NCAD DUBLIN

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

School of Education

Unit Review

Quality Review Panel Report

Date of Review visit: Wednesday 09 February 2022

Contents

1. Executive Summary

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

It is important to note that this review was undertaken during the Covid-19 restrictions. The findings are based on the self-assessment report, external examiners reports, module descriptors, other related documents shared with the peer review group and the interviews conducted via zoom (refer to the meetings schedule below).

1.1. Context

In preparing a Review Panel (RP) response to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) from the School of Education and the meeting with the School's internal and external partners, NCAD and the School of Education must be complimented on the quality of the self-assessment report and the access provided to a large number of reports and other documentation germane to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme for Schools.

The RP is producing this report in the full knowledge that it is not a forensic audit but more of a bird's eye or systems view with occasional focus on finer detail. The comments and recommendations made are done so in the spirit of enhancing NCAD and the School of Education community in achieving their individual and collective aims.

Subsequent to triangulation of documentation together with the responses from staff and students and partners, both internal and external, which was mostly solution-focused and positive in tone, the overall view of the RP is that the NCAD School of Education, which has grown significantly over the last number of years, is an effective, caring, vibrant, ambitious, inclusive and open teacher education community that is cherished by its external partners and that values the crucial role of art and design education to a flourishing and sustainable society.

Implementing the SAR-specific recommendations, which were endorsed by the RP, would provide the initial impetus to the realisation of the overarching key recommendations proposed by the RP.

The review panel identifies key commendations, which reflect the impressive contribution, reputation and standing of the School, and which offer a context for the next phase of the School's continued development, enhancement and further improvement.

1.2. Commendations

The Review panel commends:

1. The NCAD Strategic Plan, 2020-2024, FUTURES, BOLD & CURIOUS – offers a frame within which the School of Education can flourish and confidently play a key role in shaping education for art and design.

2. The quality of leadership offered at College and School levels, whose direction and day-to-day management ensures that a high standard on teaching and learning are offered, while maintaining the organisation's effectiveness, adaptability, resilience and student focus.

3. The high levels of ambition, enthusiasm, commitment and resourcefulness of the School of Education staff.

4. The provision of two modes of Teacher Education, in Ireland's National College of Art & Design, delivered by an accomplished and highly respected flexible staff.

5. The commitment of the School of Education and the College more broadly, to ensuring that the pedagogy of Art & Design is at the core of debate and thinking, while recognising the persistent quest for balance, as these issues are considered.

6. The pipeline of teacher education programmes in development.

7. The influence and impact of the School in the education arena, such as educational policy, curriculum development, further education, access and widening participation.

8. The impressive levels of regard and appreciation for the School's staff, as articulated by current students, and alumni alike: they glowingly spoke of the breadth and depth of their educational experience, and the support and flexibility offered, particularly during Covid-19.

9. The positive, supportive and engaging relationships built by School, as reported by educational and community stakeholders, who described the School as, 'open', 'joy to work with', 'amazing, exceptional and refreshing'.

10. The high level of focus placed on developing and maintaining strong levels of community connectivity, with the local area and the wider city, including Schools, community groups, and cultural institutions.

11. The impressive track record of engaging in collaborative projects involving a wide range of Higher Education partners, including PATH 1, 2, and 3; Arts Council Super Projects, Artworks at Future Sparks; The Big Idea Transition Year Project in Design Thinking.

1.3. Recommendations

The Review panel recommends:

1. Close attention is paid to the SAR report and specifically the recommendations made, and which the Review Panel broadly endorses.

2. Closer alignment of the School's teaching, learning and research ambitions and needs, with the implementation of the Strategic Plan's Teaching & Learning, and Research work streams.

3. Identify opportunities to develop a college-wide shared understanding of the meaning, role and approach to Education, Lifelong Learning, Art & Design Education, and the formation of Educators. The ongoing dialogue should act as a catalyst in developing arts informed education insights, identifying synergies, increasing the degree of college cohesion and promoting cross fertilisation in and between Schools.

4. The implementation of the Strategic Plan's Lifelong Learning work stream to enable the work of the Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design to be built on, further enhanced, and sustainably embedded in the College's educational offering, and capitalises on national policy/ initiatives.

5. The adoption of a Universal Design approach to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment environments, as well as buildings, systems and processes, meet the needs of a diverse student population: enabling these needs to be in-built and not considered as 'other'.

6. Foster a self-sustaining research culture by developing a more robust college wide mutual support structure. Establish a small number of short- and medium-term objectives focused on (a) nurturing a sufficient critical level of researchers, (b) identifying areas for further collaboration and (c) quality internal and external communication of current research activities.

7. The College Strategy describes the ambition to be an 'effective organisation', characterised as, 'working together', better campus facilities development, operational effectiveness and strength' (NCAD 2020-2024, Goal 3, page 10). In this regard, the following is recommended as priority considerations:

   a. Undertake a review of the School's organisational structures as soon as possible, in order to identify the optimum configuration of the School of Education.

   b. Development of optimum blended learning approaches, informed by the experience and evaluation of current VLE pilot.

c. Consider the further enhancement of systems to support School administration, student support and student profiling, to inform planning, decision making and academic progress.

d. Develop a coherent co-ordinated approach to staff development for all academic and administrative staff within the School, which is aligned to the institution's approach.

e. Development of a college-wide agreed approach to timetabling, which takes account to the needs, opportunities, and constraints of all Schools, in order to facilitate easier planning of staff time and student workloads.

f. Enhancement of the School's facilities, in line with the Campus Development Plan (NCAD Design Framework presentation to An Bord 14.12.2021).

