



A meeting of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) was held on 08 November 2023 at 10.00am on Zoom.

Present: Professor Neville Cox, Registrar (*Chair*)
Professor David Shepherd, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies
Ms. Róisín Smith, Quality Officer
Professor Damian Murchan, Head of School of Creative Arts
Professor Carmel O Sullivan, Head of School of Education
Professor Susan McCormick, Second Representative from the School of Education
Professor Deborah Kelleher, RIAM Director
Professor Lynsey Callaghan, Research Representative & Chair of Doctoral Committee, RIAM
Professor Kathleen Tynan, Chair of Postgraduate Committee, RIAM
Professor David Collins, RIAM Chair of Undergraduate

Apologies: Professor Richard Duckworth, Second Representative from the School of Creative Arts
Mr. Pádraig Rynn, Administrative Officer, Registry, RIAM

In attendance: Dr Michael Cleary-Gaffney, Academic Affairs; Dr Liz Donnellan, Academic Affairs; Dr Orla Flanagan, School of Creative Arts; Mr Conn McCluskey, School of Education Manager; Ms Jo McNamara, School of Creative Arts Manager.

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/01

Committee Membership for 2023/24

The Chair noted the membership of the committee would include Ms Jo Mc Namara, School Manager, Creative Arts; Prof. Richard Duckworth, 2nd School of Creative Arts representative and Prof. David Collins, RIAM Chair of Undergraduate Studies.

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/02

Draft minutes of 3 May 2023 RIAM ACDC meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the 3 May 2023 were approved.

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/03

Matters Arising

None

RIAM/ACDC/23-23/04

Standing update on Quality Assurance of Linked Providers by Quality Officer

The Registrar invited the Quality Officer to provide an update on the following items:

▪ **Institutional Quality Review**

The Quality Officer confirmed that the dates for the RIAM Institutional Quality Review were the 23rd & 24th April 2024. The Director of RIAM confirmed that RIAM was currently completing the Self-Assessment Report with a view to have it drafted in December 2023.

▪ **International Education Mark (IEM)**

The Quality Officer stated that the Higher Education Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners had been approved by QQI. This Code would be published on the TCD

TT&L website. At present the annual cost to the Linked Providers in relation to the application fee and the annual cost is unknown and the Quality Officer is engaging with QQI and the IUA to get clarification on this issue. In relation to the IEM, QQI have adopted the same branding for Irish Higher Education (HE) and English Language Education (ELE) Providers. Feedback has been provided to QQI that it should differentiate between HE and ELE providers. The Quality Officer informed the Committee that there would now be two rounds of applications (January 2024 and January 2025). This is welcomed as it may allow providers adopt a wait and see approach on how the process works or could provide a second opportunity for providers to resubmit based on feedback from their first application.

The proposed timeline and outcomes from the IEM application process was communicated to members and it was noted that the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science is keen for the IEM to commence in January 2024. It was noted that Linked Providers do not need to provide a response to each principle. Instead, the Linked Provider will need to review the Code and decide which principle applies to their institution and respond to each criterion under those selected principles. To gain compliance, institutions must be fully compliant with a least 80% of the criteria applicable to them and ensure that 80% compliance rate is achieved across each of the applicable principles. Where an institution feels that they don't fully meet a criterion under a principle, the institution should clearly state this and outline what steps will be taken to fulfil compliance. The Quality Officer stated that she has asked for exemplars to assist institutions with their applications. The Quality Officer will share any resources or information with RIAM once received from QQI in relation to the IEM. The Director of RIAM queried whether RIAM should be reviewed against the research criteria, as research degrees not done in RIAM. The Quality Officer reported that RIAM's performance doctorates fall under the code. She further advised that QQI had released newly approved Guidelines for Blended and fully On-line Programmes, and that the SAR will need to be aligned with these and with TCD policies, such as the English Language Policy.

