



**Royal Irish Academy of Music
Associated College Degrees Committee**

A meeting of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) was held on 4 November 2025 (10.00am-12.00noon) at the Board Room at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM), 36-38 Westland Row, Dublin 2.

Present: Professor Neville Cox, Registrar (*Chair*)
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies
Professor Vinny Wade, Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Professor Deborah Kelleher, RIAM Director
Professor Peter Tuite, Chair of RIAM Doctoral Committee
Mr. Pdraig Rynn, RIAM Administrative Officer, Registry
Mrs. Patricia Maguire, Academic Secretary
Dr. Michael Cleary-Gaffney, Interim Quality Officer
Professor Jonathan Hodgers, Second Representative, School of Creative Arts
Professor Ann Devitt, Head of School, School of Education
Dr. Susan McCormick, Second Representative, School of Education
Mr. Conn McCluskey, School Manager, School of Education

In Attendance: Dr. Liz Donnellan, Academic Policy Developer; Ms. Ellen Kampinga, Academic Affairs (*Secretary*)

Apologies: Professor Kathleen Tynan, RIAM Chair of Undergraduate; Professor Lynsey Callaghan, RIAM Research Representative; Professor Justin Mac Gregor, Head of School Creative Arts; Mrs. Jo McNamara, School Manager Creative Arts; Professor Diane Daly, RIAM Chair of Postgraduate, Ms. Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary; Mr. Richard Duckworth, Department Head of Music, School of Creative Arts.

Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year and invited everyone to introduce themselves and noted the apologies sent to the meeting.

The Chair noted the changes in membership to the committee, namely Dr. Michael Cleary-Gaffney serving as the Interim Quality Officer at Trinity and he welcomed Mrs. Patricia Maguire as the new Academic Secretary at Trinity.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/001 Draft Minutes

The Chair noted there were no draft minutes for approval as the meeting in April 2025 became Circulation only due to availability of membership during the exam period and short agenda.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/002 Matters Arising

- a. Update on new Trinity Member in Governing Body RIAM

The Chair noted an outstanding item on the Governing Body of RIAM where a new Trinity member was to be added and invited the RIAM Director to comment. The RIAM Director reported movement had been made but it was a slow progress as it includes consideration for changes to be made to the RIAM Constitution. She asks that the item stay on the agenda.

No other matters arising were noted.

Action/Decision:

002.01 For the RIAM ACDC secretary to keep the item outstanding on the update of the RIAM Governing Body on the agenda for upcoming meetings.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/003 External Examiner Reports 2024/25

The RIAM Director spoke to the 2024/25 External Examiner reports from Professor Kathleen Coessens, advising the committee that 2024/25 was the last year for Professor Coessens as External Examiner. The RIAM Director noted that Kathleen was an extremely astute Examiner from Liège.

The RIAM Director discussed the reports circulated and the feedback from the External Examiner were very useful and interesting. The Examiner met with the admin staff which really showed the understanding and professional approach of the admin staff. The RIAM Administrative Officer and the whole team were very pleased to see this recognition and it shows that great leadership and support truly aids to deliver a great programme.

The Capstone project was a new addition, introducing practice based research at Undergraduate level. The Examiner saw this project in its inception and implementation over the last 3 years. They reflected on the importance to develop the project further. The Director adds that they noticed that students present their research well, but that they require encouragement in identifying their own work as research and understanding the various modes of research. Practice stock questions are now being used in weekly seminars leading up to the exams.

The Examiner also recommended further development on communication, especially in the early years around the amount of deadlines that are coming together. More communication to the students around planning for the deadline helped to resolve this and will be developed further. And increased communication amongst staff will be continued to ensure they show great practice together and to keep developing.

Separate Examiners were selected for the 2025/26 cycle given the increasing student numbers (50 PG 110-120 UG). The new externs will be Dr. Séan Doherty, a Composer and Musicologist from DCU for the Undergraduate Programmes and Dr. Kathryn Cok, Royal Conservatory The Hague for the Postgraduate programmes.

The Committee shared their compliments on the positive reports and feedback. The Chair enquired about a comment which refers to including a wider audience for examinations. The RIAM Director explains that audiences are welcome to attend examinations and they are public events, however getting audiences for everything can prove challenging.

The Chair asked the committee if there were any other responses to the External Examiner reports.

The Senior Lecturer commented on the capstone project recommendations and developments. At Trinity, there have also been differences in interpretation across the undergraduate degrees and he offers to share knowledge on capstone projects in the artistic domain. In some disciplines the project is still research but broader as seen in the arts and humanities mainly.

