



National College of Art and Design  
*A Recognised College of University College Dublin*

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

### **Unit Review**

## **Quality Review Panel Report**

**Date of review visit: 27 April 2022**

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## 1. Executive Summary

1.0.1 This Quality Review of Academic Affairs was undertaken in April 2022, as part of NCAD's Quality Review Framework and to meet the statutory requirements for Designated Awarding Bodies (UCD) and linked providers (Recognised College, the National College of Art and Design (NCAD)) as set out under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

### 1.1. Key findings of the review of Academic Affairs

1.1.1 The review panel has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within the College and Academic Affairs, and key areas which the review panel wish to highlight as requiring future improvement at unit level. The findings, commendations and recommendations may be broadly categorised as addressing institutional and strategic issues; organisational issues; regulatory and enhancement issues and procedural issues. The report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the review panel in detail.

### 1.2. Commendations

1.2.1 The review panel identified a number of commendations, in particular:

1. The review panel commends the commitment of the Academic Affairs unit to the welfare and wellbeing of students in NCAD, their focus on the student experience and the quality of student engagement.
2. The review panel commends the leadership of NCAD for supporting the evolution of an ambitious academic quality environment and the leadership provided in academic affairs in ensuring a focus on enhancement in all the activity of the unit.
3. The review panel commends the strong collegiate ethos evident in NCAD.
4. The review panel commends the good working relationship between the Office of Academic Affairs in NCAD and the Quality Office in UCD.
5. The review panel commends the attention to institutional strategy reflected in the documentation prepared for this review.

### 1.3. Recommendations for Future Improvement

1.3.1 The Review Group makes the following recommendations:

1. That the objective of NCAD to develop a more comprehensive learning and teaching strategy is prioritised so that the implementation of the strategy can be accelerated in the next academic year.

2. That a very close alignment between the Academic Affairs Unit and those providing leadership in research is developed with respect to quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures for post-graduate studies. This alignment will be advanced through the ongoing Supporting Research Policy.
3. That a stronger emphasis is placed on both internal and external benchmarking in quality assurance and enhancement.
4. That NCAD develops a new programme on institutional research, with a distinctive focus on the characteristics and activities of NCAD. This on-going programme of institutional research should build the evidence-base for the future strategy of the institution.
5. That the approach to access, currently well-developed in NCAD, be used as an exemplar for other areas of the institution.
6. That a planned sequence of reviews is prepared and that it is implemented in a timely manner.
7. That the currency and timeliness of quality assurance policy and procedure documents be reviewed and linked to an effective system of review and updating.
8. That student surveys such as ISSE are reviewed in order to ensure that feedback is acted upon and that there is a process in place to ensure that students get a response to their feedback.
9. That a College-wide recruitment plan is developed that includes the active participation of all departments.
10. That the role of clubs and societies in NCAD is reviewed to ensure continuity and alignment with institutional culture and ethos and that the oversight of expenditure on clubs and societies is aligned with best practice.
11. That a process of integrating peer to peer evaluation is implemented as part of quality enhancement.
12. That the demands on counselling and careers services be evaluated in order to establish the resources required.
13. That the discontinuities in communication between Academic Affairs and the academic departments that have arisen as a consequence of COVID and staff changes are addressed.

## 2. Quality Review Context and Framework

- 2.0.1 This Programmatic Quality Review was undertaken as part of NCAD's Quality Review Framework and to meet the statutory requirements for Designated Awarding Body, University College Dublin (UCD) and linked provider (Recognised College, the National College of Art and Design (NCAD)), as set out under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, namely to review the effectiveness of the linked provider's programmes.
- 2.0.2 This report presents the findings of the Review Panel's review of Academic Affairs. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how NCAD discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students by evaluating the effectiveness of its programmes or units.
- 2.0.3 The members of the Review Panel (RP), appointed by NCAD, were:
- Marion Coy, Chair of the panel, former President of GMIT (Now Atlantic Technological University)
  - Professor Anita Taylor, Dean Art & Design Office, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, Dundee, Scotland UK
  - Noel O'Connor, Former Director of Student Development, TU Dublin

### 2.1. Outline of the Quality Review Process and Methodology

- 2.1.1 The constitution of the review panel (RP) was well structured to sustain the full range of appropriate expertise. The review visit was conducted in person, on campus, the first time since the Institutional Review in 2018 that an in-person review was possible, due to COVID19 restrictions. At the preliminary meeting of the RP, it was decided that the group would work together as a group during the review visit and not assign any specific areas of responsibility to any individual member of the review panel. The review panel had an initial discussion on the contents of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), identified additional information required and agreed the format of the site visit. All members of the RP had opportunities to ask questions during the visit. The Academic Affairs Support Officer was in attendance during the review visit and took notes.
- 2.1.2 All members of the RP contributed to the writing of the report.
- 2.1.3 The key stages of the review process consist of the following elements:
1. Unit self-assessment, which includes the preparation of an analytical and reflective self-assessment report (SAR), which involves an internal and external consultation process within NCAD.

