Dublin Business School

2025

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Annual Quality Report (Dublin Business School) Reporting Period 2023-2024

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2023-2024

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
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2.3 - *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*	**2.5**	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - *Learner Resources and Supports*	**2.7**	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - *Information and Data Management*	**2.8**	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management

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

Table 1

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Dublin Business School for the reporting period **1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024.**

It is to be submitted by **Friday 28 February 2025.**

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 2025 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 49 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 7,510.

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. During May of 2024, DBS moved some administrative functions to a new office building on Digges Lane thereby freeing up space for extra classrooms in our Castle House building.

In the 2023/24 academic year the majority of classes were delivered from the campus. Since COVID, the expectations of learners has 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 investment made by the College in recent years enabled what we call 'Hyflex' delivery where lectures are delivered from the classroom and are online at the same time. DBS have since started to move away from Hyflex to a more structured approach of either being 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. In the area of professional education alone, in 2022, Kaplan provided courses to over 1.2 million students worldwide. It had turnover in 2022 of over $1.42 billion, an increase of 5% on the previous year, and represents just 36% of the overall Graham Holdings company business.

DBS currently employs 474 people. Of these, 305 are directly involved in teaching delivery while 169 are non-faculty staff. Our new President, Tim Bicknell joined the organisation in March 2024, having previously worked with DBS in a consultancy role. Andrew Conlan-Trant left that position to take up a role as Chairman of the Board of DBS.

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 which will be acted on throughout 2025.

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. That plan can be found **here.** For the Academic Year 2023/24 DBS also prepared an Academic Plan that was approved by the Academic Board 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 for the fifth time. This has been an opportunity for the organisation to monitor developments, having come through the restrictions of the pandemic and formalise monitoring and self-reflection activities around programmes requiring PSRB approval, as well as policy developments.

Briefings on compilation of the 2025 Report were provided by the Registrar & Director of Campus Operations at meetings of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Academic Board in September and October 2024.

The Assistant Registrar reviewed the 2024 AQR submission for any components of Section A that required updating for the 2025 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 2024 submission were invited to provide their respective updates. The current Registrar & Director of Campus Operations along with the Assistant Registrar completed this current submission.

A draft of the report was presented to the SLT at its monthly meeting on 18 February 2025 and Academic Board on 20 February 2025 for consultation and approval. The document was left open for review and comment before finalisation ahead of the QQI deadline on 28 February 2025.

1. Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Please refer to:

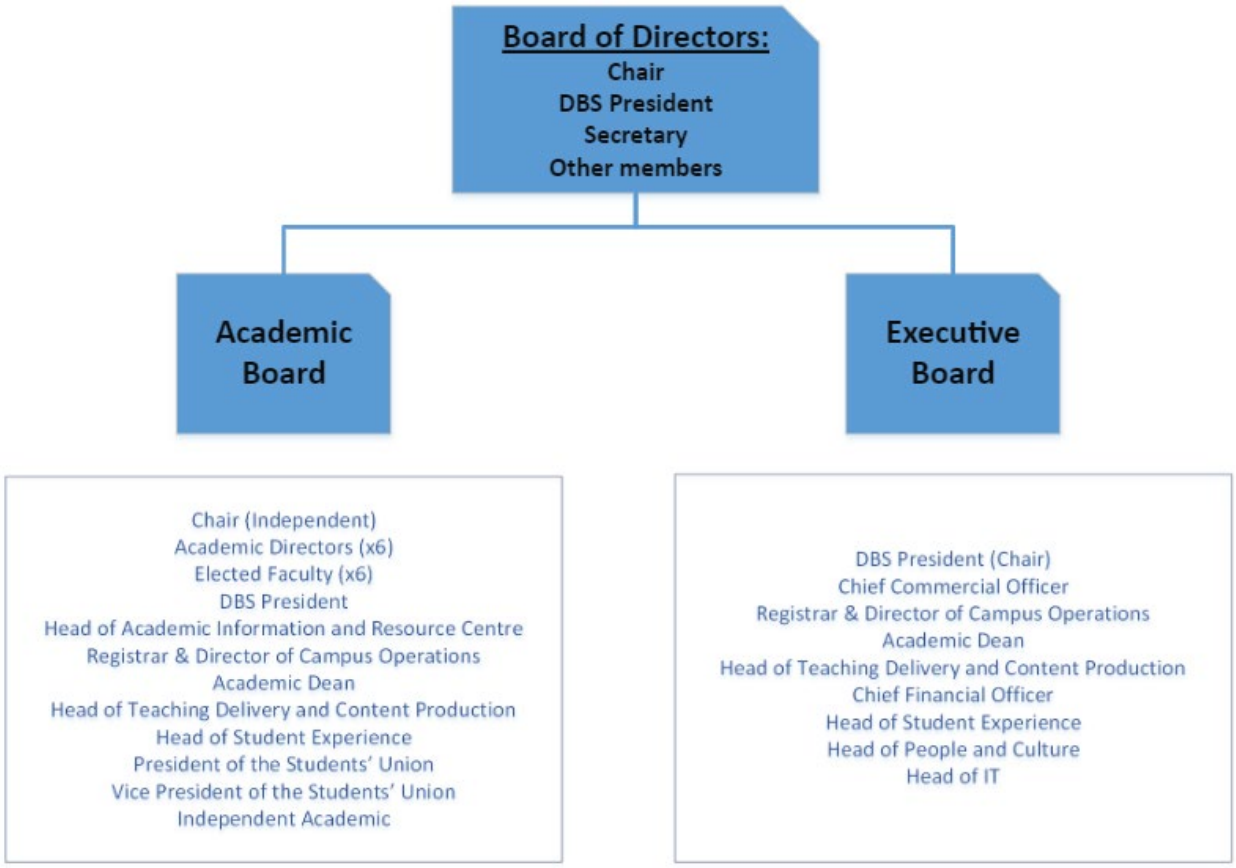
QAH Part A Section 1 Governance

- 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, 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 Registrar and the Independent Chair of the Academic Board. This committee has been paused and will be reviewed during 2025.

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 the Independent Non-Executive Director (Business). The other members are the DBS Chief Financial Officer, a Legal Counsel from Kaplan and another member of the DBS senior leadership team, other than the President. (Currently that is the Registrar & Director of Campus Operations who also has responsibility for risk management at the College.)

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, Registrar & Director of Campus Operations, Academic Dean, Head of Teaching Delivery & Content Production, Head of Student Experience, Head of the Library & Academic Hub, 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 Registrar & Director of Campus Operations, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, Academic Dean, Head of Student Experience, Head of IT, Head of Teaching Delivery and Content Production, Head of People and Culture.

The Executive Board is a decision-making entity.

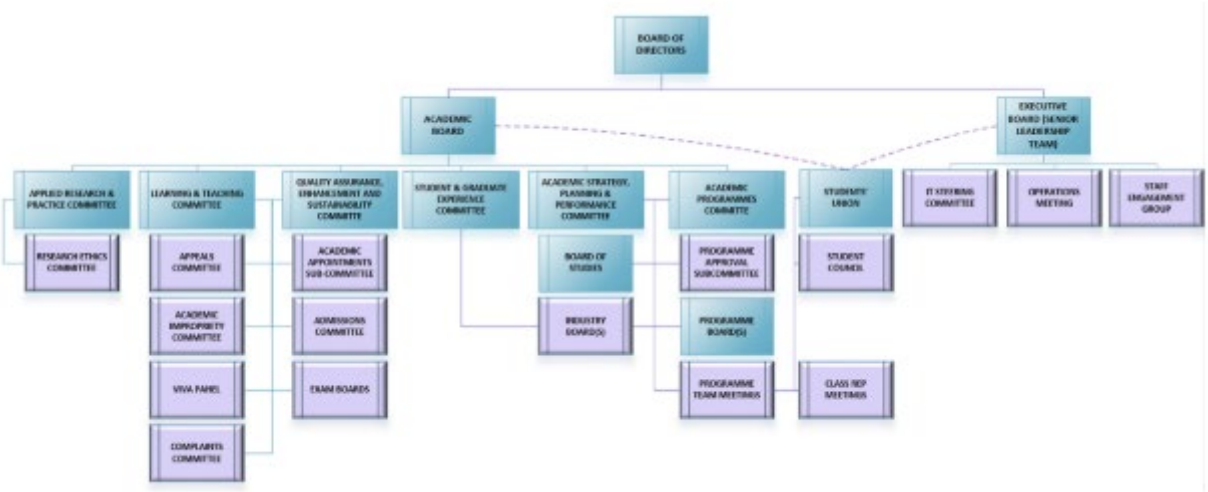
The interaction of these three Boards at the most senior level of the College is fundamental to the success of DBS in maintaining and improving quality and standards. As a private college, the business integrity of DBS is further safeguarded by strong corporate governance from the parent company structure, 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

In Q4 of 2021 a review of the structure of the boards and committees under the Academic Board was initiated. This resulted in six new or updated sub-committees of the Academic Board as follows:

- 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.

The updated committee structure was presented to and approved in its final form by the Academic Board in April 2023, and began to be implemented from this point. The Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee is currently under review while the overall Strategy review for the College is underway.

Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee

This was a new committee under the restructure with the remit to inform, develop, and sustain the annual Academic Plan.

Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee

This committee replaced the former Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Committee, with expanded membership and a more focused remit to ensure formal monitoring of QA audits and reviews, identification and follow up on QA & QE matters arising, as well as review and approval of relevant policies for raising to SLT and Academic Board for final approval.