8. The development of a more robust, confident approach to communications that conveys the expertise, contribution and impact of the School of Education and the College more generally.

2. Introduction and Context

This Unit Quality Review was undertaken as part of NCAD's Quality Review Framework and to meet the statutory requirements for Designated Awarding Body, University College Dublin (UCD) and linked provider (Recognised College, the National College of Art and Design (NCAD)), as set out under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, namely to review the effectiveness of the linked provider's programmes.

This report presents the findings of the review of the School of Education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how NCAD discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students by evaluating the effectiveness of its programmes or units.

The members of the Review Panel (RP), appointed by NCAD, were:

- Dr Anna Kelly, Director of Access and Lifelong Learning, UCD, Chair of the panel

- Aidan Clifford, Former Director, The Curriculum Development Unit

- Dr Leo Casey, Director of Centre for Education and Lifelong Learning, National College of Ireland

2.1. Outline of the Quality Review Process and Methodology

The constitution of the review panel (RP) was well structured to sustain the full range of appropriate expertise. The review visit was conducted virtually using Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions. At the preliminary meeting of the RP, [it was decided that the group will work together as a group during the review visit and not assign any specific areas of responsibility to any individual member of the review panel]. All members of the RP had opportunities to ask questions during the visit. The panel requested an additional meeting with the head of the department of product design and it was accommodated]. The Quality and Academic Support Officer was in attendance during the review visit and took notes.

All members of the RP contributed to the writing of the report.

The key stages of the review process consist of the following elements:

1. Programme self-assessment, which includes the preparation of an analytical and reflective self-assessment report (SAR), which involves an internal and external consultation process within NCAD.

2. Review visit (virtual) by the review panel on 09 February 2022, (see the schedule below), and a campus tour (live) on Thursday 10 February 2022.

3. Production of a report by the review panel, in which recommendations are clearly set out and distinguished from the general findings.

4. Production by NCAD of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which addresses all recommendations and includes a timeline in respect of their implementation.

5. Publication of the review panel's report, NCAD's response to the report, the QIP.

6. Establishment and implementation of a clear and timely follow-up process in respect of any quality improvement recommendations, which may include publication of updates on progress.

The review panel visit schedule for Wednesday 09 February 2022 of (virtual) visit:

Time	Subject of session	Participants
9.00-9.15	Welcome, Management Team,	Professor Dervil Jordan, Head of School of Education Professor Siún Hanrahan, Head of Academic Affairs Kilian O'Callaghan
9.15-9.45	Introduction: Strategy for SoE	Professor Dervil Jordan SoE staff in attendance
9.45-10.15	Discussion with Dervil	Professor Dervil Jordan
10.15-11.00	Break and Panel Discussion	Panel
11.00-11.30	Current students and alumni	Undergraduate and postgraduate students and alumni
11.30-12.30	Education staff	Staff of School of Education
12.30-1.00	Other NCAD staff	Staff from Schools of Visual Culture, Design and Fine Art
1.00-2.00	Lunch break	
2.00-2.30	Panel discussion	Panel only
2.30-3.00	CEAD staff	Head of CEAD Nuala Hunt CEAD lecturers
3.00-3.30	External stakeholders	Eg, school principals,
3.30-3.45	Break	
3.45-4.15	Panel discussion	Panel only, (Kilian)
4.15-5.00	Senior staff	Professor Dervil Jordan, Head of School of Education Nuala Hunt, Head of CEAD Department Dr Patsey Bodkin, Co-ordinator BA Education & Design/Fine Art Fiona King, Co-ordinator Professional Master of Education Dr Isobelle Mullaney, Placement Co-ordinator
5.00-5.30	Panel discuss report summary	Panel only
5.30-6.00	Present findings to Management Team	Professor Dervil Jordan, Head of School of Education Nuala Hunt, Head of CEAD Department Dr Patsey Bodkin, Co-ordinator BA Education & Design/Fine Art Fiona King, Co-ordinator Professional Master of Education Dr Isobelle Mullaney, Placement Co-ordinator Professor Siún Hanrahan, Head of Academic Affairs Members of SoE Staff
6.00	Finish	

2.2. Key areas of the review

This Quality Review Panel Report, completed following the (virtual) visit on 09 February 2022, presents commendations and recommendations, and addresses the following headline issues:

1. Education
2. Student Diversity
3. Research
4. Organisation

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

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

2.4. Relationship to UCD

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

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012, UCD must ensure that NCAD's ongoing quality enhancement of its activities meets the requirements of the Act. NCAD's Quality Assurance Procedures were approved by UCD's Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ) in October 2016. In March 2017, UCD carried out an Institutional Review of NCAD.

2.5. NCAD structure

NCAD has four schools: Design, Education, Fine Art and Visual Culture, offering a range of educational opportunities from part-time classes to doctoral studies. Eddie Murphy Library and the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL) are part of NCAD and it is important to note that NIVAL is dedicated to the documentation of 20th and 21st century Irish visual art and design.

2.6.   The School of Education

The School of Education sees art and design education as an essential component in the education of the individual as a person and as a citizen. The processes involved in thinking through, in making and in engaging with art and design are central to the holistic development of the person. The School's mission describes its commitment to Lifelong Learning, the provision of programmes of education to teachers, facilitators, in a variety of educational, cultural or developmental settings, research, as well as professional engagement with policy development. The School is organised into two areas, Initial Teacher Education, and the Department of Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design (CEAD). (SAR page 6).

3. Findings of the Review Panel

3.1. Education

Education, its underpinning philosophy, approach and concepts, are at the heart of this review. Throughout the visit and in particular when the review panel met the NCAD staff across the different schools, this theme of education in its various manifestations, was raised.