2. Review visit by the review panel on 27 April 2022. See the schedule below.
3. Production of a report by the review panel, in which recommendations are clearly set out and distinguished from the general findings.
4. Production by NCAD of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which addresses all recommendations and includes a timeline in respect of their implementation.
5. Publication of the review panel's report, NCAD's response to the report, the QIP.
6. Establishment and implementation of a clear and timely follow-up process in respect of any quality improvement recommendations, which may include publication of updates on progress.

## 2.1.4 The review panel schedule for the 27 April 2022 visit:

## Academic Affairs Review

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 National College of Art and Design  
 A Regional College of University College Dublin
**Review Panel Visit**

Wednesday 27 April 2022

Time	Subject of session	Participants
8.30-9.15	Discussion	Panel
9.15-10.15	Welcome Co-ordinating Committee	Professor Sarah Glennie, Director NCAD Professor Siún Hanrahan, Head of Academic Affairs Cathy McCartney, SS&A Officer Finola McTernan, Access Officer Kilian O'Callaghan, Quality & Academic Support Officer
10.15-10.30	Break/Discussion	Panel
10.30-11.15	Academic Affairs staff	Members of Student Services & Admissions, Quality & Academic Support, Access, Teaching & Learning Development, Academic Affairs Officer
11.15-11.45	Tea and discussion	Panel
11.45-12.30	Other NCAD staff	Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments, Administrative and Academic NCAD staff
12.30-2.00	Lunch and tour	Siún Hanrahan
2.00-2.45	Students & SU	Students from all Schools, including an Erasmus student
2.45-3.15	Discussion	Panel
3.15-4.00	Senior Academic Affairs staff	Siún Hanrahan, Head of Academic Affairs Kilian O'Callaghan, Quality & Academic Support Officer Finola McTernan, Access Officer Renée Koch, Teaching & Learning Development Officer
4.00-4.15	Tea and Discussion	Panel
4.15-5.15	Summary preparation	Panel
5.15-5.45	Presentation of summary	Staff members from Academic Affairs Director, NCAD
5.45	Finish	

## 2.2. Key areas of the review

2.2.1 This report, written by the RP on completion of their visit on 27 April 2022, covers its review of the main sections addressed in the self-assessment report:

- A review of the integration of NCAD's institutional strategy with the policies and procedures of Academic Affairs.
- A review of alignment of the policies and procedures of Academic Affairs with the requirements of QQI and the ESG 2015.
- A review of Student Services, including recruitment, admissions, academic support, personal student support services and the operation of the Students' Union.
- A review of the internal organisational effectiveness of the Office of Academic Affairs and its relationships with other bodies (including academic departments and college committees).
- A review of its regulatory and enhancement policies and processes.
- A review of the evidence-base used to prepare for this review.
- A review of the approach to benchmarking.
- An identification of key areas for development in advance of the next scheduled review.

## 2.3. Brief History and Context of the National College of Art and Design

2.3.1 The National College of Art & Design (NCAD) is described in the SAR as Ireland's leading provider of art and design education. The NCAD campus on Thomas Street in Dublin's historic city centre is home to a community of 1,500 undergraduate, graduate and part-time students engaged in a wide range of study and research across the disciplines of Design, Education, Fine Art and Visual Culture. NCAD has been a significant provider of Art & Design education in Ireland for over 250 years and is a Recognised College of University College Dublin.

## 2.4. Relationship to UCD

2.4.1 In 1996, the College became a recognised college of the National University of Ireland. In 2011, the College established a strategic academic alliance with UCD and is now a recognised college of UCD under a Memorandum of Agreement. As a recognised college of UCD, UCD is the designated awarding body, the accrediting university for NCAD programmes. All NCAD programmes are subject to the UCD Academic Regulations.

2.4.2 Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, UCD must ensure that NCAD's ongoing quality enhancement of its activities meets the requirements of the



Act. NCAD's Quality Assurance Procedures were approved by UCD's Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ) in October 2016. In March 2017, UCD carried out an Institutional Review of NCAD.

