

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILESQUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANJUNE 2009**1. Academic Matters**

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report	Department Action to recommendation	Faculty Action to recommendation	Responsibility	Time-frame / Status (From - to)	Issues for Decision by An Bord (if applicable) / Management Response
1.1. The department's mission statement acknowledges that graduates may not work in fashion and textiles but in the broader creative industries, however there appears to be a mismatch between the mission and the curriculum, which is very specific to the "traditional model" fashion and textiles industries.	The design process within the Department embraces a broad platform from which students develop an understanding of the wide ranging nature of the Fashion & Textiles related creative industries. The Department will look at ways of conveying this in a more succinct way within the curriculum	Electives in years 2 + 3 give all students a wide range of opportunities within other Depts. The Faculty is currently assessing the 4 Departments Electives & their appropriateness to the broader design creative industries for 09/10	Head of Department and staff team to update the curriculum.	By Sept.09. In preparation for 09/10 Department Student Handbook.	.
1.2. The fundamental assumption of the courses seems to be that they are preparing people for work in the fashion and textiles industries. This means that the modules are heavily vocationally focussed with a lot of skills development. Much of the staff time and energy is taken in building a high level of skills in their undergraduate students, to some extent overlooking broader knowledge/competences and postgraduate development.	Many transferable skills/knowledge/competencies are embedded within Modules/Projects. These will be identified more explicitly & noted within the Learning Outcomes.	The Faculty is discussing ways of cross faculty delivery of certain skills/competencies.	Head of Faculty & Heads of Departments to assess 09/10 Electives for years 2 + 3.	By mid October 09 in preparation for 3 rd year Electives in weeks 11 & 12 By mid Nov '09 in prep. For 2 nd yr Electives in weeks 13 + 14	

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1.3. The PRG recommends that the department consider how different pathways could be offered to broaden the courses in keeping with their mission statement.	The Department recognise that it is beneficial to offer differing pathway experiences through the courses; this is reflected by the diversity of modules, projects & learning outcomes. Evidence of this diversity, culminates in the students eventual focus & wide ranging outcomes presented for examination. The Department will be looking at ways of better communicating this diversity, including an explanation of the broad knowledge/ competences gained whilst undertaking modules and Electives, within the student handbook.	With the forthcoming/major re-think of UG provision & the introduction of 3 + 2 (at the earliest by 2011) the Faculty will be looking at the possibilities of formalising different student pathways.	Head Of Department and staff team. Faculty Forum	Curriculum development is in progress and will be dovetailed with 3 + 2 + 3.	
1.4. The PRG strongly recommends that the textile specialisms should be more integrated across all three years of the degree programme (for example as elective modules) to develop a more holistic approach to textiles and to help free up resources.	Department will look at a broader 3rd yr. Textiles programme in preparation for 3 + 2. Advanced planning/timetabling and flexible technical support is crucial in order to deliver a broader textiles curriculum.	The Faculty will be advancing with discussions relating to a broader curriculum at BDes stage with more specialisation at MA level	Head of Department and Textile staff	Curriculum development is in progress and will be dovetailed with 3 + 2 + 3.	
1.5. The department should explore opportunities for more integration across other disciplines: within the department, faculty and college.	Fashion piloted a joint Fashion/Metals project for year 3 during academic yr 08/09. This will be built upon within the Department & Inter Faculty, when/where appropriate within the curriculum.	More integrated cross departmental modules demand alignments of credits at specific points in the Academic year.	Head of Department And staff team, Faculty Forum, Modularisation Committee.	Curriculum development is in progress and will be dovetailed with 3 + 2 + 3.	

