



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Quality Review of Creative Arts

27 - 29 November 2018

External Reviewers:

Professor Carolyn Abbate, Harvard University, US.
Professor Deirdre Heddon, University of Glasgow, UK.
Professor Yvonne Tasker, University of East Anglia, UK.
Professor Andrew Lavender, University of Warwick, UK.

Internal Facilitator:

Professor Eoin O' Sullivan, Head of School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity.

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School of Creative Arts Review Report

1. Preamble

The review team would like to begin by thanking the staff and students of the School of Creative Arts for their candour and openness in engaging with the process. The support received for our work from the staff in the Quality Office, the internal facilitator as well as senior members of the University was outstanding.

The School of Creative Arts has many strengths in its internal operations and the larger institutional context. In particular, we would like to note and commend the Trinity Long Room Hub as a site for research collaboration; the Trinity Education Project (TEP) initiative; the dedication of staff and the quality of teaching and research undertaken in the School; the entrepreneurial spirit and research ambition of academics in competing for the relatively small pots of money available to the disciplines; the value placed on administrative colleagues; student pride in the programmes on which they are enrolled; a willingness to consider growth and develop collaborative plans.

Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that the School is operating in a challenging context. Factors which we were particularly aware of through the course of our review include the staff:student ratio (SSR); challenges of succession and leadership following the retirement without current plans for replacement of senior figures; the task of maintaining separate curricula with extensive module choices, a reducing staff base and at present limited collaboration; timetabling challenges; difficult spaces for some activities; limited resources for some activities.

The financial challenge faced by the University as a whole as well as its ambitious estate plan form the larger institutional context in which we conducted our review.

This very real context has produced understandable anxieties which have contributed to a position of stasis within the School. We've seen evidence of a readiness for change but also a residual affection for the status quo which hampers new ways of thinking.

From our point of view as a review team this stasis represents an urgent threat to the future thriving of the School. We believe that for the next stage of its development the School needs to move forward together and to demonstrate both initiative and collective vision. A degree of culture change will be needed to achieve this goal. In addition, the School requires support from the institution in some key areas as detailed in our recommendations.

2. Terms of Reference

The review team were asked to review and comment on the School's strategic plan, focusing on teaching and research as well as administration in support of an integrated School. We were asked to consider questions of practice-based work and to comment on proposals for a potential move of the School to the proposed development as part of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin's Innovation area at the Grand Canal Innovation District (GCID).

3. Responses and Recommendations

We broadly endorse the strategic plan which sets out a goal of unifying the School of Creative Arts. We believe that the School should retain its three distinct subject areas since these provide coherent disciplinary identity and clear subject areas that recruit students. While doing so, nonetheless, the School could and should enhance significantly its culture by way of shared principles, interconnected systems and activities, and a deep commitment to cooperation and collaboration between staff.

The percentage of non-EU students registered in the School has risen to 14% from 11% and research productivity from 67 to 75. Research Expenditure stands at €20,039. It is significant that three College Officers commended the School's ability to secure research funding from diverse and competitive sources, rising to this challenge in ways that stand out. Staff are considered to be committed, ambitious and entrepreneurial.

The School is a small unit in a large and multidisciplinary Faculty. We believe that it is imperative that the School functions as a single, coherent unit if it is to enhance its capacity, efficiency, visibility and influence and ensure its sustainability through growth. This coherence should be sought in administrative terms, intellectual terms, and in physical terms (locations, facilities, technology).

The School was formed in 2006, retaining Drama, Film and Music in its title. Drama and Music are officially recognised as Departments in the College Calendar, whereas Film while acting operationally as a Department, is not officially recognised as one. In 2016, the School was renamed the School of Creative Arts. This is therefore a recent shift in the School's identity and further work is required to embed and extend this identity, constructing a School that exists and delivers in more than name only.

