



## **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 Registrar's Area  
2004-2005**

## **Peer Review Report**

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**COLÁISTE NÁISÚNTA EALAÍNE IS DEARTHÁ**  
**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**  
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*Coláiste Aitheanta d'Ollscoil na hÉireann*

**Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance**  
**Peer Review Group Report**  
**Registrar's Area**  
**Academic Year 2004/05**

**A Peer Review was undertaken in June 2005 of the Registrar's Area of the National College of Art and Design.**

**Members of the Peer Review Group:**

1. John McGinnity, Assistant Registrar, NUI Maynooth
2. Mary Alexander, Director of Finance, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
3. Frank Bissette, Head of First Year (Core), NCAD

**A site visit took place on 20th June and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2005**

**Timetable of the site visit**

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Action</u>
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	9.00 – 9.15 a.m.	PRG meet Director, Colm O Briain, & QA/QI Officer, Nicky Saunders for short briefing.
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	9.15 – 9.30 a.m.	Schedule of events and roles of each member of PRG are confirmed.
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	9.30 – 10.00 a.m.	PRG meet with Registrar, Ken Langan who presents overview of the area and responds to any questions from the PRG. PRG discuss self-assessment report and clarify what further information they would like to receive in light of the report.
20 <sup>th</sup> June	College	10.00 – 10.45 a.m.	PRG, Registrar & QA/QI Officer tour Registrar's Area and related College facilities.
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	10.45 – 11.00 a.m.	Coffee/tea
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	11.00 – 11.30 a.m.	PRG meet with John O'Donnell, I.T. support
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	11.30 – 1.00 p.m.	PRG meet with Registry staff individually: 1. Berna Scanlan, Registrar's secretary 2. Kitty O'Connor, Registry 3. Pauline Delaney, Reception/Registry 4. Mary Robinson, Registry 5. Dorothy Maher, Reception 6. Debbie Reddin, Registry
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Canteen	1.00 – 2.00 p.m.	Lunch with staff of Registrar's Area

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Action</u>
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	2.00 – 2.30 p.m.	PRG meet with: Vincent Kehoe, Buildings Officer Anita Martin, Human Resources Secretary
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	2.30 – 3.00 p.m.	PRG meet Student representatives: Bob Corish Jacqui Mangan
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	3.00 – 3.30 p.m.	PRG meet with Attendants individually: Kathleen Callaghan, Senior Attendant Gerry Dunne, Attendant
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	3.30 – 3.45 p.m.	PRG meet with Janet Robinson, Access Officer
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	3.45 – 4.00 p.m.	Coffee/Tea
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	4.00 – 4.45 p.m.	PRG meet with Accounts staff individually: 1. David Bramley, Payroll 2. Leoné Swan/Neasa Travers (job-share), Accounts
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	4.45 – 5.15 p.m.	PRG meet with Accounts Head, Helen Fegan
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Oak Room	5.15– 5.45 p.m. (College closes at 6.00 p.m.)	PRG meet with Admissions Officer, Cecily Grant.
20 <sup>th</sup> June	Eden Restaurant	7.00 p.m.	Dinner with PRG, Registrar, QA/QI Officer, Admissions Officer, Head of Accounts, Senior Attendant.
<i>Day 2</i>			
21 <sup>st</sup> June	Oak Room	9.00 – 10.15 a.m. 9.15 9.30 9.45 10.00	PRG individually meets: Professor Gary Granville, Head of Faculty of Education Professor Brian Maguire, Head of Faculty of Fine Art Professor John Turpin, Head of Faculty of HADCom Professor Angela Woods, Head of Faculty of Design
21 <sup>st</sup> June	Oak Room	10.15 – 1.30 p.m. T/C	PRG draw up draft report
21 <sup>st</sup> June	Oak Room	1.30 – 2.30 p.m.	Working Lunch with Director & QA/QI Officer
21 <sup>st</sup> June	Board Room	2.30 – 3.30 p.m.	PRG present findings of draft report to Director, Registrar, Admissions Officer, Senior Attendant, Head of Accounts & QA/QI Officer.