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<p>1.6. The written descriptions of the modules need to be more consistent and transparent throughout the courses.</p>	<p>A review of how modules/projects are written will take place to ensure that tangible 'product' outcomes as well as learning outcomes are clearly understood by students. Transferable skills will be flagged more visibly to ensure students are aware of the broad nature of their learning. The new Module Template (devised by N. Hunt) will be used to ensure consistency & transparency across all modules.</p>	<p>The Design Faculty will ensure that each of the 4 Depts. follow a similar, understandable & transparent method of writing modules within the student handbooks as well as the 'projects' or 'briefs' that inform the student of the exact nature of the activity/outcomes within the module.</p>	<p>Faculty Forum, Modularisation Committee.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	
<p>1.7. Some curriculum areas could be developed and strengthened: to include for example the <i>business of fashion</i>, which could be addressed through a module or a project in the later years of the course.</p>	<p>"The Business of F & T" lectures within the Department have always been delivered in the final term for final year students. These have been enhanced for 09/10.</p>	<p>A formal (but non credit bearing) Business Studies programme was piloted in 08/09. The lecture series, supported by a website & small assignment was well received.</p> <p>However, due to the recent & ongoing cuts in the part time budget, Faculty Forum have decided not to run this Inter Faculty initiative for 09/10 but it will be re-examined for the move to 3 +2.</p> <p>The Business Studies website will however be kept up to date & will be a valuable resource for all Design students.</p>	<p>Head of Dept and staff team.</p> <p>Faculty Forum.</p> <p>Head of Faculty and website administrator</p>	<p>On-going.</p> <p>On-going and in preparation for 3 + 2.</p> <p>On-going.</p>	

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<p>1.8. Another area for development is Computer skills: the Department should work towards giving students a reasonable competency in Illustrator and Photoshop. A possible approach would be to start this in Core and further develop it as required in later years</p>	<p>The delivery of IT skills across F & T has been in constant review. A specific feasibility study as part of QI by Dept Staff will identify the needs for new equipment/licenses and the maximisation of existing resources.</p>	<p>In the short term, the Faculty, in conjunction with IT Support & ID, will conduct a feasibility study of the Lab's use, hardware and software.</p>	<p>Head of Dept, Textile staff, IT Support, Head of ID</p>	<p>Sept. 09 IT Review is in progress and will be dovetailed with 3 + 2 + 3.</p>	

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<p>1.9. The PRG supports the recommendation from some staff and students to consider global awareness and social responsibility within the curriculum along with issues such as the environment, ecology and sustainable, ethical production.</p>	<p>The Department is committed to ensuring that the issues of global awareness, social responsibility & sustainability are taken seriously throughout the courses. The staff's research interests have led to their participation in the 24 hour Design challenge & the staff/student trip to Nepal in early Spring of 2009.</p> <p>The Fashion Yr.2 2008/09 Elective had an ethical focus, as have many individual degree projects in textiles. One of the final year Textile students is representing Ireland on the ethical clothing stand at Graduate Fashion Week (UK) and won the Irish round of the Society of Dyers competition with her project on sustainability in yarn and colour development.</p> <p>Incoming MA students have a keen interest in these areas & the Department anticipates that they will join the Department-wide discussions. These issues will be dealt with in a more formal manner throughout the 09/10 curriculum by way of projects & electives (e.g. The 'Day of Colour' sponsored by the Society of Colourists, planned for 09/10).</p>	<p>The Faculty is discussing a "User-First" conference for Spring 2010 to address issues of social responsibility. There is the need for the Faculty of Visual Culture to deliver specific lectures as part of their programme. The Design Faculty is keen to open dialogue with the Visual Culture staff.</p>	<p>Head of Department and staff team, Design Ethics Group, Faculty conference organising team, Head of Visual Culture.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	
<p>1.10. The PRG noted that the learning outcomes of the degree courses are strongly skills-based, and recommends that the department look also at developing the <i>knowledge</i> and <i>competences</i> aspects to achieve consistency of standard in accordance with the guidelines given in the NFQ.</p>	<p>The Department of Fashion & Textiles can appear somewhat 'old fashioned' in its 'learning by doing' methodologies embedded in the current 4 year BDes programme.</p> <p>The Dept believes that a current graduate from a 4 year programme should have a high level of expertise along with a high level of knowledge & competences in order to 'hit the ground running' within the multi-faceted arena of fashion & textiles. This is borne out by the Department's high level of first destination employment. The new 3 + 2 system will give the opportunity to re-evaluate the learning outcomes in line with the NFQ.</p>	<p>Faculty Forum will be debating the NFQ guidelines/consistency of standards in respect of the 3 + 2 scenario.</p>	<p>Design Faculty Forum.</p>	<p>Curriculum development is in progress and will be dovetailed with 3 + 2 + 3.</p>	