The RP understands firstly that the act of engagement in art itself is an education process as an exploration of human condition/relationship and secondly the lecturer in their own role was engaged in an education process. Such conversations are very timely.

From these conversations and analysis of college documentation, the RP identified three areas that could enhance the School of Education and NCAD activities namely (a) deepening the understanding of education, (b) the possibility of creating additional curriculum space and (c) a focus on lifelong learning and universal design.

a) While the School of Education is primarily concerned with Teaching and Learning research & development and accreditation of practice at all levels, it also can be a conduit bringing the latest developments in education to the wider staff of NCAD. Equally there is significant potential within all schools of NCAD to contribute to an ongoing discourse and research on education and the significance of the arts in education in contemporary society. Discourse of this nature, cross referenced with international developments[1][2], should lead to a shared and deeper understanding of education and art and design education, which would contribute to the foundation of a shared academic ethos. As one of the strands of the NCAD Strategic Plan "being connected", that understanding merits communication to the wider education and public community.

In the end, nearly all the education institutions, national and international, are slowly realigning towards the pressing, time poor, existential desire to create and sustain a flourishing humanity within a flourishing environment. Given its unique perspective and capability, the School of Education and NCAD as a whole, should be to the fore in providing leadership to guide the new realignment of education.

Another more pragmatic outcome of that realignment may lead to the identification of new synergies.

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[1] https://www.oecd.org/education/future-of-education-brochure.pdf
[2] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707

b) Given the comments from students and external examiners on the restricted access to studio time and time abroad e.g., the Erasmus programme, a further review of modules within the programme may offer the opportunity of creating additional curriculum space by the alignment of courses where common ground is found.

c) Building on previous work, the School of Education ought to make more explicit how the concepts of lifelong learning and universal design are integrated into the School and the College more broadly. The adoption of a Universal Design approach would further enhance the work of creating an inclusive environment for all.

Such deliberations by NCAD and the School of Education, should enable the achievement of prime position and offer leadership and expertise, in society's reconfiguration of education.

Recommendation:

Identify opportunities to develop a college-wide shared understanding of the meaning, role and approach to Education, Lifelong Learning, Art & Design Education, and the formation of Educators. The ongoing dialogue should act as a catalyst in developing arts informed education insights, identifying synergies, increasing the degree of college cohesion and promoting cross fertilisation in and between Schools.

3.2.   Functions of the School of Education

In this section, the role and functions of the School of Education within the wider framework of NCAD, are discussed. This discussion draws on the work of the 2021 SAR and inputs from the School staff and colleagues across the college. The Review Panel was impressed by the vigorous discourse on the interconnection between education and art and design. This interplay is evidenced at many levels, the college itself is an educational institution and therefore education is the business of all faculty. In this context, the School of Education has a special significance as an expression of the pedagogy of art and design.

The SAR report (p10/11) indicates two broad domains of engagement as 'Teacher Education' and 'Continuing Education'. For future planning, it may be beneficial to add further granularity to the domains. The list below indicates four domains where the functions of the School of Education may operate, this is intended as conceptual framework of possibilities rather than reflecting the balance of current practice:

School-Based Education

- the formation of school teachers as art and design educators
- the professional development of school teachers in the areas of art and design education

- research, practice innovation, and access initiatives in the pedagogy of art and design

Further Education & Training

- the formation of further education teachers and tutors

- the professional development of FE educators in art, design and craft skills, and digital media

- research, practice innovation, and access initiatives in the further education sector

Higher Education

- teaching enhancement and universal design for learning within the context of art and design education (internal to NCAD)

- research and practice innovation in the area of art and design in higher education

- other domains (e.g. early years, primary school education, object-based learning, inquiry learning)

Community Education & Lifelong Learning

- the provision of adult and community education in art and design

- education of educators in the community, cultural and lifelong learning sector

- research, practice innovation, and lifelong learning initiatives within the community and lifelong learning sector

The common thread that connects the work of the School across these domains, is the unique quality and characteristics of the pedagogy of art and design. Whereas this was not always stated explicitly, it is a quality that was very much in evidence from the inputs from faculty (both SOE and other faculty colleagues), students, graduates and external stakeholders.

It was notable that much of the discussion on for example, the need to provide student teachers with sufficient studio time as well as time for school placement, was rightly positioned as a core pedagogical question. From the perspective of the RP, the underpinning values and practical expertise of the School in the pedagogy of art and design should not be underestimated. The sectoral framework above may be helpful in identifying the full scope of application, now and in the future, of the work of the School of Education.

The SAR (p34) indicates the current staffing levels of the School. The RP is impressed that so much can be achieved by so few. Add to this, the commendable adaptability (see pp 42-46)

shown in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and it is clearly the case that there is limited capacity for strategic development and new initiatives. The recommendations of this report and those outlined in the SAR are intended to make it possible for the School to continue to progress and build on its achievements to date.

It may not be necessary, or indeed practical, for the School to operate to a significant extent across all four of the domains indicated. The questions in the table below may provide useful starting points for future strategic decisions.

School-based Education	What is the long-term outlook for teacher demand and where will new teacher supply be required? To what extent should the School be involved in professional development programmes? What sources of future funding are anticipated for teacher professional development? What are the implications of digital transformation in education for ITE and professional development?
Further Education & Training	The Further Education & Training sector has undergone substantial changes in recent years in terms of SOLAS and ETB funding mechanisms, integration of Further and Higher Education in one government department. How is the Graduate Diploma in Further Education and Arts positioned to meet changing needs of the sector? Should the School consider itself as a provider of professional development programmes in the FE sector?
Higher Education	How will NCAD ensure the continued enhancement of teaching and learning across the college? Is this a role for the School of Education? How can the expertise of the School further contribute to the HE partner institutions?
Community Education and Lifelong Learning	How can the expertise of CEAD be leveraged by the College to further enhance the Lifelong Learning objective? How should CEAD be positioned within NCAD? How can NCAD part-time students be accommodated equitably?

