



National College of Art & Design

**Coláiste Náisiúnta Ealaíne is Deartha
A Recognised College of the National University of Ireland
Coláiste Aitheanta D'Ollscoil na hÉireann**

**Quality Assurance Review in the Department
of Fine Print
Faculty of Fine Art
2005-2006**

**Peer Review Report
November 2005**

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Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance
Peer Review Group Report
Department of Fine Print
Faculty of Fine Art
Academic Year 2005/06

A Review was undertaken by the Department of Fine Print, Faculty of Fine Art in the academic year 2004/2005. The Peer Review site visit took place on 14th and 15th November 2005.

Members of the Peer Review Group (PRG):

1. Jordi Arko, Consultant of Fine Arts in Dalarna, Sweden/Artist (Chair)
2. Jacques de Champfleury, Manager of Atelier Á Fleur de Pierre Workshop, Paris, France

In the absence of an internal advisor, Nicky Saunders, NCAD QA/QI Officer acted as secretary to the Peer Review Group.

1. Timetable of the site visit

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Action</u>
Day 1			
13 th November	Jury's Inn, Christchurch	6.30 p.m.	PRG meet with Nicky Saunders, QA/QI Officer
13 th November	Da Pino Restaurant	7.00 p.m.	Informal dinner to confirm schedule and roles of each member of PRG and agree format of review for next two days

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Action</u>
Day 2			
14 th November	Oak Room	9.15 – 9.30 a.m.	PRG meet with Nicky Saunders, QA/QI Officer and prepare for day's sessions
14 th November	Oak Room	9.30 – 10.00 a.m.	PRG meet Director, Colm O Briain and Registrar, Ken Langan.
14 th November	Oak Room	10.00 – 10.30 a.m.	PRG meet with Professor Brian Maguire, Head of Faculty of Fine Art.
14 th November	Oak Room	10.30 – 11.00 a.m.	Coffee/tea x 6
14 th November	Oak Room	11.00 – 11.30 a.m.	PRG meet with Mike Birtchnell, Head of Fine Print to discuss Department and respond to any questions regarding the Self-assessment Report (SAR).
14 th November	Oak Room	11.30 – 12.30 p.m.	PRG meet with Department staff & QA Team: Andy Folan James Dunbar Catherine Lynch Clare Carpenter Colette O'Sullivan Joan Fowler (facilitator & HADCom representative)
14 th November	Oak Room	12.30 – 1.15 p.m.	Lunch with Fine Print Staff & QA Officer
14 th November	Oak Room	1.15 – 1.30 p.m.	PRG prepare for afternoon sessions
14 th November	Oak Room	1.30 – 3.00 p.m.	PRG meet with undergraduate and postgraduate Student Representatives: Edia Connole, Year 2 B.A. Yvan Vansevenant, Year 3 B.A. Kieran Gallagher, Year 4 B.A. Aishling Noone, Year 1 M.A. Emma Finucane, Year 2 M.A.
14 th November	Oak Room	3.00 – 3.30 p.m.	PRG and QA Officer-Private recap on student session Tea/Coffee
14 th November	Oak Room	3.30 – 4.00 p.m.	PRG meet with Mick Wilson, Head of Research and Postgraduate Development
14 th November	Fine Print & College	4.00 – 5.00 p.m.	PRG, Head of Faculty, Head of Fine Print & QA Officer tour Department and related College facilities, Core, Library.
14 th November	Oak Room & Jury's Inn	5.15 – 6.45 p.m.	Private re-cap on day's sessions with QA Officer
14 th November	Mermaid Cafe	7.00 p.m.	Dinner with PRG, Head of Faculty, Head of Fine Print, QA/QI Officer

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Action</u>
Day 3			
15 th November	Oak Room	9.15 – 1.00 p.m.	PRG draw up draft report with QA Officer
15 th November	Oak Room	1.00 – 2.00 p.m.	Working Lunch with QA Officer
15 th November	Oak Room	2.00 – 4.30 p.m.	PRG complete draft report
15 th November	Board Room	4.30 – 5.00 p.m.	PRG present recommendations of draft report to Director, Registrar, Head of Faculty, Department of Fine Print and QA/QI Officer

The PRG found the review to be very well-planned and organised with enough time in between sessions to prepare for the next session. The review ran extremely smoothly and the PRG would like to commend all involved in the review.