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<p>1.11. The PRG recommends that a structured period of work placement should be an essential part of the degree courses, with clear learning outcomes and appropriate monitoring procedures.</p>	<p>The Department has had the highest take-up of the Erasmus work-placement bursaries in the Faculty. Many students find their own (& additional) placements during the summer vacation between yrs 3 & 4. However, this is an area for growth, improved monitoring & feedback mechanisms & potential mandatory status. Department staff will continue to secure relationships with potential EU 'host' companies. Meanwhile, the Dept. will establish a more rigorous evaluation process for returning students.</p>	<p>The Design Faculty has operated the Erasmus work-placement programme for many years & has seen a steady growth in the number of bursaries awarded by the HEA. With the introduction of a 3 + 2 system there is the opportunity to explore a mandatory/credit bearing period of placements during the start of year 4 (Yr.1 of MA)</p>	<p>Head of Department and staff team. Head of Faculty and Faculty Administrator.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	
<p>1.12. The teaching methodologies employed by the department in its courses appear to include a high proportion of one-to-one interaction with students. The PRG recommends that seminars and group tutorials should be systematically structured into the timetable to promote peer learning and communication skills. Students need more opportunities to make decisions and solve problems for themselves, with less "hand holding" by staff.</p>	<p>The current configuration of the studio & workshop areas is not conducive to large group seminars & tutorials. Frequently the same areas are being used by different staff & year groups. The Department however will look at ways of advance planning of key dates in order to book college-wide seminar rooms well in advance of the academic year.</p>		<p>Head of Department and staff team</p>	<p>Sept. 09 in preparation for academic year 09/10</p>	
<p>1.13. The value and the benefits of group work should be examined. It appears that the same skills are reiterated through different projects, and more creativity and diversity is needed in looking at the full range of knowledge, skills and competences that can potentially be developed in an integrated way within the projects and modules.</p>	<p>Group projects & subsequent peer learning are known to be beneficial & time effective and are delivered as and when appropriate. These are areas for further consideration by the staff during curriculum planning & implementation. However, the nature of a wide range of student responses to a brief, individual attention by the staff is needed in order not to fall into the trap of a 'house style'.</p>	<p>The Faculty will be looking at 'good practice' in terms of group projects and will maintaining an overview of the range of knowledge, skills & competences delivered by other departments through the regular Faculty Forum meetings.</p>	<p>Head of Department and staff team. Faculty Forum.</p>	<p>On-going.</p>	

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<p>1.14. The PRG strongly encourages the Department to explore all possible areas of postgraduate development for a variety of reasons – financial, status, industry requirements, growing skill levels and specialisations. Staff must take a creative approach in their considerations of MAs, possibly in collaboration with overseas Colleges. The development of postgraduate provision could include aspects of industrial placement, discursive forums, incubator support and partnership as set out in other sections of this report.</p>	<p>The recently announced college wide strategic policy of bringing in the 3 + 2 by 2011/12 will ensure a vigorous debate and development of both MA by Mode A and MA taught programmes.. It is likely this will realign placements/ work experience/ Erasmus into the first year of the MA programme.</p>	<p>The Head of Faculty will be assessing current MA content and delivery during the Faculty QA Review in 09/10 in light of the forthcoming 3 + 2 in 2011.</p>	<p>Head of Department and Faculty Forum</p>	<p>On-going and in preparation for 3 + 2.</p>	
<p>1.15. It would be useful for the department to undertake systematic follow-up on the destination of graduates after a number of years. This will help to identify ways in which the curriculum might need to adapt to prepare students for a range of future careers as “creative, independent and reflective design practitioners”.</p>	<p>During the QA process the Department produced an in-depth analysis of every graduate from 2002. This quantitative information formed the basis for the case studies highlighted in the report. It is Department policy to continue to track graduates through both formal and informal mechanisms. The College graduate network is the formal structure for all NCAD graduates, and staff will continue to add to the graduate database as and when information comes to them. Graduate’s first destinations are catalogued and submitted for the first design faculty of the academic year as part of the department report.</p>		<p>Head of Department and staff team.</p>	<p>6/10/09 (first Design Faculty Board)</p>	