## 2.5. NCAD structure

- 2.5.1 NCAD has four schools: Design, Education, Fine Art and Visual Culture, offering a range of educational opportunities from part-time classes to doctoral studies.
- 2.5.2 The Office of the Registrar and Corporate Services includes the areas of Finance, Accounts, Payroll, Human Resources and the two Libraries: Eddie Murphy Library and the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL).
- 2.5.3 The Director's Office covers overall directorship of the College, including strategic developments.
- 2.5.4 Academic Affairs, the focus of this review, incorporates three areas: Student Services & Admissions, Student Support Services, and Academic Development. The responsibility for research was based in the Office of Academic Affairs but is no longer based there. The First Year programme is still structurally part of this Office but is not covered by this review.

## 2.6. Academic Affairs: An Overview

- 2.6.1 The Office of Academic Affairs is a small cohesive unit where there has been considerable change in staffing over the last five years. The Office has had to deal with all the challenges thrown up by COVID and is now attempting to re-establish a "new normal" way of working.
- 2.6.2 The structure of the unit is undergoing further review and the role of research and the management of first year were not included in this review although both of these functions were part of the office during the period under review.
- 2.6.3 The post of Head of Academic Affairs was created in 2011. There was much turbulence and change in the decade that followed and it was evident to the review panel that there is now an opportunity to concentrate on embedding and stabilising the work of Academic Affairs in the life of the College.

## 2.7. Scheduling of Reviews

- 2.7.1 The last formal review of this Department took place between 2004-2006. There is an urgent need to formalise and regularise the frequency and scheduling of the quality assurance and enhancement reviews of all units of NCAD. Linked to this is a requirement for a more consistent approach to document updating and management. For example, the academic council has a schedule of documents for

review but there does not appear to be a procedure for amending the date of the next required review if the council makes no changes to an existing document.

## 2.8. Staffing

- 2.8.1 As many new staff have joined the department, the review panel sought information on the induction of new staff. It learned that this was quite limited, for understandable reasons, during the period of Covid and recommends a review of staff induction processes and the preparation of comprehensive staff handbooks.
- 2.8.2 The RP noted the comments of students on the absence of career guidance in the surveys conducted as part of the SAR. This matter was discussed with management, staff and students. It became quickly apparent that there had been a gap but that services were now in place. What was highlighted in examining this issue is the need for the Office of Academic Affairs to review how its internal structure might be re-organised to ensure that there is no over-reliance on a single individual and that there is an on-going programme of staff development and training that incorporates modules on all the functions of the office. A nimble staff structure which facilitates coverage of areas by more than one member of staff may alleviate some of the inevitable challenges faced by a small unit having such broad areas of responsibility.

## 2.9. Academic Development

- 2.9.1 The academic development work of the office is well structured and its policies and procedures are aligned with the quality assurance standards and processes of UCD. These are also aligned with the requirements of QQI and the ESG 2015. There are procedures in place covering programme approval and review at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The office monitors admission, progression and completion rates. Extern examiners are appointed in accordance with the approved regulations and their reports and recommendations are reviewed by the Academic Council, the office of Academic Affairs and the College management. Students are members of review boards and College committees.
- 2.9.2 The review panel was told of a very good working relationship with the UCD Quality Assurance Unit. There appears, however, to be a lot less interaction with student services and recruitment in UCD.
- 2.9.3 The office is responsible for developing the statistical reports on student numbers, progression and graduation required by national agencies. Whilst there is an informal process in place to benchmark performance, there is scope for this to be expanded. In addition, NCAD should consider putting in place a programme of institutional evaluation which should inform current practice and stimulate

innovation. This is also required if NCAD is to develop its declared mission to be the “National” centre of art and design education.

## **2.10. National and International Recruitment**

2.10.1 The RP discussed national and international recruitment and admissions with management, staff from Academic Affairs, other College staff and students. It is evident that a lot of work is done on access and there is a structure to the operation of access. The RP did not see the same level of planning taking place in other areas. The absence of a Recruitment Strategy, Recruitment Committee, Recruitment annual plan, key targets and a college-wide commitment to this recruitment strategy is a deficit that needs to be addressed. Some heads of Academic Departments felt that in the absence of any apparent link of resources to student numbers, there was little incentive for individual departments to focus on recruitment. In the absence of a strategy and structure, there is, in some quarters, an understandable but regrettable view that the work of recruitment is somebody else’s responsibility.