2. Peer Review Methodology

The PRG would like to suggest that the College tour take place prior to the commencement of the review sessions. Having read the report thoroughly, a tour of the studios and workshops would have aided the PRG's understanding of the report and the structure of NCAD.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, an internal advisor was not available during the review. The QA Officer acted as secretary to the two external members of the team and detailed notes were taken during each session of the review. No specific sections were allocated to the PRG, rather they worked together to produce the report and found that they were in agreement on all commendations and recommendations. The majority of the report was completed on the second day of the review with minor amendments being added in the following two weeks.

The PRG would like to thank Nicky Saunders for her excellent and professional approach to the review and her discretion in not interfering in the report process.

3. Description of the Department of Fine Print

3.1 Faculty of Fine Art Overview

There are four Departments in the Fine Art Faculty - Painting, Fine Print, Media and Sculpture. The purpose of the Faculty is to provide the entry point to the profession of Artist at both BA and MA levels. It is faculty policy to have the content of the courses as close as possible to contemporary art practice. The method is for each department to address this in a common second year and then in an independent manner.

It is clear that in recent years the difference between departments is not only the subject specific to the department, but increasingly the *Ethos* or *Philosophy of Art* within each department is the distinguishing feature.

In the context of Faculty policy of inter-department and inter-faculty activity, the Fine Print Department has been very helpful in assisting students from other departments and faculties. Fine Print has participated in all major policy shifts e.g. the review of second and third year.

3.2 The Department of Fine Print

The Department of Fine Print enables students, through its course structure, to explore Fine Print in its broadest sense and seeks to develop the student's individuality and creative expression. Students are skilled in a wide range of traditional processes, as well as the most up to date approaches to digital imagery, large format ink jet, photography and multimedia. There is a comprehensive range of new technology resources including scanners, large format printers and computers. Projects are set in all media with emphasis on the use of appropriate technologies for the expansion of ideas and their tangible expression.

Emphasis is placed on the development of intellectual, creative and critical abilities as well as high levels of technical proficiency. Fine Print is pursued primarily for its role in the development of creating thinking and expression rather than for its reproduction potential.

3.3 Fine Print Philosophy

Print has developed historically alongside painting and sculpture although at all times has remained relatively distinct from them. Printmaking has a pedigree stemming from its early roots as a reproductive process and its more vital role in political and social commentary. Throughout its 500+ year life, artists have turned to print for multiple reasons including - political satire, social enlightenment, the multiple distribution of images and more recently - for its formal, conceptual and aesthetic values. There has also been an overriding commercial aspect to print with both positive and negative connotations. This particular course of development places print clearly within the fine arts although linking it inextricably to the commercial and publishing world. Straddling the modernist aesthetic of authorship and individual expression through post-modern duplicity and re-invention print has retained its validity as a progressive and adaptable medium. The range of possibilities afforded by printmaking has influenced many key figures in recent art history and as long as its specific nature is understood it should continue to do so.

The knowledge and understanding of print dating back over five centuries gives the contemporary artist a sense of continuity with the past and an understanding of the evolutionary nature of image production within a realm that continues to progress with ever increasing ferocity. Printmaking offers a broad range of resources to the contemporary artist, stemming from a clearly defined traditional base but encompassing an ever-broadening range of approaches including those pertaining to the use of digital media.

The definition of a graphic sensibility is an evasive one, though a claim can be made for it. Print is so intrinsically linked to modes of drawing, painting and photography that boundaries tend to overlap. What is certain is that print production in general requires a controlled and systematic approach. Inherent in it is the need for a certain amount of pre-planning or at least an appreciation/understanding of the mutability which results from the progressive application of print processes. While the desire is usually to force a conclusion, provision should also be made for the notion of the artist as journeyman. For many artists the journey will be more interesting than the destination. Print is unique in the material arts in its ability to retain its progressive status. While this is a very useful quality while learning the subject, it may also be valid as a means in itself. The mechanics of printmaking encourages the serial development of images and plates can also be recombined permutationally. In a curious and tentative fashion this quality links print to such time-based media as animation, film and video.

