

Programme Evaluation Report

Provider Name:	DBL College		
Provider No.	38036J & 38116H		
Address	The Steelworks, Foley Street, Dublin 1.		
Phone / Fax / email / website	01-8559437	01-8559421	admissions@dblcollege.com www.dblcollege.com
Manager / Principal / Director Name	Sean Featherstone		
Report Date	September 2009		
Programme Titles	FETAC 5 Business Accounting (BBSXX) FETAC Level 5 Marketing (BMXXX) FETAC Level 5 International Trade (BBSIT)		
Report Author(s)	Elaine Cohalan	Programme Director	
External Evaluator	Grainne Seaver	Dorset College	
Timeframe covered by Evaluation	From (10/2008)	To (06/2009)	

Sean Featherstone

Manager / Principal / Director

18/09/09

Date

Grainne Seaver

External Evaluator

18/09/09

Date

Programme Summary

(a) Programme Name (s):

FETAC 5 Business Accounting (BBSXX)
FETAC Level 5 Marketing (BMXXX)
FETAC Level 5 International Trade (BBSIT)

(b) Programme Aim:

These 2 year programmes were designed for international learners in Ireland who wish to study and work in the business world with a particular emphasis on accountancy / marketing / international trade – depending on which course they chose.

(c) Programme Objectives:

Business Accounting:

The objectives of this course are to provide learners with general purpose business skills, workplace and IT skills & knowledge as well as specific training in accountancy-related skills.

Marketing:

The objectives of this course are to provide learners with general purpose business & team working skills, workplace and IT skills & knowledge as well as specific training in marketing-related skills.

International Trade:

The objectives of this course are to provide learners with general purpose business skills, workplace and IT skills & knowledge as well as specific training in the international trade area.

(d) Programme Modules:

Business Accounting:

Bookkeeping – Manual & Computerised
Statistics
Marketing Practice
Communications
Accounting – Manual & Computerised
Business Law
Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace
Work Experience
Language & Exam Preparation

Marketing:

Marketing Practice
Communications
Desktop Publishing
EBusiness Studies
Language & Exam Preparation
Behavioural Studies
Statistics
Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace
Work Experience

International Trade:

International Trade Practice
Communications
Word Processing
Accounting – Manual and Computerised
Language & Exam Preparation
Marketing Practice
Business Law
Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace
Work Experience

(e) Learner Profile:

The typical learner on this course at DBL College is a non-EU International learner, originating from China, India, Brazil, or Mauritius (other nationalities include Bulgarian, Japanese, Mongolian, South African, Malaysian, Italian, Romanian, and French). The average age of the learners is approximately 24. He / she has spent a couple of years in Ireland on a Learner Visa, and has at least an Intermediate level of English (IELTS level 5). The typical learner will also have at least one part time job.

Given the learner profile, the College decided to include a resource class in all programmes called 'Language & Exam Preparation'. This class runs over the course of the 2 academic years.

This resource class is mandatory for all non native English speakers and covers the following:

- FETAC level 5 English as a Second Language
- English for Specific Purposes i.e. for:

- Accounting – English for Accounting
- Marketing – English for Marketing
- International Trade – English for International Trade
- Exam Preparation
- Harvard Referencing System

The timetable was also designed to be convenient for a learner with part time work.

(f) Target Awards:

Business Accounting:

FETAC Level 5 Minor Awards in:

- Bookkeeping – Manual & Computerised
- Statistics
- Marketing Practice
- Communications
- Accounting – Manual & Computerised
- Business Law
- Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace
- Work – Placement
- English as a Second Language

FETAC Level 5 Major Award in:

- Business Studies (BBSXX)

Marketing:

FETAC Level 5 Minor Awards in:

- Marketing Practice
- Communications
- Desktop Publishing
- eBusiness Studies
- English as a Second Language
- Behavioural Studies
- Statistics
- Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace
- Work Experience

FETAC Level 5 Major Award in:

- Marketing (BMXXX)

International Trade:

FETAC Level 5 Minor Awards in:

- International Trade Practice
- Communications
- Word Processing
- Accounting – Manual and Computerised
- English as a Second Language
- Marketing Practice
- Business Law
- Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace
- Work Experience

FETAC Level 5 Major Award in:

- International Trade (BBSIT)

Programme Statistics

No. Learners who started in period:	70
No. Learners who achieved an award in period:	5 modules completed per learner: Total success from learners who attempted assessment: 247/377 = 66%

Evaluation Methodology

The Programme Director conducted the evaluation of the programmes and sent the information to the external evaluator. The external evaluator then read the reports and made her recommendations.

The evaluation was conducted using information gathered from learners, Programme Director, teachers and administrative staff:

Teacher & Programme Director meetings:

As part of our ongoing Quality Assurance Procedures at DBL College, we conduct regular meetings between teaching staff and Programme Director. Any issue that needs further discussion is brought up at our monthly Academic Council Meetings.

Academic Council Meetings:

The Programme Director, Principal and Registrar conduct monthly meetings to discuss any issues that may arise in relation to a programme.

Internal Quality Assurance Reports:

DBL College also conducts a formal Quality Assurance procedure every year. This involves a full review of facilities, equipment, resources, building security & safety, staff communication procedures, staff structure, course content and quality, teaching quality, learner participation in class etc.

Teacher & Class Observations:

Class Observations were conducted with each individual teacher. The teacher was given a copy of the finding and recommendations which he/she discussed with the Programme Director.

One to One meetings with Teaching Staff:

One to one meetings between teachers and the Programme Director are arranged for their comments / input.

Questionnaires:

Each learner and member of staff (teaching / administrative) fills out an anonymous questionnaire annually. These surveys questioned their views on course content & quality, teaching quality, resources and facilities, equipment and what they would like to change.

Suggestion Box:

A suggestion box has been placed in our learner common area to allow us to continually anticipate and facilitate their needs. Staff members are also encouraged to use this.

Executive Summary

Grading Scale:

- 3 = Strength There is plentiful evidence to indicate that achievement in this area is above average. This is an area where practice should be disseminated elsewhere.
- 2 = Acceptable There is evidence that achievement in this area meets expectations. With further development, this could become an area of strength
- 1 = For Improvement There is little or no evidence that achievement in this area meets what is expected. Improvement is needed.

Policy Area	Average Grade
Communications	3
Equality	3
Staff Recruitment and Development	3
Access, Transfer and Progression	3
Programme Development, Delivery and Review	2.9
Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners	3
Protection for Learners	3
Sub Contracting / Procuring Programme Delivery	n/a

Strengths

- High quality teaching & administrative staff
- Effective structure that allows for input and feedback from all parties
- Good communication between all relevant parties
- Quality assurance practices in place for programme content, delivery and support services.
- High quality equipment & facilities

Areas for Improvement

- Increase in success rate of programme
- Increased learner participation in continuous assessment
- Increased learner attendance and participation in class

Recommendations

- Teaching and administrative staff to highlight the quality of the course and opportunities that the learner will attain out of it.
- Teachers to employ the use of a variety of techniques to increase class participation.
- More FETAC posters etc to be erected to highlight this also.

Detailed Findings

Programme Design and Content

These programmes were designed to specifically cater for international learners in Ireland who wish to study and work in the business world with a particular emphasis on accountancy / marketing / international trade (depending on the course they chose).

The programmes run over two years and includes a resource programme called 'Language & Exam Preparation'. This resource class runs over the two academic years, is mandatory for all non native English speakers and covers the following:

- FETAC level 5 English as a Second Language
- English for Specific Purposes i.e. for:
 - Accounting – English for Accounting
 - Marketing – English for Marketing
 - International Trade – English for International Trade
- Exam Preparation
- Harvard Referencing System

This was decided upon due to DBL's typical learner profile, i.e. a non-EU International learner with an Intermediate or higher level of English who works part time.