Academic Programmes Committee

The Academic Programmes Committee was new under the restructure. Its 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

This committee replaced the previous version of the committee, with updated membership and terms of reference. It has Ownership of the College Strategy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. (SLATE).

Applied Research and Practice Committee

This committee replaced the previous version of the committee. Its remit is to monitor and assess the effectiveness of policy and strategy which promotes, encourages and supports Applied Research and Practice activities across the College.

Student and Graduate Experience Committee

This new committee under the restructure has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the student supports and learner supports across all College academic and support activities. It reports on the activities of a number of other areas and units.

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)

The remit of the PASC is to evaluate proposals for new programmes for suitability to progress at each stage of the development process, up to submission to QQI. This committee was instituted through the review of policy and procedure for Re-Engagement with QQI but its functioning and membership remain under review. This committee will be reviewed during 2025 as its current form is not meeting the desired outcomes.

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

Please refer to:

QAH Part C Section 3 Transnational Collaborative and Joint Awards

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

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

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

At the time of writing the 23/24 AQR the effectiveness of reporting by Programme Boards and template for Annual Reports is under review.

The meeting schedule for Programme Boards in 2023/24 is set out in Part B 1.3.1 of this Report..

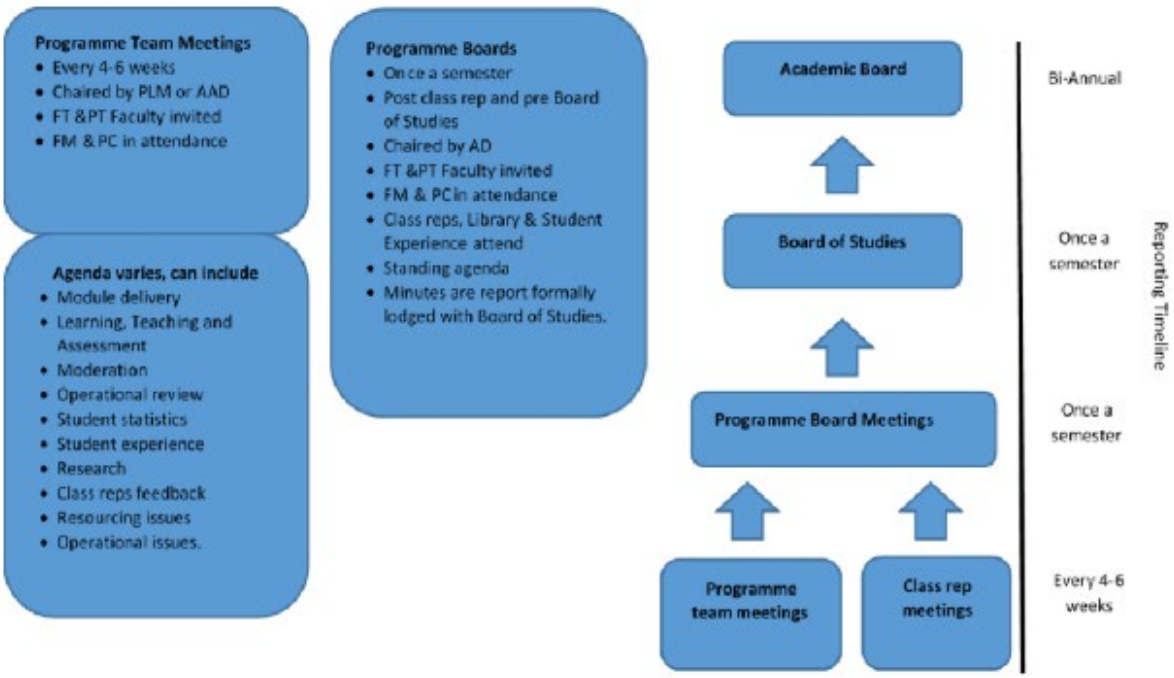
Board of Studies (twice yearly, Terms of Reference QAH Part A Section 1.3.6)
The function of the Board of Studies is to ensure academic quality across all programmes and appropriate implementation of the five year strategic plan in programme delivery. The membership of the board consists of the Academic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

- Monitors programmes and suites of programmes to ensure consistency of approach in teaching, learning and assessment across the schools
- Reviews and approves updates to teaching, learning and assessment for programmes or modules, within its scope, referred from Programme Boards.
- Agrees the implementation of new initiatives in teaching, learning and research identified by the Learning 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.

This process was trialled for one discipline area in 2020 and brought forward for all programmes in 2020/2021 with reports presented in all discipline areas. Following an assessment of workload and data availability, it was agreed that APRs would be produced for each academic discipline on a bi-annual basis for the November Academic Board following the reporting period. While this has been a valuable process, as above this is now under review to ensure reporting is optimal.



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 Dean keeps under constant review any DBS programmes which require review and revalidation. As a minimum all programmes undergo a full review once every 5 years as per statutory requirements, but programmes may be brought forward for early review where a need is identified. Once these are agreed for review, programme teams commence the programme 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 2023/24 academic year, membership of the IABs was refreshed under new Chairs and the membership and Terms of Reference were reviewed:

- Business, Marketing & Laws, in existence since April 2020: new Chair appointed 2024.
- Computing, in existence since September 2019: new Chair appointed 2024, membership under review
- Accounting and Finance, in existence since September 2018: new Chair appointed 2024.
- The former Human and Social Sciences IAB was paused as the discipline was split in May 2024 into Psychology & Social Sciences and Counselling, Psychotherapy & Addiction. Two separate IABs will be reconstituted in 24/25.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Please refer to:

QAH Part B Section 1 Learner Admissions:

- ***1.1 Information for Applicants Policy***

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

- ***2.9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy***

QAH Part B Section 6 Examination Boards and Award Classifications:

- ***6.3 Progression and Classification of Awards***

Access, Transfer and Progression

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

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

Admissions Office

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

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

Recognition of Prior Learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Open 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 a one-stop shop for any information or resources that learners require during their time studying in the College. Functional and support areas of the College input into this including Academic Operations, Student Experience, Library, Exams, Student Engagement and Success Unit, and Quality Assurance.

Some features to note are:

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

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

N/A

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Please refer to:

QAH Part C Section 1 Learning and Teaching:

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

QAH Part A Section 2 Overarching Policies:

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

QAH Part B Section 5 Assessment Regulations:

- *5.1 Assessment Overarching Policy*
- *5.2 Learner Assessment Procedures*
- *5.3 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 23 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 were continued to be held online for the duration of the academic year 2023/2024 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. The ratio of invigilator to student was greatly enhanced to 1:15 during this period.

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*

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.

Since 2023, academic support outside the timetable for learners at DBS has been coordinated by the Academic Support Community (ASC). The ASC 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 & Research 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 2023/24 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 2023/24 the Student Council held 9 meetings, 1 each month during the Academic Year.

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 2023/24 DBS began planning to make an 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 342 students completing the course since September 2023. 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 23/24.

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:

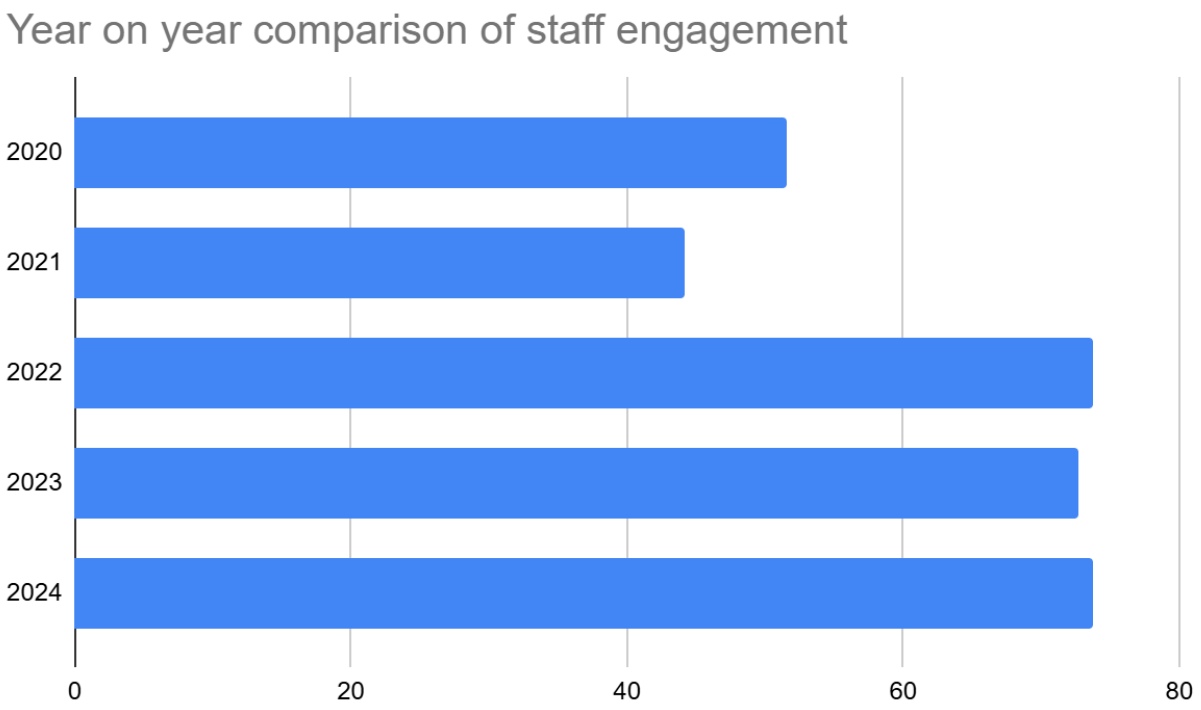
- Act with Integrity
  - Do everything to the highest ethical standards
- Empower and Support
  - Share and Solve problems for the greater good of DBS
- Create Opportunity
  - Encourage new ideas and look for new ways of doing things
- Grow Knowledge
  - Encourage the development of our colleagues
-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

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

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

In relation to assessing staff engagement, each year DBS employees are invited to participate in the Global Kaplan Annual Survey. This survey covers the following areas: continuous improvement, diversity and inclusion, manager relationship, growth and development, intention to stay, 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:

1. Faculty Manager:

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

2. Academic Director:

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

3. Learning 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 2022 DBS formalised its Learning Unit to support faculty, with additional resources. The Learning Unit consists of two Educational Developers. The unit provides formal and informal training and development opportunities in multiple modes, covering both technical and pedagogical issues.