The process, no matter how subliminal its use, will usually characterise the print to some extent and may be perceived to have a greater influence in the formulation of the image than is desirable. This formal notation inherent in all of the separate print media is offset by the diversity of printmaking as a whole. A student conversant with a range of print media may well be in the enviable position of selecting an appropriate medium for their message. Therefore the understanding and appreciation of the appropriate use of process is encouraged. The combination of various methods is valid, as is an understanding of the application of print along with elements of painting, media, sculpture and installation.

It could be maintained that technical processes come between the artist and their delivery. The process, which is essentially employed to facilitate, may also be seen to impede production. Such an impediment (although frustrating for some) requires a specific range of strategies, a discipline in formulation and a clearly defined intention. The result may consequently be a more carefully edited and incisive conclusion. Given this understanding print can become a vital tool, not in spite of its indirectness, but because of it.

3.4 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Department are:

- To encourage students to gain knowledge and self-confidence in order to develop and mature creatively and intellectually.
- To encourage students to develop *subject specific* as well as *transferable* skills combining practical and conceptual concerns to develop creatively.
- To encourage students to be fully aware of archival and exhibition/curatorial practice.
- To develop students in contextual/critical awareness, self-motivation, individual creative practice and problem solving, independent learning and research.
- To encourage students to organise, comprehend and communicate efficiently utilising imagination, critical thinking and the expressive nature of Print Media into a coherent and rigorous art-practice.

The objectives of the Department are:

- To provide a stimulating and challenging environment for the study of Printmaking and to provide the necessary *relevant* skills to utilise printmaking in its widest context.
- To provide comprehensive skilling *both technical and conceptual* within printmaking processes.
- To provide a range of both new and traditional (*appropriate*) technologies encouraging students to interrelate ideas and methods ensuring an understanding and positioning of their practice in relation to Fine Art/Fine Print.

- To provide students with *comprehensive workshop practice skills* and to train students in relation to Health/Safety.
- To offer students an awareness of and preparation for the challenges of various professional/career opportunities.
- To promote the development of effective visual and interpersonal communication skills.

4. Report of the Peer Review Group (PRG) - preliminary comments

The PRG was highly impressed by Fine Print's self-assessment report which covered all aspects of its programmes and provided a variety of subjects for discussion and development within the department, the faculty and NCAD as a whole.

The PRG found the report contents to be fully confirmed by all staff and students through the discussions on the first day of the review. The PRG commends the open and honest response of the review participants and found that they agreed with 95% of the recommendations contained within the report with only a few remarks which will be addressed in sections 5 and 6 of this report.

The PRG would like to see the recommendations contained herein addressed, not only by Fine Print, but also by the whole Faculty and encourage a shorter time-frame between the reviews of the Fine Art Faculty so that a Faculty-wide development plan can be introduced and implemented. The PRG are aware of the different ideologies contained within the separate areas of Fine Art that can engender different views but believe that the Faculty should work together to overcome these differences to move forward coherently and collaboratively. What the departments are providing are different instruments for art but the Faculty should have a holistic vision and strategy for the future.

Discussions with the students demonstrated their admiration for all the staff of the department and showed their commitment and loyalty to the Fine Print Department. The students were extremely open in the discussions and showed their engagement and enthusiasm for the Fine Print Department and NCAD.

The Fine Print staff displayed an open-minded attitude with regard to postgraduate research students practice within the Faculty and the PRG would encourage other departments within the faculty to engage in a similar manner with the postgraduate research initiative which provides students with valuable development opportunities.