In our view, the development of a coherent and sustainable School requires

- strong leadership
- a single, shared vision that is ambitious for the future of the School
- revitalised governance structures that allow for greater cross-School planning, communication and accountability
- shared processes and systems
- access to and use of shared resources by all staff in the School
- greater fluidity and co-working in the conduct of research and delivery of teaching

3.1 School Leadership

The review team understands that leadership will be a vital aspect of the next stage of the School's development, and we are aware that there is a particular challenge around succession and seniority given vacancies and imminent retirements. In this context we strongly recommend:

- a) that the Faculty and/or University **prioritise the appointment of a Professor of Creative Arts** to take on the role of Head of School, foster an integrated School culture, develop and deliver an agreed School plan that embeds efficiencies and growth, look to the School's future relationship with GCID, and develop key partnerships, specifically with LIR and RIAM. This recommendation is made in light of the current situation whereby the present Head of School has temporarily deferred his retirement. We believe that without this investment the School will fail to reach its full potential and its sustainability will be severely compromised.
- b) engaging with the **reappointment of a Chair in Music**, a post which would give leadership to the discipline in the larger context of the School. In view of the impending retirement of the current Head of Music—which will leave Music as a discipline without a senior faculty member—this appointment is crucial. The goal of integrating the subject areas into a unified School cannot be reached absent strong leadership in all three.
- c) that the Faculty and/or University support the appointment of a temporary **Development Officer** or second someone from Trinity's central Alumni and Development team to support the School in this remit. The reputation of the Samuel Beckett Theatre is significant and its alumni roster is impressive. We feel that the School is under-performing in terms of potential

philanthropic activity. Currently, the School has no capacity to develop and implement an Alumni Development plan. This is a missed opportunity for both the School and Trinity.

3.2 Governance

We have some specific recommendations in relation to governance and structures within the School, an area that the review panel was specifically invited to consider.

3.2.1 School Administration

In line with standard practice elsewhere, and to consolidate the structure of a School with shared rationale and strategic processes, we recommend that the School **revise reporting lines** so that administrators report to the School Manager rather than the Heads of the individual subject areas.

In the School's current geography, the Head of School and School Manager are located at a different site from other colleagues in the School. We recommend that **both be located within or directly adjacent to one of the School's Departments**, in order to interface more easily with the School's activities.

Given that the School is currently spread across four sites (albeit close to each other), we see sense in retaining subject area administrators, who will continue to have distinct functions in relation to curriculum delivery within Departments. However, we consider that cross-school responsibilities could and should be assigned to individual administrators, eliminating duplication of effort and creating some additional capacity and resource as well as developing the culture of a single and unified School through shared processes and roles. We recommend that the School Manager undertakes a **review of administrative roles, working with administrators to agree and embed a rationalisation plan**, with staff development/training provided as appropriate.

We note that one of the Theatre administrative staff also currently supports the Samuel Beckett Theatre as a public venue, including Box Office duties. With efficiencies gained through the rationalisation of School roles allocated to administrators, the administrative servicing of the Samuel Beckett Theatre could be made formal. This would be additionally beneficial in light of the School's proposal that the Samuel Beckett Theatre be renamed as the Samuel Beckett Centre for Creative Arts (see 3.2.5, below) with a wider cross-School remit.

Given that administrators may fulfil school-wide functions, we propose that it would make sense to nominate all administrators as School Administrators with bracketed functions indicating disciplinary alignment e.g. School Executive Officer (Music).

In the event of co-location of the School (see below), we do see the value of bringing all the School's administrators into a single office and further reviewing roles and functions of the administrative team to release additional capacity to support the ambition of increased student numbers and research activity.

3.2.2 School Technical Provision

The review team identified an **evident need for technical support** for the School's practice-based and production-related activities. At present, technical support is allocated at subject-area level. A technical manager for the School would operate across its sites and disciplines, ensuring that resources are managed efficiently and equitably, software and equipment are up to date and suitably maintained, and that staff and students are enabled to make best use of the equipment. Additional technical support should allow increased use of the Samuel Beckett Theatre and of ATRL (see below), enhancing the work of the School in both teaching and research.