Ongoing Training and CPD

1. New Faculty Pathway

From 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024, 44 faculty members completed the LU Induction Session. This one-on-one live training provided essential guidance on the DBS learning ecosystem, covering:

- **Moodle essentials**: Page design, content management, activity structuring, assessment grading, feedback, and student communication;
- **Multimodal teaching**: Hyflex, online, and in-person classroom strategies;
- **Learning, teaching & assessment**: Preparation and planning support;
- **Educational technology**: Introduction to key EdTech tools;
- **Online resources**: Access to guides, CPD lessons, and training videos;
- **Library & research**: DBS Library resources integrated on each Moodle page, resources that support learning and assessment activities and research support.

2. Classroom Tech Training

Recognising the importance of faculty confidently using classroom technology for effective teaching, LU, in collaboration with the IT Helpdesk, delivered a series of targeted training sessions.

Topics Covered:

- Overview of classroom AV setup, including computers, TV screens, interactive smartboards, webcams, microphones, and projectors;
- Integrating Zoom and Moodle for live class delivery and recordings;
- Connecting personal devices and troubleshooting common technical issues;
- Utilising lecture capture tools and streaming options via Zoom;
- Maximising console features to enhance hyflex classes;
- Hands-on practice and Q&A sessions;
- Best practices for delivering classes in online and hyflex environments;

Beyond enhancing faculty competencies in smart classroom teaching, this initiative fostered collaboration between LU and the IT Helpdesk, improving service delivery and increasing efficiency by reducing technical support requests.

3. Module Pathway Course

Between 01/09/23 and 31/08/24, 33 lecturing staff completed the Module Pathway Course Badge. This course is designed to support faculty in preparing and delivering their modules effectively. Recognising the dynamic nature of learning, the course provides structured guidance on adapting to curriculum

demands, integrating new technologies, and addressing learner diversity. This course is available as an on-demand, self-study course. Faculty can complete the course at their own pace, ensuring accessibility regardless of workload or teaching commitments. This flexibility allows lecturers to engage with the material when it best suits their availability, making professional development more manageable and inclusive.

4. RESq & Other Drop-In Support Sessions

48 RESq drop-in clinics were held during this period, facilitated by LU and Quality Assurance staff. These themed weekly sessions offered faculty guidance and support on a range of topics, including practical digital skills, grading and feedback, assessment design, exam and assessment processes, curriculum delivery, as well as effective use of Moodle and Zoom for LT&A.

Throughout the academic year, LU also provided ongoing support to faculty and staff involved in learning support through themed one-hour drop-in sessions held online and in a hyflex environment at various times and days to accommodate a wider audience. Additionally, bespoke ad-hoc sessions were available for those requesting individual assistance.

5. Multi-Modal Delivery Courses

At DBS, some courses are designed with a blend of live (synchronous) classes and on-demand (asynchronous) lessons. To support staff, the LU provides a tailored lesson as follows:

Multimodal Delivery – Getting the Blend Right
This short course is designed for lecturers delivering modules that combine on-demand (asynchronous) lessons with live (synchronous) classes. During this period, 17 lecturers completed this badge.

6. Vevox

From January 2024, LU played a key role in the pilot rollout of Vevox, a live polling and Q&A platform, originally aimed at enhancing student engagement and providing lecturers with real-time feedback. A structured training and communications plan ensured the platform's adoption across the institution. The rollout generated strong interest by the end of August, with 110 sessions conducted across various departments and activities, 2,455 participants, and a total of 676 polls, 33 Q&As and 25 surveys created. With support from LU members, Vevox was integrated into various academic and administrative activities, including scenario-based academic integrity workshops and student inductions.

7. Transnational Partners

LU provided support and training to Transnational Partner Faculty, enabling them to access and utilise Moodle pages designed and developed for course delivery in their colleges.

8. Moodle Upgrade

In July 2024, Moodle was upgraded to the Moodle Version 4.3. To help, LU provided a series of workshops offering faculty an overview of the new version of Moodle. In addition, LU revised all training resources, including how-to videos, information guides and other resources to reflect the upgrade.

The upgrade to Moodle 4.3 brought several benefits such as:

- A visual upgrade offering users a more aesthetically pleasing and intuitive interface.
- Improved user experience for navigation.
- Streamlined display of course activities on Moodle pages.
- WCAG 2.1 AA compliant, meaning that Moodle meets accessibility criteria.
- Integrated with Medial plugin for secure video/audio assignment submission.
- Bug fixes and security updates.

9. Grade Entry Analysis (Pilot)

LU conducted an analysis of grade entries for the January intake of postgraduate programs to address delays in meeting exam board deadlines. Using a traffic light system, the analysis identified grades that were missing or at risk of late submission. The findings highlighted multiple contributing factors, including technical issues, lecturers' workload, and staff availability for grading. The results were shared with Academic Directors for follow-up to ensure timely grade entry and address underlying challenges.

10. . GenAI

The LU stays up to date with sectoral developments in genAI for learning, teaching and assessment by attending conferences, and webinars in addition to engaging in networking and professional organisations such as the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), and Advance HE. The knowledge and insights gained are shared with DBS staff involved in teaching and learning support and inform the LU's training and support offerings.

The resources, workshops and drop-in sessions aimed to provide practical insights into:

- Using the AI Assessment Scale in the new Assessment Template to establish clear guidelines on genAI use in academic work;
- Embedding reflections to develop students' metacognitive skills and help them thoughtfully integrate genAI into their learning using the PAIR framework.

Faculty Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

DBS offers CPD on three levels:

- The Learning Unit deliver 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 Student Engagement Officer to view student data and identify any anomalies, risks, or concerns. The data which comprises the early alert report is at a more granular level than that of the student engagement dashboard.

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

- Week 1 – Has the student logged into Moodle and are they attending lectures?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please 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 though the Programme Approval Sub-Committee and an independent panel review (i.e. mock panel event).
- DBS is responsible for the management of the processes for Programme Review, including the management of external evaluation and reporting, subject to agreed Terms of Reference with QQI, prior to application for Revalidation to QQI.
- In June 2021 DBS was approved by QQI for Devolved Responsibility for Validation of New Programmes, thus assuming responsibility for the management of external evaluation and reporting for new programmes, subject to approval and final sign-off by QQI.
- External evaluation of QA processes and procedures is undertaken by QQI through Institutional Review.

Changes to QA policies and procedures, where those changes can be made by DBS, are made via the Quality 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:

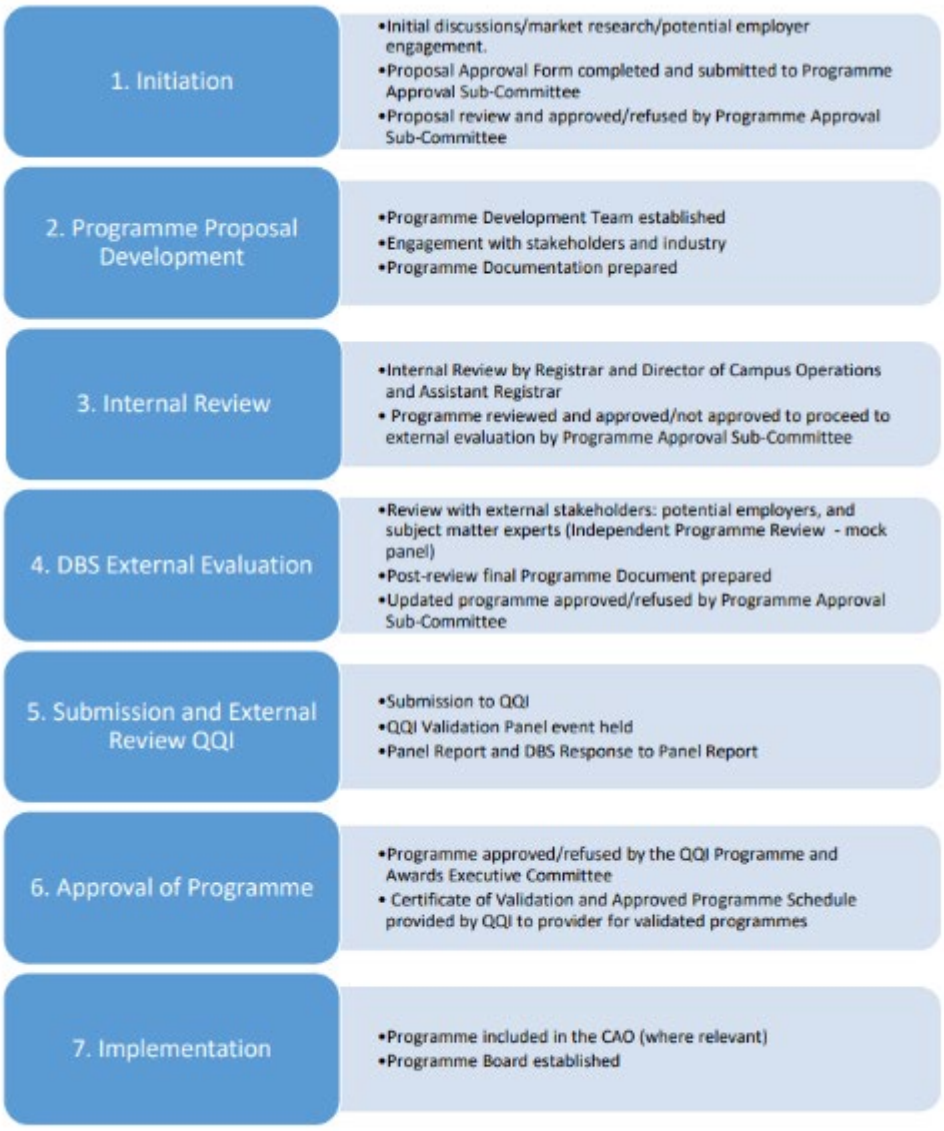
- Exam Paper approval (in advance of exam sittings, a review of exam papers to ensure appropriate setting and standard for the academic level, and that they assess the module's Learning Outcomes)
- Assessment Sample review (following final assessments, a review of a sample of assessed material, both 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.



