responsible for collecting feedback from the student body and notifying the College regarding any specific issues that arise. In the Academic Year 2024/25 the Student Council held 7 meetings, October, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb, March, and April.

Class Reps

DBS was the first private college to engage with USI to train all Class Reps on the NStep Programme. This programme was launched in 2016 by the HEA, QQI and USI, and applies best principles of student engagement to enhance and enrich the College's interactions with its Class Reps. The class reps, chosen by each class, take a holistic class view and have the interests of the rest of the class as their guide; they fairly and purposefully represent all the other members of the class. The main purpose of being a class rep is to gather views from peers regarding various aspects of the course, student learning experience and wider college experience, feeding this information to the members of staff in DBS for attention.

Blended Learning

DBS's Blended Learning Policy was approved by QQI in 2019 alongside the application for Re-Engagement.

Since then, synchronous online delivery has been utilised alongside face-to-face classroom delivery to provide flexibility for learners, particularly part-time learners. DBS has also been expanding its capacity to develop asynchronous on-demand content which has been incorporated into programmes through the programme review process.

In the academic year 2024/2025 DBS submitted their application for fully online delivery to QQI, in accordance with the QQI Statutory Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes, which were published in 2023.

Development

Decisions over blends of learning modes are pedagogically based and are governed by the ABC Curriculum Design methodology. The creation of content for blended learning programmes is guided by the principles of Universal Design and is in keeping with DBS Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. Materials and resources are reviewed annually. DBS has invested in an audio-visual studio and recruited experienced audio-visual and instructional design staff to facilitate development. The blended module development process ensures that the learning resources are sufficient to cover the indicative syllabus in the module descriptor. The documented and validated process for ensuring the lecturer is qualified to teach the subject applies as it does across DBS. Ongoing training will continue to ensure that faculty are provided with the necessary expertise for delivering a blended curriculum. This comprehensive training covers all elements of the learning experience, encompassing pedagogy, delivery modalities, and the technologies that underpin delivery. Furthermore, it includes guidance for lecturers on creating a secure online environment by fostering a culture that encourages diversity in communication and knowledge exchange.

Before Learning

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

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

demand short lesson, Learning in a Multimodal Environment, with 199 students completing the course since September 2024. The objective of these short lessons is to set clear expectations for engaging in this type of educational experience, including technologies, teaching and learning pedagogies, and class participation and engagement.

During Learning

The timetable distinguishes for learners the different modes of delivery on a blended learning programme, so learners are aware of in-class, online and on-demand learning from the timetable (If applicable to their programme). Each on-demand lesson starts and ends with a summary of the learning covered in the lesson.

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

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

Validation of assessment and moderation of student submissions do not differ from standard documented processes which apply to traditional (non-blended) modules. Use of personal data will be in keeping with DBS Privacy Policy. Programme Coordinators and IT Support are available to learners as with all programmes, as well as feedback mechanisms through student surveys and class rep meetings. DBS uses its virtual learning environment to host all blended learning content, which is secure and convenient for learners.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Please refer to:

[QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:](#)

- [1.3 Academic Research Policy](#)

Research at DBS

Research in DBS is overseen by the Applied Research and Practice sub-committee of the Academic Board. The Committee is made up of research active faculty from across the College, as nominated by the Academic Directors, and staff who support research, including the Research Librarian and a representative of the Ethics Committee. The Practice Research Coordinator, in place since February 2021, drives the College's research strategy, and coordinates with the Library and academic disciplines to focus resources and encourage research in each area.

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

The Practice Research Coordinator produces an annual report each year that includes a record of research outputs from DBS faculty and staff, research support initiatives, funding applications and a summary of the annual Practice Research Conference.

A new research strategy, *Research, Innovation, Practice & Enterprise Strategy 2023-2026* was developed in 2023 and approved by the Academic Board at its February 2024 meeting. This strategy sets out goals and objectives for research in DBS up to 2026, also aligned with SLATE2 and National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, through three pillars:

1. Advancing Research, Enterprise and Innovation for Ethical Societal Impact
2. Research-Led Teaching and the Professional Development of Staff: Promoting Research Excellence and Impactful Outcomes
3. Industry-Focused Research: Fostering Innovation and Driving Enterprise Success through Research

Research outputs and strategic goals are monitored by the Practice Research Coordinator and Research Committee. Research outputs continued to grow throughout 24/25.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Please refer to:

QAH Part A Section Governance:

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

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

o 2.9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:

o Staffing of Academic Programmes Policy

DBS Recruitment Policy

DBS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (HR)

DBS Policy on Staff Members Attending Internal Courses

HR Governance, Policies and Processes

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

Recruitment, Development and Support of Staff

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

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

- Recruitment/selection and induction
- Culture and engagement
- Effective talent management and development
- Performance management
- Health and wellbeing
- Reward and recognition

- HR governance, policies and processes

Recruitment and Selection

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

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

Where appropriate and relevant, jobs are advertised both internally and externally through a variety of media. Applicants apply for the vacancy via the Workday platform. Applicants are screened on the basis of meeting the qualitative and technical criteria of the role through competency-based interviewing. In some instances, where appropriate, applicants are further screened by utilising relevant psychometric tests, for example the Saville Wave personality and aptitude tests and the PRISM neuro linguistic test. Other screening tools include standard reference checking and Garda vetting. All teaching staff are also subject to endorsement by the Academic Appointments Sub Committee (AASC), a sub committee of the Academic Board, which verifies that the proposed appointee to a teaching or supervision role is suited and/or may be in need of some teaching or assessment support.

Induction

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

The pre-onboarding includes:

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

The first day includes:

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

The first week includes:

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

The first three months includes:

- Understanding team goals and KPIs
- Completion of mandatory compliance training modules e.g. Code of Conduct, Information Security and Privacy, GDPR
- A scheduled meeting with the President

At six months - probation

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

Culture and Engagement

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

The DBS values are:

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

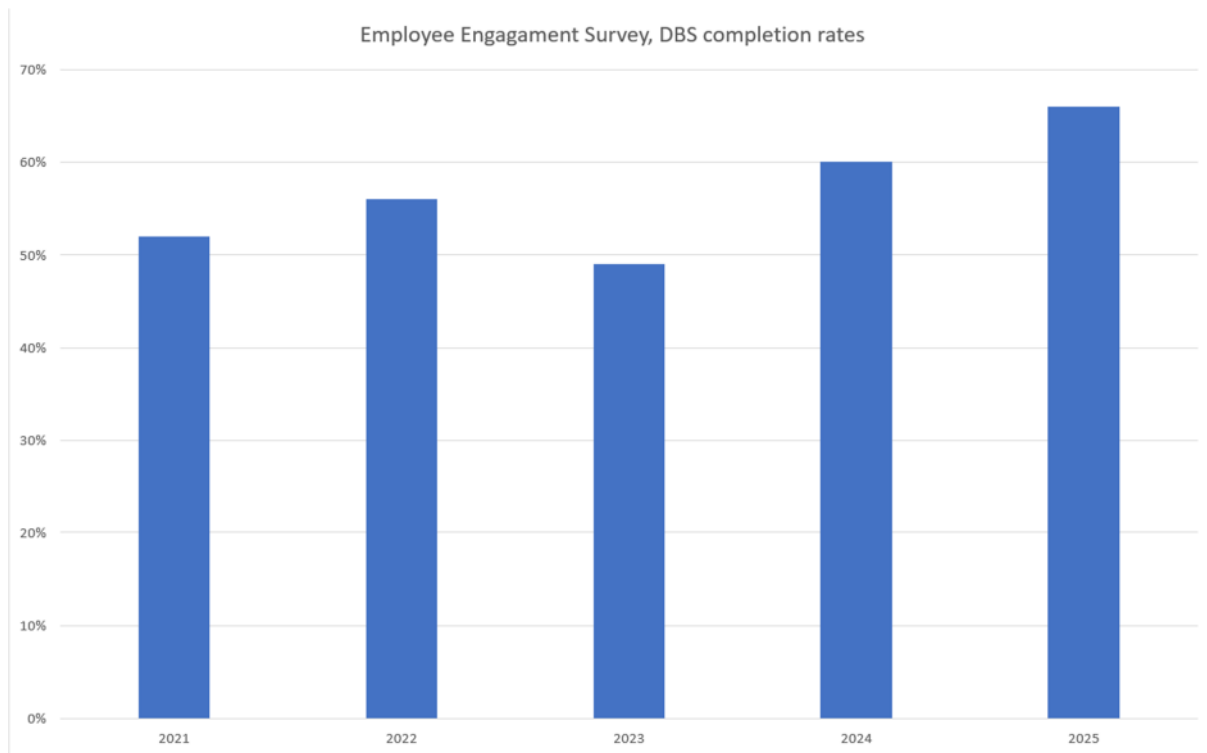
As part of our People and Culture strategy, specifically within the area of employee recognition, reward, and wellbeing, we have introduced a series of initiatives designed to support our staff and foster an engaged, high-performing workforce.

Employee Recognition, Reward and Wellbeing Initiatives

- 'High Five' Recognition Programme: In May 2025, we launched a peer-to-peer recognition initiative that enables staff to acknowledge the contributions of colleagues. Each recognition is intended to reflect behaviours and achievements aligned with DBS's strategic priorities and values.
- High-Potential Programme (Planned for 2026): We will be introducing a structured development pathway to identify, engage, and support high-potential employees. This programme will equip selected staff with the skills, capabilities, and experience needed for future leadership roles within the College.
- Enhanced Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): We have expanded our EAP offering through Spectrum Life, providing confidential counselling, on-demand wellbeing resources, live and digital fitness classes, nutrition support, podcasts, and a range of discounts to support holistic employee wellbeing.
- The President's Award: We have established a new annual honour that recognises outstanding impact, leadership, or service in support of the College's strategy. The first award will be awarded in December 2025. This award reflects our commitment to excellence and underscores the central role our people play in advancing the mission and values of DBS.

These initiatives collectively support the College's strategic objectives. By recognising excellence and meaningful contribution, we reinforce a culture of high performance and continuous improvement, ensuring that staff feel valued and connected to the College. Strengthening wellbeing and resilience across our workforce enhances overall performance and enables our staff to provide the highest level of support to our students.

In relation to assessing staff engagement, each year DBS employees are invited to participate in the Global Kaplan Annual Survey. This survey covers the following areas: continuous improvement, diversity and inclusion, manager relationship, growth and development, intention to stay, teamwork and collaboration. DBS has participated in this programme for six years. Over this period the overall employee engagement has continued to increase incrementally with just one exception in 2021. The graph shows that trend over the past 5 years.



Talent Management and Development

DBS is focused on the talent management and development of its staff. Following a training needs analysis DBS launched a training calendar inviting staff to participate in a range of online courses covering Microsoft Office and soft skill courses such as time management, communication skills and workshops in relation to health and wellbeing. DBS also offers staff and their families the opportunity to study Dublin Business School programmes. Staff can take a course free of charge and family members receive a 25% discount. Details of this are in the [Policy for Staff Members Attending Internal Dublin Business School Courses](#).

In early 2023, DBS implemented a talent management and succession planning strategy to strengthen key functional areas and proactively address potential succession gaps in critical roles. This was to ensure continuity in leadership and operational stability by identifying and developing individuals capable of stepping into essential academic and administrative positions. This allows the College to mitigate risks associated with staff turnover and cultivate a culture of professional development and internal progression.