Action/Decision:

003.01 The Senior Lecturer to share knowledge on the implementation of the capstone project in arts and humanities programmes at Trinity with the RIAM Director.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/004 Review of Agreements, Policies and Processes Project

a. Review of the Memorandum of Understanding between Trinity and RIAM

The Chair noted that this item will be taken offline to discuss with the RIAM Director.

b. Review of TCD Policy on the *Approval of Linked Providers' Quality Assurance Procedures*

The Academic Secretary spoke to the linked provider policies from 2021 that they want to review over the next year; the Approval of Linked Providers' Quality Assurance Procedures and the Linked Provider Appeals Procedure. The aim of the review will be to continue the oversight as described by the QQI but also recognise the longstanding and solid Quality Assurance relationship between Trinity and RIAM.

On the Quality Assurance Procedures, the Interim Quality Officer stated the goal is to expedite the process and to categorise the difference between academic and non-academic policies, to avoid a double review by both the Quality Committee and the ACDC. There will also be a reduction in the remit of the Linked Provider Working Group and a proposal is being developed to add a subject matter expert to provide feedback rather than the full working group. The expectation is to present progress in Semester 2.

On the Appeals Procedure, only minor changes are expected as the procedure for appeal of a linked provider is set in law by QQI. The review aims to update the procedures as is good practice after 4 years.

The Chair invited questions from the committee.

The RIAM Director welcomes the review of the policy and the procedures as described.

The Academic Secretary also noted that it is likely that the format for institutional quality review will be changing significantly. There is no new model yet, but the focus may shift from a CINTE type review to a thematic approach.

The standing item on communication was taken now due to both Deans needing to leave the meeting early.

Action/Decision:

004.01 The Chair to discuss with the RIAM Director further on the status of the agreements between Trinity and RIAM.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/005 Standing Items on Communication - Policies and Procedures Relevant to RIAM

The Senior Lecturer was asked to share their update on Policies and Procedures relevant to RIAM.

He shared the update that GenAI and the influence of AI on teaching and learning is still an important topic and they will share the updates in the developments of accompanying policies with RIAM. There is an increased need to educate on AI Literacy and how AI should be used and the policies in development will reflect this.

The Trinity Strategic Plan: Thrive was officially launched on 15 October 2025.

The Dean of Graduate Studies was asked to share their update on Policies and Procedures Relevant to RIAM.

There have been updates to the Calendar on the regulation regarding use of professional copy-editing, which has now been deleted. Instead, students must confirm the originality and ownership of their work and that it is compliant with Academic Integrity policies, as well as guidelines in relation to use of AI and GenAI. The research thesis submission declaration was similarly updated. Students now must sign to confirm that work is original and compliant with relevant research and academic integrity policies, as well as the guidelines on the use of AI and GenAI.

The conceptual design for a framework to manage conflict within the research student-supervisor relationship has been approved. This framework aims first to prevent conflict primarily through managing expectations, and second help to address and resolve conflict. The framework is based around 6Rs (Respect, Recommended Actions, Recognising conflict, Reflecting, Resolving and Referral).

Linked to the conflict management framework, a Code of Conduct for research supervisors and students has been prepared. The Code is out for consultation with unions, and the Dean will share the outcomes with RIAM. This Code of Conduct is a critical enabler to prevent conflict arising and help to manage expectations and responsibilities.

Finally, the Dean shared that they have launched a pilot for a new 5 ECTS, level 10 module titled Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research. This module was developed together with the CHARM-EU team, and they have a small pilot cohort. After the pilot has been evaluated, the aim is that the module will be made available to all level 10 students, which might be of interest to RIAM students.

The RIAM Director stated they are definitely interested in the Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research Module. She also adds that the Code of Conduct will be interesting for RIAM to see as it is very good to support research students and supervisors.

The Academic Policy Developer was asked to share their presentation on new Trinity Academic Policies that have effect on the RIAM and the planned workplan for policy review in 2025/26.

a. Policies that are new/updated in 2025/26

A new policy in 2025/26 is the Late Submission of Assessments (Extensions) Policy. Important elements described in this policy are extensions related to LENS Reports as part of reasonable accommodations available through the disAbility Services. Certain accommodations allow automatic one week extension without the need for extra justification by the student. The policy is currently in the implementation phase and work is being completed on a communication plan.

Updates related to academic integrity and the use of GenAI were made to the policies for Assessment and Academic Progression and the Return of Coursework Policy, the latter which was renamed to the Return of Feedback on Assessments Policy.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Policy was updated to reflect new BlackBoard Ultra system in use. The policy was renamed to the Learning Management System (LMS) Policy. Changes also include updates on GenAI use and Academic Integrity.