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
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
Name of body:	APPI (Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master in Arts in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24065
Date of accreditation or last review	29/07/2020
Date of next review	29/07/2025

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	PSI (Psychological Society of Ireland)

Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24168 Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24169
Date of accreditation or last review	12/12/2019
Date of next review	06/03/2025

4. Type of arrangement	**PRSB**
Name of body:	IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Counselling & Psychotherapy https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24188
Date of accreditation or last review	13/12/2019
Date of next review	Semester 1/2025

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

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Library Association of Ireland (LAI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Information and Library Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24214 Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24215
Date of accreditation or last review	29/08/2024
Date of next review	30/08/2025 (tbc)

7. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Accounting & Finance https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166
Date of accreditation or last review	31/08/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029

8. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	PMI (Project Management Institute)
Programme titles and links to publications	Advanced Diploma in Project Management https://www.dbs.ie/course/professional-evening-diploma/part-time-evening-diploma-in-advanced-project-management-dublin-business-school
Date of accreditation or last review	03/03/2024

Date of next review	02/03/2025

9. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	KPA (Kaplan Professional Awards)
Programme titles and links to publications	Diploma in Accounting & Finance https://kaplanpa.co.uk/docs/default-source/pdfs/kpa-level-4-diploma-in-accounting-and-finance-rqf.pdf?sfvrsn=f2bab25_4
Date of accreditation or last review	23/7/24
Date of next review	23/7/25

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

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

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	EU Business School

Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG24166
Date of last review	12/11/2024
Date of next review	12/11/2029

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

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

5. Collaborative provision	**Collaborative programme**
Name of body (/bodies):	Sound Training College
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/ProgrammeDetails?programmeCode=PG25840

Date of last review	19/04/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029

6. 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	**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	**98**

Articulation agreement:	Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEDEU), Madrid Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Universidad Rey Juan Carlos
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of in Business Administration https://www.cedeu.es/cursos-y-postgrados/bachelor-in-business-administration/ https://www.urjc.es/
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	7th June 2024
Date of next review	7th June 2029

Detail of the agreement	CEDEU is a Higher Education Institution based in Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry into the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Business plus all streams. 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.

Articulation agreement:	Centro de Estudios Universitarios (CEDEU), Madrid Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	Awarding Body – Universidad Rey Juan Carlos
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor in Tourism & Hotel Management https://www.cedeu.es/cursos-y-postgrados/bachelor-in-tourism-and-hotel-management/ https://www.urjc.es/
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	7th June 2024
Date of next review	7th June 2029

Detail of the agreement	CEDEU is a Higher Education Institution based in Spain. This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry into the final year of the level 8 BA (Hons) in Marketing plus all streams. 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.

Articulation agreement:	Hainan Normal University, China
Name of body (/bodies):	Award their own degrees
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Accounting https://eng.hainnu.edu.cn/

Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	14th June 2024
Date of next review	14th June 2029
Detail of the agreement	Hainan Normal University is a public University. This RPL agreement allows students from Hainan Normal University to gain direct entry into 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.

Articulation agreement:	Schiller International University, Madrid Spain
Name of body (/bodies):	This College is an American University accredited by ACCSC (Accrediting Commission of Career Schools & Colleges)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Computer Science https://www.schiller.edu/programs/bachelor-of-science-in-computer-science/
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	19th June 2024
Date of next review	19th June 2029

Detail of the agreement	Schiller International University is a private for-profit university with its main campus and administrative headquarters in Tampa, Florida. It is named after the German playwright and philosopher Friedrich Schiller. It has campuses on two continents in four countries: Tampa, Paris, Madrid and Heidelberg This RPL agreement allows students from this university to come to DBS with 180 ECTS credits and gain direct entry into the final year of the level 8 BSc (Hons) in Computing Plus Streams. 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 4 at DBS.

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PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Reporting Period 2023-2024

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 Cinnte 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 impact[2] 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.

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

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear 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 & Delegated Authority

DBS completed IR 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.

The next 12 months will see the implementation of the recommendations arising from the review further enhancing our QA.

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.	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.
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
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.
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.
2021-2	Readiness for DA	On-going
2021-3	T&L staff training and development	On-going
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.
2021-11	DBS review professional body possibilities for relationships and exemptions	On-going
2022-1	Strategic Project 2: Programme Strategy (arising from the	On-going

	refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	
2022-2	Strategic Project 4: Academic Delivery (arising from the refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	On-going
2022-3	Strategic Project 12: Digital Capacity (arising from the refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	On-going
2022-4	Strategic Project 18: Academic Standards (arising from the refresh of the DBS Strategic Plan 2021-2025)	On-going
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.
2022-6	Discipline-based CPD	Work on this is on-going.
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.
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

2022-13	Readiness for DA and Institutional Review	On-going for DA. Complete for IR.
2023-3	Implement changes to Academic Management	Ongoing. New roles have been appointed and there are some positions still to be filled.
2023-7	Complete review of ethical approval process for student research and implement changes	Process complete but review on-going.
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.
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.
2023-10	Develop and implement an annual institutional audit plan	Implementation complete. Ongoing review and actions arising from audit underway.
2023-11	Complete readiness for Institutional Review	IR took place during 2024 with the report published in Jan 2025.
2023-12	Complete readiness for Delegated Authority	On-going
2023-14	Review of assessment practices	On-going; given changes in technology this will remain a live topic.
2023-16	Extend internal faculty moderation to cover teaching content and delivery.	On-going
2024-1	Successful completion of Institutional Review Process	Complete; targets set out in the Action Plan are on-going
2024-2	International Education Mark application submitted and achieved	Application submitted during 2024, with IEMAS due to be submitted in March 2025
2024-3	Due Diligence and PEL requirements process commenced	Underway.
2024-4	Successful revalidation of all relevant programmes due for review in this cycle	Ongoing

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.
2024-6	Initiation of Universal Design for Learning Project	Not commenced.
2024-7	Initiation of Learner Retention/Student Journey Project	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. 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. Key goals include improving the student experience, streamlining administrative processes, fostering 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.
2024-8	Development of Academic Integrity Task Force	The Academic Integrity Taskforce initially convened in October and November 2023 to address emerging concerns related to academic misconduct. While the taskforce has not met since its initial discussions, plans are in place to restart its activities in 2025. This will include a review of its Terms of Reference and composition to ensure its objectives align with evolving challenges in academic integrity.

2024-9	Refresh of Industry Advisory Boards	Commended 2024 with new Chairs and membership appointed in the areas of Accounting & Finance; Computing; Business, Marketing & Law; and Arts & Creative Media. Following restructuring of the Human & Social Sciences area into two distinct areas (Psychology & Social Sciences; Counselling, Psychotherapy & Addiction) in Q2 of 2024 separate boards are yet to be constituted.
2024-10	Formal Launch of SLATE2	Complete Q1 2024.
2024-11	Formal Launch of DBS Research Strategy (Research, Innovation, Practice and Enterprise 2023 (RIPE 23))	Complete Q1 2024.
2024-12	Bedding in changes in Senior Leadership, Governance Board and Academic Board	ongoing

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Board of Directors	24th April 2024 17th July 2024 16th October 2024
Audit and Risk Committee	14 March 2024 5 April 2024 13 June 2024 19 September 2024
Academic Board	12 October 2023 7 December 2023 15 February 2024 2 May 2024 18 July 2024 26 September 2024
Board of Studies	7 September 2023 (extraordinary) 1 December 2023 21 March 2024 (extraordinary) 29 April 2024 (extraordinary) 4 July 2024 3 September 2024
Programme Boards	Business & Law: • 23 November 2023 • 4 May 2023 • 23 November 2023 • 22 April 2024 • 29 November 2024 Marketing: • 23 November 2023 • 22 April 2024 • 29 November 2024 Computing: • 20 September 2023