It proved possible to adhere to the pre-arranged time-table, with only occasional deviations, despite the large number of staff which the PRG met over the two days. This was due to the careful planning and management of the visit by Ms Nicky Saunders, QA/QI Officer with NCAD, and the enthusiastic co-operation of all the staff of the Registrar's area who went out of their way to make themselves available to meet with the PRG during the two days. Discussions with staff were open and informative, in keeping with the spirit of the quality assurance/quality improvement concept.

## Peer Review Methodology

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**Chair – John McGinnity**  
**Rapporteur – Mary Alexander**  
**Internal information – Frank Bisette**

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The approach adopted by the Peer Review Group (PRG) was as follows:-

1. In advance of the site visit, documentation provided by the QA/QI Officer was studied. This included two documents outlining the quality assurance review in the Registrar's area. One document set out, in a very comprehensive manner the review process, findings and recommendations. A second document contained appendices setting out financial data, College layout, student statistics, and work timetables in different areas as well as the results of surveys from internal staff, external staff and students. The PRG would wish to state that these prior reports were completed to an extremely high standard by the Registrar and the staff of the Registrar's Area, and contributed significantly to the work of the PRG.
2. At the start of the site visit further documentation was made available and reviewed. These included the NCAD budget submission for 2005, student handbook and College brochures.
3. The PRG met with all staff in the Registry area, all staff in the Accounts area (except one part-time staff member who was on holidays) and two staff members from the Attendants area.
4. The PRG met with students and staff external to the Registry area including the Director, Heads of Faculty, the Human Resources Officer and the Buildings Officer, as well as the QA/QI Officer.
5. On the second day the PRG drew up a draft report outlining their recommendations.
6. The PRG made a verbal presentation of the recommendations to the Director, Registrar, Admissions Officer, Head of Accounts and QA/QI Officer.
7. Following the site visit the PRG prepared a final report for circulation to the Registrar and QA/QI Steering Group, and there to Academic Council. It is intended that the PRG report will be made available both internally and externally on the College's website, after the internal consultation process.

## Description of Registrar's Area

The Registrar's Area is divided into three separate sections: -

- i) **Accounts Department**
- ii) **Attendants**
- iii) **Registry Department**

### I) **Accounts Department**

The Accounts Department agreed on the following Mission Statement:

*The provision of professional financial service to all faculties and departments in an efficient and friendly manner and reporting thereon to all relevant bodies*

The major formal activity of the Department is the preparation of accounts and budgets. In addition there are day-to-day procedures to deal with payroll and processing and recording of expenditure and income. The number of staff in the department is small and it is not possible to have complete demarcation of duties. An internal audit committee was appointed in 2004, and an internal audit service is outsourced to a firm of Accountants.

The Accounts Department is located on the first floor of the Administration Building under the supervision of Helen Fegan. There are three full-time positions, one of which is job-shared, and a further part-time position within the department. The annual budget is of the order of €12,000,000.

### ii) **Attendants**

The Attendants adopted the following as a Mission Statement:

*The provision of an efficient and friendly support service to all members of the College community and visitors to the College campus*

The attendants main activities include opening and closing the College, and manning all entrances, arranging rooms, greeting and directing visitors, dealing with deliveries, post, cleaning supplies and keys, and monitoring building faults and advising the Buildings Officer.

There are thirteen Attendants and one Cleaner within the Attendants' area. The Attendants report directly to the Head Attendant, Breda Savage who is assisted by two Senior Attendants, Kathleen Callaghan and Rosemary O'Gorman. Monthly meetings take place between the Registrar and the Head and two Senior Attendants to discuss particular work plans for the coming months and any difficulties that have arisen.

