

Visual Communication Quality Improvement Plan - November 2007

1. Department Philosophy - aims and objectives

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report	Department Action to recommendation	Faculty Action to recommendation	Responsibility	Time-frame / Status (From - to)	Issues for Decision by An Bord (if applicable) / Management Response
<p>1.1. The PRG encourages the department to place the Mission Statement in the context of educating professional graphic designers who will be “innovators not imitators”.</p>	<p>The department understands that the objective here is to: formally match the intention of the mission statement to the content of the programme and to the means by which that content is delivered, communicated and assessed.</p>				
	<p>An Academic Development Team¹ has been established to carry out all tasks and actions related to the re-framing of the degree programme.</p>		All academic staff	October 25 th 2007	
	<p>This task will begin with the re-writing of programme learning outcomes, year learning outcomes and module learning outcomes. The sequence of actions to be taken are as follows:</p>		M. Lonergan responsible for writing tasks.	November 2007 to June 2008.	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. David Caron will make a presentation to staff on Learning Outcomes. 2. Margaret Lonergan will make a presentation to staff on Learning Journals and other key Teaching and Learning methodologies. Staff will complete Learning Styles questionnaire and discuss results in context of teaching styles. 3. The Academic Development Team will meet to produce Draft 1 of new Programme Learning Outcomes for the BDes. 	Head of Faculty to attend these presentations.	M. Lonergan David Caron	November 12 th 2007 2 - 5pm	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The Academic Development Team will meet with selected individuals from the 		M. Lonergan Academic Development	November 19 th		

¹ The members of the Academic Development Team are: Margaret Lonergan, David Caron, Brendon Deacy, Ed McGinley, Pat Mooney.
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	<p>design industry to introduce Draft 1 of new Programme Learning Outcomes and to work on a second draft which will take cognisance of feedback from industry.</p> <p>5. The Academic Development Team will meet to produce Draft 2 of new Programme Learning Outcomes for the BDes.</p> <p>6. The ADT will meet with Alan Davies to work on the final draft of Programme learning outcomes and to seek advice on how to extrapolate these towards year learning outcomes and module learning outcomes as well as looking at assessment and constructive alignment.</p> <p>7. The ADT will finalise Programme Learning Outcomes, Year Learning Outcomes and Module Learning Outcomes.</p> <p>8. David Caron is undertaking research (funded under NUI Teaching and Learning Initiatives) into assessment and marking in the modular system.</p> <p>9. The ADT will base its new modular assessment system on David Caron's research. New forms will be compiled and designed and these will be constructively aligned with learning outcomes at all levels.</p> <p>NOTE: Once all of the tasks outlined in Sections 1.1 to 2.7 have been completed, a new Course Document will be compiled and submitted to Academic Council.</p>	<p>Head of Faculty to attend</p>	<p>Team + selected panel from the design industry.</p> <p>Academic Development Team</p> <p>Academic Development Team</p> <p>David Caron</p> <p>M. Loneragan Academic Development Team</p> <p>M. Loneragan</p>	<p>2007</p> <p>November 26th 2007 Draft 2 completed by December 9th 2007</p> <p>10th/11th December 2007</p> <p>8th - 16th January 2008 16th - 26th January 2008</p> <p>Current.</p> <p>February/March 2008 for implementation from October 2009</p> <p>September 2008</p>	
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<p>1.2. The department needs to constantly refresh the professional vision and feed it back into the educational programme. An important part of this task is to build on the shared philosophical vision that exists to implement a shared approach to teaching and learning.</p>	<p>The department will initiate an Annual Development Meeting dedicated to the task of continually reviewing our shared philosophical and professional vision and to ensuring that this vision is directly, formally and communicably expressed in our educational programmes. This meeting will address the task under the following headings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of the past year in relation to programme learning outcomes and department philosophy. 2. Course direction and curriculum in relation to: philosophical and educational vision; student feedback; feedback from industry. 3. Teaching and learning 4. Research 5. Professional and staff development 		Academic Development Team	June 9 th 2008 (annually thereafter)	
<p>1.3. The department philosophy needs to state its design principles more clearly and clarify the learning outcomes within this philosophy. The curriculum needs to reflect the emphasis on design education and its relationship to IT as a complementary tool reinforcing the distinction between the “message” and the “media” aspects noted in the department’s definition of the discipline.</p>	<p>This aspect of the course philosophy will be clarified after the Learning Outcomes for the programme, years and modules have been completed.</p> <p>The department has undertaken major changes in its IT policy and is re-visioning the day-to-day use of technology on the degree programme (see Section 5.2).</p> <p>Modes of teaching and learning in relation to technology will be defined and positioned within course modules as part of the re-writing of Programme and Year Learning Outcomes (see Section 1.1).</p> <p>The position of technology in relation to the department’s educational and philosophical vision will be reviewed annually (see Section 1.2).</p> <p>The role of technology in design education will be regularly reviewed with consultative partners in industry (see Section 2.6)</p>		<p>Academic Development Team</p> <p>Pat Mooney M. Lonergan Ed McGinley</p> <p>Academic Development Team</p> <p>Academic Development Team</p>	<p>February 2008</p> <p>Current and ongoing</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>June 2008 and annually thereafter.</p>	