2. Industry Links

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<p>2.1. The PRG strongly recommends that the current links with industry be extended and strengthened, which would produce mutual benefit for both sides (“win-win”). However, the department needs to be discriminating & selective in choosing partners, to ensure that the values of the companies they link with are consistent with the values of the college and the department, especially with regard to design and production ethics. The department might also explore forming links with other types of creative industries, while ensuring the relevance of all partnerships to the learning experiences and career prospects of students.</p> <p>Some new forms of co-operation might be considered in future, for example:</p> <p>Industry advisory group or consultative group to discuss curriculum, changes in industry, and standards of skill required and provide commissions for research to be carried out by the department.</p> <p>Industry Forum Set up an industry discussion forum (led and organised by staff with collaboration of industry representatives, students and agencies such as IDA, <i>Forfás</i>, Enterprise Ireland) to discuss issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positioning Ireland as a leading design “cell” for fashion and textiles worldwide ▪ Plagiarism, originality, ethics, sustainability, moral and social responsibility ▪ Fashion and textile design as a potential growth area in the economy ▪ The impact of global finances on the fashion 	<p>Many of the Department staff work or have strong connections within the industry. First hand knowledge & experience filters into every aspect of the curriculum and its delivery.</p> <p>Teaching and learning strategies regarding production ethics etc. are being continually developed. Several Textile staff are attending the ‘Fashioning An ethical Industry’ conference on July 7th 2009.</p> <p>Many of our sponsored projects are in conjunction with creative industries, normally facilitated by their PR companies as the fashion and textile design skills & product outcomes are highly press worthy. Students have faced the challenges of extending designs to car ‘wraps’ (Kia), tee-shirt designs (‘Wispa’, Cadbury’s re-launch,) L’Oreal, ‘Tell Her’ Cervical Cancer awareness campaign. Invariably, ‘Industry Collaborators’ brief students & participate in reviews of work free of charge.</p> <p>The college strategic plan mentions incubator units and discussions with PRG focussed on the use of the broader Thomas Street location, rather than entirely within NCAD campus.</p>	<p>Design forums such as the 24hr Design Challenge (Spring 2009) located Fashion and Textiles within a very broad creative platform. Events such as this will continue to unite business, industry and design. (Design Faculty conference ‘User First Design’ scheduled for Feb.2010)</p> <p>The Faculty will give due consideration to the Spring 2011 conference topic that may cover many of the areas highlighted by the PRG.</p>	<p>Faculty Forum to indicate appropriate Industry speakers/guests for 2010 conference.</p> <p>Textile staff to disseminate information from Summer 09 conference.</p> <p>Head of Department and staff team to identify forthcoming academic year Industry related projects.</p>	<p>Autumn term 09</p> <p>Autumn term 09</p> <p>Autumn term 09</p>	