5. PRG Response to Internal Report Recommendations

5.1 Internal Recommendations – Year 2 BA

- *Skill-based emphasis* - this emphasis was seen to be too restrictive. A better link between each workshop-based project and an identified theme/title would allow for the project to be seen as accommodating both skills *and* concepts. Student responses to existing workshop projects indicate a need to develop ideas as well as acquire skills which at present is indicated as being *skills in isolation*. New Module descriptors will reflect in their content a skilling/conceptual development balance.
- Students are indicating that they require drawing to be more emphasised within the curriculum. One option would be to allocate an afternoon *drawing workshop* operating Faculty-wide and replacing the Thursday afternoon lecture slot for 2nd Year students. Fine Print Staff however are concerned that the 2nd Year students continue to participate in the Thursday lecture programme. Fine Print therefore needs to provide suggested artist speakers as part of the lecture programme to counterbalance the perceived painting bias in speakers and will be nominating more artists to this programme.
- Discussions have identified the need to incorporate digital/media workshops into the Year 2 programme. Wet photography is in demand across the Fine Art Faculty. It should be part of the 2nd Year curriculum. Students are also requesting more digital process training in Year 2. Elective modules could possibly be expanded to provide a greater choice for Year 2 students but Faculty discussions will be needed to resolve this issue.
- The use of demonstration and lecture should be enhanced to allow for more efficient instruction and more time for ideas development. At present student experience of process bases is solely “hands on”. New module content will allow for a revised lecture/demonstration strategy.
- Students have requested information to identify more Workshop Practice and Workshop Usage as well as Health and Safety issues. A Health and Safety manual will be given to each student of the September 2005 intake.
- There was discussion on shorter more intensive workshop induction blocks whereby students choose and develop their own pathway/concern base by selecting relevant workshops. This will be investigated as part of future curriculum development.
- A more interdisciplinary year structure has been discussed whereby student choice of outblocks/elective modules could be increased from a choice of two departments to four. Students would thereby be able to work across Fine Art disciplines but this will have to be agreed by Faculty.
- Discussion focussed on the need for History of Art & Design and Complementary Studies (HADCom) to reflect studio practice. Debate has centred on the usefulness of students understanding the History of Printmaking and the need for HADCom to deliver *department discrete* theory components. Further discussion and collaboration between HADCom and the Fine Art Faculty is needed to resolve this debate.

PRG Response

The PRG commends the Department on all of their recommendations for Year 2 of the undergraduate programme with the following comments:

Drawing workshops are already provided and the PRG commends the foresight of the Department, however the PRG feels that demands of this type from students come and go as fashion dictates and the Department should review the curriculum on an on-going basis.

New technology has been well-provided for but wet photography is too specialised and “old-fashioned” a technique to be invested in to the detriment of other photo-mechanical methods.

The PRG commends the Health & Safety manual provided to the students, however the manual should be supported by further workshops in Health & Safety on an on-going basis so

that students are well-versed in Health & Safety matters and the possibilities of using the workshops outside of College hours in the future is then open to them.

In order to address issues that have arisen through the QA process and outside of the process, the PRG recommends a yearly review of the curriculum by the whole Faculty of Fine Art to agree on further developments and changes to the curriculum.

The PRG agrees that further discussion is required between the Faculty of Fine Art and HADCom to resolve the increasing division between theory and practice and to combine the two elements of the programme. The history of Printmaking is provided by the tutors in the Department to the benefit of the students and should continue in this manner.

5.2 ***Internal Recommendations – Year 3 BA***

- Students in the current year have found the project themes difficult to apply to their production of art works. While they generally understand the projects and appreciate their validity there is a lacuna between the process-based training they have received in second year and the application of process with regard to these specific conceptual themes. The Department has agreed to tailor projects with a more gradual lead-in time and direct the student towards the appropriate process for the theme to be developed. This will include a technical refresher course preceding each project and greater encouragement with regard to workshop-based activity. There would also be a greater intensity of technical activity in the early weeks of term one to re-establish a culture of production.
- Discussion has identified the need to enhance workshop practice within Year 3. Students will be required to utilise the workshop intensively as part of projects during Spring term. Projects will be more *process focused* and students will be encouraged back into the workshop to investigate and resolve ideas.
- As in Year 2, a balance between workshop skills and individual conceptual concerns will be addressed. At present there seems to be too great a focus on conceptual projects leading to difficulties for some students translating ideas into print practice. Curriculum content has been revised to encourage both conceptual and print practice development.
- Student feedback regarding the Erasmus programme has indicated that there needs to be more information available earlier and it has been recommended that this occur at the end of Year 2. Students at present feel that there is not sufficient time to make important decisions regarding Erasmus and field trips. Further liaison between the Faculty and the Erasmus Coordinator will resolve this issue.