3.3. Continuing Education in Art & Design

The RP agreed on the high importance of part time provision both for individual learners and to the Lifelong Learning function of NCAD. The provision of microcredentials as options for short term and part time courses opens up new opportunities for personal/career development and credit accumulation.

Conversation with the CEAD section highlighted some difficulties in its provision of service, primarily in accessing space. The RP noted that, by and large, CEAD worked with part-time staff across all Schools in the provision of part-time accredited and unaccredited fee-paying courses.

It is outside the scope of the current review to analyse all the processes in CEAD at a level that could allow the RP to make substantial recommendations, nonetheless the RP agreed that CEAD under its current structure, was best located within the School of Education. However the RP deliberated on a review of part time provision that would enhance its status by taking into account (a) the responsibility for lifelong learning across all Schools; (b) the responsibility of each School for accreditation for courses within its domain; (c) the relationship of part time staff with the appropriate schools; (d) Access and services available to part time staff; (e) Access and services available to part -time students; (f) an analysis of the range and number of students and teachers, lecturers, tutors involved; (j) recognition of the additional substantial burden of both professional engagement and administrative time in the provision of a part time service; (k) recognition of the value of the service in reaching out and fulfilling NCAD's social function. Such a review would complement the work of PATH 3, Part-time/Open Learning initiative, involving NCAD, together with UCD, TCD, IADT, MIE, RCSI and offer potential for areas for collaboration and development.

Recommendation:

The implementation of the Strategic Plan's Lifelong Learning work stream to enable the work of the Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design to be built on, further enhanced, and sustainably embedded in the College's educational offering, and capitalises on national policy/ initiatives.

3.4. Initial Teacher Education

Initial teacher education programmes are the main activities in this area. The current tracks are:

- BA (Joint Honours) in Design or Fine Art

- Professional Masters in Education (PME) in Art and Design

The BA programme has had a consistent intake of between 32 and 39 students in the last eight years. It leads to a Teaching Council recognised qualification to teach in post-primary schools. The two-year PME in Art and Design has had consistent intakes between 18 and 23 for the last eight years. Both programmes are regarded as highly successful by the students, school principals and employers who met with the panel. Of particular note is the BA first year SEN placement experience. This is a commendable feature of the programme.

The RP notes that more students opt for the 'Fine Art' track over the 'Design' track. A further challenge, mentioned also in the SAR, is the balance of studio-learning and teaching placement. As the SAR notes, and this was evidenced in feedback from some students, "(the) split across years three and four, combined with the onerous heavy workload in School Placement and Education Studies has impacted on the students undertaking the programme." (p58). The RP notes the challenge of designing a programme that meets the Teaching Council requirements and the artistic development requirements of the students. As it was put in one comment, 'the artist and the teacher identity' struggle to develop together. This scope of this report does not extend to specific recommendations on individual programmes, we note and commend the discussions on this point by the academic team and through the QA processes outlined in the SAR. The RP notes the comments from education and other school faculty that the BA is intended as an 'integrated' programme. It is designed as an integrated student experience rather than two parallel learning trajectories.

A point that was mentioned more than once, was the need for a common timetable across the college. The RP recommends that this be considered and implemented as it would greatly facilitate the delivery of the joint BA. The RP notes the comprehensive discussion in the SAR on the School response to Covid-19 restrictions. The section on 'which innovative practices should be retained' is particularly valuable.

The RP notes the four programmes in various stages of development:

- PME in Design, Engineering and Technology (subject to Teaching Council approval)
- The Graduate Diploma in Further Education and Arts (in (re)development)
- Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education in the Creative Disciplines
- Masters in Visual Art Education (under consideration)

These programmes will considerably enhance the scope of the current provision. It is commendable that the School of Education has a pipeline of teacher education programmes in development.

3.5. Teaching Enhancement within NCAD

The strategic focus of NCAD aspires to place 'Bold and Curious Learning' at its core and this in turn will be enabled by appropriate teaching strategies and well-designed learning spaces. The strategic plan identifies the development of an L&T Action plan as a priority and has established a working group to this end. The RP notes the specialist capability for art and design education that NCAD has developed over many decades. The School of Education

can make an important contribution to the overall enhancement of teaching and universal design for learning in NCAD. A point that should not be overlooked is that 'bold and curious learning' skills are highly valued across the higher education sector and pedagogic skills and capabilities in this area are much in demand.

3.6. Internationalisation

The RP noted the positive comments from external stakeholders and the international contributor, on the quality and high esteem with which NCAD graduates are regarded in Ireland and abroad. Many contributors noted the positive impact in schools and institutions of having an NCAD educator as a colleague. It is clear also, that graduates continue to identify as both artists and educators throughout their career. This is unsurprising, given the values of 'bold and curious learning' in which they have been formed. The School of Education is well-placed to build on its international reputation and to take advantage of European initiatives such as Erasmus Plus.

Progression Through Internationalisation

International collaboration may assist in the development of further pathways for student development and progression. Additional short programmes, micro-credentials and international placements would provide a wider range of options for students. In this way, the connection with the School can be sustained through the career and lifespan of the graduate.