Level-specific books and other resources are used in content design. Module content is carefully designed and quality assured by the Programme Director before it is used in class.

The content of the program focuses on the practical skills & knowledge needs of the learner. On completion of one of these programmes, learners are prepared for both further /higher level study in the field and for work in the area.

The design and content of the programmes are continually updated to meet the needs of the learners. A variety of programme delivery and design methods are employed to further enhance this.

Information is gathered from the learners via questionnaires, a suggestion box and feedback received through teachers, administration staff and the Programme Director. This information is used to continually improve the content and delivery of the programmes, and also to ensure that the needs of the learners are being met.

Information and communication regarding content, learner needs, assessment, delivery methods, resources etc. is also continually gathered from teaching staff on the programmes through staff meetings, one to one meetings, questionnaires and feedback forms. This contributes highly to the overall success and continued improvement of the quality of the programmes.

Demand for these programmes has steadily increased as learners are made more and more aware of the benefits of such programmes. Many learners suggest the programmes to their friends also.

There has been a low drop out rate in these programmes as of yet. Upon enrolment and induction learners are informed about the specific details of the programmes, i.e. level, content, awards, opportunities on completion etc. This leads to a high level of understanding of the programmes before commencement, and hence reduces drop out rates.

Strengths

- High quality staff & resources used in content design
- All content is quality assured before it is used in class
- Content focused on practical skills & knowledge
- Learners have excellent access to high quality staff
- Environment and facilities conducive to success.
- Internal website with programme details, notes, past examinations etc available to learners

- Library of resources available for learners (including subscriptions to Marketing, Finance, Trade, Management Magazines) to borrow on a deposit system.
- Learners to have access to photocopier & printer.

Areas for Improvement

- More resources could be made available to learners.

Recommendations

- More resources to be procured for the college library.
- Library Database system to be arranged.
- Content and structure for moodle site to be arranged

Programme Delivery

The programmes are delivered by hand-picked expert staff in small tutorial-style classes. Use of activities, practical labs, exercises etc are highly encouraged and access to facilities and equipment to do so are readily available.

Staff are highly qualified and continually encouraged to use a variety of methods that contribute to the success of the class. They are also encouraged to contribute their own recommendations, materials etc to the programmes.

Programme content is adapted to meet the needs of learners, e.g. through use of dictionaries and glossaries to help overcome their language barriers, through use of international examples that they would be familiar with to explain concepts. Tutors also focus on attaining examples of the learner's experience and knowledge to help explain concepts.

All programme content is prepared / updated prior to the beginning of term. It is then evaluated and quality assured by the Programme Director before it is used in class.

Teaching staff are subject to at least one class observation during the year where recommendations were made by the coordinator.

Teaching staff adapt the class to the specific needs of the group if the need arises. Any specific issues that come about (e.g. specific / diverse needs) are noted by the teacher. The teacher speaks to the Programme Director for advice on how to meet these needs.

Staff development works extremely well within the DBL network. Teaching staff continually support each other and are continually supported by the Programme Director. Any content questions or queries that cannot be answered by the Programme Director are referred to FETAC. If there were course days / training days available through FETAC or recommended by FETAC this would further enhance this process. The College ran a FETAC 6 Train the Trainer Programme this year for staff.

Teaching staff therefore continually supported by the Programme Director to ensure they are confident and content in their roles.

Learners are continuously informed of their progress through series of in class exercises, tests etc.

Learners are given exercises to complete at home and are constantly encouraged to relay their own experiences in class. Learners are given course notes and DBL College folders in which to store them. All learners have open free access to computers with internet access to facilitate further research. This is done to help encourage learners to take interest in the programme and to take responsibility for their own learning. Learners also have access to class notes and materials via the college's moodle site.

The timetable is designed to facilitate learners who work part time. Learners get a short break after each class to ensure an optimal and practical learning environment is maintained.

The specific needs of learners are further catered for through employment of high quality equipment, facilities and resources.

