

DEPARTMENT OF CORE STUDIES**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN****1. PRG Recommendations - Curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment**

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report	Department Action to recommendation	Responsibility	Time-frame / Status (From - to)	Issues for Decision by An Bord (if applicable) / Management Response
1.1. The PRG strongly recommends that a strategy should be developed so that the Core Studies ethos is translated into inter-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary programmes, strengthened across all College structures, which would continue to be available to learners up to degree level. The aspiration to continue the principles of inter-disciplinarity to postgraduate study would make sense only if there is a change in existing undergraduate programmes.	Core Studies aims to set up a working group to meet with Faculties to: – establish nature and learning outcomes of “non-discipline-specific” or “integrated Art and Design” modules. – examine which would be the best levels (years) to commence the idea and how the nature of the modules would develop through the levels.	Core and Faculties working group	working group to be set up during 07/08 who will report developments on a yearly basis to Academic Council through Faculty Boards and the QA/QI Steering Group	
1.2. There should be better collaboration between Core Studies and the faculty structures. As an initial step, it is recommended that the Head of Core Studies should be a member of Faculty Forums and all Faculty Heads should sit on the Core Studies Board.	a) The Head of Core is on Design and Fine Art Faculty Boards and Forums. b) All Faculty Heads are invited to Core Studies Board. c) Discussion will take place between Head of Core and Heads of Visual Culture and Education.	Head of Core Studies	a & b) implemented May 07 c) aim is for implementation by December 07	
1.3. The PRG recommends that the department re-examine the titles of Core Studies modules to reflect more clearly the learning outcomes of each module e.g. Visual Development workshops could more usefully be entitled 2D/3D workshops. In addition, the module titles should be matched to a more coherent and easily understood course diagram and timetable for the students.	Core Studies agrees with this recommendation which is In progress and reviewed on an annual basis. Academic planning this year includes clarification of module structure, credit system, module titles and learning outcomes	Core Staff	Academic year 07/08 & end-of-year review and planning meetings	

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1.4. The PRG recommends that the term “discipline-neutral” be reconsidered because of its possible negative interpretation. The PRG understands the term to denote “fully integrated art & design practice”.	“Discipline neutral” - it was agreed that the term should be changed and new terminology to be implemented. This is on the agenda for the next Core staff meeting and a new term will be agreed.	Core Staff	December 07	
1.5. There needs to be more clarity and transparency in the documentation for applicants and teachers regarding the assessment criteria for the pre-admission project.	a) A Folio Brief has been formulated with assessment criteria included to provide more transparency for applicants and teachers. b) NCAD is in discussions with DIT & IADT to provide a joint brief which must also provide clear assessment criteria.	Core Staff, Head of Dept Nominees from DIT, IADT	a) 07/08 b) There is a requirement to implement this for the 09/10 CAO applications	
1.6. The PRG suggests that some elements of Teaching Practice for education students might take place in Core Studies with department staff providing mentoring support to the students i.e. education students might be enabled to “shadow” Core staff in studio and workshop activities.	This has been discussed and accepted in principle. To be progressed between the Head of Education and the Head of Core with the aim of being implemented during the final Core module 07 / 08.	Head of Dept Head of Faculty of Education	April /08	
1.7. The PRG commends the inclusive approach adopted by Core Studies in encouraging the participation of mature students. This provides a good basis for looking at how other under-represented groups might be encouraged to attend NCAD and Core Studies is in a good position to work with the Access Officer to undertake outreach activities e.g. to local communities and ethnic minorities.	a) Core staff is already collaborating with Access Officer on a number of projects. b) Core staff are keen to explore further ways in which to undertake outreach activities together with the Faculties to benefit under-represented groups.	Core Staff Head of Dept Access Officer	a) Already in progress b) Discussions will take place in 07/08 with actions arising in 08/09	
1.8. It is recommended that the Core Studies department should engage in more detailed discussion with Visual Culture on curriculum development and implementation, including for example the better integration of Visual Culture in the weekly timetable. The PRG supports the recommendation of the Core Studies department that Visual Culture staff should participate on field trips undertaken by Core Studies students.	a) Core staff fully agree with this recommendation. The new Visual Culture programme is welcomed in terms of curriculum development however its implementation into the weekly timetable on a pilot basis is proving problematic and is to be scrutinised and evaluated in terms of its providing a better integration of the Core Studies and Visual Culture programmes. This evaluation will take place after 14th March. b) Visual Culture staff have been invited on the Core field trips.	Head of Dept Core Staff Dept of Visual Culture	a) Pilot 07/08 b) Implemented	