	• 15 February 2024 Accounting & Finance: • 8th February 2024 • 20th June 2024 Human and Social Sciences • 24 November 2023 • 1 December 2023 • 20 May 2024 • 28 May 2024 Arts, Languages and Study Abroad: • 23 November 2023 • 15 February 2024 • 3 September 2024
~~Quality Enhancement and Risk Management Committee/~~Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committee	18 October 2023 12 December 2023 19 February 2024 12 June 2024 19 August 2024
Academic Programmes Committee	27 September 2023 25 October 2023 22 November 2023 24 January 2024 27 March 2024 24 April 2024 24 July 2024 9 September 2024
Teaching and Learning Committee	26 October 2023 30 November 2023 9 May 2024 13 June 2024 11 July 2024 20 August 2024
Student and Graduate Experience Committee	27th November 2023 20th February 2024 11th July 2024

	10th September 2024 21st November 2024
Applied Research and Practice Committee	6 September 2023 8 November 2023 10 January 2024 20 February 2024 17 April 2024 12 June 2024
Exam Boards	18 September 2023 (PG Proceed Internal) 22 September 2023 (PG Proceed External) 26 October 2023 (Springboard intakes External) 1 January 2024 (Internal) 8 February 2024 (External) 17 May 2024 (PG Proceed Internal) 22 May 2024 (PG Proceed External) 10, 11 & 14 June 2024 (Internal) 20 & 21 June 2024 (External) 8 August 2024 (Internal - UG Jan-intake) 23 August 2024 (Internal) 29 August 2024 (External) 17 September 2024 (PG Proceed Internal) 23 September 2024 (PG Proceed External)

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

As noted in Part A of this Annual Quality Report, 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 December 2023, during a restructuring of the Senior Leader Team, the role of Registrar and that of the Head of Academic Operations were merged. The new Registrar & Director of Campus Operations has overall responsibility for the Academic Operations, Exams, Registry and the Facilities Department.

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

In Q2 of 2024 the discipline area of Human and Social Sciences was split into two distinct areas, Psychology & Social Sciences and Counselling, Psychotherapy & Addiction. This was to reflect the demands of the specialist areas and specific requirements of associated PSRBs. The existing Academic Director and Assistant Academic Director remained over Psychology and Social Sciences, and a new position of Academic and Clinical Director was appointed over the area of Counselling, Psychotherapy & Addiction. As the needs of this latter area are discipline specific, an Academic & Training Officer role was also created in this area, reporting to the Academic and Clinical Director.

Additionally, the number of Programme Level Managers, a role which sits under Academic Directors and Assistance Academic Directors, was further expanded in 2024 to reflect increasing student numbers and also to alleviate workload being carried by Academic Directors. It should be noted that the PLM role is not a full-time role but is assigned hours based on student numbers in each area. Programme Level Managers (PLM) are student facing and responsible for the day-to-day academic management of assigned programmes. All academic queries that cannot be addressed by faculty at a module level go to the PLM.

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 Trading and Investing (PG25451) / Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Trading and Investing (PG25452)	April 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-42860_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25451_C.pdf
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance (PG25750) (incl. Transnational Validation)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43169_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25750_C.pdf
Master of Science in Marketing (PG25573) / Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Marketing (PG25574)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-42982_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25573_C.pdf
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology (PG25842)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43271_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25842_C.pdf
Higher Diploma in Arts in Psychology (PG25841)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43270_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25841_C.pdf
Higher Diploma in Business (PG25836)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43265_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25836_C.pdf

Certificate in Business and Digital Skills (PG25838)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43267_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25838_C.pdf
Certificate in Digital Marketing (PG25837)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43266_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25837_C.pdf
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Production and Music Project Management (PG25839)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43268_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25839_C.pdf
Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Engineering and Music Production (PG25840)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43269_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25840_C.pdf
Master of Arts in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (PG25292)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-42701_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25292_C.pdf
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing (PG25844)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43273_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25844_C.pdf
Bachelor of Laws (Honours) (PG25856)	July 2024	https://qsdocs.qqi.ie//sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43286_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25856_C.pdf

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels 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	16				2	10	4
of those:							
On-site processes	1						1
Desk reviews	1						1
Virtual processes	14				2	10	2
Average panel size for each process type*	4						

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

(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	14	12	2			13		1		3	11
Secretary	11	3	8			11					11
Academic/Discipline Specific	26	15	11			20	6			3	23
Student Representative	11	3	8			10			1	2	9
QA	1	1	1			1	1				2
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	13	6	7			12			1	1	12

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Policy Updates

New and updated policies in the Quality Assurance Handbook Changes are recorded in the QAH Change Tracker. All are approved through Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

Enhancement/ Development	Details	Impact
Strategy for Teaching, Learning and Assessment - SLATE2	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.	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.
Research Strategy	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	

Enhancement/ Development	Details	Impact
	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 strategy three main pillars are recognised within the research direction of the College: Excellence: Advancing Research and Innovation for Societal Impact (General research) Research Led Teaching and Staff Enhancement: Promoting Research Excellence and Impactful Outcome (Research led teaching and staff) Industry Focused Research: Fostering Innovation and Driving Enterprise Success through Research (Industry focused research). 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).	
Academic Support Community (ASC)	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 front the Library, Student Engagement	

Enhancement/ Development	Details	Impact
	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. 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 2023/2024 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.	

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:

- Educational Developer, Learning Unit
- Quality Assurance Officer - Academic Integrity and Assessment, Registrar's Office
- Information Skills and Research Manager, DBS Library and Academic Hub
- Registrar

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

This is a relatively new endeavour and 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.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
2025-1	Follow up on all aspects of the SLATE2 Action Plan	The Action Plan will be kept under continuous review and updated accordingly.
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.
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.
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.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Master of Science in Business Analytics PG24049/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Analytics PG24050	27/09/2024	Validated April 2019, Last intake August 2025
Master of Science in Business Analytics (PG24864)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Analytics (PG24866) - TRANSNATIONAL	27/09/2024	Validated April 2023, Last intake August 2025
Master of Science in Information and Library Management (PG24214)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information and Library Management (PG24215)	08/11/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Master of Science in Management Practice (PG24225)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Management Practice (PG24226)	22/11/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG24239)	12/11/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG24869) - TRANSNATIONAL	12/11/2024	Validated June 2022, Last intake August 2025
Master of Business Administration (PG24237)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Business (PG24238)	15/11/2024	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Master of Business Administration (PG24549)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Business (PG24550) - TRANSNATIONAL	15/11/2024	Validated June 2022, Last intake August 2025
Certificate in Social Care Skills (PG24528)	2024/2025	Validated May 2021

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
		Last intake August 2025
Master of Arts in Addiction Studies (PG24066)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Addiction Studies (PG24067)	17/02/2025	Validated April 2019, Last intake August 2025
Master of Arts in Psychotherapy (PG24189)	10/04/2025	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling and Psychotherapy (PG24188)/ Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Social Studies (PG24190)	10/04/2025	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Higher Diploma in Arts in Counselling and Psychotherapy (PG24185)	10/04/2025	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Master of Science in International Accounting and Finance (PG24183)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in International Accounting and Finance (PG24184)	17/01/2025	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2025
Master of Science in Information Systems with Computing (PG24222)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Information Systems with Computing (PG24223)	14/01/2025	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024 (extension requested)
Higher Diploma in Science in Computing (PG24224)/ Certificate in Information Technology (PG24230)	24/03/2025	Validated September 2019, Last intake August 2024 (extension requested)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Film and Creative Media (PG24397)	21/02/2025	Validated September 2020

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
		Last intake August 2025
Bachelor of Arts in Film and Creative Media (PG24396)	20/02/2025	Validated September 2020 Last intake August 2025
Bachelor of Business (PG24398)	14/03/2025	Validated September 2020 Last intake September 2025
Higher Certificate in Business (PG24399)	14/03/2025	Validated September 2020 Last intake September 2025
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Science (PG24400)	09/04/2025	Validated September 2020 Last intake September 2025
Master of Science in Financial Analytics (PG24328)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Financial Analytics (PG24329)	2025	Validated October 2020 Last intake September 2025
Higher Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing (PG24323)	04/03/2025	Validated September 2020 Last intake September 2025
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24463)/ Bachelor of Science in Computing (PG24464)	04/04/2025	Validated December 2020 Last intake December 2025
Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics (PG24461)/ Certificate in the Fundamentals of Data Analytics (PG24462)	24/03/2025	Validated December 2020 Last intake December 2025
Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence (PG24324)/	21/01/2025	Validated October 2020

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Artificial Intelligence (PG24325)		Last intake December 2025
Master of Science in Cybersecurity (PG24326)/ Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Cybersecurity (PG24327)	28/01/2025	Validated October 2020 Last intake December 2025

3.2.1Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

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)/	2025/2026	Validated September 2023

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics (PG24868) - TRANSNATIONAL VERSION		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

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond 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

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
		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
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
	2028/29	
	2028/29	
	2028/29	
	2028/29	

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1

Transforming Engagement: A Case Study on the Pilot Rollout of Vevox at Dublin Business School

Theme: Innovative EdTech Implementation for Enhanced Learning and Engagement

Rationale: Student and faculty feedback highlighted the need for an interactive platform to enhance engagement and support effective learning across diverse multimodal environments.

Introduction

In January 2024, Dublin Business School (DBS) introduced Vevox, a live polling and Q&A platform, to enhance student engagement and give lecturers real-time feedback. The decision was driven by feedback from faculty and students highlighting challenges such as low engagement and the need for a tool to gauge student understanding effectively. Student Response Technology (SRT) can be particularly beneficial in large classes, a common learning environment at DBS. It can encourage participation from all students (including those who may be reluctant to speak up in a large group setting), facilitate collaborative learning by allowing students to see their peers' responses, and create an inclusive atmosphere where every contribution is acknowledged and valued, ensuring no student feels overlooked or ignored (Matteson and Grant, 2024, p. 11). Recent case studies have demonstrated the specific advantages of using Vevox in higher education settings. These include increased engagement and participation in lectures (Greenwood, 2023; Jenkins and Maidment, 2024) and online learning environment (Lyttle, 2023), enhanced focus through re-engagement and a reduction in "mind wandering" (Price, 2022), the facilitation of meaningful discussions (Hill, Gordon and Gurbutt, 2023), and the provision of immediate feedback from students to guide the focus and direction of a learning session while promoting student-lecturer interaction (Lyttle, 2023) .