PRG Response

The PRG commends the Department on all of their recommendations for Year 3 of the undergraduate programme with the following comments:

The technical refresher course preceding each project and the greater encouragement to workshop-based activity suggested by the Department is to be commended; the workshop is the soul of the Fine Print Department and the benefits it provides should not be underestimated.

Students should be encouraged by the Department and Faculty to take part in the Erasmus programme and the Faculty should provide full information to students even at the beginning of Year 2 so that students can prepare themselves for the challenge that Erasmus offers and take part in the educational benefits that Erasmus provides.

5.3 ***Internal Recommendations – Year 4 BA***

- Discussion regarding the start of Year 4 identified problems with students working strategies. Some students seem to be unfocussed and indecisive regarding the beginning of their final year. Student contracts as a requirement were sometimes difficult to

resolve/complete. Students entering Year 4 will be required to utilise the summer break to research their intended practice and to formally present their intended practice outline within the first two weeks of the Autumn term in a group seminar situation. Research strategies will be identified and all final year students will present a focussed and coherent set of aims and objectives for discussion.

- Discussions have identified the need to chart meetings/tutorials with students. Often individual students can be inundated with feedback and become confused or overwhelmed. A chart will be put in place to enable a more efficient timetable and record to be kept.
- The Thesis - the written presentation annually is a problematic situation. Some students find the Thesis component an enormous burden while others positively engage with the thesis and benefit from it. Students should be offered greater choice over the weighting of studio to theory - at present 80/20 or in the case of Joint Honours students - 50/50. The link between Theory and Practice has been identified as problematic with many students in Year 4. Many students regard the Theory component as too greatly interfering with studio practice. Time management is an issue and although many students acknowledge the relevance and positive outcomes of thesis writing many are negative about the experience. There is also a need for History and Theory to acknowledge print-making histories and to deliver dedicated components in Fine Print. The Department will endeavour to place art-practice within an historical context. HADCom input to the BA needs further discussion at College-wide level.

PRG Response

The PRG commends the Department on all of their recommendations for Year 4 of the undergraduate programme with the following comments:

The HADCom thesis requirement is one that cannot be resolved by the PRG; however the Faculty is encouraged to continue discussions with HADCom for a resolution. Consideration could be given to reducing the Thesis element for students undertaking the 80/20 course. The Graduation Show is important, not only to the students, but also for the reputation of the College as a whole. This is therefore an important issue to resolve.

5.4 Internal Recommendations – Postgraduate

- Students who apply to Fine Print do not necessarily make prints although the majority of applications are printmaking based. The proposal for inclusion in the MA programme often changes, making the specialism element redundant. Students very soon are lost to Fine Print. All too often the only contact print staff have with the student is within a review, tutorial or group discussion scenario.
- The Fine Print workshop is underused by MA Fine Print students based at the Digital Hub. It is recommended that space issues aside, Fine Print MA students should be sited within Fine Print. It has been suggested that a reduction in undergraduate numbers would accommodate this but this has not been agreed as there are reservations about the implications of a reduction in undergraduate numbers and the effect on departments was raised.
- A discrete MA within Fine Print is suggested with an enhanced curriculum relevant to printmaking, (issues of over-prescriptive curriculum have been raised). An alternative strategy is to eliminate departments within the MA programme. Students would enrol at MA and develop pathways utilising relevant departments e.g. Theory pathway & Studio pathway. Students could opt for various weightings.
- The creation of an international “centre of excellence” within Fine Print with an international focus/artist in residence programme/research facility would enhance the international standing of Fine Print and NCAD as a whole and could attract international students and artists.
- There is no real relationship at present between the postgraduate students and the undergraduates. The Department has agreed that MA students be invited to talk on their practice to undergraduates.