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<p>1.4. The PRG suggests that the department should review its aims and put more focus on the student/learner.</p>	<p>Aims will be formally reviewed and analysed after the Learning Outcomes Exercise has been completed and will be re-written on a programme level, a year level and a module level with focus and emphasis on the student/learner's experience.</p> <p>The department has introduced learning journals in Year 2 and these will continue across the programme from 2008. The aim is to place very strong emphasis on the student/learner's experience and understanding of their own learning styles and progress as they move through the programme. It is intended that academic staff will gain insight into student learning experience through interaction with their learning journals and that this will inform and feed back into ongoing reviews of teaching and learning methodologies.</p> <p>The department has introduced exercises in learning styles with students to make this more explicit and to gain mutual understanding of the dynamic between learners, teachers, course content and learning outcomes.</p>		<p>Academic Development Team</p> <p>M. Lonergan</p> <p>M. Lonergan</p>	<p>March and April 2008 for implementation from October 2009</p> <p>October 2007 and ongoing</p> <p>October 2007 and ongoing</p>	

2. Curriculum/Learning/Teaching/Assessment - The Degree programme

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<p>2.1. There is a need for a broad and flexible curriculum framework within the Faculty of Design, within which the curriculum framework for Visual Communication will fit clearly.</p>	<p>The department supports the introduction of a broad and flexible curriculum framework within the Faculty. The department recognises the commonalities between the design disciplines. The department supports mobility modules as a possible means of exploring these commonalities. The department hopes that its own work outlined in Points 1.1 to 1.4 and in Section 2 and 3 may contribute to the development of such a framework. Research undertaken by members of the department into modular structures and assessment has already and should continue to contribute to developments in this area.</p>	<p>Faculty Forum: Possible establishment of Faculty Working Group to examine flexible curriculum frameworks. Faculty QA Review and QuIP.</p>	<p>Head of Faculty. Heads of Design Departments</p>	<p>Faculty of Design QA Review commences in 2009</p>	
<p>2.2. In order to address the current mismatch between the philosophy and the curriculum in Visual Communication a number of steps are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively engage with industry/employers on an annual basis to assess the needs of graduates entering the profession and develop programme learning outcomes related clearly to these needs. The needs include: - Skills - Knowledge - Attitudes - Competences <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solving - Communication with peers, supervisors and clients - Managing their own practice - Understanding the integrated nature of the relationship between creative thinking and professional processes. 	<p>The department will establish an Industrial Partners Consultative Committee (IPCC). A formal invitation will be issued to 5 key designers in industry to become members of the IPCC. These individuals will be drawn from the 12 partner companies who are working with us currently on student placements. The committee will meet once per term to address the dynamic between the department philosophy, the programme learning outcomes, the curriculum and the needs of an ever-evolving industry and set of practices. Meetings will be structured according to the items listed by the PRG and will take account of the National Qualifications Framework criteria as outlined in the PRG's recommendation.</p>		<p>Margaret Lonergan and David Caron</p>	<p>Commencing December 2007</p>	