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

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

Performance Management

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

This process is digitised on the Workday HR platform.

Health and Wellbeing

DBS offers a wide range of support services to its staff members. An Employee Assistance Programme is offered through Laya Healthcare and during the pandemic and our operations and teaching moving online, the DBS HR department launched a series of packs focused on mental and physical well-being. These have continued while operations and teaching returned to on-site, including an on site session with a Chartered Physiotherapist.

Reward and Recognition

Each year, the Kaplan Group celebrates the Kaplan Way Awards. Through the Kaplan Way Awards staff nominate colleagues who have exemplified resilience and brought 'The Kaplan Way' to life. This includes those who have gone above and beyond to further Student Success, helped make Kaplan A Great Place, introduced improvements to Continuously Transform the business, or modelled the Shared Values. DBS also has a monthly *Making a Difference* programme where management nominates staff who have gone above and beyond or made a significant contribution. Recognised employees receive a token of appreciation in the form of a voucher. Initiatives like this help foster a culture of celebrating success and valuing our people.

Separate from this, at the end of each year, DBS also runs an 'Above and Beyond' awards programme to recognise employees whose work and results best exemplify DBS's priorities and values. This is celebrated via a launch event and a recognition award.

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

Recruitment and Onboarding of Faculty

Recruitment of faculty commences with the advertisement of the specified discipline vacancy on via the DBS LinkedIn account and on the DBS website. The advertisement must include the requisite academic qualifications, business experience and person specification. Only candidates that satisfy the minimum criteria specified are considered for the interview stage. Applications are screened by the Faculty Manager and Academic Director and a short-list of qualified candidates is drawn up and invited to present for an interview. An interview panel is constituted which is normally chaired by the Faculty Manager or Academic Director or Subject Expert. For all lecturer appointments, candidates are required to give a 10-15 minute presentation on an allocated topic within their subject area.

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

In advance of a contract being issued HR ensures:

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

All contracts include a probation period of 6 months.

Induction and Orientation of New Faculty

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

As part of the induction 'pathway' process, the new lecturer meets with the Faculty Manager, Academic Director and the Learning Unit to cover key functional and teaching, learning and assessment areas:

Faculty Manager:

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

Assistant Faculty Manager:

- Arranges induction with the Exams Team
- Arranges induction with the Library Team

Academic Director:

- Introduces the lecturer to the Lecturer Handbook, *Quality Assurance Handbook* and Learner Code of Conduct

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

Learning Unit:

- Familiarises new faculty with DBS Quality Standards for benchmarking their learning, teaching and assessment practices.
- Recommends best pedagogical approaches for lecturers in their specific learning and teaching contexts.
- Assists with the preparation and planning of module delivery.
- Assists with understanding and planning assessment strategies for specific modules.
- Shows the lecturer how to use Moodle and Moodle functionalities, and other EdTech tools (such as Zoom, Vevox, Medial).
- Directs the lecturer to asynchronous teaching and learning content on training and development Moodle page, and other CPD opportunities.

The Management of Faculty

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

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

- Student feedback from the formal student questionnaires
- Class representative feedback
- Feedback from Academic Directors
- Attendance at relevant meetings such as programme team meetings, faculty meeting and examination boards
- Moodle audits (to ensure Moodle pages are populated with sufficient information and to the required standard)
- Engagement with training sessions and CPD events
- Timely submission of exam papers/submission of marks to Moodle and submission of the necessary supporting documentation
- Engagement with new technologies and new methods of teaching
- Contribution to curriculum development

Learning Unit - Faculty Training & Support for Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Introduction

DBS provides a multi-faceted approach to teaching and learning training and support for faculty. During the period 2024-2025, the Learning Unit (LU) continued to provide comprehensive pedagogical, technological and developmental support to faculty across DBS. Building on its established remit, LU expanded its activities to strengthen teaching quality, enhance digital competence, and support innovation in learning, teaching and assessment (LT&A).

New Initiatives

Faculty HEA/NF Open Course Badge - GenAI for Teaching and Learning

The LU also hosted two national-level professional development events in partnership with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: 'GenAI for Teaching and Learning: How to Do It Right'. These sessions were designed to build staff AI literacy and empower faculty to confidently and ethically explore the use of Generative AI (GenAI) within their learning, teaching and assessment practices. Across the two iterations, 32 staff members successfully met the course

requirements and were awarded a digital badge. Participants were asked to complete anonymous initial and final evaluation surveys for each iteration, and their responses can be found in this folder. The participants were asked to complete anonymous initial and final evaluation surveys for each iteration, and their responses can be found in this folder.

Ongoing Training and CPD

The LU continued to deliver a comprehensive range of ongoing training and CPD support and programmes.

New Faculty Pathway

Between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025, forty five new faculty members completed the LU Induction Session. This one-to-one training introduced lecturers to the DBS learning ecosystem, covering:

- Learner profile
- Moodle essentials: course design, content management, activity setup, assessment workflows, feedback, communication
- Multimodal teaching strategies for hyflex, online and in-person delivery
- Planning and preparation for learning, teaching and assessment
- Educational technology and EdTech tools
- Access to online guides, templates, CPD lessons and training videos
- Library and research supports integrated within Moodle pages

Classroom Technology Training

In collaboration with the IT Helpdesk, the LU delivered targeted training to ensure faculty could confidently use classroom technologies. Sessions covered:

- Classroom AV setup, including computers, screens, interactive smartboards, webcams, microphones and projectors.
- Integrating Zoom and Moodle for synchronous delivery and recordings
- Use of personal devices and troubleshooting common issues
- Lecture capture and streaming using Zoom
- Vevox for learner engagement
- Medial for student video assessment submission
- Using classroom console features to enhance hyflex delivery
- Hands-on demonstrations and Q&A
- Best practice for online and hyflex teaching

This initiative not only strengthened faculty digital competence but also enhanced cross-unit collaboration and reduced technology-related support requests.

Module Pathway Course

From 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, thirty nine new lecturers received the Module Pathway Badge. The course provides structured, self-paced support for preparing and delivering modules, incorporating guidance on curriculum adaptation, integrating new technologies and addressing learner diversity. Its on-demand format ensures accessible, flexible professional development.

RESq and Other Drop-In Support Sessions

The LU, in collaboration with the Exams Office, facilitated forty seven RESq drop-in clinics during this period. The RESq sessions are a recurring series of training, drop-in workshops for faculty.

The main topics covered across the RESq sessions include:

- **Assessment and Grading Processes**
 - Grading rubrics and feedback
 - Providing specific administrative links and guides for steps such as entering grades into Moodle, preparing assessment samples, releasing results, conducting moderation and completing the full process up to ratification at the Exam Board
- **Generative AI and Academic Integrity**
 - Addressing the impact of Generative AI (GenAI), including the need to rethink grade rubrics for the age of GenAI, a course on "GenAI for Teaching and Learning," and unpacking the "Using GenAI in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Universities" publication
 - The EU AI Act and its potential implications for Higher Education, especially concerning high-risk AI systems in educational training
 - Academic Impropriety Form and the status of Academic Integrity investigations
- **Inclusive Pedagogy and Learning Design**
 - Various aspects of inclusive teaching practices and design
 - Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in planning and learning design, with reference to the DBS Quality Standards for Learning and Teaching
 - Alternative assessment methods, such Interactive Oral Assessment (IOA) and video assessment
 - Enhancing feedback and grading practices, with links to relevant CPD badges
 - Tools for student engagement, including the use of Vevox for live polling and Q&A
- **Moodle Updates**

- Planning for the new term, specifically focusing on practical ways to organise and prepare Moodle module pages
 - Previews and practical impacts of the Moodle 4.5 upgrade
- Enhancing Engagement
 - Vevox polls and surveys

Moodle Upgrade (Version 4.5)

In June 2025, Moodle was upgraded to Version 4.5. The LU supported this transition through:

- Faculty workshops introducing new features
- Updated training resources, how-to videos and guides

Key benefits of the upgrade included:

- A more streamlined appearance with clearer section expand/collapse toggles and a cleaner layout
- Enhanced assignment features including bulk actions.
- The ability to record screen directly in the text editor, and better course organisation tools.
- Personalised notifications, students receive more timely alerts for upcoming or overdue assignments and quizzes.

Online Only Validation

The LU developed a sample Moodle page containing exemplar content, activities and resources to demonstrate a pedagogical approach to online course delivery. The design was informed by the ABC framework, Laurillard's six learning types (with an added type 'Reflection'), as well as principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the Community of Inquiry (COI) model. This sample page serves as a practical illustration of how these theoretical frameworks can be applied to enhance engagement, accessibility and meaningful learning in an online only environment.

Faculty Hub Moodle pages

In collaboration with Academic Directors, Assistant Academic Directors and Programme Level Managers, the LU created Faculty Hub pages in Moodle. These hubs are populated by an assigned academic leader and serve as a central access point for key programme documents and information, ensuring that faculty have reliable, up-to-date resources accessed from one place. By streamlining access, the initiative enhances efficiency and supports consistency.

Staff Training and Resources

Staff training materials, including videos, guides and templates, were updated on the Staff Training & Resources page on Moodle to support faculty requirements. The staff intranet was also refreshed and enhanced. A new addition this year was the 'Staff Spotlight' page, created to showcase examples of best practice across the community and highlight innovative initiatives led by lecturers.

Faculty Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

DBS offers CPD on three levels:

- The Learning Unit delivers the mandatory on demand module pathway for all incoming faculty as outlined in the previous section.
- Formal short courses designed by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.
- Access to AdvanceHE fellowships through institutional access membership.

Programme-Based Training and Support

DBS is developing a programme-based approach to enhancing the quality of the learning environment. There are two aspects to this enhancement: bespoke targeted training to address identified quality issues in the delivery of a programme and a peer-based teaching observation and feedback scheme under the guidance of the Academic Director. The peer-based teaching observation invites participants to consider the quality of each other's learning environment against criteria and devise actions to enhance the learning environment. Both these initiatives are at the nascent stage of development. The peer-based teaching observation is currently focussed on the quality of teaching content, with assessment moderators also tasked with reviewing teaching content and the layout of the Moodle pages. Observation of recordings and peer feedback on delivery is not taking place as a matter of course, but only when an issue with the teaching delivery has emerged through learner feedback or moderation of the teaching content. Moderation of content and observation of recordings can lead to bespoke training by the Learning Unit at the request of the Faculty Manager and/or Academic Director.

6.0 Information and Data Management

please refer to:

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

o 2.5 Student Records and Data Retention Policy

o 2.8 Learning Analytics Policy

Student Guide to Learning Analytics

Student Engagement Dashboard User Guide

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

Collection and use of data complies with GDPR and privacy legislation at all times. DBS Privacy Policy is available on the website here: <https://www.dbs.ie/privacy-policy>

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

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

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

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

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

- Week 1 -Moodle activity
- Week 3 -Moodle activity and attendance
- Week 6 - Moodle activity, attendance and CA submission
- Week 9 - Moodle activity, attendance, CA submission and fees paid

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

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

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

Retention and Completion

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

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

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

Retention figures are provided to Academic Directors and the Academic Dean team, which includes Academic Learner Support and Faculty support. The retention figures inform discipline and institute-wide initiatives to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and assessment content and delivery. Where the retention figures throw up anomalies, Learner Support, Academic Directors and Faculty support come together to devise bespoke initiatives to target those anomalies. Additionally, semi-annual Learning Reviews are carried out and presented by the Academic Dean and College President to Kaplan, where DBS reports on its measures of student success-Academic Performance, Student Satisfaction and Student Advancement-and initiatives to improve DBS's performance in those areas.