<p>and textiles industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other topics to be suggested by staff/students and industry representatives <p>Incubator unit & research links Explore the idea of setting up an incubator unit where state of the art production facilities can be used or “earned” by practising designers and researchers.</p> <p>Work placements Work with industry to set up meaningful and relevant work placements and internships for students during their courses.</p> <p>Visiting lecturers/industry site visits The PRG suggests that industry would be willing to collaborate on these activities too.</p>	<p>CEAD may offer opportunities for ‘Master classes’ using department facilities during teaching downtimes.</p> <p>Visiting lecturer budget has unfortunately been eroded with on-going cuts to the part time budget. However, staff frequently include graduates as ‘guest speakers’ during the Professional Practice lectures/talks.</p> <p>The Department field trip has always included industry focused visits either to studios or trade fairs. The ‘field trip’ for 2010 is to New York & staff will give due consideration to site visits etc.</p>	<p>Design Faculty Forum is keen to debate design focussed ‘Master classes’ with the Faculty of Education</p> <p>The Design Faculty annually invites visiting speakers from Industry primarily for MA students. Faculty will continue to invite UG students to participate if space permits</p>	<p>Head of Department Head of Faculty. Head of CEAD</p> <p>Head of Department Head of Faculty</p> <p>Head of Department and staff team.</p>	<p>Summer 2010</p> <p>Academic year 0910</p> <p>Spring 2010</p>	
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3. Facilities and Resources

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<p>3.1. The PRG recommends that the department and the college should consider the benefits of moving the department to the School of Design building – this would result in a better quality teaching and learning environment, with improved shared facilities such as computer rooms.</p>	<p>This is a decision beyond the remit of the Department. Previous discussions have noted that this would in effect mean a halving of our current floor space. However improvements to the entire Dept. space are on-going.</p>	<p>With the introduction of 3 + 2 the Faculty will re-open the studio provision & location debate</p>	<p>Head of Design in consultation with Management.</p>		<p>Continuing to re-configure the current working environment.</p>
<p>3.2. A re-structuring of the textile degree course programme as recommended above (1.4.) offers the potential to free up space and other resources, giving opportunities for more flexible working as recommended earlier.</p>	<p>The introduction of 3 + 2 will inevitably mean a more module based programme with students potentially pursuing more than one strand or specialism at UG level. The Department is continually looking at the Textile curriculum. The content and delivery has been streamlined in the last 5 years. This has allowed for increased student capacity. On-going curriculum developments continue to address this issue.</p>	<p>The Design Faculty staff will be holding their first 3 + 2 debate in Sept.09</p>	<p>Head of Department and staff team Head of Faculty</p>	<p>1st Faculty Forum meeting to debate 3 + 3. 17/06/09 1st Design Faculty staff meeting to debate 3 + 2. 10/09/09</p>	
<p>3.3. The PRG supports the department's suggestion of developing a garment and materials archive together with NIVAL.</p>	<p>The Department receives donations of garments/material which are used as teaching aids. There are potential research benefits to this archive which will be explored. Storage of these items is a continual problem. There is an embroidered textile archive which will be accessed by researchers.</p>	<p>The Faculty of Design is delighted to have Dr. Helen McAllister on board to assist wherever possible with NIVAL collaborations</p>	<p>Head of Department and staff team. Head of Faculty. NIVAL</p>	<p>The embroidery donation is entitled the Cecil O'Donoghue archive and is located in NIVAL. The archive is currently being catalogued.</p>	