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<p>2.3. The Curriculum framework and structure should be designed to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes. It is recommended that the department should take a holistic and team-based approach to designing and planning the curriculum including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning outcomes - teaching & learning methodologies, - materials and resources including staffing - assessment - achieve a balance between process assessment and product assessment. 	<p>During the QIP process, the department has established a committed Academic Development Team which will work together on researching and implementing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning outcomes 2. Teaching and Learning Methodologies 3. Materials, Resources, Staffing 4. Assessment <p>Help and guidance will be sought from Nuala Hunt in establishing approaches to these issues.</p> <p>Expert support for the team may be sought in the early stages. Alan Davies is one such expert who we would wish to work with on this.</p>		<p><i>1.L.O.s:</i> DC and ML with ADT</p> <p><i>2.T&L Meths:</i> ML with ADT</p> <p><i>3. Materials, Resources, Staffing:</i> ML</p> <p><i>4. Assessment</i> DC & ML with ADT</p>	<p>November 2007 to April 2008 (see details in Sections 1.1)</p> <p>These issues will also be addressed annually at the Development Meeting.</p>	
<p>2.4. The Department should give active consideration to the best solutions for teaching and learning. It is suggested that an effective approach is to harness the expertise of the relevant staff to write and teach appropriate modules (based on learning outcomes) across all years of the programme. IT skills should be included only as required to achieve learning outcomes as expressed in the course philosophy.</p>	<p>The department concurs with the approach recommended by the PRG. The plans outlined in Section 1.1., 1.2, 1.4, 2.1 and 2.3 are based on this approach and will directly address and resolve the issues raised here.</p>		<p>See Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1 and 2.3.</p>	<p>See Section 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1 and 2.3.</p>	

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<p>2.5. The PRG strongly recommends that the Department reconsider the role of the year tutor. One aspect of current practice that could be maintained is for a tutor to have a mentoring role for a whole year group of students. However it is recommended that the course be structured in modules based on learning outcomes. These modules should be taught in all years by the staff members who are subject specialists. It is also recommended that the Department look into the possibilities of teaching combined year groups where appropriate within the modular curriculum framework.</p>	<p>The department has decided to replace the Year Tutor system with a Year Coordinator/Mentor system. Teaching roles and responsibilities will be linked to Modules and their distinct learning outcomes, content and skills.</p> <p>Staff already teach across years to some extent according to their specialisms. This will be developed in relation to modules and levels of learning in individual subject areas in different years.</p> <p>The Head of Department will teach across all years in partnership with staff members leading modules.</p> <p>The new EPL staff member is currently teaching across all years in relation to modules and their content. This approach will be evaluated and modified if required in June 2008.</p> <p>The Head of Department will run the Learning Journal module across all years.</p> <p>Studio-based visiting lecturers will be referred to as visiting tutors and it will be made clearer to students that they have this tutorial role.</p> <p>Year groups are brought together for lectures from visiting tutors and for certain technical workshops. There are no plans to combine year groups for studio-based modules because learning outcomes and levels increase and deepen incrementally across the years.</p>		<p>Head of department.</p> <p>Academic Development Team</p>	<p>Commencing in the academic year 2008/09 based on Quality Improvement developments and preparations made in 2007/08 as outlined in other sections.</p>	

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<p>2.7. Another positive development would be to establish a formal and sustainable networking framework between College staff & industry. For industry, the benefits would include access to leading edge research & design. For the College, it would mean instant and constant conversation with industry. Such a collaborative framework could also provide opportunities for staff exchanges between the college and industry, which would provide excellent opportunities for continuing professional development of staff.</p>	<p>The department will establish a Industrial Partners Consultative Committee (IPCC) [See Point 2.2]</p> <p>This committee will assist the department in addressing issues of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum and course development • Placements and internships • Collaborative projects • Joint research initiatives • Developments in industry • Jointly run conferences/symposia 		<p>Margaret Lonergan and David Caron</p>	<p>Commencing December 2007</p>	