3.2.3 Academic Administration

Given the challenge of capacity and staffing resource, administrative streamlining should also be undertaken in relation to academic administration. We would advise the Head of School and School Manager to review academic structural roles to avoid duplication of those School-related activities which do not depend on discipline-specific expertise. We would, as far as possible, have single roles serving the School as a whole, e.g. Erasmus Officer for the School. Where there are existing School roles, e.g. School Director of Learning and Teaching, we would advise that these are not duplicated across the three subject areas. With such a small School team, duplication of roles is not required.

3.2.4 School Meetings

Given the size of the School, we would ask the School to consider the schedule and function of meetings, with a view to making School meetings the site for the principle business and decision-making of academic activity as well as a site in which ideas are exchanged and a shared sense of School planning and aspiration emerges. The School should ensure that time is scheduled for School-wide discussion, planning, and blue-sky thinking, for example through the implementation of annual School Away Days, School Research Planning days. School curriculum review—including cooperative planning for each term's modules—should be a priority. Such activities, though requiring time, will in our view enhance a culture wherein the “School” is seen not as a rubric, but as a genuine collaborative hive. Such activities would contribute to the School operating and growing as a single unit comprised of Drama, Film and Music, with shared values, culture and aspirations.

3.2.5 School Resources

We believe that the School would function better with more extensive sharing and use of its physical resources, including the Samuel Beckett Theatre and the ATRL. We say more about the future space plans of the School in section 3.4 below. Here, we would simply endorse the strategic plan to rename the Samuel Beckett Theatre as the Samuel Beckett Centre for Creative Arts. This will give a clear signal of the resource being school-wide.

It will be important that the activity of the Centre is indeed School-orientated. The School should consider how it can make best use of this resource as a School resource, including as a platform for showcasing work from across the School and across student and staff communities. It is clear that the interface with the professional theatre and performance sector is mutually beneficial for the School and external partners, and for staff and students. We are not proposing that key events in Dublin, e.g. festivals, are not programmed in the theatre. However, such programming is undertaken well in advance, and on a rolling annual basis. This allows the School to schedule the rest of the year's activity rationally and with a view to making most of the facilities for teaching across the School, public engagement activities that are School-wide etc. We note that the theatre is not overbooked with activity. The additional technical support noted above should allow for increased use of this now-underutilised space.

As a team we would add that the success of SCARF demonstrates that the School can and does work together at the level of staff and doctoral researchers. SCARF was commented upon positively by all staff and doctoral researchers, marking this out as one cross-School model which has made effective use of the Trinity Long Room Hub as a facilitating space.

3.3 Curriculum Delivery, Unification and Efficiencies

It is clear from the review of paperwork presented and from discussions across the academic, administrative and technical support teams that the School's key challenge is capacity. As noted, permanent staff numbers are low and SSRs are high. Staff members report being exhausted, with

little capacity to envisage and then deliver new initiatives. It is imperative that the School rationalises its delivery of its curriculum in order that some additional capacity is realised.

The review team recommend that the School **undertake an extensive process of curriculum review** to drive efficiencies and rationalise the curriculum. Given the capacity issue noted above and, presuming that approval and recruitment of a Head of School is unlikely to be immediate, we strongly urge the Faculty to provide some additional, short-term support for this activity.

The School should proactively identify those spaces (actual and conceptual) in which modules can operate across all subject areas, enabling economies of scale and greater co-working including, importantly, co-teaching. This process should involve reducing the overall number of modules to relieve pressure on staff as well as building a stronger School ethos and shared School identity. We feel this move away from fragmentation, towards overlap and collaboration, will drive an improvement in morale.

We strongly recommend a **target-based approach** that will enable the School to set and meet objectives with respect to the number of cross-disciplinary modules provided. It is imperative that as new modules are introduced other modules are withdrawn and that the aspiration is that there will be considerably fewer modules on offer by the end of this exercise.