The Attendants are located in each of the main buildings:

1. Main Entrance
2. The Granary Building
3. The School of Design for Industry
4. John's Street West – A building which adjoins the main campus

The attendants work two shifts - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. The College is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday, and most Saturdays throughout the academic year from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **iii) Registry Department**

The Registry Area adopted the following as a Mission Statement:

*To provide the framework that enables NCAD to admit, educate and graduate the best potential artists, designers and art educators and to do this to the highest professional standards.*

The Registry Department is located on the ground floor of the Administration Building which also houses the offices of the Registrar and his Secretary. There are eleven staff members in the department filling approximately nine full-time equivalent posts.

The Department is headed by Cecily Grant, the Admissions/Students Officer. The area provides a comprehensive service to all applicants and students of the College, and maintains the applications, registration and student records. The department has daily contact with all Faculties and Departments in the College and large numbers of students visit the department on a regular basis. Externally the department has contact with a large number of bodies including NUI, HEA, Central Applications Office, and the Department of Education and Science.

## **PRG Response to Internal Report Recommendations**

The following sets out the Peer Review Group's response to the internal report recommendations for each area, and makes additional recommendations or comments where considered appropriate.

### Overall Recommendations for Registrar's Area

#### **1. Internal Report Recommendation**

##### Future Structure and Qualifications

Over the next number of years there will be a number of key retirements within the Accounts and Registry areas. The present senior structure within these departments has evolved almost through custom and practice rather than a cohesive planning for the appropriate shape of the areas concerned. When the last major re-structuring took place in 1997 it was itself a response to requirements that were made by the Higher Education Authority back in 1986. It was through such a process that the Registrar's post continued to be a non-academic post although the post has been non-academic in nature since NCAD started. It is the view of the department that a structure should now be geared towards ensuring that when the present Registrar retires his replacement should be a senior academic who, in addition to the responsibilities that the present Registrar has at present, will have a more academic role with the requirement to plan academic developments for the College and to encourage and be involved with promoting academic research.

In order to achieve that type of an appointment it is necessary to ensure that the support within the Accounts and Registry areas will be in place to ensure continuity of necessary expertise on the appointment of an Academic Registrar. In that context it is the view of the Registrar's Area staff that the next Head of the Accounts area should be a qualified accountant and that the next Head of the Registry Area should be designated Assistant Registrar with responsibility for all areas of the department reporting to the Registrar.

With such a structure in place the Registrar's Area will have a structure which would be much more in line with that in existence in other colleges.

##### **PRG Response**

The PRG commend the foresight to plan now for the future needs of the area. This is all the more significant given that the next quality assurance exercise for the Registrar's area will not take place for at least seven/eight years based on the agreed QA/QI schedule. The PRG understand the constraints of the 1971 Act, which requires the Registrar to have responsibility for the finance area. However the preferred organisation structure would be a Head of Finance and a Registrar post of equal status, both reporting to the Director.

Consideration should be given to creating the Academic Registrar's position on the basis of a fixed-term e.g. five years, to attract high calibre applicants and if internal, would provide the opportunity for the Registrar to return to his/her academic duties within a Faculty. Another area which the PRG identified was the grading of the positions for the qualified accountant and the Assistant Registrar and these will have to be considered in the light of future resources and the ability to attract quality candidates.



## **2. Internal Report Recommendation**

The Accounts and Registry areas should occupy one location and operate as one enlarged department.

### **PRG Response**

The Departments did not communicate to the PRG that there was a need for integration – nor do the PRG see the necessity of further integration between Accounts and Registry. Student fees are the only area where there is interaction and with an integrated student system, there should not be a need for physical proximity, although ideally the relevant persons in Accounts and Registry should be easily accessible to each other.

## **3. Internal Report Recommendation**

### **IT Department**

An IT Department must be established separate from the Registrar's Area although it could continue to report to the Registrar. This department should provide a service to all of the College community and be seen to do so and by occupying a separate accessible location its profile will be raised within the College. Additional staffing is required. Ideally there should be two full time staff members within the IT section and from time to time during the course of the year some part time input to meet particular demands.