4. Communication

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<p>4.1. The PRG commends the development of operational planning meetings in the department and recommends that there should also be reflective/brainstorming meetings to strengthen the team approach to curriculum development, planning and innovation.</p>	<p>The Department has pre-academic year planning & 'operational' meetings. Most timetabling and course developments happen in the weeks following the degree exhibition. Further operational 'fine-tuning' meetings happen prior to the commencement of the new academic year and includes setting a schedule of regular term-time meetings (including student year reps.) The meeting schedule developed for QA process has indicated the value of department wide meetings. The Department will definitely be having regular 'brainstorming' meetings to develop ideas for 3 + 2.</p>	<p>The Design Faculty recognises the value of sharing curriculum planning, development & innovation across all 4 departments. The Design Faculty Forum is the venue for Heads to reflect on what we currently offer & 'brainstorm' ideas for the future.</p> <p>The Faculty office will confirm well in advance of the academic year, the regular Faculty Forum meetings in addition to those just prior to Design Faculty Board.</p>	<p>Head of Department and course team. Faculty Forum.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	
<p>4.2. The PRG recommends that the department consider including student representation at appropriate meetings.</p>	<p>Student reps are always invited to attend both Department and Faculty meetings.</p> <p>More formal mechanisms to regularly capture student feedback following specific modules will be explored.</p>	<p>Faculty will explore good practice in student feedback mechanisms that exist within other Design departments Quality Improvement Plans (QIP).</p> <p>The annual 'Student Exit Survey' (feedback on student experience) is forwarded to the Head of Faculty for consideration and to filter pertinent findings to Heads of Department.</p>	<p>Head of Department Faculty Forum.</p>	<p>On-going.</p>	

5. Staff Development and Research

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<p>5.1. The PRG urges the staff of the department to take more time to reflect on their current practice and to take responsibility for directing change themselves, rather than waiting for external forces to dictate what happens.</p>	<p>Many of the staff engage with contemporary design practice which underpin their teaching. A mechanism for support/ accountability is being developed by the Head of Research which will assist in how individuals research profiles and interests could be developed to enhance the strategic aims of the College and Department. The NCAD system for reporting staff research/ consultancy & applications for staff development funding are available for all staff. A number of department staff are also involved in Enterprise Ireland Innovation Vouchers, assisting small Irish companies with R&D.</p>	<p>The Design Faculty Board (4 per Academic Year) is the forum where staff engagement with design practice is noted within Department reports and issues of the changing design landscape are debated. Faculty will ensure that these issues are regularly debated at both Faculty Board and Faculty Forum.</p>	<p>Head of Department Head of Faculty. Head of Research. 2 F&T 'Innovation Vouchers' are due to be completed by AW, LB, RO'C, CD</p>	<p>Staff 'professional notices' due 6/10/09 to capture period between Spring – Autumn 2009 Nov. 09</p>	
<p>5.2. The PRG encourages staff to submit proposals for carrying out practice-based research and for the development of postgraduate qualifications in the fashion and textiles areas.</p>	<p>This is ongoing. The development of a system to capture and reward existing knowledge/expertise/experience/ competencies in relation to postgraduate awards is vital. A new method of 'practice based' MA is currently being undertaken in Fashion. This focuses on the student defining their existing practice. This may prove a route for some staff in order for them to gain future PG qualifications, whilst continuing with their personal form of consultancy & research. Staff will investigate the options of staff development funding and support mechanisms and flexible study periods.</p>		<p>Fashion Staff Dr. Siun Hanrahan</p>		

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<p>5.3. The department should develop links with similar departments in other higher education institutions in Ireland and abroad, to help provide an insight into best practice and a way of “benchmarking” their own work. This might also give scope for staff and student exchanges or joint degree programmes.</p>	<p>Many department staff are invited to examine in other colleges (Brighton, Belfast, Galway, Bradford etc)</p> <p>External Examiners play a crucial role in the benchmarking process. Staff developments offers the opportunity for staff to attend conferences at international design institutions and feedback through the ‘staff activities’ section in the Department Faculty Agenda.</p> <p>Mittlemoda and Createurope competitions held in Italy & Germany & New Designers Exhibition in London give staff the opportunity to see work of European Fashion & Textiles colleges.</p> <p>There are also regular opportunities for staff to visit NCAD Erasmus & Cumulus ‘partner’ Institutions.</p> <p>The Dept. will look at methods of capturing these experiences.</p>	<p>The Design Faculty encourages department staff with External Examining experience to share examples of ‘best practice’</p>	<p>Prof.A.Woods, Nigel Cheney, Rachel O’Connell Dr. Helen McAllister</p> <p>Fashion staff Textiles staff</p> <p>International Office</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Autumn 2009</p> <p>On-going</p>	