We recognise that changes to the curriculum will require some letting go in relation to current subject-specific commitments, and careful management and communication in terms of student expectations. However, we also note that students have commented frequently on their desire for more cross-department modules, so there is clearly an appetite across the student cohorts for more cross-disciplinary working. A move in this direction can be framed positively as a vehicle for providing key learning opportunities through new modes of delivery, and a response to student demand.

We welcome the proposed development of a **single honours programme in Film Studies**. This provides for a better balance to the School's identity and its portfolio of courses and has the potential to generate additional income. Growth will need to be supported by access to teaching spaces appropriate in size and equipment. Space issues are addressed in more detail below.

While we appreciate the logic of a potential new programme in Creative Arts which would draw on the different subject areas located in the School, we see this as a development that should be explored in the next phase of activity. This would need careful market testing. We are not confident that there is a desire for generic Arts degrees in the University sector. We anticipate that the more fluid cross-disciplinary working we are recommending as an outcome of the curriculum review will achieve such a programme, a virtual Creative Arts programme, so to speak, that has grown organically from the revitalization of the school and the enhanced integration of the three subject areas. Any further phase of curriculum planning might also consider the provision of Liberal Arts degrees in some other Higher Education Institutions. Such a development at Trinity could potentially connect with the Trinity Education Project once this has been embedded.

We welcome the place of **practice-based work** in the School's **research profile**. As signalled by the UK's Research Excellence Framework 2014 and 2021 exercises, practice research is recognised as a legitimate methodology for developing original and significant knowledge.

We have been assured that there are already protocols in place at Trinity to enable practice-based PhD work. In line with systems elsewhere these have some generic elements, such as combining a

creative project with critical/theoretical commentary. This accords with the institutional framing of practice-based research that we are familiar with in HEIs across the UK and in the US. We see the clear marketing of practice-based research as an opportunity for PhD growth and recommend identifying a more confident and visible pathway for this kind of research.

We endorse the principal of transparency and visible recognition for practice-based work in promotion criteria. Some reflection on and response to the ways in which key funding bodies define the excellence and impact of practice-based research would be sensible.

Clarity on practice-based teaching and its place in the School will be a central component of the Curriculum Review. We would not recommend that practice-based research becomes a significant component of the undergraduate curriculum, though we do see merit in introducing the methodology as part of taught postgraduate courses in particular, recognising this as one pipeline to enhancing the PhD offer.

In relation to practice-based teaching, the panel advises the School to consider the value of using a broader terminology which signals a range of experiential learning. For example, practice might include workshops, critical practice, and craft-based training. Practice does not necessarily mean, simply, that a creative project is the expected capstone work for a module. Experiential learning can take place in a seminar focused on history, and hands-on material engagement can be a part of learning about theory. We urge the School to consider these distinctions, to expand what practice is understood to entail, and to use this more broadly defined palette.

We advise the School to be explicit about the range of practice-engagement on offer. This may speak to concerns expressed by some students that expectations for the amount of practice classes were not being met. We sensed in discussions with some students that they thought they were coming to be trained as a professional artist (e.g. film maker). But the education delivered at Trinity in Music, Film and Drama is not, and should not be, constrained by pre-professional requirements (as it would be at a conservatoire or training program), and these disciplines' educational ideals, shared with humanities disciplines generally at Trinity, are broader than professional practice. Moreover, the disciplines cannot support undergraduate ambitions for artist training; the resourcing (staff, equipment, contact hours etc.) is not concomitant. This is not to say that the disciplines cannot support development of graduates who are capable of undertaking critical practice and will in some instances go on to work in professional contexts as writers and directors. But that is not a sole outcome, and these graduates' paths through Trinity will not be identical to a conservatoire training.