3.7. Student diversity

NCAD's An Bord Strategy Update notes its commitment to student diversity (Strategy Update, presentation to An Bord 14.12.2021). The work of the School of Education is making a significant contribution to this objective. It is also influencing and informing national, sectoral policy and practice in the areas of access, diversity and widening participation in higher education. The SAR details the range of elements and initiatives in this regard (page 22/22): it notes the work of both the NCAD Access Officer, located in the School, and that of CEAD (page 17/18, and 36). School staff are active members of all three strands of the PATH initiative (HEA Programme for Access to HE). The RP was impressed with the range and quality of work to diversify the student population, in particular outreach and engagement, the Creative Arts Summer School, the Future Creators Programme, Digital Hub/H2 Learning - initiative, as well as the provision of flexible study pathways by CEAD.

This work provides a solid platform for further progress and offers opportunities on which to build and systemically embed access, diversity and widening participation, so that 'it permeates all faculties and departments, and is not marginalised as the responsibility of the

designated access office"[3] (HEA, 2015, p. 25). The incorporation of a Universal Design approach offers a methodology to achieve this and create an inclusive environment that will enhance the learning experience for all students. A Universal Design approach would enable inclusion to be considered as a collective responsibility, and move the focus from entry, admissions and pathways to study, to ensuring that all students experience and thrive in an inclusive education environment.

Recommendation:

The adoption of a Universal Design approach to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment environments, as well as buildings, systems and processes, meet the needs of a diverse student population: enabling these needs to be in-built and not considered as 'other'.

3.8. Research

Quality research fostering integrity[4] is vital to a flourishing Higher Education Institute. Quality research alongside its primary function of deepening understanding also strengthens the agency, autonomy and reputation of the institution and its individual researchers both in the academic world and in the wider community. For NCAD and the School of Education quality learning & teaching, education and arts-based research, while informing practice, also secures the presence of the college in the consciousness of the community and as a voice for the arts.

The School of Education is in a unique position to bring the richness of arts and design-based research techniques into education research generally. The research agenda ought to be bold and curious, maintaining the "ambition (is) to broaden the conceptions not only of the tools that can be used to represent the world but even more to redefine and especially to enlarge the conceptual umbrella that defines the meaning of research itself"[5]

The RP acknowledged the value of a multifaceted approach as stated in the NCAD website:

> Research in, through and about art and design at NCAD is oriented towards the real worlds of art and design practice – focused upon disciplinary excellence, relevance to contemporary art and design contexts, engagement with industry and diverse communities, and upon informing art, design and education policy.

Staff identified the vital need for an expanded research activity in the School. Reopening the attendance at conferences was regarded as an important step in that process and in line

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[3] HEA, 2015. National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, 2015-2019

[4] https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/researchintegrity/

[5] E. Eisner: https://www.psychiatria-danubina.com/UserDocsImages/pdf/dnb_vol30_noSuppl%207/dnb_vol30_noSuppl%207_541.pdf

with NCAD strategy to connect and be connected. However, there was also concern that the recent heavy workload arising from the period of growth in student numbers and the response to effects of Covid-19, compromises space for bold and curious thinking. That sentiment was echoed by the observation of the reduction in the number of active EU-funded initiatives during this period. A reversal of this trend post-Covid-19 should restore momentum.

Given the current workload, what are the realistic supports required to translate the individual reflection or innovative work of the school into systematic inquiry that is useful to all parties, including the college community, and that can be made public and open to analysis by peers nationally and globally? Aside from accessing funds from governmental bodies, the School of Education could strengthen its research capacity by broadening its participation in external evaluations or consultations. Subject to NCAD culture or policy on accessing funds from the private sector, further funding from private entities under corporate social responsibility (CSR) could be explored.

The RP acknowledges the significance of the work under the research dimension of the School of Education and was impressed both by the number pursuing PhDs and the level of qualification of the permanent staff. Equally impressive was the research Interests & outputs and the range of interest of individual staff of the School of Education, outlined in section 6.1 of the SAR report.

In Section 6.2 a number of suggestions related to staff and student support were made that would improve the research culture, eg, from the staff perspective, greater support from the School and College in developing their own research interests and additional PhD supervision and professional training and from the student perspective the development of or access to appropriate research methods module.

The RP also reviewed the research-themed recommendations in section 10 of the SAR report, and endorses these fully.

A renewed focus on arts and design in education and arts and design-based research is timely given its increased emphasis in current education reformation[6]. As part of Lifelong Learning processes, the School of Education could extend the culture for research through deeper professional links with alumni. From such a platform, the School of Education would provide even greater leadership in future education reforms.

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[6] https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/arts-based-research/book234540#preview

Recommendation:

Foster a self-sustaining research culture by developing a more robust college wide mutual support structure. Establish a small number of short- and medium-term objectives focused on (a) nurturing a sufficient critical level of researchers, (b) identifying areas for further collaboration and (c) quality internal and external communication of current research activities.

3.9. Organisation

The themes of organisation, structures, and facilities were identified in the SAR, and featured particularly during various conversations with School of Educations, as well as with the other NCAD Schools and College leadership. The College Strategy describes the ambition to be an *effective organisation*, characterised as *working together*, better campus facilities development, operational effectiveness and strength' (NCAD 2020-2024, Goal 3, page 10). This document offers the backdrop against which the Review Panel (RP) has framed its thinking and set out below recommendations for 6 priority areas - structure, blended learning, systems, career development, timetabling, and facilities.

3.10. Structure

A notable theme of this review was that of the organisational design and structure of the School. The SAR noted 'two defined traditions' (page 10), Initial Teacher Education and CEAD. The latter was described as 'Centre working across the College, and is a Department with the School' (page 17). The SAR observed an 'imbalance' in the School's organisational structure (page 92). These points were elaborated at various meetings and during the site visit. The RP formed the view that the School organisational structures warrant examination. The College Strategy's goal to be an 'effective organisation', offers the backdrop for such an examination. The organisational structure needs to be considered in the light of the role, vision and mission of the School, support the effective delivery of its portfolio of work, and capitalise on the commitment of staff, and College leaders.