Completion is defined as the percentage of students who successfully complete a programme on time or plus one year. As with retention data, and the other mechanisms used to measure student success, completion rates feed into discipline and institute-wide initiatives to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and assessment content and delivery. Completion rates are captured on a programme level-basis, which allows for programme comparison within and across disciplines.

Student Feedback at DBS

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

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

Student feedback is gathered through a variety of mechanisms:

- Class Representative Meetings
- Student Council
- NStEP Class Rep Feedback Cycle
- HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey
- Student Council
- Module Survey
- Focus Groups
- Compliments and Complaints.

The Academic Board established the Feedback Review Working Group in early 2025 to address student concerns regarding assessment feedback. Tasked with analyzing existing issues and proposing improvements. One initiative that the working group has introduced has been the mandatory centralization of feedback through Moodle.

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

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Public Information and Communication

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

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

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

Provision of Information for Prospective Learners

Published information on programmes for learners includes:

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

Examples of the College's main publications include:

- [DBS Strategic Plan](#)
- [DBS Quality Assurance Handbook](#)
- [Programme Review and Validation Reports](#)
- [DBS Student Handbooks](#)
- [DBS Undergraduate](#)
- [DBS Postgraduate](#)

Other platforms DBS use to disseminate information and updates, as follows:

Social Networking Sites

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

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

College e-Newsletter

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

College Prospectuses and Marketing Materials

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

College Open Events and Information Sessions

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

Participation in Conferences, and Educational Recruitment Fairs

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

School Visits

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

Corporate Development

DBS through its student recruitment function carry out corporate development activities as overseen by the Sales Manager who works with employers, the corporate sector and other stakeholders. They have responsibility for coordinating tenders through e-tenders.ie for programme development and working on any bespoke offerings companies may have.

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

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

lease refer to:

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

O 2.2 Quality Assurance Policy

O 2.3 Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Policy

O 2.4 Risk Management Policy

O 2.5 Student Records and Data Retention Policy

O 2.8 Learning Analytics Policy

QAH Part B Section 6 Examination Boards and Awards Classifications:

O 6.1 External Monitoring of Programmes Policy

QAH Part C Section 2 Programme Development and Review

Dublin Business School's Self-Evaluation Principles

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

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

- External evaluation of QA processes and procedures is undertaken by QQI through Institutional Review.

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

Self-Evaluation and Monitoring

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

- Programmes are progressing satisfactorily both operationally and academically.
- Teaching schemes are appropriate to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes of the module and programme.
- Assessment methods are appropriate to determine the achievement of the learning outcomes for the different modules and are distributed appropriately throughout the academic year.
- Academic staff remain current and relevant and engaged in scholarly activity and/or research as appropriate.
- Academic procedures are being followed.
- The suitability of existing programmes to meet the current and future needs of learners is assessed.
- The programmes remain current and relevant to employers.
- Future requirements for programmes, and hence future programme development, to allow the institution to continue to meet the needs of the learner, to encourage learner progression and to appeal to prospective learners in the future are identified.
- DBS undertook QQI's Cinnte Review, Institutional Review, during 2024

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

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

External Independent Experts

As described in Section A1.1 above, the DBS Board of Directors includes two independent non-executive directors, one with higher education experience and one with business experience. The Academic Board membership includes an independent Chair and independent academic member, both with significant experience in higher education.

Proposed External Examiners are nominated by members of the programme team and endorsed by the relevant Academic Director based on the criteria as indicated in the External Monitoring of Programmes Policy (*Quality Assurance Handbook*, Part B Section 6.1). The nominating Academic Director completes the form 'Application for Appointment of New External Examiner', which is accompanied by the candidate's Curriculum Vitae. This nomination is then reviewed/approved by the Academic Appointments Sub-Committee on behalf of the Academic Board. Conditions imposed by professional bodies, such as The Honourable Society of King's Inns, must also be met.

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

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

- Exam Paper approval (in advance of exam sittings, a review of exam papers to ensure appropriate setting and standard for the academic level, and that they assess the module's Learning Outcomes)
- Assessment Sample review (following final assessments, a review of a sample of assessed material, both coursework and examination scripts, to determine whether the grading awarded is appropriate and valid, and the Learning Outcomes are being appropriately demonstrated in the assessment strategy)
- Exam Boards (attending the ratification process to observe and contribute to consideration of borderline awards, and have sight of the overall performance of modules and individuals in the larger context of their programmes and cohorts)
- Annual Reporting (following the final Exam Board of the academic year, a summary reflection and commentary on all assessments and material viewed, in addition to College processes and performance of facilitating external review and ratifying grades).

Programme Validation and Review

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

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

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

CINNTE Review

Dublin Business School (DBS) received seventeen recommendations from the independent Cinnnte panel in 2024. Our comprehensive action plan, submitted in the first quarter of 2025, outlined our response to these recommendations. This response involved subdividing the recommendations into forty-eight distinct sub-actions. The update on the actions during the reporting period of the Annual Quality Report associated with these 17 recommendations are outlined below:

Item	Recommendation	Planned Actions	Commentary	Status	Supporting Evidence
1	DBS improves 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.	1.1 Set up a working group on student feedback to gather insights into the challenges that are facing us.	During 2025, a working group was established and led by the Assistant Registrar with stakeholders from across the college, to put in place a new policy on Student Feedback.	Complete (March 2025)	ToR Feedback Review Working Group
		1.2 Review, redesign, and implement enhanced student feedback mechanisms, focusing on timely collection, thorough analysis, and clear communication of actions taken (closing the loop)	A new policy was developed by the working group and approved by the Academic Board at our September board meeting. The policy was shared with the student council in September and has been in effect since September 2025.	Complete (August 2025)	Quality Assurance Handbook Section 5: Assessment Regulations
		1.3 Develop and implement a revised overarching communication plan addressing internal and external stakeholders, ensuring clarity, accuracy, and accessibility of	We are in the process of developing this communication plan and expect to have it signed off and operational in Q1 of 2026.	In progress	n/a

		QA-related information.			
2	DBS should 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	2.1 Consider mechanisms to improve tracking of faculty engagement with training, support and interventions.	The current reliance on spreadsheets is undermining the ability of line managers to track engagement. Extending the use of our LMS environment is intended to address this.	In progress	n/a
2.2 Ensure outcomes of training and supports are followed up and the feedback loop is closed.		The intention is to establish a clear link between a faculty support activity: participation in technology workshops, for example, and the application of that technology in class.	In progress	n/a	
2.3 Continue to keep training needs under review and respond proactively, particularly with respect to emerging technologies.		DBS proactively reviews its Faculty training through the offering of Digital Badges. Current offerings cover essential pillars such as Moderation, Copyright and Teaching Content, The Importance of Feedback and a Guide to Marking and Grading. To address emerging technologies and	Complete	n/a	

			shifting academic needs, further badges are currently in development, informed by ongoing training needs analysis		
3	DBS continues to enhance its decision-making criteria by establishing appropriate mechanisms for training stakeholders involved in one or all stages of programme development.	3.1 To ensure streamlined and effective processes, review the resourcing and workflows of teams undertaking and managing programme development and review, panel coordination and liaison with the awarding bodies.	Following the appointment of a Portfolio Performance Manager, DBS has strengthened how programme development and review activity is coordinated and overseen across the College. The role provides a single point of responsibility for ensuring consistent practice across disciplines, identifying risks and gaps early in the development cycle, and supporting timely, well-informed decision-making by all stakeholders. This has improved visibility of progress, clarified ownership at each stage, and reinforced	Complete	n/a

			alignment between academic, regulatory, and operational timelines.		
		3.2 Set out additional internal training and guidelines for new team members undertaking the review or development process.	As part of the role, the Portfolio Performance Manager has reviewed recent programme development and review activity to identify effective practice and strong examples of documentation and narrative structure. An onboarding approach has been mapped for staff who are new to these processes, as well as for those returning under the updated framework, ensuring clarity on expectations and sequencing. Where appropriate, this is supported through peer-to-peer engagement, allowing experienced colleagues to support and guide others through the process.	Complete	n/a

		<p>3.3 Consider the process for Programme Review and Revalidation such that the Programme Review part is given greater focus and is a clear input to the programme changes.</p>	<p>A key element of the Portfolio Performance Manager role is to ensure that Programme Review activity is applied consistently across all disciplines and used as a meaningful input into programme development and revalidation. The approach builds on existing practice by placing greater structure around how year-on-year review findings inform incremental improvements, rather than treating review as a standalone exercise. This strengthens the link between continuous enhancement and formal revalidation, ensuring decisions are better evidenced and improvements are clearly tracked over time. Once this role is embedded over the coming months, we are confident</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>n/a</p>
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			that it will address this action.		
4	DBS reviews 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.	4.1 Review and develop communication strategy	We are in the process of developing this communication plan and expect to have it signed off and operational in Q1 of 2026.	In progress	n/a
		4.2 Implement phase 2 of SCCM project, utilising the latest functions of our CRM platform	Phase 2 of our Student Contact Center Management project went live in August 2025.	Complete	n/a
		4.3 Ensure training for all relevant stakeholders	Training was provided where required and will continue to be provided with future updates or to new staff.	Complete	n/a
5	DBS continues to build strong partnerships with industry to increase opportunities for internships and placements for students, especially for international students.	5.1 Have a Careers Coach sitting on each Industry Advisory Board- promoting placement opportunities and benefits to employers	DBS has five IABs across the Finance, Marketing, Business, ICT and Creative Media & Sound disciplines. A Careers Coach is a member of each Board. The DBS IABs' purpose is to: Have employer needs and ideas	Complete	IAB Membership Draft Business and Marketing

			<p>included in our programmes</p> <p>Develop a network of employers who become advocates of DBS programmes</p> <p>Establish work placements for DBS students amongst our network of employers</p> <p>Increase the proportion of DBS graduates in employment</p> <p>Establish a system whereby staff/student projects or dissertations are taken from live industry needs.</p>		
		<p>5.2 Issue updates to employer contacts of upcoming placement opportunities and dates</p>	<p>DBS communicates upcoming placement opportunities to all employer contacts through the following channels: IABs, Employer Representative Bodies, existing employer database and contacts, employers who previously took students on placement, industry</p>	<p>complete</p>	<p>n/a</p>

			contacts through faculty, alumni network.		
		5.3 Develop links with Employer representative bodies as a medium for promoting placement opportunities	DBS have developed and nurtured strong links with IBEC, Ireland's largest and most influential business representative and lobbying organization. DBS also partners with and is a member of AI Ireland, which connects SMEs, large enterprises, researchers, and leaders, by promoting adoption, fostering digital literacy, facilitating collaboration, and recognizing innovation in the field of AI. DBS continues to foster links with other employer groups.	complete	n/a
6	DBS continues to build research capacity and further encourages faculty and students to publish their research findings in	6.1 Increase recorded research outputs.	DBS has continued to record year-on-year growth in research outputs, based on internal research reporting and staff activity	complete	n/a

	reputable journals and conferences.		<p>data. Increased engagement in the DBS Practical Applied Research Conference (PARC) and the HECA Research Conference has contributed to this, alongside higher levels of research participation from both existing faculty and recent academic appointments. While student research outputs are not formally captured in these figures, student involvement in research dissemination has also increased during this period.</p>		
	6.2 Garner external funding for research projects across the College.		<p>DBS has actively engaged in two EU research funding collaborations and one Shared Island funding initiative during the reporting period. While these applications were not successful, participation has strengthened institutional</p>	complete	n/a