Learners have excellent access to administration staff (8.30am-6.30pm daily), their teachers (before and after class times) and the Programme Director (office hours) for any questions or queries they may have. Information is made available through the college's website and via hard copy in the reception office.

Each module is reviewed at the end of a semester. The Programme Director meets with the teacher(s) involved and recommendations and suggestions are considered and implemented where appropriate. Teachers are continually encouraged to add their own content to the programme if they feel it would benefit the programme positively. This is open for discussion with the Programme Director and other teachers at monthly staff meetings. Teachers also complete feedback forms upon completion of each semester – in this form they comment on what resources, facilities and equipment are available for the teaching of the module and how it can be improved.

The College holds graduation ceremonies annually. Learners who were successful in their modules and courses receive their certificates at this ceremony.

Strengths

- Teaching staff receive excellent and continual support and have excellent facilities, equipment and resources available to them.
- An effective quality assurance process ensures excellent content and delivery.
- The needs of learners are continually assessed and monitored to ensure delivery is of optimal level.
- Learners receive constant and open access to administrative support and course information.
- The timetable is specifically designed to meet the needs of the learner.

Areas for Improvement

- More open access to resources to be made available to learners

Recommendations

- More library resources to be procured for the college library.
- Library Database system to be arranged.
- Content and structure for moodle site to be arranged

Assessment of Learning

Administration and registration of learners performed and managed through the use of a specifically designed database system. This system is accessible to all administration and management staff. The database holds records of each learner (uniquely identified by learner numbers). Each record maintains the following information on the learner:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone Number
- All courses they have enrolled on
- Their % attendance on all courses
- Modules they are scheduled on.
- Days they attended class
- Examination results
- Visa Details etc.

This system is backed up daily on the college's server and works very effectively.

Records of Assessment are maintained securely on the college's database system (soft copy). Hard copies of all portfolios and summary sheets are also maintained in a locked cabinet in the main office for a minimum of 2 years.

All reports from external examiners are reviewed at the next Academic Council Meeting. Appropriate action is then decided if required.

Assessment is module specific and outlined by the FETAC's module descriptors. Assessment includes assignments, skills demonstrations, projects, role-plays, interviews, examinations, presentations, research and data collection etc. These assessment techniques are conducive to success with the college's learner profile.

Learners are fully briefed at the outset of each module as to how it will be assessed. At the end of each semester, the Programme Director ensures that all learner portfolios are presented in order, marks are tallied up correctly, and that all work submitted is accounted for. The college's teachers then take part in DBL's internal invigilation process; where they correct the randomly sampled learner portfolios of their peers.

Examination dates and final dates for portfolio submission are set out and published on the notice boards by the Programme Director at the start of each term. In class assessments, presentation, skills demonstrations etc are scheduled by the class teacher.

As outlined in the college's Access Transfer and Progression policy; where a learner has evidence of prior achievement relative to the programme, it is recognised before entry into that programme. In certain circumstances, credit, examination exemption or direct entry into a particular examination can be awarded for prior learning.

The standard of achievement by learners on these programmes stands at a 66% pass rate. The learner profile is seen to be a contributor to a percentage of the failure rate, i.e. language barrier, learners sometimes prioritising work over their studies etc.

Where a learner has a disability that will impact on their ability to complete their assessment, support is provided by the college or alternative methods are designed (with the agreement of the awarding body).

Strengths

- Assessment appropriate to module and to the learner.
- The college has a reliable internal invigilation process in place that ensures standards are consistent.

- Responsive system in place to deal with any input from external assessment.
- Secure and efficient in-house database system in use to hold learner records, examination results etc.
- Learners and tutors made aware of assessment schedule at the beginning of each semester.

Areas for Improvement

- Standard of achievement needs to be maintained and improved where possible.

Recommendations

- Teaching and administrative staff to highlight the quality of the course and opportunities that the learner will attain out of it and hence encourage learners to take more interest in achieving success.