Three Admissions policies were updated to reflect changes in the landscape and updated processes: the Admission and Transfer Policy, The Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Policy and the English Language Policy.

A final new policy was added, the Student Garda Vetting Policy. And updates were made to the Remote Supervision of Postgraduate (Doctoral) Students policy, renamed to the Off-site Supervision of Research Students Policy, to reflect the developments in off-site supervision landscape.

b. Updated Suspension and Cessation Policy

Especially relevant to RIAM is the update to the Suspension and Cessation Policy. A new appendix was added to reflect the approval routes for committees for each programme and/or module type available in Trinity. There have been no changes to the approval routes for the suspension and/or cessation for validated programmes, rather the process has been articulated as it in the new appendix.

c. Policy Review Workplan for 2025/26

The Academic Policy Developer also shared the work schedule for 2025/26 review of policies. Which includes, the Appeals Policy and its associated procedures and resources, the Academic Awards and the Dual and Joint Awards Policies, the Quality Policy Statement, The Procedure for the Transfer to External Examiners of Students' Assessed Work, the Guidelines on Student Focus Groups, the Procedures for the Operation of an Online Viva Voce Examination, and the Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy.

New policies to be developed in 2025/26 will be any new policies arising from the new Strategic Plan and separately on the use of GenAI. Other suggested areas for new policies are: Joint Research Awards, Transcripts, Rescinding of Awards and the Recording of Lectures. The latter will have a working group set-up to discuss the demand expressed by students to have lectures recorded, especially when in circumstances of long commute to Trinity and/or caring responsibilities. The working group will review the feasibility and subsequently develop a policy.

The Chair thanks the Academic Policy Developer and asks if there are any questions from the committee.

The RIAM Director enquires about the scope of the Joint Awards Policy, as RIAM have been in early consultation for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters. The Academic Policy Developer states that this will be taken into account.

The RIAM Director also asks to follow the development and/or results of the Recording of Lectures working group as RIAM have seen an increase in students with a long commutes. The Senior Lecturer adds that long commutes have become more prevalent under the student cohorts and that recordings of lectures are already being made or shared in some circumstances without permission. There are certain concerns to recordings being shared when for example discussing the state of the world, with statements being taken out of context and being shared online and the possibility of manipulation of recordings using AI which have been taken into account.

The Chair thanks the committee for the questions and moved to the next update on inter-institutional collaboration.

Action/Decision:

- 005.01** The Senior Lecturer to share with RIAM developments on the policies and procedures emerging around use of GenAI.
- 005.02** The Dean of Graduate Studies to share the Code of Conduct for Research Supervision with the RIAM Director.
- 005.03** The Academic Policy Developer and the Senior Lecturer to share with the RIAM Director updates from the working group on the Recording of Lectures where relevant.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/006 Standing Items on Communication - Inter-institutional Collaboration

The RIAM Director was asked to share an update on the inter-institutional collaboration. She shared that the The Expansive Canvas Conference took place August 26-28, focusing on 19th Century Women Composers, in collaboration with RIAM, Trinity Department of Music and Trinity Long Room Hub. The event provided amazing performances and was very well received.

The RIAM Director and the Head of School for Education attended a meeting on early-teacher training by the Teaching Council and the Department of Education, together with Marino

Institute of Education and TU Dublin. For the BMusEd programme, there has been an issue with the fees, that has been raised with the HEA. The RIAM Director thanks the Assistant Academic Secretary in Academic Affairs at Trinity and the Senior Lecturer for their support in raising the issue and also approaching the IUA. The RIAM Director added that the meeting also yielded great examples of inclusive practice as shown by Trinity and that she was inspired by the initiatives for students with additional needs and the expertise in Trinity with their approach.

The School of Creative Arts was asked to share their update on inter-institutional collaboration. The second representative gave an update in the place of the Head of School and Head of Department, who had apologised for the meeting.

The Expansive Canvas Conference was a great event and thanks Dr. Nicole Grimes for their input. A new collaboration between Audio Educators, PULSE and the Head of Department Richard Duckworth is being discussed with the theme of developing technology for arts.

The Dublin Music Analysis Conference (DubMAC 2026) will take place from Monday 13 to Wednesday 15 July 2026 and will be hosted jointly by Trinity College Dublin and the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Event to chaired by Dr. Nicole Grimes, with contributions from Dr. Orla Shannon from RIAM.

Ongoing successful talk series with the Composition Music Centre, which Creative Arts invites all to attend. Dr. Grimes has been organising a Musicology Seminar series. It is great to see a musicology seminar series returning post-Covid to re-awaken talks that were held in House 5 previously.