		<p>experience in large-scale funding bids, expanded research partnerships, and widened future funding potential. DBS acted as lead institution on the most recent EU funding application, reflecting growing confidence and capability in this area.</p>		
	6.3 Expand research outreach both internally and externally, using the Practical Applied Research Conference as a vehicle to enable additional collaboration with Irish and international partners.	<p>The Practical Applied Research Conference (PARC) continues to run successfully on an annual basis, with contributions from established external partners as well as a wide range of HECA collaborators. DBS staff and students participate actively in the HECA Research Conference each year, with DBS staff playing a central role in organising the event. To date, two of the four HECA Research Conferences have been hosted at</p>	complete	n/a

			DBS, supporting both national and international research engagement.		
7	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.	7.1 The Placement Handbook and process was extensively updated during the programme review cycle in the academic year 2024/25.	The Placement Handbook and associated processes were comprehensively reviewed and updated as part of the 2024/25 programme review cycle. Updates focused on clarifying guidance for students on ethical approval for placements, strengthening alignment with module and programme learning outcomes, and signposting learners to relevant on-demand resources, including materials on research ethics. While a consistent core framework is now in place, some discipline-specific variation remains to reflect differing professional and regulatory requirements.	in progress	Sample Placement Handbook

			Further consolidation and sharing of practice is being addressed through subsequent planned actions, including cross-college review via the proposed Placements Working Group.		
		7.2 The Academic Director for Business, Marketing and Law has undertaken to convene a Working Group for Placements.	The Placements Working Group has been established under the oversight of the Academic Director for Business, Marketing and Law. The group provides structured oversight of placement activity, including ethical considerations, student guidance, and consistency of practice across programmes, and supports ongoing review and sharing of good practice at College level.	complete	Placement Working Group Agenda/Minutes
		7.3 The Placement Coordinator works with a member of the academic team to	A Placements Working Group has been convened under the oversight of the Academic Director for	in progress	as above

		ensure learner's choice of placements is aligned with achievement of learning outcomes and is therefore appropriate, with ethical considerations forming part of this process.	Business, Marketing and Law. The group provides a formal forum to review placement policies and practices, with particular attention to ethical approval, student guidance, and consistency of approach across programmes. Its remit includes sharing good practice across discipline areas and ensuring that placement processes remain aligned with programme learning outcomes and quality assurance requirements.		
8	DBS continues 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.	8.1 Learning Unit to provide regular guidance and training on GenAI	Ongoing support is provided by our Learning Unit, which will, when appropriate, focus on any new AI initiatives or policy changes.	complete	Learning Unit Report
		8.2 Update guidance to learners on appropriate use of GenAI	Ongoing communication with learners, including at induction, on the appropriate use of GenAI. A new	complete	n/a

			Academic Integrity induction was launched in September 2025, which covers the use of GenAI.		
		8.3 Update policies associated with GenAI	Our policy on GenAI was published and shared during Q3 of 2025.	complete	GenAI Policy Quality Assurance Handbook
9	DBS ensures 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.	9.1 Establish working group on feedback to determine best way forward	see 1.1 above	Complete (March 2025)	ToR Feedback Review Working Group
		9.2 Develop clear policies for faculty to assist in helping them meet our requirements	To assist faculty in meeting institutional requirements, all policies relating to assessment were comprehensively reviewed during Q2 of 2025. These policies were subsequently updated in the Quality Assurance Handbook, with particular attention paid to improving feedback quality and ensuring strict assessment deadline adherence. These updated policies have been published on the	complete	Assessment Marking, Feedback and Moderation Policy Quality Assurance Handbook

		<p>college website for easy access by both faculty and staff; furthermore, college-wide communication was circulated to the staff and student body to specifically highlight these developments. To ensure the revisions addressed real-world academic challenges, the Student Council was involved in an active consultation process regarding the main issues students encounter, directly informing the final policy refinements.</p>		
	<p>9.3 Communicate to both faculty and learners the expectations on all stakeholders</p>	<p>To assist faculty in meeting institutional requirements, all policies relating to assessment were comprehensively reviewed during Q2 of 2025. These policies were subsequently updated in the Quality Assurance Handbook, with particular attention</p>	<p>complete</p>	<p>n/a</p>

			<p>paid to improving feedback quality and ensuring strict assessment deadline adherence. These updated policies have been published on the college website for easy access by both faculty and staff; furthermore, college-wide communication was circulated to the staff and student body to specifically highlight these developments. To ensure the revisions addressed real-world academic challenges, the Student Council was involved in an active consultation process regarding the main issues students encounter, directly informing the final policy refinements.</p>		
10	DBS addresses the gaps in supports provided to students to fully	10.1 Implement phase 2 of our SCCM, increasing the	Phase 2 of our Student Contact Center Management	complete	n/a

	align with the most critical stages of the 'student journey'.	knowledge base of FAQs	project went live in August 2025.		
		10.2 Enhance support provided to students pre arrival, particularly around accommodation information and onboarding	A revised induction and onboarding programme was put in place in September 2025 to address this recommendation. Pre arrival accommodation sessions are now provided to all International students, giving advice on accommodation options and first refusal on DBS sourced accommodation. The DBS Student Experience Team also vet and inspect accommodation for any International Students to ensure it is not fraudulent if they cannot inspect themselves. The Disability and Inclusion Officer reaches out to all students who have indicated a disability on their application form pre course commencement, to ensure appropriate	complete	n/a

			supports and documentation are in place.		
		10.3 Improve access for Disability and wellbeing queries, creating a quicker direct route to professional support staff, critically in the case of emergency assistance required	Faculty and Support Staff have clear instructions, required actions and contact details in the event of a mental health, safety concern, or other student emergency. A number of triggers have been built in the SCCM, where key words (such as suicide ideation) create an alarm which goes to professionally trained staff (Assist-Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) to action. Triggers have also been built for disability queries creating an easy to navigate path to the Disability Office	complete	n/a
11	DBS continues to engage with both students and faculty staff to ensure that student supports are embedded more	11.1 Review, revise, and update the asynchronous induction content on the Student Portal,	The asynchronous content on the student portal has been reviewed, updated and revised and was live ahead of the	complete	n/a

	effectively into the overall learning experience.	incorporating input from student feedback sessions and faculty consultations.	September 2025 intake.		
		11.2 Determine the need for late Inductions for January and April intake students based on student needs and faculty observations	A late induction will take place as a simu-live induction (re-run of the initial induction) on Wednesday of Week 1 of the semester. SESU will facilitate a Tea & Talk session on Zoom on Friday of Week 1 to address any induction-related queries from students. Admissions will have access to the induction folder and recordings to share with any students who fall outside of the late arrivals window.	complete	n/a
		11.3 Review all student support workshops currently offered by the Student Engagement and Success Unit and the Library, soliciting	To ensure there is no overlap we have reviewed all workshop content, and also renamed some workshops so it is clear as to their content and purpose. To ensure	complete	Library Support Workshops

		feedback from both students and faculty to ensure there is no overlap and that there is clarity on workshop availability	clarity on workshop availability we have reviewed the booking system on the library website and also streamlined the Academic Writing workshops.		
12	DBS establishes a systematic approach for managing and reporting academic misconduct across the institution that is consistent with national and international best practice.	12.1 Review existing policies to develop a Robust Framework & Proactive Education that establishes a clear, comprehensive Academic Misconduct Policy aligned with QQI standards and international best practices.	All policies were reviewed throughout 2025, and reported up to our board via our Audit & Risk Committee. Alongside this process included the Academic Misconduct Policy, which upon review, is now made up of two other policies, relating to Academic Impropriety and a separate disciplinary policy.	Complete	All Quality Assurance Handbook Links
		12.2 Implement proactive educational strategies for both students (induction, embedded skills, AI use guidelines) and staff (training on detection,	Updated student induction to include a renewed focus on the appropriate use of GenAI. Separately, our Learning Unit delivers regular training sessions on Assessment	complete	n/a

		<p>policy, and designing fair assessments) to prevent misconduct and foster a culture of integrity.</p>	<p>creation, grading, and use of GenAI.</p>		
		<p>12.3 Ensure Systematic Oversight & Continuous Improvement: Maintain centralized, secure record-keeping of all cases (GDPR compliant) to enable internal reporting to academic governance bodies.</p> <p>Use this data to analyze trends, identify areas for improvement, and periodically review and update the policy and procedures, ensuring ongoing effectiveness and alignment with national requirements (e.g., QQI reporting) and best practices.</p>	<p>While we believe that we are well advanced with this recommendation, we want to be in a position to provide evidential assurance before closing.</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>n/a</p>

13	DBS further reviews the Complaints Policy with the aim of removing redundant and/or duplicated material as appropriate.	13.1 Review our complaints policy as per recommendation	Policy reviewed during 2025 and approved at Academic Board.	complete	QAH Part B Section 3 Learner Conduct Appeals and Complaints
		13.2 Follow up review to ensure efficient operation of policy	Following a small number of uses, the policy was deemed to be effective. We will keep it under review on a cyclical basis to ensure we are fit for purpose	complete	n/a
14	DBS further develops 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.	14.1 Record and track the following student KPIs: Retention rate, progression rate, student satisfaction score (NPS)	These metrics are recorded either annually or quarterly, and presented to our Academic Board and Governance Board at regular intervals.	complete	n/a
		14.2 Record and track the following; Research output, staff participation in research activities	Our Practice Research Coordinator (PRC) manages this task throughout the year and data is available to support this. The PRC solicits input from faculty through various channels and at regular intervals to ensure an up to date record is maintained.	complete	

		<p>14.3 Analysis of themes and recommendations from external examiner reports and peer review processes.</p>	<p>The overall academic review confirms a strong quality foundation, particularly in the professional conduct of Exam Boards and the successful use of real-world, practical assignments. However, future efforts must urgently address the need for greater clarity and consistency in marking, which requires providing more detailed feedback and using clear, standardized grading rubrics. The other critical focus areas are quickly updating assessment methods to counter Generative AI threats by shifting to in-person and practical formats, and streamlining administrative processes for timely and organized documentation submission.</p>	<p>complete</p>	<p>n/a</p>
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15	DBS ensures 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.	15.1 Explicitly integrate Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) considerations and impact assessments into all QA review processes where practical, including programme reviews.	This is covered in section 6.11 of programme documents. We also have an active EDI policy and a number of initiatives in place, including the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities initiative and a new Accessibility Policy that was implemented in June 2025.	complete	DBS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy AQR 2026 Accessibility Policy Quality Assurance Handbook
		15.2 Integrate Universal Design into new DBS website, and all learning resources and materials	We expect our website to be live later this year due to a delay with competing projects.	in progress	n/a
		15.3 Implement actions of AthenaSwan Bronze Award (awarded in Dec 2024)	All actions that are due for implementation within the current timeframe have been completed. The accreditation with AthenaSwan requires constant implementation of these actions.	complete	n/a
16	The Academic Board ensures that the Programme Board Reports template is adopted	16.1 Raise at Academic Board for roll out post July 2025	This was brought to our December 2025 Academic Board where it was approved.	complete	n/a

	consistently and systematically across all programmes and that actions are followed up on as appropriate within an agreed reporting period.	16.2 Review for operational consistency	The plan is to allow some time since the December Academic Board before reviewing. The first review is due to be carried out towards the end of Q1 2026.	in progress	n/a
17	DBS moves forward to implement a periodic review cycle for professional support services (i.e., non-academic supports).	17.1 SOP and Policy review	All SOPs and Policies were reviewed during 2025, and are due for review again in two years.	complete	n/a
		17.2 Implement phase 2 of our Student Contact Centre Management project	This is now live since August 2025.	complete	n/a