Associated Services and Resourcing

Staff are equipped with module descriptors, course books, course plans, course schedules and examination schedules for each module they teach. In the case where the module was previously taught at the college, the tutor is given all the resources used at that time (hard and soft copies) along with details of the feedback from tutors who taught that programme (Feedback Forms).

Preparation / update of module notes, handouts, exercises, assignments etc takes place before the semester commences. Additional materials and resources can be procured at this stage where required. This material is quality assured by the Programme Director before it can be used in the teaching of the class. Any questions / queries on programme content can be resolved at this stage.

Staff have access to a library of resources in the college and can request for additional resources to be procured where necessary.

Staff have access to a PC in the staff room (which also has online access), printers, and photocopiers. Staff are also equipped with laptops. These can be used deliver classes via PowerPoint, show online examples / exercises etc. All the classrooms and computer labs are equipped to deliver audio-visual presentations (i.e. with projectors & interactive screens).

There are 2 computer labs in the college. Where necessary, classes are scheduled to take place in a computer lab (the module teacher and Programme Director discuss this before the semester begins). Where available, these labs can also be booked by teachers if required for individual classes.

Learners have access to a library with course related resources in the college. Learners on all our FETAC programmes have access to both computer labs during class and at allotted open-access times.

All facilities in the college are new and safely maintained. Fire exits and extinguishers are scattered throughout the building in allocated areas. First aid kits are maintained at 3 locations. Equipment is continually monitored and maintained. A Safety Statement and Risk Assessment are completed annually.

Strengths

- Staff are fully equipped with resources, facilities and equipment to deliver high quality classes and can request additional resources where necessary.
- Learners have access to excellent resources, facilities and equipment that enhances their learning experience and encourages high achievement.
- Learners and teaching staff have excellent daily access to administrative staff and to the Programme Director for continual and ongoing support.
- All resources and facilities are up to date, well maintained and safe.
- Learners and staff have access to the College's internal moodle website for sharing of resources.

Areas for Improvement

- More open access to resources to be made available to learners
- Improvement of facilities and equipment for learners

Recommendations

- Library Database system to be arranged.
- Content and structure for moodle site to be arranged
- Microwave Unit to be installed to enhance learners catering facilities
- Computer Laboratories to be updated: MS office 2007, PCS >3 years old replaced (12)

Attainment of Programme Objectives

The overall aim of these programmes are to provide learners with the abilities and skills required to work or study in the Business Accounting / Marketing / International Trade fields. To achieve this, the programmes were designed to provide learners with:

- General purpose business & team work skills,
- Workplace & Personal skills
- IT skills & knowledge &
- Specific training in accountancy/ marketing/ international trade skills

The objectives are achieved through ensuring the following:

- High quality qualified and experienced teaching staff are employed.
- Quality resources, facilities, equipment and support are available to staff and learners.
- An open communicative environment is maintained. Learners and staff are asked and encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions to ensure continual improvement to the programmes and to ensure the needs of the learners are being met.
- Programme and module content is continually quality assured and updated to ensure it meets with FETAC standards.

When a learner enquires about enrolling for a course, the course content, level, direction and objectives are clearly explained to them. If this matches with their specific requirements / needs, they are encouraged to enrol for the course. When it doesn't match, they are encouraged to enrol on a more appropriate programme. This ensures a very low drop out rate.

The specific programme objectives are also clearly stated on all marketing material on the programme.

Learners who drop out of the programmes generally do so due to their own changing requirements, e.g. they cannot commit the time (continuous assessment, skills, assignments, projects etc) to the programme any longer)

Demand for the programmes is still quite evident, and enrolment of new learners has already begun for the October 2009 term.

Learners who have completed year 1 of the programme are also enrolling for their second year at a high rate.

As the same ideology has been applied to all programmes and groups (high quality staff, support, facilities, services, quality assurance, feedback mechanisms etc), attainment levels has tended to be similar across all groups.

Conclusions:

- The design and structure of these programmes are meeting the specific needs of the learners involved.
- Success rate is high and the future of the programmes looks bright.