PRG Response

Fine Print staff seem eager to develop the postgraduate side of the Department. The PRG feel that Fine Print must develop a coherent postgraduate strategy in collaboration with the Fine Art Faculty, the Design Faculty and the Head of Research and Postgraduate Studies. Talks have already commenced regarding Postgraduate Taught Courses in collaboration with Visual Communication and the Faculty of Education and the PRG strongly recommends that these talks continue in order to develop original, contemporary and meaningful courses.

The PRG encourages the development of a national/international centre of excellence within Fine Print. The Department is well-placed to become a centre of excellence with collaborations already in place with many Dublin Print Studios and workshops and good facilities within the Department. The Department should research into external funding possibilities to further develop this idea. This could, in the long-run become a “win/win” situation for NCAD and other Art Colleges within Ireland and could attract important artists, curators and critics to the College.

The relationship between postgraduate research students and the undergraduate cohort could be strongly enhanced by postgraduate studentships, whereby postgraduate students give talks to undergraduates on their practice and techniques. This could be programmed into the new modular structure. This would provide very real benefits to undergraduate students but also provide postgraduate students with important interaction with the Fine Print Department and art pedagogy in general.

5.5 Internal Recommendations – Department

- *Should there be emphasis placed on the most utilised printmaking areas and should the workshop be rationalised to deal with areas that are under-used? We believe that we should be offering a wide range of print processes even if some areas at certain times appear under-subscribed. Student demand is different each year. Our course content is compatible to other undergraduate printmaking courses in terms of breadth of study and process bases.*
- *In accepting and acting on developments such as Digital Media have we developed the curriculum to encompass too great a content and thereby spread ourselves too thin? We are constantly seeking to fully integrate new media/digital technologies within our curriculum. Students are demanding a comprehensive digital training from year 2.*
- *Should the I.T. provision be developed within the workshop to achieve greater integration? We believe not. The integration comes from course content and separate digital resources are not a problem. Problems occur where equipment provision/condition frustrates student ambition.*
- *Some confusion can exist where individual students are given a variety of tutorial views. We must make the diverse views of staff a positive and challenging experience for students. We will create the opportunity for individual students to be discussed within a group scenario. We will provide a chart of tutorial contact so that staff and students can see record of meetings.*
- *A considerable amount of discussion as part of QA and at staff meetings occurred within Fine Print as to the merits of “modularisation “and how/if it should be adopted as a means of academic delivery. It has been agreed to trial a modular structure for year 2 for the academic intake 2005.*

- *There should be more accountability within the courses and mechanisms to allow for more sustained student “feedback”.* A student survey was piloted in March 2005. An exit feedback questionnaire will be in place for next year’s final year students. More student/staff meetings will be timetabled. As the modular structure replaces the current course structure, clearly articulated “Project Outlines” are to be given to each student and contain:
 - Aims and Objectives/Structure and Timeframe.
 - Content
 - Assessment Rationale
 - Research guidelines
 - Bibliography

This will provide a clear guide for students on how they are able to maximise performance as per the requirements. Student representative meetings have identified that students wish to receive clear and comprehensive outlines pertaining to each project in order to better understand what is required of them and to clearly understand assessment criteria, content, rationale and research methodologies.

- *More team teaching/tutorial strategies.* Staff will be more widely utilised across years. Each staff member will input academically to all years. More group discussion and across-year group seminars will be timetabled.
- *Professional Practice ‘The Art Business’.* Students have requested a more in depth and regular academic input to this area. Rather than being seen as a separate subject we will build an ongoing Fine Print professional practice element within the studio curriculum. We will investigate how the course might be enhanced by a comprehensive business/professional practice curriculum.

PRG Response

The PRG commends the Department staff on their answers to the many questions that have arisen through the QA process and also commends their foresight in already implementing the recommendations.

It is important for the Department to be a knowledge-bank of print and not look too much at the whims of fashion, but develop a good strategy for what printmaking can provide for art. This strategy must be supported by the Faculty as a whole and communication between the Departments is imperative to develop an art strategy that the whole Faculty can embrace.