3. Curriculum/Learning/Teaching/Assessment - Postgraduate Development

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<p>3.1. The PRG considers that there is a need for a college-wide strategic development and implementation plan to support the aspirations of individual faculties/departments in the postgraduate area. It is recommended that there should be a plan to build the readiness and capability of the Visual Communication Department in this context.</p>	<p>The College has in place a comprehensive policy document and a strategic plan for research and postgraduate development. The College has a Postgraduate Research Committee of which the Head of Vis Comm. is a member. Department research initiatives are supported in the strategic plan and through the Research Committee. The Faculty of Design has a sub-committee working on postgraduate, interdisciplinary developments. The Head of Vis Comm. is a member of this committee.</p> <p>The department has written a proposal for the development of a National Book Arts Research Centre and NCAD Press to be sited in the School of Design and to be linked to national partners. This document has been submitted to the Head of Faculty and will go forward to the Postgraduate Research Committee.</p> <p>The department also has worked on a proposal for a taught MA in Graphic Narrative which has been on hold pending developments at Faculty and College level.</p> <p>The department has listed in its own Self-Assessment Report those research areas that it wishes to promote within the discipline of Visual Communication. Those which correspond to the research strands outlined in the College strategy will be brought forward to the Postgraduate Research Committee.</p>	<p>The Faculty Research Committee will collate common research areas within the design faculty.</p> <p>Faculty to consider feasibility/desirability and potential of this initiative.</p> <p>The Faculty Research Committee can consider and explore this initiative further.</p> <p>The Faculty Research Committee can consider this in the wider context of Faculty-wide research and postgraduate developments.</p> <p>College Postgraduate Research Committee and Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee to consider.</p>	<p>Faculty Research Committee. Head of Department.</p> <p>Head of Department. Sean Sills.</p> <p>Head of Department as member of Research Committees.</p> <p>Head of Department as member of Postgraduate Research Committees</p>	<p>Commencing November 2007</p> <p>Current</p> <p>On hold.</p> <p>Current</p>	<p>College to consider feasibility/desirability and potential of this initiative.</p>

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3.2. The PRG supports the proposal to initiate a faculty-wide taught Masters as a very good development for the future, and suggests that the faculty should reconsider its decision not to proceed with it. The common elements of the programme could include research methods/contemporary issues/design elements with specialisation in one area of design taking place in the “thesis” element or project element.	The department supports this proposal and has worked closely with Faculty on research initiatives into the development of such a Masters which were launched and facilitated by the Head of Faculty.	Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee to consider	Head of Department as member of Postgraduate Research Committees	Current	

4. Staffing & Staff Development

Recommendation in Peer Review Group Report	Department Action to recommendation	Faculty Action to recommendation	Responsibility	Time-frame / Status (From - to)	Issues for Decision by An Bord (if applicable) / Management Response
<p>4.1. The PRG recommends that the allocation of staff teaching and other duties be re-examined and restructured as necessary to align with the restructured curriculum. The restructuring of the curriculum should be viewed as an opportunity to balance the amount of time that staff spends on teaching/mentoring, research and professional development.</p>	<p>The department concurs with this recommendation and will create the foundations for the fulfilment of this task as part of the work outlined in the sequence of developments described in Sections 1.1., 1.2, 1.4, 2.1 and 2.3. A restructured curriculum will result from these developments which will automatically lead to a restructuring of staff duties.</p> <p>Staff will work to adopt more time- effective teaching and learning methodologies at undergraduate level in order to create space for research activities and professional development.</p> <p>The department will clearly identify contact hours and student learning hours when writing module descriptions and this will be communicated to students. (Currently, staff are available to students all hours of every day on an open-door policy basis. While staff have always supported this freedom of contact, it makes it impossible to structure and balance time and commitments as recommended by the PRG report.)</p> <p>The department has already identified every Thursday as a research and postgraduate day and will carry this through into the detail of module descriptions and the timetable in general.</p>		<p>Head of Department. Academic Development Team.</p> <p>Head of Department. Academic Development Team.</p> <p>Head of Department. Academic Development Team.</p>	<p>November 2007 to June 2008</p> <p>Continuing in academic year 08/09 after evaluation, review and student feedback.</p> <p>Research and planning for this: November 2007 to June 2008</p> <p>Implementation in 08/09 and continuation in 09/10 after evaluation, review and student feedback.</p> <p>Research and planning for this: November 2007 to June 2008</p> <p>Implementation in 08/09 and continuation in 09/10 after evaluation, review and student feedback.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Full implementation starting October 2008.</p>	