Stages in Programme Development

Programme Review similarly proceeds through a series of stages:

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

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	6
Awarding bodies	3
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	IAHIP (Irish Association of Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24189 Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling & Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24185
Date of accreditation or last review	30/06/2024
Date of next review	30/6/2029

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	PSI (Psychological Society of Ireland)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24168

	Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24169
Date of accreditation or last review	06/03/2025
Date of next review	01/03/2030

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Counselling & Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24188
Date of accreditation or last review	13/12//2025
Date of next review	13/12/2031

4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Law Society, King's Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Laws (Honours) https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24186
Date of accreditation or last review	15/03/2024
Date of next review	03/2029

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Library Association of Ireland (LAI)

Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Information and Library Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24214 Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24215
Date of accreditation or last review	30/01/2025
Date of next review	01/05/2026

6. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PSRB
Name of body:	CIPD
Programme titles and links to publications	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24393
Date of accreditation or last review	25/03/2022
Date of next review	25/03/2026

7. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	AWARDING BODY
Name of body:	ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Accounting & Finance https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166

Date of accreditation or last review	31/08/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029

8. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	AWARDING BODY
Name of body:	PMI (Project Management Institute)
Programme titles and links to publications	Advanced Diploma in Project Management https://www.dbs.ie/course/professional-evening-diploma/part-time-evening-diploma-in-advanced-project-management-dublin-business-school
Date of accreditation or last review	March 2025
Date of next review	March 2026

9. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	AWARDING BODY
Name of body:	KPA (Kaplan Professional Awards)
Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma in Accounting & Finance https://kaplanpa.co.uk/docs/default-source/pdfs/kpa-level-4-diploma-in-accounting-and-finance-rqf.pdf?sfvrsn=f2bab25_4
Date of accreditation or last review	22/05/2025
Date of next review	22/05/2026

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	7
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1.	Collaborative programme
Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	KPTM
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG25750
Date of last review	16/02/2024
Date of next review	30/08/2029

2.	Collaborative programme
Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	
Name of body (/bodies):	EU Business School
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166

Date of last review	12/11/2024
Date of next review	12/11/2029

3. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	EU Business School
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Business Administration https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24549
Date of last review	15/11/2024
Date of next review	15/11/2029

4. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Sound Training College
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production and Music Project Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG25839
Date of last review	19/04/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029

5. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
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Name of body (/bodies):	Sound Training College
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG25840
Date of last review	19/04/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029

6. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	UNYP
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Business Analytics - https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24864
Date of last review	27/09/2024
Date of next review	27/09/2029

7. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	UNYP
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Digital Marketing and Analytics - https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24867
Date of last review	01/09/2023
Date of next review	31/12/2026

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an **articulation agreement** may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Articulation agreements - Total number	115
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1. Articulation agreement:	Nanjing University of Finance & Economics (NUFE)
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – NUFEE is a public, degree-awarding University under China's Ministry of Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Accounting
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	12th May 2025
Date of next review	12 th May 2029
Detail of the agreement	NUFE is a well established University located in Nanjing, China. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with a minimum of 141 Chinese credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance programme. The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining

	where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.
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2. Articulation agreement:	Millat Umidi University, Tashkent - Uzbekistan
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Millat Umidi University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Applied Accounting & Finance
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	31 st July 2025
Date of next review	31 st July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Millat Umidi University Tashkent is a private Higher Education Institution based in Uzbekistan. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance.</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>
3. Articulation agreement:	Millat Umidi University, Tashkent - Uzbekistan
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Millat Umidi University
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Business Management

Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	31 st July 2025
Date of next review	31 st July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Millat Umidi University Tashkent is a private Higher Education Institution based in Uzbekistan. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (General), (Management), (Global Business), (HRM), (Project Management).</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

4. Articulation agreement:	Millat Umidi University, Tashkent - Uzbekistan
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Millat Umidi University
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Business Administration
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	31 st July 2025
Date of next review	31 st July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Millat Umidi University Tashkent is a private Higher Education Institution based in Uzbekistan. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (General), (Management), (Global Business), (HRM), (Project Management).</p>

	<p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS. However, if the students are choosing either the HRM or Project Management streams, they need to do particular electives before joining DBS.</p>
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5. Articulation agreement:	Millat Umidi University, Tashkent - Uzbekistan
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Millat Umidi University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Software Engineering
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	14 th August 2024
Date of next review	14 th August 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Millat Umidi University Tashkent is a private Higher Education Institution based in Uzbekistan. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BSc (Hons) in Computing.</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 4 at DBS.</p>

6. Articulation agreement:	Tashkent International University, Uzbekistan
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Tashkent International University, Uzbekistan
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Management
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	10 th July 2025
Date of next review	10 th July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Tashkent International University, Uzbekistan is a private Higher Education Institution based in Uzbekistan. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with either, 120 ECTS credits and join year 2 of our BA (Hons) in Business (All Streams) or with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (General), (Management), (Global Business).</p> <p>The mapping between all programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 2 or year 3 respectively at DBS.</p>

7. Articulation agreement:	Tashkent International University, Uzbekistan
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Tashkent International University, Uzbekistan
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Management

Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	10 th July 2025
Date of next review	10 th July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Tashkent International University, Uzbekistan is a private Higher Education Institution based in Uzbekistan. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with either, 120 ECTS credits and join year 2 of our BA (Hons) in Business (All Streams) or with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry onto the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (General), (Management), (Global Business).</p> <p>The mapping between all programmes was prepared, outlining where the University's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 2 or year 3 respectively at DBS..</p>

8. Articulation agreement:	Galicia Business School, Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	Professional Qualification awarded by Galicia Business School (The school is a member of professional associations like the Asociación Española de Escuelas de Negocios (AEEN))
Programme titles and links to publications	HND in Business Administration
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	19 th November 2024
Date of next review	19 th November 2029
Detail of the agreement	Galicia Business School is a Private Business School based in Santiago de Compostela and Vigo, Spain. This RPL agreement

	<p>allows students from this Business School to come to DBS with completion of the HND in Business Administration and join year 3 of our Level 7 Bachelor of Business, Bachelor of Business in Marketing and the Bachelor of Business in Accounting OR Year 2 of the Level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (All Stream)</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 2 (level 8) or 3 (Level 7) at DBS.</p>
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9. Articulation agreement:	ESLSCA, France
Name of body (/bodies):	ESLSCA Business School
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Finance
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	24 th March 2025
Date of next review	24 th March 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>ESLSCA is a private Business School in Paris belongs to the Planeta Formation et Universités Group. Created as an international network of educational institutions, Planeta Training and Universities represents Grupo Planeta's commitment to higher education and vocational and continuing training.</p> <p>This RPL agreement allows students from this Business School to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Accounting & Finance. The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules</p>

	and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.
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10. Articulation agreement:	FH Stuttgart, Germany
Name of body (/bodies):	FH Stuttgart (a Public State University)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Business Psychology
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	25 th March 2025
Date of next review	25 th March 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>FH Stuttgart is a Public State University in Germany continuing training. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 120 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (Psychology).</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

11. Articulation agreement:	Romanian American University of Bucharest
Name of body (/bodies):	Romanian American University
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in International Business
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	3 rd April 2025

Date of next review	3 rd April 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>Romanian American University is an accredited Higher Education Institution in Romania. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 120 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (Global Business).</p> <p>The mapping between all programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

12. Articulation agreement:	UAX - Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio, Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	UAX - Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor in Business Administration
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	26 th June 2025
Date of next review	26 th June 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>UAX - Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio is a Private University is an in Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 120 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (Global Business).</p> <p>The mapping between all programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped</p>

	sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.
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13. Articulation agreement:	UAX - Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio, Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	UAX - Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor in Marketing
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	2nd July 2025
Date of next review	2nd July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>UAX - Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio is a Private University is an in Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 120 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Marketing (General) and (Digital Marketing) streams.</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

14. Articulation agreement:	Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEDEU), Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (URJC)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Marketing & Digital Strategies
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	11 th July 2025

Date of next review	11 th July 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>CEDEU and operates as a University Centre based in Madrid, Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 180 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Marketing (General) and (Digital Marketing) streams.</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

15. Articulation agreement:	Romanian American University of Bucharest
Name of body (/bodies):	Romanian American University of Bucharest
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Computer Science for Economics
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	30 th June 2025
Date of next review	30 th June 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>CEDEU and operates as a University Centre based in Madrid, Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 120 ECTS credits and join year 2 of our Level 8 BSc (Hons) in Computing.</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped</p>

	sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 2 at DBS.
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16. Articulation agreement:	Universidad Intercontinental de la Empresa (UIE)
Name of body (/bodies):	Universidad Intercontinental de la Empresa (UIE)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Digital Business Administration
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	23 rd June 2025
Date of next review	23 rd June 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>UIE is a private university institution legally established under Galician law and recognised as an accredited university in Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this University to come to DBS with completion of 240 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (Information Systems).</p> <p>The mapping between both programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

17. Articulation agreement:	EU Business School Munich, Germany
Name of body (/bodies):	Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia (UCAM)
Programme titles and links to publications	<p>BA in Digital Communication</p> <p>BA in International Relations</p> <p>BA in Artificial Intelligence</p> <p>BA in Sports Management</p>

	BA in Leisure & Tourism Management BA in Business Administration BA in Business Finance BA in Digital Business, Design & Innovation
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	20 th November 2025
Date of next review	20 th November 2029
Detail of the agreement	<p>EU Business School (EUBS) is a Private Business School with a campus in Munich. This RPL agreement allows students from this Business School to come to DBS with completion of 150 ECTS credits and join year 3 of our Level 8 BA (Hons) in Business (Management).</p> <p>The mapping between all programmes was prepared, outlining where the Business School's modules and credits map to DBS's modules and credits. The programme mapped sufficiently with no gaps in prior learning upon entry to year 3 at DBS.</p>

Annual Quality Report (Dublin Business School)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2024-2025

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement advices, or to Cinnnte review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged 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.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact² of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

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

Section 2 considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

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

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

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

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;

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

- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

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

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Institutional Review, TrustEd, Extension of Scope to Deliver Programmes Fully Online & Delegated Authority

Institutional Review

DBS completed Institutional Review during 2024. The panel review meeting took place during June with the final report published on QQI's website in January 2025. This was a welcome exercise for DBS and has enhanced our QA capabilities and reputation.