The Director of RIAM indicated that it would be preferable to make an IEM application in January 2024. RIAM is already completing a Self-Assessment Report as part of the Institutional Quality Review and the outputs from that report may be similar to the content required for the IEM application. The Director of RIAM indicated that the draft of the Self-Assessment Report was due in December 2023. If at that time it is found that more substantial work is required on the draft Self-Assessment Report or there are substantial differences between the requirements of the Self-Assessment Report and the IEM application, then RIAM would need to delay their IEM application to the 2nd round.

- **Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes**

QQI have published the statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes. The guidelines will be published on TCD's TT&L website. RIAM was advised to review these guidelines and incorporate them into their Quality Assurance Procedures.

- **English Language Policy**

The Trinity English Language Policy was approved in June 2023. RIAM are requested to review this policy to ensure that their current policy is aligned. The Director of RIAM indicated that the RIAM English Language Policy is currently being reviewed and will be considered by RIAM's Board of Governors in December 2023. The Quality Officer advised that the revised RIAM English Language Policy must be approved prior to RIAM making their IEM application.

- **External Examiner Policy (Taught and Research Programmes)**

The Quality Officer indicated that the External Examiner Policy – Taught Programmes and External Examiner Policy – Research Programmes had been approved and are now available on the TCD website. RIAM were asked to review these policies to ensure that their policies are aligned.

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/05

External Examiner Reports 2022/23

Dr Kathleen Coessens commenced her term as External Examiner to RIAM's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in 2022/23. The Director of RIAM welcomed Dr Coessen's feedback and insights on student assessment. Dr Coessens met with students and their feedback in relation to assessment burden was similar to findings from a recent student survey carried out by RIAM. RIAM have made changes to the assessment load and will review the impact of these changes on students' experiences at the end of the academic year. It was noted that Dr Coessens welcomed the artistic research component and its relationship to artistic practice.

The Senior Lecturer welcomed the positive comments from the external examiner. He queried RIAM's policy in relation to returning feedback to students on assignments, as this is an area currently being looked at in TCD, He also queried how RIAM navigates the quality of feedback and the volume of feedback to be provided. RIAM's Chair of Doctoral Studies indicated that RIAM do have a feedback policy on assessment, and that it is currently under discussion. RIAM will be proposing a slight difference from TCD's current policy which indicates that feedback can be provided within 20 working days. RIAM is proposing that feedback be provided within 4 working weeks. This is due to a number of RIAM staff working on a part-time basis. The Senior Lecturer stated that he would welcome hearing what comes out of RIAM's discussion in relation to the review of this policy.

The Dean of Graduate Studies welcomed the external examiners' comments. She queried whether comments in relation to the handbook and assessment information had been addressed. RIAM indicated that staff aim to ensure that information in relation to assessments are correct in the handbook. However, if inconsistencies arise or there are ambiguities in assessments information, the benefit will be given to the student. RIAM also advised that it now provides learners at the start of each semester with an assessment roadmap document, which provides learners with an overview of the type of assessment for each module and the submission date of assignments. RIAM also advised that sometimes there may be a communication issue with students not consulting their handbook and instead getting information from informal channels (i.e. other students).

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/06

Standing items on communication:

- i) Inter-institutional collaboration including research: Heads of School of Education and Creative Arts and RIAM Director

The Registrar invited the Head of School of Education to provide an update. The Head of School informed members that the Bachelor in Music Education was approved by the Teaching Council. The Head of School acknowledged the immense work that was put in by all parties involved in this programme. During the approval process it was noted that there are significant costs with the running of this programme which in the future could impact on the sustainability of this important programme. It was suggested that the current split of the student contribution between the parties involved in running this programme is not equitable. Both the Director of RIAM and the Head of School of Education feel that the funding model should be reviewed.

The Registrar suggested that this issue was not within the remit of the RIAM ACDC to address and suggested that a meeting should be organised with the College Chief Finance Officer to discuss the finances of this programme and the splitting of the fee. The outcomes from that meeting could be discussed at the next ACDC.