Over time, the Learning Unit (LU) recognised that Vevox offers unexpected additional benefits as a powerful survey tool. It enables the LU to gauge the “temperature in the room” and gather real-time feedback from both students and faculty. This functionality has revealed opportunities to enhance the experiences of learners and lecturers alike by allowing the LU to respond promptly and provide tailored solutions to identified issues.

Another significant advantage of using Vevox is its robust data security and privacy features. Previously, the use of free polling and survey software by lecturers raised concerns as the generated responses and data were not stored within DBS’s secure network. Vevox has effectively addressed these challenges, providing a safer and more reliable solution.

Rollout Plan

The rollout of Vevox in DBS was implemented in several phases. These phases included (1) planning meetings with stakeholders, (2) technical configuration to ensure users could sign on to Vevox with DBS Single Sign-On (SSO), (3) integration with Moodle LMS, and (4) Learning Unit (LU) training sessions and workshops for all users.

Objective

Our objective was to implement an enterprise-wide pilot of Vevox for all DBS staff, ensuring seamless integration with existing systems and promotion of effective adoption for teaching and learning by lecturers and students.

Timeline and Key Steps

The preparatory work for the rollout of Vevox at DBS was completed in January and February 2024, following the agreed plan and timeline. The key components of this preparation are outlined below.

1. Planning & Kick-Off Meeting

- Confirmed requirements and agreed on optimal setup.
- Introduced project team members and defined roles.
- Established success criteria and identified potential risks.
- Planned regular review points.

2. Implementation & Account Setup

- Configured the Vevox dashboard with allocated administration rights.
- Conducted Single Sign-On (SSO) and domain recognition tests.
- Integrated Vevox with Moodle LMS in test and live environments.

3. Training & Handover

- Delivered ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions.
- Conducted workshops for new users.
- Launched internal support, training and communication plans.

4. Operational Product Use & Ongoing Support

- Regularly monitored account usage and addressed queries.

- Hosted weekly ‘Getting Started with Vevox’ sessions.
- Provided continuous resources such as help sites, webinars, YouTube tutorials, and Learning Unit (LU) training sessions.

Communication Strategy

In collaboration with the Vevox representatives, the Learning Unit (LU) developed a comprehensive communications and training plan for the Vevox launch for all DBS staff which started in early January 2024. This included:

- A series of emails to raise awareness about Vevox, communicate the training timeline, and share resources.
- News items to promote Vevox were published monthly in the **‘DBS Connect’** newsletter and circulated to all staff.
- ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions for LU and IT Helpdesk staff, conducted on 11th January.
- A scheduled faculty training calendar event in collaboration with Vevox staff held on 17th January. This session was recorded and made accessible to all staff on the Learning Unit intranet.
- Ongoing bespoke training sessions and workshops for all staff throughout the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years.
- Introduction to Vevox for students at the Student Council meeting on 13th March.

Key Features and Benefits of Vevox at DBS

Vevox has been introduced at DBS to enhance interactivity and engagement in educational settings. Some of the key features and benefits that make Vevox a valuable tool for both educators and students are:

Ease of Use

- An intuitive interface for poll creation and management allows the staff to create interactive content without requiring technical expertise.
- The mobile-friendly platform is accessible via QR codes.

Enhanced Engagement

- Interactive live polls and quizzes keep learners actively involved during sessions, encouraging them to provide instant feedback or participate in discussions.

- A real-time leaderboard motivates participants to stay engaged and participate actively in classes and lectures.
- Anonymous participation by default encourages honest responses.

Inclusivity

- Anonymity in polling and Q&A encourages more inclusive participation, especially for individuals who may feel uncomfortable sharing their identity in a group setting.
- The word cloud and text features enable students to submit open-ended responses that can be displayed dynamically, highlighting common themes or ideas and fostering a sense of collective contribution.
- Asynchronous surveys: By removing the need for immediate responses, students may feel more comfortable providing thoughtful, considered feedback.

Feedback for Lecturers

- Instant insights into student comprehension allow for adaptive teaching strategies.
- Faculty can use asynchronous surveys to gather feedback from students before a class or lecture to gauge students' prior knowledge, expectations or preferences, enabling them to tailor the lesson content more effectively.
- Asynchronous surveys can be sent after a lecture or class to collect feedback on the session, helping to assess student understanding, engagement and areas needing improvement.

Customisability and Privacy

- A range of question formats can be tailored to the specific goals of a learning session, ensuring that the interactive content is best suited to the needs of an audience.
- Moderation options ensure appropriate and constructive communication.
- Profanity filters maintain a safe environment.
- Participant data is anonymous and handled securely.

Implementation Success

The adoption of Vevox at DBS in 2024 marked a transformative step in enhancing the educational experience for both students and faculty. The platform's widespread usage highlighted its impact in fostering interactive learning and engagement at scale.

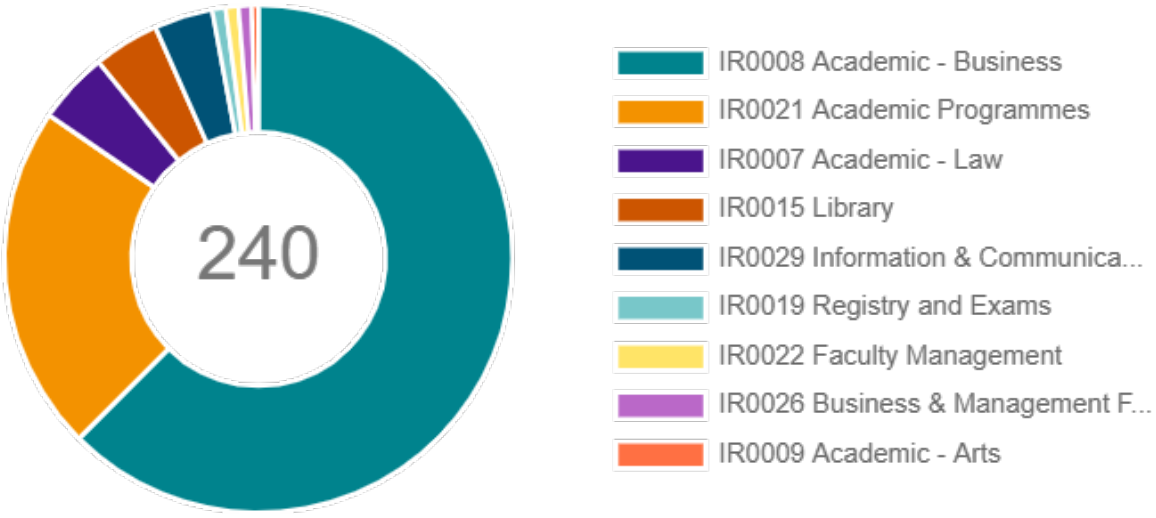
The usage of Vevox during this period illustrates a clear interest and enthusiasm for the platform, as evidenced by the metrics and use cases below:

Usage Statistics (2024):

- **240 sessions** were conducted across various departments and activities.
- **7,781 participants** were engaged.
- **1,532 polls**, **37 Q&As**, and **46 surveys** created.
- A peak response of **1113 students** was recorded during a September induction session, one of the highest Vevox recorded ever according to Alan Duddy (Vevox Global Institutional Manager - Education).

Departments and Use Cases:

- Implemented across Business, Law, Arts, Social Sciences, Psychology, ICT, and Film & Media.
- Used in student inductions, library sessions, and Student Council meetings.



Feedback and Lessons Learned

Lecturer Feedback:

- Vevox has significantly improved student participation and discussion.
- Features like word clouds and instant polls have resulted in engaging conversations, such as debates on workplace topics.
- Poll and Survey/Quiz questions have enabled learners and lecturers to gauge understanding and adapt the learning and teaching strategies and resources accordingly.
- Access to session data has supported ongoing teaching and curriculum adjustments.

Testimonials from DBS Lecturers:

John Noble (Digital Marketing): “Once you start to use Vevox, you will be glad you did because it's a user-friendly tool, easy to become familiar with and so easy for the students to engage on as all they need to do is scan the QR code and they have immediate access to the session you have created. You can create Polls, Surveys and Q&A in a short amount of time, and there are some lovely cool features such as the ‘Countdown Clock’, which can be accompanied with cool music, encouraging all the students to be engaged. Another nice aspect of this system is that it's easy to learn how to use other functions. You can prepare sessions in advance, which is a great opportunity to have learners think about some content you might have taught them, and test them out, and for many of the DBS modules, this helps to address the area of ‘participation’ (something many modules require), and is a powerful way to learn.”