From this review, we received 12 commendations and 17 recommendations. The 17 recommendations were broken down into 48 sub actions. At the time of writing, 42 of these are complete. The remainder are due for completion throughout 2026. We are due to report to QQI on progress during 2026.

TrustEd/IEM

DBS underwent the application process to use the TrustEd mark to market programmes to international learners, and was successful in its application. DBS is now approved to use the TrustEd mark.

Extension of Scope

In the 2024/2025 academic year, DBS applied for an extension of scope to allow for the delivery of fully online programmes to both national and international markets and was recommended by an Independent Panel to QQI. At the November 2025 PAEC meeting, DBS was granted approval of this extension of scope.

Delegated Authority

As of now, no progress has been made on Delegated Authority by the Department of Further and Higher Education that would allow any HEI to apply for DA.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Item	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	2019-6	Ensure that qualifications recognised for advanced entry - accredited or otherwise - and including in articulation contexts, are subject to rigorous approval and continuous review.	On-going
2	2019-7	Further consider how the College's use of completion rates can increase the effectiveness and strategic capability of its quality assurance system	Complete in terms of capturing and reporting on completion rates. Use of data is an on-going consideration for informing all work in DBS.
3	2019-9	Ensure that agreements with other parties reflect the grievance, appeals, and disciplinary procedures that apply to these arrangements.	Complete in this context and information to learners remains an on-going consideration.
4	2021-2	Readiness for DA	On-going
5	2021-3	T&L staff training and development	On-going
6	2021-5	RPL Review	On-going in that RPL training and development of this area is a longer term project, and needs to be aligned with best practice in the sector and kept under constant review.
7	2021-11	DBS review professional body possibilities for relationships and exemptions	On-going
8	2022-1	Strategic Project 2: Programme Strategy (arising from the refresh	On-going

		of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	
9	2022-2	Strategic Project 4: Academic Delivery (arising from the refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	On-going
10	2022-3	Strategic Project 12: Digital Capacity (arising from the refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	On-going
11	2022-4	Strategic Project 18: Academic Standards (arising from the refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	On-going
12	2022-5	Consolidation and alignment of all academic student support functions, including bringing together the work of SESU, LT&A Unit and AIRC	Complete in terms of establishment of a body to bring this together. Work is on-going.
13	2022-6	Discipline-based CPD	Work on this is on-going.
14	2022-9	Student Success Project	This objective is complete. DBS had input into the National Forum on student success. A metric calendar was created along with retention principles.
15	2022-12	Research Activity Enhancement	On-going. Research has grown significantly during this period; the Research Office has grown from the Practice Research Coordinator and Research Librarian by the inclusion of 5 Senior Lecturers all with research remit in their contracts. This has allowed for more attention to be provided to increasing research outputs and the socialisation of research across the

			College. The College has produced two more iterations of the Practical Applied Research Conference (PARC) and the HECA Research Conference as well
16	2022-13	Readiness for DA and Institutional Review	On-going for DA. Complete for IR.
17	2023-3	Implement changes to Academic Management	Complete
18	2023-7	Complete review of ethical approval process for student research and implement changes	Process complete but review on-going.
19	2023-8	Implement changes to internal examination boards	Implemented successfully for January 2023 boards but not brought forward yet for subsequent boards due to pressures arising from the mobilisation of the new Student Information System. This will be reviewed again.
20	2023-9	Review of end-to-end exams process in light of new SIS	On-going in light of the mobilisation of the new Student Information System delayed.
21	2023-10	Develop and implement an annual institutional audit plan	Implementation complete. Ongoing review and actions arising from audit underway.
22	2023-11	Complete readiness for Institutional Review	Complete
23	2023-12	Complete readiness for Delegated Authority	On-going
24	2023-14	Review of assessment practices	On-going; given changes in technology this will remain a live topic.
25	2023-16	Extend internal faculty moderation to cover teaching content and delivery.	On-going

26	2024-1	Successful completion of Institutional Review Process	Complete; targets set out in the Action Plan are on-going
27	2024-2	International Education Mark application submitted and achieved	Complete
28	2024-3	Due Diligence and PEL requirements process commenced	Underway.
29	2024-4	Successful revalidation of all relevant programmes due for review in this cycle	Ongoing
30	2024-5	Finalisation of all follow up actions from QQI Focused Review 2023	Complete except for on-going actions that will remain live/be revisited on an on-going basis.
31	2024-6	Initiation of Universal Design for Learning Project	Not commenced.
32	2024-7	Initiation of Learner Retention/Student Journey Project	<p>The Student Journey project aims to create a seamless and supportive experience for DBS students, from pre-enrollment to alumni engagement. By enhancing internal processes and student touchpoints, DBS aims to improve lead conversion, student satisfaction, retention, and success rates.</p> <p>The project was initiated in response to declining NPS scores and operational challenges arising from increased student volumes. It is also informed by external factors such as evolving student expectations and advancements in AI technology.</p> <p>Key goals include improving the student experience, streamlining administrative processes, fostering</p>

			engagement, and leveraging data-driven decision-making. The next project stage involves developing a costed roadmap and identifying quantifiable benefits for material investments to achieve these goals.
33	2024-8	Development of Academic Integrity Task Force	Ongoing
34	2024-9	Refresh of Industry Advisory Boards	Ongoing
35	2024-10	Formal Launch of SLATE2	Complete
36	2024-11	Formal Launch of DBS Research Strategy (Research, Innovation, Practice and Enterprise 2023 (RIPE 23))	Complete
37	2024-12	Bedding in changes in Senior Leadership, Governance Board and Academic Board	Ongoing
38	2025-1	Follow up on all aspects of the SLATE2 Action Plan	The Action Plan will be kept under continuous review and updated accordingly.
39	2025-2	Move to closed book and browser lockdown exams	Trialed in January 2025, and to be rolled out further in April/May 2025. The exams office is leading this initiative to address challenges with Academic Impropriety, and the challenges presented by improper use of Generative AI.
40	2025-3	Implement Cinnte Recommendations	The Registrar's office will lead on the implementation of the recommendations contained within the Cinnte final report. These recommendations affect the entire college and must be addressed over the coming 12 months.

41	2025-4	Implement DBS identified actions during creation of ISER for Cinnte Review	The Registrar's office will lead on the implementation of the recommendations contained within the ISER, that were identified by DBS. These recommendations affect the entire college and must be addressed over the coming 12 months or as appropriate. Many of these will overlap with the findings and recommendations of the panel.
42	2025-5	Establishment of Feedback Review Working Group, with the aim of improving feedback on assessments to learners	Complete
43	2025-6	Refresh of the Student Inductions at DBS	Complete
44	2026-7	Review of Quality Assurance Handbook for Fully Online Application	Complete in May 2025
45	2026-8	Successful revalidation of all relevant programmes due for review in this cycle	Complete

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Board of Directors	16th October 2024
Audit and Risk Committee	19 September 2024
Academic Board	26 September 2024
Board of Studies	3 September 2024
Programme Boards	Business & Law: 29 November 2024 13 May 2025 Marketing: 29 November 2024 13 May 2025 Computing: 15 November 2024 Accounting & Finance: 19 September 2024 Psychology and Social Sciences 29 November 2024 20 May 2025 21 May 2025 22 May 2025 Arts, Languages and Study Abroad:

	1 September 2025 5 February 2026 7 May 2026
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1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Ms Donna Bell assumed the role of Chair of the Academic Board in 2023, stepping up from her previous role as the second independent member under the Chair. This left a vacancy for the second independent member of the Academic Board, which was filled in September 2024 by Dr John Bartlett, Head of Research at ATU.

In January 2025, the role of Registrar & Director of Campus Operations was elevated to Chief Operating Officer & Registrar and has overall responsibility for the Academic Operations, Exams, Registry and the Facilities Department along with the inclusion of the Careers and Student Experience Departments.

A new role of Head of Academic Operations was created to further support the Chief Operating Officer & Registrar, with this role managing the teams of academic operations, curriculum systems and the timetabling team.

There have also been additions within the Academic Dean team to strengthen the academic management of the College.

The Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production was retired and a new post of 'Head of Faculty Management' was created. This role now reports into the Academic Dean post.

Additionally, the number of Programme Level Managers, a role which sits under Academic Directors and Assistance Academic Directors, was further expanded in 2025 to reflect increasing student numbers and also to alleviate workload being carried by Academic Directors.

There was also an additional post of Assistant Academic Director created in the area of Business, Law and Marketing.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
Master of Science in Business Analytics PG25845/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Analytics PG25846	February 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG25845
Master of Science in Information and Library Management PG26215/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management PG26216	April 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26215
Master of Business Administration PG26274/ Postgraduate Diploma in Business PG26275	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26274
Master of Science in Management Practice PG26281/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice PG26282	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26281
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business PG26249	April 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26249
Master of Science in Information Systems with Computing PG26302/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information Systems with Computing PG26303	April 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26302
Master of Science in Cybersecurity PG26319/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Cybersecurity PG26320	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26319

Master of Arts in Addiction Studies PG26317/ Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Addiction Studies PG26318	July 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26317
Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence PG26323/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Artificial Intelligence PG26325	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26323
Master of Science in Financial Analytics PG26321/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Analytics PG26322	July 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26321
Bachelor of Arts in Film and Creative Media PG26475	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26475
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film and Creative Media PG26474	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26474
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing PG26477	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26477
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (Web and Cloud) PG26480 / Certificate in Information Technology PG26481	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26480
Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics PG26478/ Certificate in the Fundamentals of Data Analytics PG26479	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26478
Certificate in Applied Care Skills PG26476	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26476
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science PG26473/ Certificate in Social Science PG26482	June 2025	https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG26473

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

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

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	20					19	1
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes							
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	20					19	1
Average panel size for each process type*	5						

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	20	8	12			20				4	16
Secretary	19	9	10			19				6	13
Academic/Discipline Specific	45	26	19			35	8	1	1	8	37
Student Representative	19	6	13			19				7	12
QA	4		4			4					4
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	20	11	9			20					20

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Enhancement/ Development	Details	Impact
Strategy for Teaching, Learning and Assessment - SLATE2	<p>DBS's original three-year Strategy for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (SLATE) was published in 2020. During 2023, a review was conducted to create the next iteration of this strategy, for the next three years. The development of the Strategy was carried through an analysis of current trends in the Higher Education sector, followed by consultation with students, faculty, the Senior Leadership Team, Industry Boards and members of academic support teams such as DBS's Learning Unit and Library. Following this development and drafting process, with feedback from stakeholders, SLATE2 was approved by the Senior Leadership Team and Academic Board in Q4 of 2023, and an official launch took place at the annual Practice and Applied Research Conference in April 2024. An associated action plan has been developed to track progress towards meeting the strategic objectives set out.</p>	<p>Ensuring alignment of approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in light of changes in delivery and student needs over the past number of years, including expectations for increased flexibility and enhanced use of technology, including responding to advances in AI technologies which are challenging the integrity of assessment.</p>
Research Strategy	<p>In 2022/2023 the College undertook an exercise to develop an updated Research Strategy. A Working Group was set up comprised of members across the College. The process included a review of the strategies of other similar colleges, as well as focus groups with students, interviews with staff and a staff survey, in order to determine a consensus on the most important areas of focus for DBS. Following this consultation process a draft Strategy was set out by the Practice Research Coordinator and worked on over a period of months by the Working Group, resulting in the Research Strategy: Research, Innovation, Practice and Enterprise 2023 (RIPE 23). Through this</p>	<p>By fostering a collaborative environment for staff and students, the College is positioned to significantly increase its research output and societal impact by the end of 2026.</p>