Recommendation:

In the light of public sector resource constraints, review the School's vision and mission, and develop a five-year plan, which articulates the priority objectives, identifies consolidation potential, and examines the optimum organisational structure to ensure delivery.

3.11. Blended Learning

Covid-19 accelerated the need to offer blended learning approaches. It was clear to the RP that staff and students alike, worked hard to facilitate learning under these challenging

circumstances. The RP noted a consensus that blended approaches combining in-person and digital methods, offer benefits, flexibility, and opportunities, to a range of stakeholders, including, staff, students and placement sites, alike. At short notice, School staff put in place alternative learning strategies and support to maintain a sense of belonging, at a time when students were experiencing disconnectedness, distance, and detachment. Virtual delivery and learning formed part of the new contingencies. The crisis and disruption caused by the pandemic necessitated 'outside the box' thinking: it brought many challenges, but it also offered opportunities. Discussions with all stakeholders offered evidence of the School's creative and pragmatic response to the provision of education during this time. Notwithstanding, the SAR SWOT (page 95) analysis identified a need for technology-related investment.

From an inclusion perspective, Covid-19 brought renewed focus on teaching and learning. It also served to remind us that there is no 'one-size-fits-all solution', and as such reinforced the importance of a universal designed inclusive learning experience that enables equitable participation for all students. During the site visit, panel members observed classes where students had the opportunity to participate equitably, facilitated through in-person and virtually attendance. The SAR also identified the need to develop blended models of learning, and flexible study pathways (page 94). The Board Strategy Update, 14 December 2021 noted CANVAS pilot (Virtual Learning Environment VLE), and anticipated a cross-college roll-out by September 2022. The learning and experience offered through this pilot, coupled with that gained during the pandemic, offer the context to continue to optimise a blended learning approach.

Recommendation:

Develop an optimum blended learning approach, informed by the experience and evaluation of current VLE pilot.

3.12. Systems to support School administration, student supports and profiling

A range of student and staff supports are noted in the SAR. A range of student supports, including learning, financial, assistive technology, counselling, careers, and library are offered (page 88). The College installed a Student Record System (SRS), which offered a system to administer all programme (credit and non-credit) applications, registration, fee payment and examination results. The outstanding GDPR issues to enable academic staff to administer assessment processes are currently being addressed. During discussions with staff, the progress made in this respect was welcomed and there was a consensus that further enhancement of these systems could offer additional efficiencies. Particularly,

noted were the workloads being undertaken by Schools staff, further enhancement of these systems could offer additional efficiencies and help free up time for research activity.

Mechanisms that gather student feedback to enhance the learning experience are also outlined in the SAR (pages 62, 82, 86), including twice-yearly student forum, and an-end-of-year surveys. This activity is a key educational component and reflects the role of the student voice in the School, and more widely in the College structures and processes. Conversations with staff revealed the diversity of student backgrounds, while the SAR offered data on student intake and graduation numbers (page 12). The automation of student data processes would be of benefit in reducing manual processing, and importantly, it also would more easily identify and track patterns, in profiles, admissions, participation, progression and graduation.

Recommendation:

Consider the further enhancement of systems to support School administration, student support and student profiling, to inform planning, decision making and academic progress.

3.13. Career Development

During examination of the SAR and the various meetings held, issues relating to staff development were identified as a priority. Evidence was offered of members of the School staff undertaking a range of opportunities, including doctoral level study, pedagogy and technology-related training, and CPD (SAR page 37). Institutionally, staff development has been identified as needing attention: The Institutional Review Report (23 May 2017), recommended that *NCAD needs to put in place more effective systems for staff support and development*. The NCAD Strategic Plan, 2020-2024, FUTURES, BOLD & CURIOUS (page 10), references fostering staff development and training. The Strategy Update, presentation to An Bord 14.12.2021, noted that a temporary HR resource had been appointed to externally benchmark models for academic career progression and development, with a view to informing a college plan in this regard.

In discussions with School staff, a range of career development issues were made including, the need for a coherent, co-ordinated approach to staff development, recording and tracking participation, and aligning staff development with career progression. Staff also placed emphasis on CPD and suggested that it be 'reignited', in addition to the need for a formal Induction training for all School staff. The RP was impressed by the individual commitment of School staff, and by the institutional approach, but also sensed frustration at the pace of developments in this regard, however.

Recommendation:

Develop a coherent co-ordinated approach to staff development for all academic and administrative staff within the School, which is aligned to the institution's approach.

3.14. Timetabling

The RP noted the comments made about the timetabling structure which included the use of two different units/blocks of time (1.5 hrs and 2.0) in different courses. The use of these two different large blocks of time created a clunkiness in the amount of overlap in time and reduced dovetailing and the smooth transition between courses. The resulting timetabling process was perceived to reduce student choice, options and access to resources. While acknowledging the complexities of timetabling in reconciling multiple demands, a review of the basic unit/block of time may lead in some way to addressing the needs of students and increase the efficient use of resources. Such a review would take into account any relevant outcome of the recommendation in the Education section above, An NCAD-wide approach to timetabling could also contribute further to college cohesion, ownership and buy-in.

Recommendation:

Develop a College-wide agreed approach to timetabling, which takes account to the needs, opportunities, and constraints of all Schools, in order to facilitate easier planning of staff time and student workloads.