Such an IT department would also be responsible for developing the training needs of all staff and, where appropriate, students. The College is investing in excess of €150,000 per annum in IT related equipment without adequate training for those who use it and is not fully exploiting all of the equipment that it has bought as people are training themselves on a need to know basis.

### **PRG Response**

The IT infrastructure (both human and physical resources) is deficient given the size of the College. It is clear that this has hampered the development of IT as a resource for greater effectiveness and efficiencies within the College. It was particularly highlighted by the student body as a problem area, and this is understandable given the fact that one person is carrying the total responsibility for this area. It is clear that the day to day exigencies/ 'fire-fighting' aspects of the post has led to a situation where there is little forward planning and that the staff (both at Registrar and Faculty level) take precedence over student requests. This is unsustainable going forward.

IT should have further resources with an additional staff member responsible for projects and strategic planning of the IT area and to work with users in relation to IT development, e.g. updating on-line accounts system, enhancing student record functionality for staff and students. Also additional part-time staff should be assigned to the computer support function to assist with on-going user support. Funding to assist this development may become available under the HEA Strategic Initiatives programme, which the Registrar has submitted proposals to. This vehicle has provided the impetus for enhanced IT administrative support systems in other colleges.

## **4. Internal Report Recommendation**

The role of the Attendants needs to be more recognised than it is at present. Should discussions lead to the Attendants being involved in some form of CCTV security it will be a significant change to their duties. In addition they must be involved to a greater extent in being made aware of developments within the College and of their role within those developments. This must include at least basic knowledge of information technology.

### **PRG Response**

The Attendants role regarding security needs clarification. The student body perception was that the attendants had a security role, and they did not see any distinction. Their perception is understandable. The PRG found an openness within the Attendants Office to consider additional roles within the security area with the use of information technology and CCTV to the benefit of the campus community. It was clear from the review reports that the attendants genuinely were of the view that a number of events and seminars etc were taking place on campus about which they were not advised of. In addition, visiting lecturers could on occasion arrive without them having prior notice. The PRG saw scope in the development of the intranet, with co-requisite PC and e-mail training for attendants. This should be applicable to all attendants and not to only one senior attendant which is currently the case. This initiative would provide for the dissemination of information to a large number of staff simultaneously.

### **5. Internal Report Recommendation**

The Registry Area needs to develop its student support section. This can only take place if additional staffing requirements are met.

This section must include at least the following:

- Access
- Student Support
- Counselling Services
- Health Services
- Disability
- Grants and Financial Aid

### **PRG Response**

PRG noted the new positions (1.5) which have been provided to cover access, student support, disability, International Desk, etc. Students do feel positive regarding the services, which are presently offered and particularly mentioned the Counselling Service, Career Guidance and student support services. These services which have been put in place by the Registrar are well regarded by the student body. Further funding to expand the disability service, the mature student support service and facilities to increase the participation of socio-economic disadvantaged students should attract support from the National Access Office in the future, providing cogent arguments are put forward by the College. There is currently a student-centred approach to the activities of the College, but the societal demands arising from the diverse student body calls for continual initiatives in this area.

### **6. Internal Report Recommendation**

#### Human Resources

The Area is conscious that in a Quality Assurance Review it is possible to over-emphasise the need for revision of procedures with a view to increasing services provided without giving due attention to the human resources that are required to provide the services that exist.

In this regard the quality of the working environment is particularly important. All three surveys made reference to the quality of the Reception Area both in the context of the nature of the space to those who are visiting the College as well as the quality of the space as a working environment.

Staff have raised a number of physical working environment issues which require attention:

- The Registry Area tends to be a noisy and often disruptive area because of its open plan nature
- The air conditioning needs improvement
- There should be a central improved staff room and rest room
- The Reception Area should be moved to achieve a more work-like environment.