A New Trinity Elective Proposal for Climate and the Arts is underway for approval. The module is being developed in collaboration with the Education for Sustainable Development fellows and the assessment will include creative elements.

The RIAM Director adds that RIAM have similar initiatives with music connecting to the climate and will share this. They were part of an Erasmus partnership initiative that hosted performances at partner institutions in other countries, which they travelled to over land as tied to sustainable travel initiatives.

[The Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies left the meeting at this time]

The Head of School of Education also adds that NCAD have a change-lab approach with arts and sustainability, which might be interesting for the second representative to consider.

The Head of School of Education was asked to share their update on inter-institutional collaboration.

She adds that they have their School Review next week, with support from the Quality Office. Which will be followed by a new School Strategy after the review has concluded.

The Chair thanks all for their updates and now moves to the item on the standing update on quality assurance.

Action/Decision:

006.01 The RIAM Director and the Head of School of Education to share initiatives of arts and climate/sustainability with the second representative for the School of Creative Arts where relevant.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/007 Standing Update on Quality Assurance of Linked Providers

The Interim Quality Officer was asked to share his update on the Quality Assurance.

a. RIAM TrustEd Application Update

The RIAM Director was happy to share that RIAM had received the approval for the TrustEd Mark with minor conditions/recommendations to be completed over the next year. The Chair and the committee shared their congratulations. The RIAM Director thanks Trinity on their assistance, especially the Assistant Academic Secretary in Academic Affairs.

The Administrative Officer shares that there were 4 main recommendations in the report that need to be addressed. First of all, increasing the visibility of the NFQ levels and adding this information to documentation. Secondly, adding a breakdown of the student fee, for which a dedicated webpage on the RIAM website has already been added. Third, Academic Integrity training and covering some gaps in the AI Policy for example on contracting essays. And the final recommendation asked for adding more detail on the English Language support for students. The RIAM Administrative Officer explained that RIAM already has an English Language Policy, language support classes and other supports, which will be highlighted more to students.

Additionally, there were some notes on inter-cultural information and international students supports, and RIAM has added information on their website in response. The RIAM Director thanks the Administrative Officer and shares that it was a worthwhile experience and allowed for another step of improvement and development for RIAM, recognised by the new TrustEd Mark.

b. QQI Consultation Papers

The Interim Quality Officer shared an update on QQI Consulting Papers that are ongoing. The first being on Statutory QA Guidelines on work-integrated learning. The Guidelines enable recognition of professional bodies. There are some challenges in these guidelines to which Trinity has provided a response. There is much oversight required to determine if a work partner is qualified, but Trinity feels this is outside of remit of the University. The consultation has gone in and the QQI Draft White Paper is expected in the first half of next year.

The second green paper is regarding Micro-credentials which is a fast moving space. QQI are seeking broad input in terms of NFQ inclusion, attainment of credit, facilitating stackability, and they are open for responses until the 28th of November, leaving time for RIAM to contribute. The Academic Secretary adds that findings on the Trinity-wide consultation will be in next week, which can be shared with RIAM.

Action/Decision:

007.01 The Interim Quality Officer and the Academic Secretary to share with the RIAM Director the Trinity-wide consultation results for the Trinity Response to the green paper on Micro-credentials by QQI.

RIAM/ACDC/25-26/008 Any Other Business

The Chair asked the Committee to share any other business.

The Academic Secretary asked the RIAM Director about the interest in inclusive education practices the Director expressed in discussion before where Trinity might be able to assist. The RIAM Director explains that RIAM have a non-verbal opera initiative in workshop at present, funded by Rethink Ireland involving academy students and people living with disabilities. Additionally, RIAM is part of an EU project titled IncluMusic, bringing together researchers and lecturers to create training manuals and workshops to assist main study music teachers to teach students with learning and educational needs more effectively.

The Academic Secretary adds that Trinity has the Trinity-INC Inclusive Practice Project, which is now transitioning to mainstreaming through Academic Practice, and there might be a synergy in the initiatives. The RIAM Director says this is timely as it would be a great time to collaborate in the new year with the return from leave of Professor Lynsey Callaghan. The Head of School of Education adds that a review programme for the Trinity Centre for People with an Intellectual Disability in the School of Education is ongoing, where they have co-learning pilots for learning English and Law and they are looking to extend this to other fields, and more information can be shared with the RIAM Director if relevant. The Director adds that it is the second creative project in the academy and it would be great to have more than one a year. A new position will be created related to inclusive practice and learning needs education to assist this.

No other business was noted.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing input. Congratulates RIAM for their input and their development.

The meeting was closed at 11.03am.