	<p>strategy three main pillars are recognised within the research direction of the College:</p> <p>Excellence: Advancing Research and Innovation for Societal Impact (General research)</p> <p>Research Led Teaching and Staff Enhancement: Promoting Research Excellence and Impactful Outcome (Research led teaching and staff)</p> <p>Industry Focused Research: Fostering Innovation and Driving Enterprise Success through Research (Industry focused research).</p> <p>It is the vision of the strategy that DBS will see a further increase in the research activity over the 3 year lifetime of this plan (January 2024-December 2026).</p>	
Academic Support Community (ASC)	<p>In 2023 the Academic Support Community was formed to provide cohesion to the range of academic supports provided to learners in DBS. The ASC is comprised of membership from the Library, Student Engagement and Support Unit (SESU), Learning Unit, and students from student leader and mentor programmes. A priority of the ASC is to foster collaboration with faculty in supporting students in key areas of the curriculum. The ASC is also intended to be the main driver of a repeat retention plan post-Summer Examinations with the aim of maximising the retention of continuing students into the next academic year. Objectives for interactions staff and students and involvement of all relevant parties in supporting students have been set out and are being continually reviewed.</p> <p>The Learning Unit (LU), discussed in Section A.5 above, was set up in 2022, and has the remit to promote a culture of excellence, innovation and collaboration in teaching and learning. Across the academic year</p>	<p>By unifying diverse departments like the Library and the Learning Unit into a single Academic Support Community, the institution has created a streamlined, collaborative ecosystem that directly enhances student retention and teaching innovation. This strategic alignment ensures that both faculty and students receive targeted, data-driven support, effectively bridging the gap between classroom instruction and academic success.</p>

	2024/2025 the LU has continued to expand its offering of resources to support faculty.	
Institutional Review	During the creation of our ISER, DBS identified 90 actions internally that we intend to carry out to enhance our QA. These actions affect all areas of the college, and will be tracked and monitored throughout 2025/2026.	The identification of 90 internal actions establishes a rigorous, college-wide framework for accountability that ensures quality assurance is woven into every department. By tracking these objectives through 2026, the College demonstrates a proactive commitment to continuous improvement and measurable institutional growth.
Forecast Alignment Group	As part of ongoing measures to review upcoming intake numbers, DBS established the Forecast Alignment group that is tasked with conducting a granular, programme-by-programme review to determine the viability of each course based on latest domestic and international forecasts. This group facilitates critical decision-making regarding whether to expand, intervene in, or cancel programmes, while simultaneously aligning faculty workload, rooming, and QQI compliance with these updated student volumes.	The Forecast Alignment group enables a data-driven approach to portfolio management by synchronizing individual programme viability with real-time domestic and international market trends. This proactive oversight optimizes institutional resources—from faculty workload to campus space—ensuring that every course remains both operationally efficient and fully compliant with QQI standards.
Library Readiness Assessment for Fully Online Programmes	The DBS Library initiated a strategic enhancement of its services to support the institution's expansion into fully online programmes.	The DBS Library initiated a strategic enhancement of its services to support the institution's expansion into fully online programming, guided by a departmental working group and benchmarking against eight

		<p>peer institutions. Key developments include the establishment of library user profiles to better understand online learner needs, the formalization of global accessibility standards for all new digital resources, and the expansion of asynchronous support through recorded workshops and a library blog. Furthermore, the library is prioritizing the evolution of its digital infrastructure by seeking dedicated eResource support for its website and forming a working group to investigate the integration of AI into information services, ensuring a high-quality and proactive support environment for the online student body.</p>
Staff/Faculty	<p>The scope of non-teaching activity recording has been broadened to include capstone projects and dissertations across an expanded range of disciplines. To maintain institutional consistency, the Assistant Faculty Manager (Systems) oversees the administrative framework, providing Dissertation Coordinators with standardized tracking tools. These sheets are designed to capture precise data on faculty time-allocations, ensuring that all supervisory and administrative efforts are accurately recognized and balanced across the department.</p>	<p>This integrated tracking ensures that supervisory workloads are documented with total transparency, allowing for the precise monitoring of operational costs while ensuring faculty receive equitable recognition for their mentorship.</p>

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

- DBS is an active member of QQI's National Academic Integrity Network. In 2023 DBS sought to extend its membership of NAIN. Across the College, 14 individuals responded to a call for expressions of interest, which was extremely positive. Membership at this time is restricted to 4 members however so the following roles were identified to continue with membership or join NAIN:
 - 1) Educational Developer, Learning Unit
 - 2) Quality Assurance Officer - Academic Integrity and Assessment, Registrar's Office
 - 3) Information Skills and Research Manager, DBS Library and Academic Hub
 - 4) Assistant Registrar, Registrars Office

Academic Integrity Task Force

In September 2023, we set up an Academic Integrity Task Force, with responsibility for addressing academic impropriety issues within the College. This includes the promotion of Academic Integrity across faculty and the student body, the prevention, mitigation, and investigation of impropriety, and the development of strategies to prevent future occurrences.

The responsibilities of the Task Force as per its Terms of Reference are to:

- Review and recommend updates to College policies, procedures, and codes of conduct related to academic integrity. Implement changes in line with the NAIN framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation.
- Ensure that policies are clear, comprehensive, and communicated effectively.
- Review and evaluate existing methods of assessment to reduce potential opportunities for impropriety
- Consider potential changes to assessment design.
- Develop and implement educational initiatives and awareness campaigns to educate students, prior to the commencement of their programme, of the importance of academic integrity and the requirements and expectations for maintaining Academic integrity at DBS and within the Irish education system.
- Develop and implement educational initiatives and awareness campaigns to educate students during their programme on the importance of maintaining academic integrity, requirements and regulations of assessments, and the consequences of academic impropriety.
- Develop new, and increase awareness of existing, support services and academic classes.
- Monitor, evaluate, and report on the effectiveness of educational initiatives and make recommendations for improvements.
- Collaborate with faculty, staff, and students, to develop and ensure a coordinated approach to tackling academic impropriety.
- Act as a point of contact for the reporting of new and developing trends of impropriety.
- Advise faculty on the implementation of techniques, technologies, and tools to detect and deter academic impropriety.

Committee Membership

- Quality Assurance Officer - Academic Integrity and Assessment
- Academic Directors x2
- Nominees from

AI Committee

Faculty

Exams

Library

SESU

Student Experience

Students Union

Student Representatives

Work in this area will continue to be monitored, supported by and drawing on the work of NAIN and the sector generally.

During 2024, work progressed at a slower pace than anticipated, with a focus primarily on reducing Academic Integrity in Dissertations. A significant emphasis was placed on adjusting continuous assessments, via our Board of Studies Committee, to reduce the potential for improper use of GenAI by learners, and we commenced a plan to strengthen the integrity of our end of term examinations.

Academic Integrity Induction at Orientation

Following a strategic review of academic standards in early 2025, a dedicated Academic Integrity Induction was developed to address emerging risks. This initiative was specifically designed to bridge the gap between traditional plagiarism policies and the rapid integration of Generative AI (GenAI) in higher education. The project was completed during the Summer 2025 development cycle as a collaborative effort between Quality Assurance and Academic Operations, ensuring the content was developed as a standalone module to maintain its status as a mandatory, high-impact learning requirement.

To emphasize the institutional importance of the subject, the delivery model utilizes a live, synchronous approach led by the Assistant Registrar/Quality Assurance Officer. This direct engagement allows for real-time clarification of institutional expectations. Concurrently, Academic Operations completed a full refresh of the Induction Library during the Summer 2025 period, providing a permanent, optimized repository where the induction is retained for asynchronous student reference.

The primary driver for this focused induction was the identified need for proactive guidance on GenAI. The session explicitly addresses the boundaries of authorized usage, transparency in citation, and mitigation strategies to prevent academic misconduct resulting from over-reliance on automated tools. This framework ensures that all

incoming undergraduate and postgraduate learners are equipped with the necessary ethical foundations, with the module slated for an annual review in Summer 2026 to maintain alignment with evolving technological trends.

Academic Integrity Digital Badge

Following the development of enhanced orientation materials in Summer 2025, the institution has successfully launched the pilot phase of the Academic Integrity Digital Badge. This initiative formalizes academic integrity training through a gamified, credential-based approach. The project has received overwhelming internal support, resulting in the identification of 24 initial modules for the pilot, with 19 modules currently having the lesson fully integrated into their active Moodle environments.

A critical quality control mechanism introduced in this pilot is the use of conditional release restrictions. Students are required to successfully complete the digital badge lesson before their Continuous Assessment (CA) submission links are made available. This ensures 100% engagement with the integrity materials prior to the submission of summative work. To measure the pedagogical impact of the badge, the lesson incorporates a pre- and post-lesson survey and quiz model. This longitudinal data collection allows the team to gauge shifts in student understanding, knowledge, and perceptions of academic integrity, providing a data-driven basis for future content enhancements.

To ensure technical and administrative oversight, a centralized tracking system has been established to monitor module performance and resolve any localized issues. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the digital badge will be evaluated at the conclusion of the term by cross-referencing completion data with academic impropriety statistics for the participating cohorts. This comparative analysis will determine the correlation between the badge's completion and the reduction of misconduct cases, informing the potential for a full-scale institutional rollout for subsequent academic cycles.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
2026-1	Review of the Academic Impropriety reporting and investigation process	Ongoing
2026-2	Development of an Academic Integrity Digital Badge.	Work on the development of this digital badge is complete, it was piloted on a select number of modules, where learners were required to complete this to unlock access to their assessments. This will continue to be introduced at the start of modules to increase awareness relating to academic integrity
2026-3	Review of Academic Appointments process	Ongoing- a comprehensive audit of academic appointments is currently underway to identify any 'title creep' resulting from recent module revalidations. In parallel, we are evaluating the end-to-end workflow to identify automation opportunities that will streamline the entire process
2026-4	GenAI use for QA oversight	DBS has commenced the utilisation of Generative AI to enhance our QA oversight to detect anomalies and inconsistencies within programme validation documentation. This data-driven approach will ensure rigorous academic alignment while significantly streamlining the review and audit process.
2026-5	Continuous Assessment Moderation process review	To ensure that moderation is actively taking place rather than existing as a mere administrative formality, DBS will implement a robust verification layer centered on transparent audit trails and physical evidence of engagement. This will be achieved by requiring moderators to provide qualitative feedback, timestamped, proving that a secondary review of student work actually occurred. Oversight will be further strengthened through periodic spot checks by the Registrar's Office. By integrating

		these verification steps into the annual monitoring cycle, DBS will transform moderation from a passive exercise into a visible, accountable, and rigorous academic standard.
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3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Master of Science in Human Resource Management (PG24393)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Human Resource Management (PG24394)/Certificate in Human Resource Management (PG24395)	2025/2026	Validated February 2021 Last intake August 2026
Higher Certificate in Arts (PG24642)/ Certificate in Arts (PG24644)	2025/2026	Validated June 2021 Last intake August 2026
Higher Diploma in Science in Interaction Design and User Experience (PG24533)	2025/2026	Validated September 2021 Last intake August 2026
Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24664)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24732)	2025/2026	Validated September 2021 Last intake December 2026
Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24744)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24748) - ONLINE VERSION	2025/2026	Validated June 2022 Last intake December 2026
Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24867)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24868) - TRANSNATIONAL VERSION	2025/2026	Validated September 2023 Last intake December 2026
Master of Science in Data Analytics (PG24665)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics (PG24730)/ Certificate in Data Analytics (PG24731)	2025/2026	Validated September 2021 Last intake August 2026