3.15. Accommodation & Facilities

Accommodation and facilities were a theme of both the SAR and conversations with School and College staff. There is acknowledgement of the Campus Development Plan (NCAD Design Framework presentation to An Bord 14.12.2021), and its potential to offer improved settings and environment. There also was frustration evident with the current accommodation, facilities and space available to the School. Housed on the second floor of the Design Building, the School comprises four classrooms, a tutorial room, and a meeting room/lunch space etc (Page 37). The classrooms are used by the Teacher Education programmes during the day and are used by part-time students in the evening. CEAD, while part of the School, does not have a dedicated space for staff or students, instead, it relies on booking accommodation throughout the College, where available (page 38). Access to storage facilities for part-time students was a particular challenge.

The SAR SWOT (page 95) analysis identified space as a threat for the School. The growth in student numbers (both full- and part-time) adds urgency, and this issue has the potential to hamper further growth and development. Enhancement of campus facilities requires a significant capital investment, requiring continued advocacy and persuasion.

Recommendation:

Enhance the School's facilities, in line with the Campus Development Plan (NCAD Design Framework presentation to An Bord 14.12.2021)

4. Conclusion

The Review Panel wishes to express its gratitude to the School of Education, College personnel, students and external stakeholders, who facilitated this Quality Review. During the course of this exercise, the Panel was supplied with a significant amount of information. Contributors generously gave of their time and shared their experience and insights.

The Panel's overarching assessment is that the School is passionate about education in art and design. The commitment and energy of staff is a significant feature, as is the positive regard conveyed by current students and alumni, and educational, cultural and community stakeholders. The panel adopted a 'critical friend' approach to this review: in this context therefore, makes a series of impressions and observations, alongside commendations and recommendations. It is intended that these will offer a platform for further enhancement.

The School has much to be proud of: the world of art and design is better for its presence.

Appendix 1 – Response from the School of Education, National College of Art and Design (NCAD) to the Review Panel Report

The exercise of writing the Self-Assessment Report for the Quality Review process for the School of Education at the National College of Art and Design was a worthwhile and rewarding experience. It offered the School of Education the opportunity to reflect and review our position within the National College of Art and Design and within the Art in Education sector more generally. The exercise allowed us to review our priorities, highlight our strengths and identify our weaknesses and set out a plan for the next five years. This robust evaluation of the work of the School of Education comes at an opportune time. The Teaching Council is undertaking an accreditation review of Initial Teacher Education programmes across the state from 2022-2024. The School of Education Accreditation Review is due in the second quarter of 2023. The Review Panel's recommendations will also be important in the context of the development of the Further Education Sector and the College's commitment to life-long and flexible learning. We are very pleased with the strong endorsement and positive commendations of the Review Panel in respect of the work of the School of Education and welcome their careful consideration of the needs of the School as we move into the next phase of developing the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

There was a significant contribution made to the Quality Review process from staff and students within the School of Education and from staff across the NCAD. In particular we wish to acknowledge the engagement with the QA process from our external stakeholders: our linked primary and secondary schools, local community groups and the cultural institutions that we work with. The School of Education wishes to thank the Review Panel for their time, expertise and constructive comments, both during the visit and for their thoughtful and positive report. The time and careful attention given to the whole process was greatly appreciated.

We will seek to address the recommendations in the Review Panel Report through the Quality Improvement Plan, some of which are already underway in the context of the NCAD Strategic Plan. These include engaging in a college wide conversation about the strategic importance of the role and importance of Education and Life Long Learning as part of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The engagement with optimum blended learning approaches to enable flexible learning pathways across the School of Education and in the NCAD more generally. Finally, we will seek to create a greater alignment of the work across Schools, better communication and integration of the work of the School of Education within Schools to develop a shared understanding of the college strategy 'working together better'.

With specific reference to the prioritised recommendations identified by the Review Panel, the School's initial proposals/comments are outlined below.

Recommendation 3:1
Identify opportunities to develop a college-wide shared understanding of the meaning, role and approach to Education, Lifelong Learning, Art & Design Education, and the formation of Educators. The ongoing dialogue should act as a catalyst in developing arts informed education insights, identifying synergies, increasing the degree of college cohesion and promoting cross fertilisation in and between Schools.

Proposal/Comment
The School of Education recognises the importance of developing a shared College-wide understanding of art education to ensure that we deliver on our ambitions for life-long learning and developing flexible pathways for learning as articulated in the NCAD strategy. We also appreciate and value the recommendation that this dialogue on art and design education should act as a catalyst to increase College cohesion through cross fertilisation between Schools. The Joint Programmes Committee is a shared platform including all Schools and Departments established to review our Joint Programmes, especially those in the School of Education – we have a fruitful platform here to consider cross-fertilisation issues affecting all joint programmes. The Teaching and Learning Strategic Project, one of a number of projects through which the College Strategy is being delivered, will also give careful consideration to how best to address this recommendation within and beyond the parameters of our Working Together Better strategic project as we develop our QIP.

Recommendation 3:3:
The implementation of the Strategic Plan's Lifelong Learning work stream to enable the work of the Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design to be built on, further enhanced, and sustainably embedded in the College's educational offering, and capitalises on national policy/ initiatives.

Proposal/Comment
The School of Education and the College shares the view of the panel that the Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design needs to be built on, further enhanced, and sustainably embedded in the College's educational offering, thus capitalising on national policy/ initiatives. The implementation of the next phase of NCADs Strategic Plan to *Connect and be Connected*, will focus on building a range of flexible routes to learning, drawing on the work and knowledge of the Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design (CEAD). This will build on the important base of the part time student body which already exists in CEAD. Other initiatives that will support the enhancement of Lifelong Learning provision within the College include the introduction of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas, across all NCAD programmes (including those offered through CEAD). The School of Education recognises the importance of a unit review of the Centre for Continuing Education. This will be built into the QA periodic review schedule.