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1.9. The PRG supports the suggestion of the Core Studies department that further discussion should take place with Industrial Design with a view to the two departments collaborating on a mutually agreed modular structure to include relevant Industrial Design elective elements.	Core studies believes that this should happen. Industrial Design will be approached in autumn 07 to arrange meetings to forward this recommendation.	Head of Dept Dept of Industrial Design	Meetings will take place in 07/08 to develop electives for implementation by 09/10.	
1.10. Assessment marks awarded by Core should be accepted for progression by all faculties; in addition, Visual Culture marks should be included in the final Core year result. This will ensure harmonisation of progression across Faculties. In addition, in keeping with common practice with other Higher Education Institutions, all student files and information should be held centrally.	<p>a) It was decided that departments would nominate a staff member to join the Core assessment panels. Formal feedback will take place during term 2 2007/08.</p> <p>b) That Visual Culture marks be included in final Core result was accepted in principle. Implementation in 08 to be discussed.</p> <p>c) It is envisaged that student records progress with students from Core to 2nd year. This will be monitored as it is progressed.</p>	<p>a) Head of Dept</p> <p>b) Head of Visual Culture</p> <p>c) Head of Dept</p>	<p>a) Implemented May 2007 – to be reviewed early 2008.</p> <p>b) 07/08</p> <p>c) 07/08</p>	

2. Facilities and Resources

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2.1. The PRG considers that the main studio and workshop spaces available to the Core Studies department are appropriate, bright and well appointed. However, the sub-standard accommodation in John Street West needs to be addressed on Health and Safety and security grounds. The students have described this accommodation as “scary” and this is totally unacceptable.	This is a College management issue which is being addressed by An Bord. Core Studies do not anticipate using John St facility in the foreseeable future.			An Bord commissioned a report to identify works required for John Street West School which would come to €375,665.
2.2. The PRG recommends that the college should as a priority provide appropriately resourced teaching/lecturing/IT suites, (both PC and MAC) with AV facilities and dedicated technical support. In addition exhibition spaces should be provided. Such facilities would be available not only to the Core Studies department but to other faculties and would be centrally timetabled.	a) Core Studies accepts the general principle of centralised IT facilities and intends making recommendations to the college IT committee. Core Studies should be represented on the IT committee b) The volume of students and nature of the Core programme requires a dedicated IT technician in Core. c) An inventory of digital equipment will be compiled and an update prepared for 07/08 d) The provision of exhibition space through the proposed Harry Clarke building is welcomed. Suggestions for the promotion of on-going Core work displayed on a continuous basis within the college and on the web is being prepare	a-d) Head of dept a,b) IT d) College resources	a-c) 2007/08 academic year d) 2008/09 academic year	Core will submit a proposal to An Bord for dedicated IT support through quality improvement.
2.3. The social, cultural, physical and environmental facilities provided for students are not up to the standard of other similar institutions and need to be up-graded.	This is a College wide issue. The new Harry Clarke building should improve space and facilities restrictions.			

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2.4. A comfortable and well-appointed hospitality suite with catering facilities and personnel would be a useful addition, not just to the Core Studies department but to all NCAD staff and would facilitate interaction internally and externally.	Please refer to 2.3 When the Harry Clarke building is finished, it has been agreed that Core will reclaim roomG16. This will be considered as a possible staff room for Core	Head of Dept	Academic year 2008/09	Once room G16 reverts to Core Studies, an inventory of furnishings for a staff room will be costed and supplied to An Bord.
2.5. The PRG recommends that adequate resources should be available to the department to support its Quality Improvement Plan; however the Core Studies team needs to develop a prioritised list of requirements.	Core will compile a list of resources and facility requirements and prioritise it in two categories 1. for immediate implementation or ASAP 2. for implementation over a 5-year time scale.	Head of Dept	December 2007	Will submit resource requirements to An Bord under quality improvement
2.6. The library is considered to be an excellent resource in terms of its holdings, however the PRG suggests that space and seating for students are inadequate and recommends that these issues be addressed by the college. Other specific areas for development in the library include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More availability of electronic sources• Increased support for post graduate students and research (more specialist advice should be available to students).	The lack of library space impacts on Core students and restricts their use of the library. The Library is undertaking its QA review in 2008 and Core hopes that these issues will be discussed at that time.			

3. Communication

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<p>3.1. The PRG supports the recommendation of the department to develop a Course Handbook that should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of modules, module content and learning outcomes • Assessment criteria/regulations • Course timetable in detail • Student responsibility • Staff details – phone numbers/email addresses • Reading lists for modules • Procedures for dealing with student illness and absence <p>The Core team should begin developing the handbook immediately so that it can be given to next year's cohort of students at the induction week in September 2007.</p>	<p>This has been implemented and a joint Visual Culture/Core handbook has been circulated to students. This will be updated annually.</p>	<p>Head of Dept & Head of Visual Culture</p>	<p>Implemented in September 2007</p>	
<p>3.2. The PRG suggests that the need for a staff meeting room can be met through the introduction of centralised facilities that can be booked (see point 5.2.2). A structured timetable of Core Studies staff meetings would facilitate the booking of suitable rooms.</p>	<p>The introduction of 10 centrally booked seminar rooms has been implemented by the Registrar's Office. This will facilitate a structured timetable of staff meetings for Core Studies.</p>	<p>Head of Dept Registrar</p>	<p>Implemented in October 2007</p>	
<p>3.3. A student/staff consultative committee (student-led) should be set up to discuss issues pertinent to the course and to support the ethos of student-centred learning.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been implemented. The Committee is made up of eight student representatives (two elected from each Core Student Group) and the Head of Core Studies. The purpose of the committee is to bring important student issues to the attention of the Head as directly as possible.</p>	<p>Head of Dept</p>	<p>Commenced in 2007/08 academic year</p>	