## **2.11. Institutional Benchmarking**

2.11.1 The review panel did not see evidence of external benchmarking in the SAR. There was a strong internal focus and this may well be a consequence of the necessary attention to developing internal policies, procedures and structures. Now there is an opportunity to build relationships with other Academic Affairs units in order to expand the perspectives that underpin the work of the office.

## **2.12. Review Process and Documentation**

2.12.1 The RP initially considered the SAR and the comprehensive set of supporting documentation. The SAR contained an excellent overview of the newly-adopted strategy of NCAD, a well-structured institutional profile, a narrative of the history of the Office of Academic Affairs and a clear description of its areas of responsibility.

2.12.2 The SAR provides clear evidence of the capacity for self-reflection in the Office of Academic Affairs. It does a very good job on identifying the areas of work that require further development and contains extensive lists of enhancements identified during the preparation work for this review. The RP suggests that it would now be worthwhile to prepare a consolidated list of recommendations derived from this report and the SAR and the use of this list as the basis for the preparation of a strategic plan and annual work plan for the Office of Academic Affairs. This plan must have definite targets and timelines. It should be reviewed by College management and the Academic Council and once agreed should be subject to annual review. As part of this process, the Office of Academic Affairs should prepare its own

annual report linked to a clear evidence-base. These reports should form the basis of future external reviews.

- 2.12.3 The consultation process used in the preparation of the SAR references a number of surveys of different internal stakeholders. Students, staff of the College and staff in Academic Affairs itself were surveyed by means of an electronic survey. Some external consultation was conducted and this is referenced in the SAR. The RP recommends the expansion of the methods of consultation in future in order to get a stronger focus on qualitative analysis. The RP would like to see a focus on wider and more structured external consultation.

#### Commendation

- 2.13.1 The review panel commends the leadership of NCAD for supporting the evolution of an ambitious academic quality environment and the leadership provided in academic affairs in ensuring a focus on enhancement in all the activity of the unit.
- 2.13.2 The review panel commends the attention to institutional strategy reflected in the documentation prepared for this review.

### 2.13. Recommendations

- 2.14.1 That a stronger emphasis is placed on both internal and external benchmarking in quality assurance and enhancement.
- 2.14.2 That NCAD develop a new programme on institutional research, with a distinctive focus on the characteristics and activities of NCAD. This on-going programme of institutional research should build the evidence-base for the future strategy of the institution.
- 2.14.3 That the approach to access, currently well-developed in NCAD, be used as an exemplar for other areas of the institution.
- 2.14.4 That a planned sequence of reviews is prepared and that it is implemented in a timely manner.
- 2.14.5 That the currency and timeliness of quality assurance policy and procedure documents be reviewed and linked to an effective system of review and updating.
- 2.14.6 That a College-wide recruitment plan is developed that includes the active participation of all departments.

## 3. Academic Affairs-Relationship with the College

- 3.0.1 The workload of the Office of Academic Affairs is onerous and the size of NCAD is a contributory factor. It is a relatively small institution with just over 1000 students

but it must provide all the services that are an essential part of a third level institution.

- 3.0.2 The Office of Academic Affairs must work with all academic departments and all other central services to deliver the services that are required. These span academic development, academic regulation, quality enhancements, admissions, student services, international recruitment and admissions, oversight of Students' Union, public information and communication, and the implementation of the NCAD strategy.

### **3.1. Teaching and Learning Strategy**

- 3.1.1 In its SAR, the Office of Academic Affairs refers to the work being done on the development of a new teaching and learning (T&L) strategy for NCAD. The RP considers that this should be accorded the highest priority in the next academic year. Simultaneously, the work on utilising the new digital platform must be accelerated. Key to both of these initiatives is the requirement for a well-developed programme of staff development that focuses on teaching and learning practice. In a post-Covid environment, this will be even more important. The review panel heard from academic staff about their eagerness to get back to the physical "classroom" but that the student response was not as strong. The RP also learned about the work done by all the College staff to move to a virtual environment at the start of Covid. This was a huge challenge that was met with great commitment by all staff. The experience of students during this period was varied: some found great opportunities for engagement; others felt that their experience on-line had been predominantly that of passive receivers. Now that there is an opportunity to reflect on the experience of the last two years, the Office of Academic Affairs should try to capture the key learnings from this period and use them to inform future T&L programmes.