Staff have also raised a number of recommendations in relation to the environment in which they carry out their work, separate to the physical environment which would enable them provide better service:

- Improvements in the Student Database and a linkage of fees with the Accounts Department
- Continued access to training on an appropriate and timely basis
- Feedback on job performance
- Recognition of work done and improvement in career prospects
- Staff information booklet should be provided

It is the view of this Area that only by providing up-to-date information technology systems, equipment and a conducive physical working environment can staff deliver in the most effective way possible on the services that are required.

### **PRG Response**

The PRG recommend the relocation of the NCAD reception area out of the Registry to a dedicated reception to reduce noise and disruption levels within Registry. Reception should be the first port of call for visitors to NCAD. Reception could be combined with the Attendants' central enquiries area to improve facilities and provide cover for attendants and reception. The Attendants highlighted the fact that the current area inside the College front gate does not represent the appropriate 'image' for the College and the new reception/attendant's area could address this.

## **7. Internal Report Recommendation**

### **Facilities & Cover**

The Department needs to develop a Foreign Desk. Such a Foreign Desk would deal with the services that are at present being undertaken through the Erasmus service. These services must be expanded to include support of students and staff who are both incoming and outgoing on Erasmus programmes. There is a clear requirement for an improved and centralised information service for staff and students. The Registrar's Area is of the view that programmes should be developed to attract a certain number of foreign students to the College in line with government policies.

### **PRG Response**

The PRG noted the new positions which have been provided to include support for the International Desk, as referred to at 5 above. The PRG would recommend that consideration be given to the investigation of possible links with non-EU Art Colleges (e.g. US and Canada) which could provide an income contribution to the College. These would be on a college-to-college basis to avoid the difficulties encountered with 'free-movers' in the past. There is a danger in resources being attracted into increasing links for EU

students that do not have a consequential income benefit for the College, albeit a very understandable cultural and European perspective for students and the campus community.

The PRG is cognisant of the constraints there are in relation to space and the fact that there is significant demand for the Colleges programmes of study from existing EU students. However, as indicated in the original Registrar's Area report, there may be scope to consider this initiative. There was an interest among the academic heads for recruitment of non-EU students to generate funding to support their departmental academic and research activities that could be at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It may be possible to devise a model, as currently operates in other third level colleges, whereby there is an agreed distribution of income accrued between the College and at Faculty level which creates the incentive for Faculties to recruit non-EU full fee paying students.

## **8. Internal Report Recommendation**

### Publicity

Clearly there is a lack of understanding within the College, within individual areas, of the services that are available in each of the Registrar's Areas. An explanatory document should be prepared outlining the range of service that each area offers.

### **PRG Response**

With regard to publicity PRG notes both the need for internal awareness of the Registry for the campus community and endorse the idea of an explanatory document outlining the range of services. At a higher level, a view was expressed to the PRG that there is possible scope to raise the NCAD profile nationally and internationally. At overall College level, there may be scope for the Registrar's Area to work with academic staff in this regard, given the prohibitive costs from some external agencies. The amount of 'free' advertising, which currently takes place in the National media during the period of the annual shows, is very noticeable. One other approach, which could be taken, is for the Admissions Office to mail shot NCAD applicants with an invite to particular shows, which would be of interest to them.

## **9. Internal Report Recommendation**

### Grading Structure and Merit Awards

This area is of considerable concern to all staff within the three areas. Some support the possibility of such grading being reviewed through a revised Staffing Review Committee whilst others feel that a Staffing Review Committee would be powerless in the context of current national agreements. Staff would like to see some form of merit award for services rendered whilst recognising that any award by its very nature can give rise to as much dissatisfaction as it can satisfaction.