Ashley Sands (HR): “As a lecturer, I have found great success integrating Vevox into my in-person classes. This powerful tool has significantly enhanced student participation. This has helped with:

1. **Increased engagement**: Higher level of student engagement because it is accessible by mobile phone. Students only need to scan a QR to start using.
2. **Inclusive participation**: The tool enables every student to contribute, including those who might be hesitant to speak up in the classroom.
3. **Starting and enhancing discussions**: The results generated through Vevox serve as excellent springboards for in-depth class discussions. This definitely has helped with student discussion as there is always something in the word or text clouds they have opinions on. The polls can especially highlight differing opinions in the classroom.
4. **Immediate feedback**: I can quickly gauge the class's comprehension of topics and adjust my teaching approach accordingly.
5. **Challenging my assumptions:** I can illustrate this with an example of when we moved on to the topic of ‘difficult conversations’ in the workplace. One of the poll questions was around how you feel about asking for a pay rise. I assumed that younger people might be more confident and likely to do that. On this question, the poll revealed this class would be anxious and reluctant to ask for a pay rise. A very lively discussion followed that.

Student feedback:

- Students appreciated the opportunity to express opinions anonymously.
- The platform fostered inclusivity, making it easier for all learners to contribute.

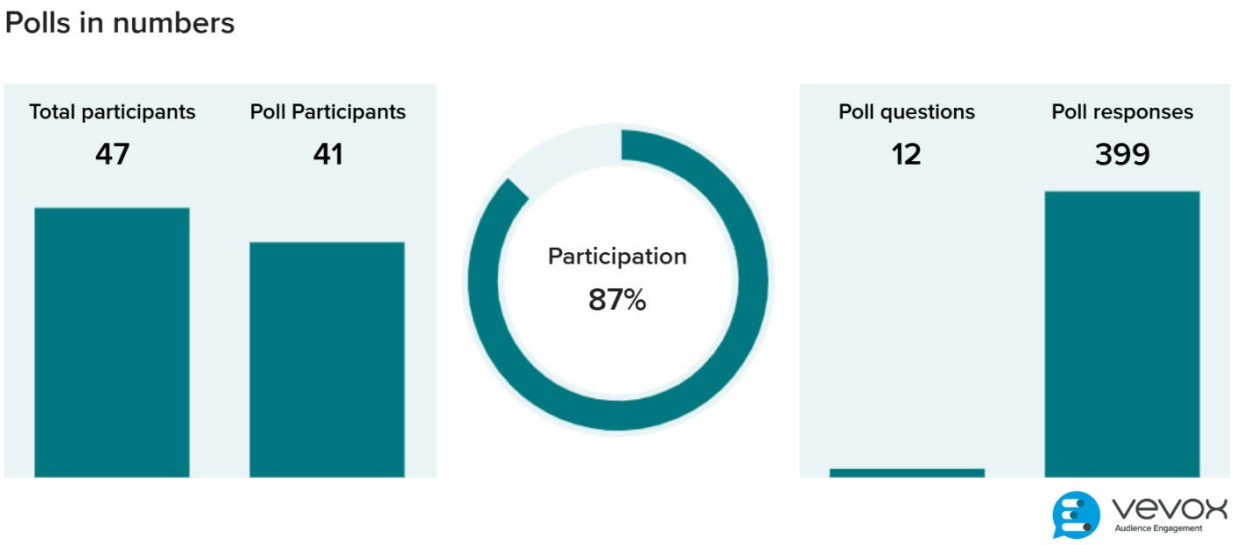
Implementation tips for lecturers:

- Introduce Vevox early in the academic year to familiarise students.
- Limit sessions to two per lecture for optimal engagement.”

Student Feedback:

The Learning Unit (LU) introduced Vevox to DBS students during the Student Council meeting on 13th March. The session aimed to familiarise students with various Vevox features and demonstrate how these could enhance their learning experience.

Lively engagement during the session was reflected in the participation statistics detailed below.

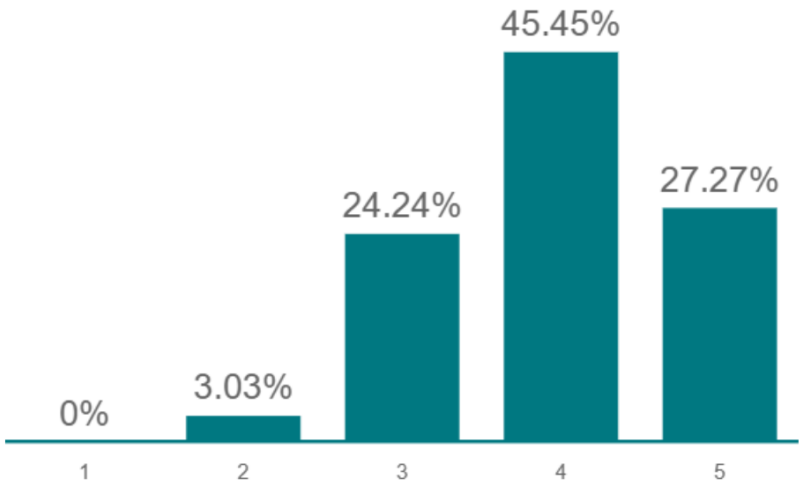


At the end of the session, students were asked two questions about their attitudes toward using Vevox in class. Their responses are presented here:

★ On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you think Vevox could make your classes more engaging? 33

Average response:

★★★★☆



vevox Audience Engagement

After learning about Vevox, do you think you'd be more interested in participating in class activities if we used it regularly? 36

Definitely! It sounds like it could make class way more fun and interactive.
38.89%

Yeah, I think so. It seems like it could make things more interesting.
44.44%

Not really sure. I'd have to see it in action first.
11.11%

No, I don't think it would change much for me.
5.56%

Allowed selections: 1

vevox Audience Engagement

The LU plans to collect updated data on students' experiences and perceived benefits of Vevox during a Student Council meeting in the spring term of 2025.

Other Uses of Vevox

Since its launch in early 2024, Vevox has unexpectedly become a key tool at DBS for purposes beyond regular learning and teaching activities. Its real-time feedback and survey features have been effectively applied in broader academic and administrative contexts, enhancing both learning and working environments.

The Learning Unit

The LU leverages Vevox polls surveys to gather targeted insights from faculty, driving enhancements to its services and initiatives, and ensuring that its activities remain aligned with faculty needs and evolving educational trends. Below are some examples:

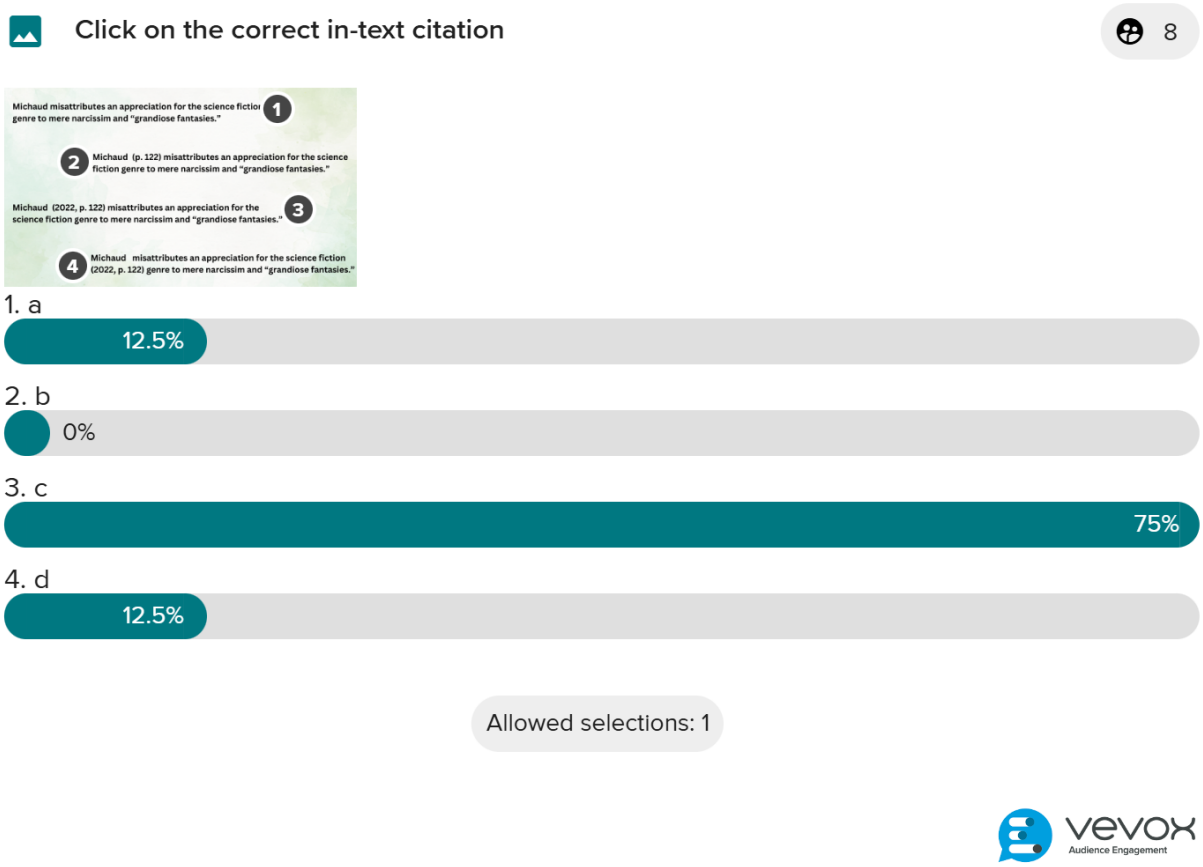
- Moodle Users Survey, conducted prior to the Moodle 4.3 upgrade, collected feedback on existing Moodle features and identified desired improvements.
- Advance HE Fellowships poll was conducted to better understand faculty's expectations and perceived barriers to obtaining Advance HE fellowships.
- GenAI and GenAI Assessment Scale Survey explored faculty use of generative AI in learning, teaching and assessment, and provided insights into their experiences and opinions on the GenAI Assessment Scale.
- LU Support and Training Survey aimed to inform the development of a new support and training strategy for 2025 by identifying faculty preferences on topics and delivery formats.