### **3.2. Internal Academic Benchmarking**

- 3.2.1 The relationship with the academic departments is a key relationship. The review panel met with representatives from other central services, from academic departments and students. At these meetings the review panel learned that the size of NCAD enables much informal communication and resolution of issues. On the other hand, it was evident that the Head of Academic Affairs and the staff of that unit see the need to move to more formalised and regularised procedures around, for example, response times to international applications. There is a recognition of pockets of good practice internally on quality assurance and enhancement but no established and embedded processes for internal benchmarking in this area. It

wasn't clear to the panel that there is any oversight of the consistent publication of student, staff and module handbooks.

### **3.3. Commendation**

- 3.3.1 The review panel commends the strong collegiate ethos evident in NCAD.
- 3.3.2 The review panel commends the good working relationship between the Office of Academic Affairs in NCAD and the Quality Office in UCD.

### **3.4. Recommendations**

- 3.4.1 That the objective of NCAD to develop a more comprehensive learning and teaching strategy is prioritised so that the implementation of the strategy can be accelerated in the next academic year.
- 3.4.2 That the discontinuities in communication between Academic Affairs and the academic departments that have arisen as a consequence of Covid and staff changes are addressed.
- 3.4.3 That a process of integrating peer to peer evaluation is implemented as part of quality enhancement.

### **3.5. The Role of Research**

- 3.5.1 The review panel confined its examination of research to a review of the quality assurance and enhancement procedures in place in respect of postgraduate studies. The NCAD strategy proposes to grow activity at this level over the next five years. At its meeting with NCAD leadership and the Head of Academic Affairs, the review panel learned of the current arrangements for the supervision of the small-scale PhD programmes that are now in place. There was a recognition on the part of the College of the need to benchmark its postgraduate activity, to build alliances in order to mitigate the difficulties inherent in the small scale of its activities and the need to put in place a formal programme to develop internal capacity for postgraduate supervision.
- 3.5.2 The review panel learned that the structural arrangements in respect of research are under review.
- 3.5.3 As the panel did not review the policies and procedures operating in this area, it can make no detailed comments on their adequacy. However, the panel did conclude that the quality assurance and enhancement of all research programmes will require a close relationship between this office and those providing leadership in relation to research and post-graduate studies.

### 3.6. Recommendations

3.6.1 That a very close alignment between Academic Affairs and those providing leadership in research and post-graduate development be developed with respect to quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures for post-graduate studies.

### 3.7. The Student Voice

3.7.1 The Office of Academic Affairs manages recruitment, admissions, student academic records, regulatory reporting, student services, the oversight of the Students' Union, alumni and graduate relationships. For all of these activities, it is crucial that the voice of the student is clearly heard and that students get systematic feedback on any matters they raise.

3.7.2 Opportunities for feedback are provided through the Student Fora and the review panel learned that their operation is now under review. It is apparent to the review panel that matters raised by students are heard and considered by a variety of committees in NCAD and their issues are seriously considered. The mechanisms that feedback responses to the students and inform them of how their issues are being handled could definitely be strengthened. This inevitably involves explaining why and how issues can or cannot be resolved. In addition, it may well be that students need more comprehensive information about services and that this could be better handled on an improved on-line student information service.

3.7.3 The review panel also looked at the student responses on ISSE and noted the comments from students on, for example, career guidance. There is scope for the Office of Academic Affairs, in conjunction with academic departments to put in place a more consistent approach to addressing the issues raised. In some cases, providing students with additional information (as in the case of the additional charges for materials or the cost of access to restricted software) before they start a programme may be helpful.

3.7.4 The review panel asked students to describe their experiences of grading procedures used on their programmes. The students were unclear about the review and appeals mechanisms and also raised the issue of variation in grading standards between different lecturers. This highlights the need for internal benchmarking and sharing of good practice across academic departments. A formal process of internal academic benchmarking should be developed by the Office of Academic Affairs in consultation with staff and students.

3.7.5 The review panel asked students about the operation of the Students' Union and the funding of its activities. The students raised the issue of lack of access to sports facilities and the difficulties of accessing support services outside "normal" college

hours. These matters were subsequently discussed with management. The review panel again recognises the constraints imposed by the college size and budget but does see a need to look at how other small institutions manage these issues. In addition, the budget of the Student' Union should be based on an approved annual schedule of activity.

### **3.8. Commendation**

3.8.1 The review panel commends the commitment of the Academic Affairs unit to the welfare and wellbeing of students in NCAD, their focus on the student experience and the quality of student engagement.

### **3.9. Recommendations**

3.9.1 That student surveys such as ISSE are reviewed in order to ensure that feedback is acted upon and that there is a process in place to ensure that students get a response to their feedback.