	<p>In the Student Handbook, the department will communicate the full range of its work more clearly to undergraduate students so that the contact hours allocated to them can be placed in the wider context of all educational and research activities that take place.</p> <p>The department will seek to support staff research and professional development initiatives by releasing lecturers from teaching duties through staff development funds and through sponsorship initiatives.</p>	In consultation with Head of Faculty	<p>Head of Department. Academic Development Team.</p> <p>Head of Department. Academic Development Team.</p> <p>Head of Department.</p>	<p>Implementation in October 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
4.2. If there are professional development needs arising from change, they should be clearly identified and a plan made by the Faculty to meet these needs within the near future e.g. writing learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, team-working and sharing good practice among staff.	The department will identify these needs while undertaking the change-management tasks of re-writing the programme and restructuring staff roles (as outlined in previous sections) and will submit two detailed reports to Faculty outlining professional development needs as they become clear: once in January 2008 and again in April 2008.	In consultation with Head of Faculty	Head of Department with Academic Development Team	January 2008 and April 2008	
4.3. The Department should adopt a strategic approach to filling any future posts in line with the new curriculum structure and content e.g. recruiting specialist expertise in digital media, software training.	The department adopted a strategic approach to filling the recently vacated EPL post. It sought a candidate with a broad base of knowledge in Visual Communication and with specific skills in digital technology. The department will continue to identify teaching needs arising from the new curriculum and will apply the same strategic approach to filling any future posts.		Head of Department	Ongoing	

	<p>3. Purchase media (paper and inks) for sale to students at a competitive cost.</p> <p>The department will install two digital screens in the lobby areas at either end of the studio. These screens will display student work on an ongoing basis. It will be possible to move these screens to the ground floor for Open Day and other events.</p>		Pat Mooney		
<p>5.3. It is recommended that the department consider allocating one room as a “programme team room” to facilitate department planning and provide a collaborative workspace for curriculum development.</p>	<p>The department has drawn up plans to convert the existing computer room into two smaller rooms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Programme Team Room 2. A small tutorial room with shared office facilities <p>The purpose of the Programme Team Room will be as outlined by the PRG. It will have a meeting table and chairs and will hold a shared library of the department’s design books (currently in individual offices) and the magazines to which it subscribes.</p> <p>The second room will be used as a small group tutorial space and as a shared office facility. It will have a desk, chairs, a phone line, internet connection etc.</p>		<p>Brendon Deacy M Lonergan Fiona Hodge With Maintenance</p> <p>Plans: Drawings have already been made by Brendon Deacy.</p> <p>Costing: November 2007</p> <p>Implementation: From January 2008</p>		Costs to be submitted under Quality Improvement
<p>5.4. The PRG recommends that adequate resources be made available to the Department to implement the Quality Improvement Plan that the Department will formulate based on the recommendations of this QA review.</p>	<p>The department will submit costing for the implementation of the development plan. These will be itemised under three headings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic development work 2. Infrastructural changes to room layout plus cost of fixtures and fittings. 3. Professional development needs arising from changes to academic programme 		<p>M Lonergan Academic Development Team F Hodge S Sills</p>	November 2007	Costs to be submitted under Quality Improvement