### **PRG Response**

The PRG noted the grading structures as a key issue to the Registrar's Area staff. While the college is curtailed in its flexibility to change those structures, it is evident that the College has facilitated flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies wherever possible. Based on the prior reports, it is evident that the Registrar's Area enjoys low staff turnover and this is reflective of a supportive, encouraging environment. The PRG encourages the adoption of a Performance Management Development System (PMDS), which would provide feedback on job performance, and recognition of work done, which is currently being introduced in other third level institutions. While this is not a panacea for all ills, it does provide a structured opportunity for staff to discuss matters of mutual interest

with their line manager and also align the goals of individuals at work to be consistent with College objectives.

The PRG found evidence that where a job has significantly changed, it has been possible to change the grading to reflect that change and we feel that this practice should continue. While development within a post may be limited, there is opportunity for staff to move within College to other positions and can thereby develop their roles and career paths. Another possibility will be job enhancement through the introduction of new technology if the Registrar's Area is successful in attracting funding under HEA Strategic Initiatives although these funds tend to be for a defined duration.

#### **10. Internal Report Recommendation**

A comprehensive working manual should be prepared for the Accounts Department and for the Registry Department so that clear procedures are accessible outlining the various tasks of each area for all staff.

##### **PRG Response**

PRG endorses the need for working manuals within each area, which should be updated on a regular basis.

#### **11. Internal Report Recommendations - Accounts Area**

The Accounts Department has identified the following recommendations as the primary ones that should be pursued within the area:

- Employ one additional half-time staff member on a full-time basis with a knowledge of both the creditors and payroll areas
- Implement changes in the creditors/payments area to speed up the process by
  - paying creditors by direct debit
  - including unlisted orders in the monthly accounts so the faculties and departments have a better view of the balance of the budget that remains in their areas
- Re-examine format of purchase orders, payment requests and any other official forms to ensure that they are comprehensible to all users
- Investigate current accounts system with a view to providing online access on a view only basis to faculties and departments
- Allocate members of the Accounts department direct responsibility for particular faculties and departments to liaise directly each month as the monthly accounts are completed.

##### **PRG Response**

PRG recognizes the requirement of an additional half-time post within accounts that should be capable of operating all systems including payroll, given possible exposure in this critical area. We would envisage some of these technical improvements taking place through the enhanced IT support section.

PRG endorses all the recommendations for the Accounts area, as they would be considered best practice.

## 12. Internal Report Recommendations - Attendants Area

- Engage in discussion on the involvement of the Attendants on future security plans for the College including CCTV
- Involve Attendants in IT training so that information can evolve through the intranet
- Establish communications between the Attendants and faculties and departments to ensure that information flows to the attendants
- Identify the Attendants by the use of name badges so that there is an awareness of the identity of the person with whom they are dealing. The Attendants are also of the view that this recommendation should apply to all members of staff dealing with the public.
- Review numbers of Attendants in the context of additional opening on Saturdays and the potential of Sunday openings at certain times of the year.

### **PRG Response**

Following discussions it was considered that the Attendants should have access to information via email and intranet to counter the feeling of marginalisation, which exists in the Attendant area. One suggestion is the provision of 'observer' membership at Faculty Board meetings for an attendant and a member of the Registrar's Area, to provide for two-way communication.

PRG support discussion relating to CCTV (referenced above at number 4)

PRG endorses all recommendations for the Attendants area.

## 13. Internal Report Recommendation - Registry Area

Having considered the questionnaires in particular and arising from the various meetings the following recommendations have emerged in respect of the Registry Area:

- The Registry Area needs re-branding, as the term "registry" is not considered appropriate. This was clear from the apparent lack of clarity on the area's role from the result of the questionnaires. Suggestions have taken place on alternative names and the following is the preferred title:

-Central Office for Admissions and Student Services

- To streamline the workload at Reception by removing responsibility for opening the post
- Post should be opened in a private room
- Grant cheques should be issued independently of the Reception service
- Commission a consultants report on the student record system before upgrading the present system, as some sections of the programme may not have been adequately developed and we should maximise their use
- Extend access to the student database to the faculty and department offices
- Provide online registration
- Provide online examination results including marks
- Provide online student notice board, including the Student Handbook, with regular updates
- Provide "air terminal" type screens around campus disseminating information to students and encourage students to use this facility in order to access information
- Set up a cross College working group on the promotion of NCAD with membership from each faculty, the Library and the Registrar's Area.
- To improve internal communications consider the provision of bi-weekly bulletins for staff online
- Provide an induction programme for new staff to familiarise themselves with the College
- Set up an annual day out on campus for registry staff during the annual shows to a chosen department where staff could be informed by students and staff in the area on what happens within that area and reciprocate such invitations
- Provide continued appraisal of staff training needs and organise appropriate courses.

### **PRG Response**

PRG agree with the change of title to be more reflective of the work undertaken by the Office.

The removal of Reception from Registry would also remove the responsibility of opening post for Registry and provide a more confidential atmosphere.

Users of Quercus should research the value of upgrading to Quercus 2 – consultants are probably not needed. Further training of staff could facilitate use of Quercus and extend its usability. The PRG noted that staff had adopted a flexible attitude to cover for other staff when difficulties arose which assisted the smooth running of the office – in these circumstances it is understandable that some staff felt that they needed more specialised training in the use of Quercus.

One positive feature, which has arisen from the quality assurance exercise, has been the establishment of 'mini-meetings', which a number of staff felt had been extremely useful and increased effectiveness within the office.

PRG agree with on-line student notice board and utilisation of website as a student portal. The concept of "Air terminal" is probably too far down the line, and much of the functionality can be delivered via web portals accessible by students on campus and remotely.

PRG endorse the idea of a working group on the promotion of NCAD, and the Faculties are also receptive to the idea. This will be necessary to retain NCAD as the college of choice for applicants undertaking courses offered by the College.

PRG endorse on-line communication methods, an induction programme, an annual day out on campus and continued appraisal of staff training needs.

The Registry should consider the implications of the Diploma Supplement (following Bologna) and ensure staff resources and training and implications for the student records system are planned for. The progression links for FETAC and BTEC students have shown that the College is innovative in attracting a diverse intake of students.

## Conclusion

The PRG found that the staff of the Registrar's Area were very committed, hardworking and enthusiastic. This was very evident from all the Registrar's Area personnel that we met, but more particularly the students and staff from other parts of the campus confirmed it. The Office operates in a well-managed, constructive atmosphere and is held in high regard by the campus community.

While there are recommendations for change, which were identified by the staff, and which in most cases were endorsed by the PRG, these should be seen in this context. The PRG found that the area under review worked very well, and in most cases, the areas needing change were not large relative to the total activity of the area. Significantly the recommendations are about planning for the future and achieving efficiency rather than addressing any fundamental concerns about the operations or any areas of risk or exposure.

Use of technology, particularly in the accounts area should bring benefits. In the attendants area clarity regarding security was important in our view. The attendants feeling of being left "out of the loop" as regards communication could also be addressed, to some extent, with the use of technology. It will be important for the attendants to engage in the process so as to decrease the feeling of marginalisation, which has been articulated.

We are conscious that work has commenced in relation to a strategic plan for the overall College. It would be important that the Registrar's Area, which is a key College function, has an input into this plan so that there is consistency in terms of goals, and the objectives of the Registrar's Area are aligned with those of the College and *vice versa*.

Our discussions with the students and staff external to the Registrars Area indicated a high level of satisfaction with the area and in particular with the response of the staff. The availability of staff in person or by phone to assist with queries or difficulties in a timely and friendly manner was often referred to.

The PRG wishes to place on record its appreciation to Nicky Saunders, QA/QI Officer, for all of her advice during the review process and wish the Registrar's Area continued success in the work it undertakes, which provides a significant contribution to the National College of Art & Design.

11<sup>th</sup> July 2005