Recommendation 3.7
The adoption of a Universal Design approach to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment environments, as well as buildings, systems and processes, meet the needs of a diverse student population: enabling these needs to be in-built and not considered as 'other'.

Proposal/Comment

NCAD Access and the School of Education are pleased to note that the commitment to student diversity is acknowledged by the Review Panel especially through staff's active participation in NCADs Access and outreach programme, PATH 1,2,3 and CEAD. We also note the panel's endorsement of the influence NCAD Access has on the development of national policy and practice in terms of its innovative approaches to widening diversity in Higher Education. We look forward to the adoption of a Universal Design approach through the NCAD Strategic Projects to meet the needs of a diverse student population across the whole college, as well as careful consideration of a Universal Design approach within the campus development plan.

Recommendation 3:8
Develop a more robust whole of college research support structure enabled by a small number of agreed short- and medium-term goals focused on developing a sufficient critical mass of active researchers to nurture a self-sustaining research culture.

Proposal/Comment

The School of Education welcomes the acknowledgment that the School has achieved significant work in the field of research through a wide range of EU research projects and outputs both on an individual basis and as a staff group in growing the PhD staff and student numbers. We welcome the recommendation that a College research support structure is needed, especially as the increased student numbers in SoE has impacted on staff workload in recent years and on staff ability to engage in more ambitious research. Developing a Vibrant Research Culture is one of the five strategic projects currently underway as part of the College Strategic Plan to support and strengthen our research culture. The School of Education is represented on this project team and looks forward to a coherent staged approach to building research capacity within art and design education. We recognise that a small number of agreed short and medium-term goals focused on developing a sufficient critical mass of active researchers will help nurture a self-sustaining research culture within the School of Education and across the College.

Recommendation 3:10 Organisation
In the light of public sector resource constraints, review the School's vision and mission, and develop a five-year plan, which articulates the priority objectives, identifies consolidation potential, and examines the optimum organisational structure to ensure delivery.

Proposal/Comment

The School of Education recognises that the vision and mission of the School and College *Futures Bold and Curious* for the next five years must be considered in light of public sector restraints. The School of Education will align itself with the overall College Strategy of working together better and connecting NCAD to the world beyond the campus. The five-year plan will include examination of the organisational structure of the School in light of the twin roles of Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Education and Life Long Learning. The work of the School will identify priorities and focus its ambitions in Teaching and Learning through Art and Design, building on Access and Inclusion, diversifying the student body, developing flexible pathways to learning, and contributing to a strong cross college research culture. It will ensure optimum delivery of its ambitions within the College strategic plan.

Recommendation: 3:11
Develop an optimum blended learning approach, informed by the experience and evaluation of current VLE pilot.

Proposal/Comment

The School of Education is currently part of the rolling out of the VLE Pilot and we will utilise the platform to optimise the opportunities for blended learning. The blended learning approach will be especially important in the development of flexible pathways to learning, this will take place within the timelines set out by the College Strategy.

Recommendation: 3:12
Consider the further enhancement of systems to support School administration, student support and student profiling, to inform planning, decision making and academic progress.

Proposal/Comment

Enhancement of systems to support School Administration is being reviewed as part of the Working Together Better Strategic Project. The School of Education looks forward to enhancement of the use of Quercus, VLE and relevant software currently being considered by the Teaching Council to streamline School Placement. The use of Google Drive has been very helpful in the coordination of information for School Placement.

Recommendation: 3:13
Develop a coherent co-ordinated approach to staff development for all academic and administrative staff within the School, which is aligned to the institution's approach.

Proposal/Comment
The School of Education welcomes and agrees that a coordinated approach to staff development is necessary and timely. Staff in the School are interested in opportunities for engagement in continuing professional development. The staff in SoE are also well placed and ready to contribute to this process as and when the institution CPD and CFA programmes are piloted in 2022 and beyond. CPD in particular is an area of expertise within the School of Education. We look forward to the renewal of the CPD for art teachers which ran very successfully for many years until the external funding stopped. We would welcome CPD for art teachers, who are a group of professional alumnae to be considered within the College CPD strategy under 'Connect and Be Connected'

Recommendation: 3:14
Develop a College-wide agreed approach to timetabling, which takes account to the needs, opportunities, and constraints of all Schools, in order to facilitate easier planning of staff time and student workloads.

Proposal / Comment
The need for a College wide approach to timetabling is recognised and has been called for by many students and staff in the School of Education. Especially the BA Joint Hons in Education and Design or Fine Art, which is particularly affected as it spans all schools and departments. This recommendation is welcomed by the Joint Programmes Committee and the sharing of timetables in September meeting of the JPC is a first step towards enabling a cross college approach to timetabling for this group of students.

Recommendation: 3:15
Enhance the School's facilities, in line with the Campus Development Plan (NCAD Design Framework presentation to An Bord 14.12.2021)

Proposal / Comment
The School of Education welcomes this recommendation and acknowledges that the first part of this enhancement has started with a refurb of the rooms on the Education floor.

Within three months of receiving the Review Panel Report, the institution will prepare the QIP outlining how it proposes to implement the Review Panel Report recommendations. The QIP will be agreed within the institution and signed-off by the Chair of the Review Panel and the UCD Director of Quality. The QIP will be considered by the UCD Academic Council

Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC) and then published alongside the Review Panel Report.

Professor Dervil Jordan
Head of School of Education

13 May 2022