3.9.2 That the role of clubs and societies in NCAD is reviewed to ensure continuity and alignment with institutional culture and ethos and that the oversight of expenditure on clubs and societies is aligned with best practice.

3.9.3 That the demands on counselling and careers services be evaluated in order to establish the resources required.

## **4. Conclusion**

4.0.1 NCAD had developed a clear vision and mission and understands the importance of creating realistic expectations about its positioning in the landscape of Irish higher education. Its strategy is clearly focused on the distinctiveness and identity of NCAD. Its leadership is ambitious, creative and clear-sighted.

4.0.2 There is a strong collegiate ethos and students speak very positively of their academic experience.

4.0.3 There is also a need to grapple with the demands imposed on a smaller institution and these challenges are well-understood.

4.0.4 The RP supports strongly the ambition and realism of NCAD and sees the Office of Academic Affairs as playing a key-role in the future success of the College.



## **Appendix 1: Response from the Academic Affairs Office to the Review Panel Report**

The task of developing the Self-Assessment Report for the Quality Review of the Academic Affairs Office was a valuable reflective exercise, which facilitated the area to review its position from a number of perspectives, highlight and confirm our strengths and opportunities, identify areas of good practice and evaluate our weaknesses and challenges in a systematic way. The Review Panel Site Visit was a positive and constructive experience. We welcome the endorsement of the Review Panel for our activities through commendations and will carefully consider the recommendations in the context of developing the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the area.

There was a high level of engagement in the Quality Review process from all staff in Academic Affairs and from the wider College community, both in compiling the Self-Assessment Report and in interacting with the Review Panel during the site visit. The Head of Academic Affairs, the staff of the area and the Director wish to thank the Review Panel for their time, expertise and constructive comments, both during the visit and in their helpful Report. Their generosity in undertaking this work is greatly appreciated.

The staff of the Academic Affairs Office also greatly appreciate the commendations offered by the Review Panel. In particular we are heartened by the recognition offered in relation to: the commitment of the Academic Affairs unit to the welfare and wellbeing of students in NCAD, their focus on student experience and the quality of student engagement, and the leadership of NCAD for supporting the evolution of an ambitious academic quality environment and the leadership provided in academic affairs in ensuring a focus on enhancement in all the activity of the unit.

We will formulate the QIP to address the recommendations in the Review Panel Report, and many actions are already underway. These include: prioritising the development and early implementation of a comprehensive learning and teaching strategy; close alignment between academic affairs and those providing research and postgraduate development leadership; preparing and implementing a planned sequence of reviews; and enhancing and implementing our college-wide recruitment plan with participation of all Departments. These changes will significantly benefit the area and the College.

A number of the recommendations identified by the Review Panel had not previously been considered by the Academic Affairs Office, and our initial proposals/comments to these recommendations are outlined below:

(i) **Recommendation 4:** The Review Panel recommends that NCAD develop a new programme on institutional research, with a distinctive focus on the characteristics and activities of NCAD. This on-going programme of institutional research should build the evidence-base for the future strategy of the institution.

**Proposal/Comment:** The Academic Affairs Office acknowledges potential value to the area and to the College of a programme of institutional research and we are very interested in developing such a programme over the lifetime of the current institutional strategy and this Quality Improvement Plan.

(ii) **Recommendation 5:** The Review Panel recommends that the approach to access, currently well-developed in NCAD, be used as an exemplar for other areas of the institution.

**Proposal/Comment:** The Academic Affairs Office is pleased to have the value of the work undertaken through our access programme recognised and acknowledges the value to ourselves and others of distilling and sharing the approach taken across and beyond Academic Affairs.

(iii) **Recommendation 10:** The Review Panel recommends that the role of clubs and societies in NCAD is reviewed to ensure continuity and alignment with institutional culture and ethos and that the oversight of expenditure on clubs and societies is aligned with best practice.

**Proposal/Comment:** The Academic Affairs Office acknowledges the value of this recommendation. NCADSU and the College community have gained real value from the Union re-joining USI several years ago. Understanding how we might better support and develop the valuable work of the Union through understanding and aligning with best practice as suggested could also be transformative within and for the community.

Within three months of receiving the Review Panel Report, the Academic Affairs Office will prepare the QIP outlining how it proposes to implement the Review Panel Report recommendations. The QIP will be agreed within the area and signed-off by the Chair of the Review Panel and the NCAD Director. The QIP will be considered by the NCAD Quality Assurance Steering Committee and then published alongside the Review Panel Report.



Dr Siún Hanrahan  
Head of Academic Affairs