5.6 Internal Recommendations – Faculty

- More “common elements” across Departments, Joint projects, regular joint seminars and a programmed access for all interested students to regularly operate within other departments.
- A thorough review of Research within Fine Art, the establishing of groups/centres within Departments and a Fine Art Research Centre.
- A strategy on income generation within Fine Art linked to research/entrepreneurial activities.
- Published research profile for Fine Art and strategies to link Fine Art research to other Faculties.
- The provision of a full-time Fine Art I.T. technician.
- The need to academically link the MA and BA (Hons) programmes with Joint seminars and a far greater set of mechanisms to allow for the cross fertilisation of the two awards. At QA meetings, a two-pathways BA was suggested - Specialist/Interdisciplinary, (interdisciplinary Years 2 & 3, specialist Year 4). Further discussion with Faculty can develop this idea.

PRG Response

The PRG recommends using all available means to publish the research profiles of Fine Art staff - website, and hard copy circulation, regular strategic and minuted meetings within the Faculty and across other Faculties. The Faculty should also consider strengthening external collaborations with communities, education and business and disseminate the information gained through these collaborations.

The PRG recognises the budgetary limitations of the Faculty in appointing a full-time I.T. technician. The PRG recommends utilising the Staff Development Fund to upgrade the I.T. skills of existing staff.

The PRG supports further discussion on all the Faculty recommendations to move forward a Faculty-wide strategy for development.

5.7 *Internal Recommendations – College wide*

- More space to meet the increased interest in Fine Print from Core Studies and MA applications or, at the very least, allow for equitable Fine Art studio provision.
- The provision of a seminar room to allow for slide and group activities.
- The provision of an NCAD exhibition space and a Student Exhibition space
- Review of the relationship of and the weighting for Theory/Studio requirements within the degree.
- Establishment of “common interest” research groups within NCAD.
- The provision of a separate “Machine/Equipment” maintenance budget.
- A mechanism for the sharing of academic interests across Faculties within NCAD.
- The level of staffing needs to be improved within the Department as often staff members are overburdened with hands on instruction in the workshop (by necessity individual one-to-one tuition/demonstration) and the demand for individual tutorial support. There is only one technical assistant for the department and the workload is often extreme.

PRG Response

The PRG recognises the space limitations in Fine Print and recommends a Faculty-wide review of available space with a view to re-organising existing space to address any inequities between students in the Faculty. Fine Print could also review the students' individual space – a more open-plan studio for all years might allow more space for each student with, for example, “working walls” for the students to use which could be taken down or moved as wished to allow for a more flexible studio space.

A seminar room should be available and accessible on a scheduled basis for the whole Faculty.

The PRG commends the idea of establishing common interest groups and the sharing of academic interests across NCAD.

The PRG recognises and commends the dedication of the technical assistant in supporting the increased student cohort but also realises that funding may not be available to appoint a further technical assistant. The Fine Print team have a responsibility to ensure that the workload does not overburden the technical assistant to the detriment of the students.

6. Additional Recommendations by the PRG

- 6.1 The PRG encourages the Department to aggressively seek sources of external funding through collaborations with community and business.
- 6.2 The PRG recommends the consideration of an Artist in Residence programme for the Faculty. An Artist in Residence programme would provide a different point of view and a point of contact between the external world and the academic world to the benefit of students. The visiting lecturer's programme should be further developed to include professional practitioners working within the art world. The programme could then be opened up to all college students and could encourage collaboration between faculties.
- 6.3 A more formal and structured method of communication needs to be implemented between Fine Print and HADCom to address the many issues that have arisen through the QA process. Communication methods need to be further formalised between staff/students, staff/staff, Department/Faculty and Management/Department. It is important that all areas of the College are aware of what is being discussed and implemented across College.
- 6.4 Colour is important for lithography and it should be provided free for proof-prints. Colour lithography should be included in the modular programme.
- 6.5 The College should provide basic safety equipment for students e.g. chemical gloves, dust-masks for aquatint.
- 6.6 The PRG found a lack of transparency in the budget allocation which should be addressed by management and the Faculty. In order to plan and improve, staff need to know what money is available for the academic year and at any given time throughout the year, and where it has been allocated e.g. staff, materials, capital.