Master of Science in Applied Psychology (PG24663) Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Applied Psychology (PG24716)	2025/2026	Validated September 2021 Last intake August 2026
Certificate in International Business (PG24666)	2025/2026	Validated September 2021 Last intake August 2026

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Master of Science in Health Psychology (PG24743)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Health Psychology (PG24796)	2026/2027	Validated July 2022 Last intake August 2027
Master of Science in Financial Technology (PG24859)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Technology (PG24860)/ Certificate in Financial Technology (PG24901)	2026/2027	Validated July 2022 Last intake August 2027
Higher Diploma in Science in Financial Technology (PG24858)	2026/2027	Validated July 2022 Last intake August 2027
Certificate in Fund Accounting (PG24857)	2026/2027	Validated July 2022 Last intake August 2027
Diploma in Big Data for Business (PG24856)	2026/2027	Validated July 2022 Last intake August 2027
Master of Science in Supply Chain Management (PG25001)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Supply Chain Management (PG25008)	2026/2027	Validated September 2022 Last intake December 2027
Certificate in Global Business (PG24933)	2026/2027	Validated September 2022 Last intake December 2027

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Master of Arts in Contemporary Criminology (PG25304)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Contemporary Criminology (PG25305)	2027/2028	Validated July 2023 Last intake August 2028
Master of Arts in Film and Creative Media (PG25208)	2027/2028	Validated July 2023 Last intake August 2028

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1

Enhancing Academic Standards: A Case Study on the Pre-Emptive External Examiner Review Process

Introduction

In summer 2025, Dublin Business School (DBS) introduced a new, proactive process for the review of continuous assessment (CA) by External Examiners. Pilot-tested on the MSc in Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme, this initiative shifts the traditional quality assurance model from a retrospective review to a preventative measure.

With the increasing reliance on continuous assessment over examinations, the College recognised that quality assurance processes must be applied up-front. This ensures that the academic rigor, fairness, and clarity of assessment tasks are validated externally before they reach the student body. Following a highly successful pilot with the September 2025 intake of the MSc in AI, and subsequent approval from the Academic Board, this process was expanded across the entire School of Computing for the January intake.

Rationale

A recommendation from the 2025 revalidation panel for the MSc in Artificial Intelligence, combined with an institutional shift towards continuous assessment, highlighted the need for a robust, front-loaded quality assurance process to ensure assessment strategies are "fit for purpose" prior to deployment.

Rollout Plan

The rollout was designed to be phased and methodical, ensuring minimal disruption to faculty while maximising the quality of output. The process was built around two core components: a Standardised Assessment Template and a Phased Review Cycle.

Objective

Our objective was to implement a structured framework that facilitates informed feedback from External Examiners before the semester commences, ensuring all assessments align with learning outcomes and QQI standards from the outset.

The process is executed through distinct phases, moving from preparation to implementation:

- **Preparation & Information Gathering**
 - Collection of past assessment question banks and updated programme samples.
 - Distribution of the new Assessment Template to faculty. This template explicitly requires details on weighting, assessment methods (e.g., case studies, practicals), and alignment with Minimum Intended Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs).
 - Lecturers draft assessments for the upcoming academic cycle, supported by secure internal AI tools for initial drafting where appropriate.
- **Review Phase**
 - **Internal Review:** Assessments are vetted by the Programme Level Manager (PLM) and Academic Director (or delegated representative) to ensure compliance with module descriptors.
 - **External Review:** The Exams Team packages assessments for the External Examiner. Unlike previous iterations, the Examiner reviews these *before* the semester begins, focusing on academic rigor, fairness, and clarity.
- **Implementation & Feedback Integration**
 - Feedback from the External Examiner is collated and addressed.
 - Assessors implement required changes (e.g., clarifying ambiguity, adjusting difficulty) before the assessments are published to students.

Key Features and Benefits

The new process offers distinct advantages over the traditional retrospective model:

- **Enhanced Quality Assurance:** Shifting to a pre-emptive check ensures that any issues with assessment design are caught and rectified before they impact the student experience.
- **Standardisation:** The introduction of a mandatory Assessment Template ensures consistency across modules. It requires lecturers to explicitly state the "Generative AI Assessment Scale" (e.g., No AI, AI-Assisted, Full AI), providing clarity to students on academic integrity expectations.
- **Actionable Feedback:** It creates a formal channel for External Examiners to contribute constructive feedback that directly shapes the module delivery, rather than simply commenting on past performance.
- **Improved Workflow:** By encouraging lecturers to author assessments for the *following* cycle, the process aids in workload management and ensures readiness well in advance of teaching weeks.

Implementation Success

The initial rollout to the MSc in Artificial Intelligence for the September intake was marked by high compliance and positive reception from all stakeholders.

Key Outcomes (September Pilot):

- **100% of Continuous Assessments** for the MSc in AI were reviewed and approved prior to the semester start.
- **External Examiner Feedback:** The feedback loop was successfully closed before student deployment, resulting in assessments that were more robust and clearly aligned with learning outcomes.
- **Academic Board Approval:** Citing the success of the pilot, the Academic Board formally adopted the process in September 2025 for immediate expansion to the wider School of Computing.

Expansion to School of Computing (January Intake): Following the successful pilot, the process was scaled to include all programmes within the computing discipline. This expansion represents a significant step in the College's quality enhancement strategy, moving a large cohort of modules into this new high-assurance framework.

Feedback and Lessons Learned

External Examiner Feedback: The response from External Examiners has been positive, highlighting the value of seeing assessments in context before they are live. The opportunity to review the assessment strategy as a whole, rather than piecemeal, allows for a much better understanding of the student journey. The template provides all the necessary context regarding learning outcomes and weighting that is often missing in a standard review.

Faculty Feedback: While the shift required an adjustment in working timelines (drafting assessments a semester ahead), faculty have noted the benefits of having "locked-in" assessments before the busy teaching term begins. Using the standardised template helped clarify exactly what we were asking of students, especially regarding the new AI usage guidelines. Knowing the assessments are already approved reduces administrative stress during the semester.

Lessons for Future Rollout:

- **Lead Times are Critical:** To ensure success, the timeline for the "Preparation Phase" must be strictly adhered to. Late submissions can compress the External Examiner's review window.
- **Guidance on AI:** The explicit inclusion of the AI Assessment Scale in the template has proven essential for clarity, and further training on this aspect is planned for the wider college rollout.

Conclusion

The External Examiner CA Review Process represents a maturation of Dublin Business School's quality assurance framework. By moving from retrospective review to proactive design and validation, the College has significantly strengthened the academic integrity and pedagogical value of its assessments. Following the successful scaling to the School of Computing, plans are now in place to roll out this process across all taught programmes at DBS, ensuring a unified, high-standard approach to assessment design.

Case Study 2

Digital Transformation of Academic Records

Introduction

In June 2024, Dublin Business School introduced the release of digital transcripts through Parchment (formerly Digitary CORE), a secure online platform for the management and sharing of verified digital academic credentials. This initiative marks a significant step in the college's ongoing digital transformation, moving the process of issuing and verifying official documents from a paper-based model to a secure, digital-first framework. Parchment had been partially implemented the previous year to release Digital Badges for Professional Diplomas.

Parchment is a comprehensive platform and global network that allows educational institutions to certify, issue, and manage academic documents digitally. It empowers learners to access and securely share their official, authenticated records with employers, other education providers, and third parties anywhere in the world.

Rationale

The primary driver for implementing Parchment was the institutional need to enhance security, efficiency, and the learner experience in the management of academic records. Traditional paper-based methods were becoming increasingly time-consuming, costly, and susceptible to fraud. This new process addresses these challenges by directly targeting key areas of improvement.

Documents issued through Parchment are cryptographically signed and tamper-evident, a crucial measure that ensures their authenticity and protects the integrity of the college's credentials. Secondly, the digital alternative is key to improving operational efficiency within DBS. By replacing print and mail processes, the system significantly reduces costs and streamlines administrative tasks, which frees up administrative resources within the college. Lastly, implementing this system is vital for meeting learner and alumni expectations. Providing modern, secure, and lifelong access to documents enhances the service delivery for both current students and alumni.

Rollout Plan

The implementation of the Parchment platform has delivered distinct advantages across various college operations, notably in enhanced quality and digitalisation. The service securely issues a variety of documents, including Transcripts, Diploma Supplements (EDS), Digital Badges, Professional Diploma Certificates and student letters such as Graduate Visa Letters. This move ensures the authenticity and credibility of DBS awards globally, as the platform guarantees one-click verification of digital academic records in real-time. Furthermore, the documents are instantly recognisable and verifiable internationally, simplifying processes like international applications and employment verification.

A significant benefit is the increased security of student information. Parchment utilises advanced cryptographic hardware to protect sensitive data and comply with international legal and privacy standards, including EU Digital Signatures Directives. This highly secure environment ensures the integrity of student

records. Students and graduates have complete control over who accesses their documents; they authorise shares and can track and regulate access using a simple online dashboard.

This control is paired with the guarantee of lifelong, safe, and secure access to their documents, regardless of whether they retain their student email address.

The platform utilises systems integration with existing DBS systems. For documents like transcripts, the process is streamlined, with documents being 'pushed' from our Student Information System into Parchment. Once in Parchment, records can be individually or bulk signed. Once this step is complete, a notification is automatically issued to the learner's email, thereby reducing manual intervention. This integration provides a single, unified location for issuing and managing all secure credentials, eliminating the need for multiple, fragmented processes.

A key internal benefit is the instantaneous internal records transfer for learners reapplying to a new course, as the Admissions Department now has direct access to verify learner records via Parchment, bypassing the need to submit a request to the Registrar's Office and wait for a response. Current students typically use their student email and password for initial access, with the option to register a personal email for lifelong access once they graduate, ensuring a user-friendly access experience.

Conclusion

The introduction of Parchment at DBS represents a successful digital leap in the area of academic records management. By transitioning to a verified digital credentials platform, the college has not only improved the security and authenticity of its documents but has also significantly enhanced the overall learner experience through 24/7 global access and ease of sharing.

Next Steps

Following the successful initial launch, DBS plans to further integrate the Parchment service to cover the provision of education verifications. This expansion will streamline the process for third parties (such as employers and professional bodies) seeking to verify the credentials of DBS graduates, enhancing operational efficiency and the integrity of the verification process.

This transformation is a core element of the College's commitment to providing a modern, high-standard service to its student and alumni community.

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Generative AI Disclosure

This case study was drafted and structured using Generative AI (Google Gemini), based on specific user requirements and drawing upon external and internal information provided to ensure formatting consistency and content accuracy.