Action/Decision

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/05.1: Meeting to be organised with the Chief Finance Officer to discuss the finance of this programme. Outcomes from this meeting to be discussed at the next ACDC.

The School of Education and RIAM successfully co-hosted the 11th Annual Conference for the Society for Music Education in Ireland in November.

Dr Lyndsey Callaghan of RIAM who is one of the module coordinators of the Trinity Elective "*Music Making, The Arts and Society*" which is co-delivered with the School of Education at TCD recently presented this initiative at a European conference in Oslo. This collaboration was warmly received among conference delegates. Other institutions have asked that RIAM and the School of Education's experience of delivering this collaborative module be shared with other institutions.

The Registrar invited the Head of the School of Creative Arts Professor Damien Murchan to speak to the item. Prof Murchan thanked outgoing Creative Arts representative Professor Evangelia Rigaki for her service to the ACDC. Prof Murchan noted ongoing collaboration between RIAM and the School of Creative Arts. Dr Orla Flanagan from the School of Creative Arts thanked RIAM for allowing TCD students to use their facilities for recitals and rehearsals and looks forward to future collaboration between RIAM and School of Creative Arts.

- ii) Policies and procedures relevant to RIAM: Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Graduate Studies

The Registrar invited an update from the Senior Lecturer.

The Senior Lecturer advised members that TCD has approved new regulations for academic integrity and new procedures in cases of suspected misconduct. These procedures have been welcomed by academic staff as they provide a guide on the different levels of academic misconduct and the severity of the consequence to the student if they have been found to have engaged in academic misconduct. The process will be reviewed at the end of the academic

year to enhance areas of weakness within the policy. The Senior Lecturer noted that there had been significant enhancements made within the College in relation to Academic Integrity, but more work was needed. He also noted that TCD is currently reviewing the attendance policy. The Senior Lecturer informed members that attendance levels had not returned to levels prior to Covid-19. It was acknowledged that other factors influence lower attendance such as students being unable to secure accommodation and experiencing high accommodation costs. The review of this attendance policy will be shared with RIAM. Finally, the Senior Lecturer informed members that TCD is examining how enhancements can be made to enable Schools and academic colleagues better respond to the views expressed by students in the National Student Survey.

The Registrar invited an update from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that going forward all newly approved postgraduate programmes will have the option to graduate from the programme with an exit only award. The Dean also advised that TCD is introducing a new two-stage postgraduate programme development and approval review process that will be introduced on a pilot basis in January 2024. The first step of the process will require development of a proof of concept by the programme proposer which provides a business case for the programme. This proof of concept needs to be approved by the Head of School and the Faculty Dean. Stage two involves the development of a curriculum plan. The proof of concept and the curriculum plan form the combined proposed which then considered by the School Executive Committee, the Faculty Executive, the Graduate Studies Committee and Council for approval. It is hoped that this new two-step process will enable Programme Teams to consider their proposed programmes and in turn eliminate major change requests to programmes once approved. The Dean advised that RIAM is not part of the pilot for programme development and approval. The Director of RIAM welcomed the two-step process of programme development and approval and would welcome seeing the templates and hearing of the experience from the pilot.

The Dean of Graduate Studies informed members that TCD is currently carrying out an external benchmarking exercise to examine how other institutions demarcate the experience of students on postgraduate taught programmes and postgraduate research programmes. The outcomes will allow TCD enhance the identity and role of students on postgraduate research programmes. The benchmarking will be carried out by December 2023 and TCD will examine these outcomes. The Dean said the outcomes from this exercise would be shared with RIAM.

RIAM/ACDC/23-24/07

Any Other Business

- i. It was noted that conductor and artistic director Fergus Sheil will receive an Honorary Doctorate from TCD on December 1st 2023.
- ii. Dr Liz Donnellan informed members that the Programme Handbook policy is under review and once approved, it will be shared with RIAM.