The LU has also utilised live polling and asynchronous surveys during Student Councils and meetings with the Student Union and Student Services representatives to incorporate the collective student voice in informing LU activities as well as broader cross-departmental initiatives, such as those of the Academic Support Community (ASC). Examples of these sessions include:

- Student Council: Discussions covered topics such as Vevox usage in driving engagement, academic integrity, genAI use in assignments, and the GenAI Assessment Scale.
- Student Leaders Focus Group and ASC Communication poll and survey to develop a more effective approach to student-staff communication using Vevox.

The Library

DBS Library staff have been using Vevox in their live workshops on research skills and genAI use. The data obtained allows them to assess participant engagement, identify areas where additional support may be needed, and refine the content and delivery of future workshops. This feedback-driven approach ensures that the workshops remain relevant and responsive to the students' needs.



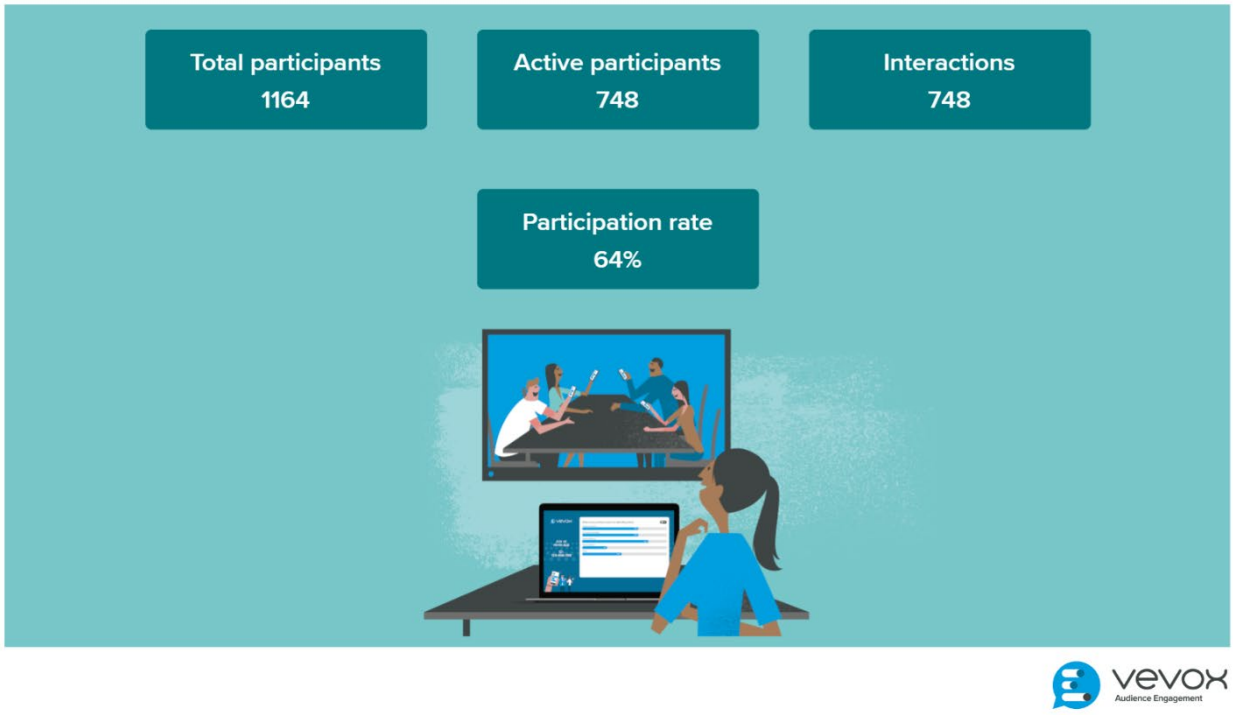
Quality Assurance and Academic Integrity

The DBS Quality Assurance Officer for Academic Integrity and Assessment has conducted live workshops and asynchronous quizzes to help students understand what might constitute academic misconduct in various academic contexts, such as open- and closed-book exam regulations. By adopting a scenario-based approach in creating questions for both polls and quizzes, these activities not only raise students' awareness of academic integrity and potential breaches but also, perhaps more importantly, assess their comprehension of the concepts. This helps identify gaps in understanding, allowing for targeted interventions.

Read the following scenarios. Select all of the scenarios that you think would constitute Academic Misconduct.
21
During an open book exam, you refer to your course and revision notes to help answer a question.
38.1%
During an open book exam, you consult an online source to help you answer a question.
57.14%
During an open book exam, you contact a friend via whatsapp to ask for help with answering a question.
61.9%
During an open book exam, you find a quote on a website / your lecturer's Moodle notes, that will help you answer a question. You copy the quote into your answer but do not cite the source.
61.9%
A question from a past paper appears in your exam. You have practiced answering this question as part of your revision so you copy the pre-prepared answer from your notes into your exam answer.
33.33%
Your lecturer has provided the class with guidance on the type of questions that may be asked in the exam. When you start the exam, you realise that your revision notes answer the questions being asked. The notes are all original and your own work. You have been told by a past DBS student that you are not allowed to use the Copy and Paste function to transfer work from your notes into your answer, so you instead retype the notes word for word.
47.62%
You used Generative AI to help write your revision notes. You refer to these notes during the exam.
47.62%
You have a messenger app open on your desktop but you are not using it. You receive a message from a class study group chat that contains answers and files relating to the exam. The message pops up on your screen and although you do not fully open the message part of what it contains can still be read.
57.14%
You have finished your exam early. You have closed the test window. You then send a message to a study group chat with your answers to check what answers your class mates gave. The exam time has not finished and at least one member of the whatsapp group is still sitting their exam
47.62%
You are having technical problems during the exam so you message a friend to ask for their help.
57.14%
You receive an email during the exam containing answers or information relating to the exam. The email is from your own email account but the invigilator can not verify the origin of the material.
52.38%
A question asks you to create a spreadsheet. You use a spare laptop, that is not running the test platform, to create the document. You then email it to yourself to upload on the laptop that is running the test platform.
42.86%
A friend who has taken the module before offers you their notes to use as revision material and to use during the exam.
33.33%
The search engine/programme that you are using has a Generative AI function built-in that is automatically making suggestions based on what you are entering.
57.14%
Allowed selections: 14
vevox
Audience Engagement

Student Inductions

Vevox was used for the first time during online student inductions in September 2024 for ice-breaking activities, generating the highest number of responses in a single poll ever recorded at DBS. One example from the session is provided below.



The success of this initiative has led to the decision to incorporate Vevox more extensively during the January 2025 inductions to actively engage students and maintain their attention throughout the sessions.

Conclusion

The pilot rollout of Vevox at DBS addressed engagement challenges and fostered a more dynamic learning environment. Its integration across various academic and administrative functions underscores its versatility and impact. By providing real-time feedback and promoting inclusivity, Vevox has set a new standard for interactive learning at DBS.

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Case Study 2

Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidelines

With the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) software in far more accessible forms, through ChatGPT and other competing systems, the College quickly realised the impact this could have on the educational sector, but also our own limitations in understanding exactly how and where these new systems would disrupt traditional practices. In the early part of 2023, the Dean and Registrar's Offices drafted a GenAI Usage Policy Statement, setting out the College's recognition that the software would be unavoidable, but

would need to be treated with informed caution. This Policy Statement set out the commitment that the College would provide guidance to learners and faculty in the appropriate use of GenAI.

For an extended period, members of the College's various academic and administrative teams monitored the developing research and reports on GenAI, collecting examples of best practice, well intentioned (but less successful) deployment, and proposed strategies for managing GenAI use by both learners and faculty. Through attending conferences hosted in the sector, reviewing the published research, and engaging with academic teams on their experiences, a collection of material could be coalesced together to form the core components of a guidance document which could be made available to learned and faculty.

In consultation with the Learning Unit and library teams, the Registrar's Office drafted the GenAI Guidelines from a benchmarking exercise against other institutions' published guidance, and supplemented with the additional research collated across the various teams. These Guidelines were circulated through the Learning and Teaching Committee and Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Sustainability Committees for consultation and feedback, before being raised to Academic Board for consideration. In parallel, the Information Skills and Research Manager in the library developed a learner-focussed workshop based off the evolving draft guidelines, to mirror the existing information literacy workshops available to learners, while the Learning and Teaching Committee was reviewing the Assessment Template, which offered the opportunity to align enhancements to the developing guidelines. This allowed the final version of the Guidelines to be launched, following approval by Academic Board, with accompanying workshops offered by the library team, and a new assessment template which explicitly set out space for lecturers to make clear to learners what extent of GenAI, if any, could be used in an assessment. The guidelines were published on the student-facing website, in a new webpage subsection, to make it readily findable by learners navigating the College website, and associated with the other quality assurance publications: https://students.dbs.ie/quality-assurance/genai

These developments were presented to faculty before the commencement of the teaching term in September 2024, and to learners through the meeting of the Student Council early in the new year, and embedded in semesterly reminder notices regarding key College assessment regulations circulated by email to all active learners. Following this launch, the Learning Unit has continued to monitor lecturer and learner understanding and experience of GenAI tools and the GenAI Assessment Scale through surveys circulated to different groups at various points of time.

[End of Dublin Business School AQR 2025]