In relation to practice-based teaching, we would encourage the School to review and develop further its relationships with LIR and RIAM. The School perhaps needs to reposition itself in relation to these conservatoire institutions and be clear about the distinctiveness of its offer and its training for students. What is it to be a graduate of the Trinity School of Creative Arts, as opposed to LIR? An education in the humanities has distinct values. The School could explore areas where there might be useful cross-fertilisation and mutual benefit in partnering with LIR and RIAM, including curriculum and space and technical resources. The discussion around the GCID and shared resource provision may be part of this. Both LIR and the RIAM are enthusiastic about the possibility of collaboration so that there are opportunities for further partnership working. But we also sensed wariness on both sides of the aisle. The RIAM cannot provide private instrumental instruction for Trinity undergraduates, for example. The program at the LIR was equally described to us as so intense and intimate that it was difficult for the stakeholders to imagine how Trinity students could even be in the room. Pragmatic and clear-eyed negotiations about what the exchanges would involve will therefore be important here.

3.4 School re/location

The fourth point the review team was asked to comment on was a consideration of the possible relocation of the School. We have opted to frame this question as part of a larger issue of space which poses a significant challenge for the School of Creative Arts and provides the context for the proposal. Some space issues require immediate and short-term attention, others are for the medium and longer term. We also recognise that the proposed GCID development raises longer-term strategic issues for both the University and the School, and we reflect on these below.

3.4.1 There are immediate renovation concerns to take account of health and safety challenges (mould remediation, fire hazards) and basic technological and infrastructural needs for the delivery of teaching and research in the creative arts. Working with academics and administrators, the School Manager should take responsibility for compiling a list of urgent tasks.

3.4.2 We recommend that the College give urgent attention to the relocation of Music from House 5 into a situation where the Department is co-located with the Samuel Beckett Creative Arts Centre. It is the firm view of the review group that the Music Department is currently operating in a space that cannot be addressed by minor changes. Moreover, the quirks of the space pose insuperable challenges to the basic functioning of the department. Relocation should include facility for musical performance, the Boydell continuing to be used by the School as a recital room until an alternative space with appropriate acoustic specifications is identified or provided.

3.4.3 Growth plans in Film Studies – notably the introduction of a single honours – will be hampered by the availability of suitable teaching space. Film Studies needs access to suitably equipped teaching space of appropriate size and the School should work with the College to ensure these needs are factored into the planning process.

3.4.4 We enthusiastically endorse the proposed rebranding of the Samuel Beckett Theatre as a Creative Arts Centre to be used by all parts of the school. If Music is to relocate (as we have advised) this rebranding must be accompanied by infrastructure changes. We recognise that the Beckett is a vital and successful part of the School and University. We understand the redevelopment of the site is not currently in the Trinity Estate Plan, and that if this is to happen—which we see as necessary to reconfiguring this area as a gravitational centre for the School in the medium term—philanthropic funding will be important to the scope of this initiative. There is an opportunity for the School to make this a priority, but it will need to lead on such a project. In this context we would invite the School to consider a temporary Development post to support the construction of a case for fundraising based on the history and value of the Beckett Theatre site, and to secure advances in such fundraising initiatives. Such activity should of course operate in tandem with the wider Trinity Development campaign.

3.4.5 Access for disabled staff and students is an issue across the School's estate footprint. The contortions that a physically non-able individual has to go through to reach teaching, practice, and mechanical spaces are daunting and in multiple cases insurmountable. Our expectation is that as part of the Trinity Estate Plan all teaching and research spaces will be accessible. These would include performance spaces. A plan of works over an identified period to ensure that this is undertaken should be developed under the umbrella of the larger Estate plan. Mitigations should be identified in relation to current spaces and usage, such that individuals with a disability are suitably and respectfully accommodated.

3.4.6 As a short and medium-term solution to some of the School's space needs, our recommendation is to **relocate all film production, film screenings, music technology teaching as**

well as disciplinary, cross- and inter-disciplinary digital work more broadly to ATRL. This is an under-used facility with excellent digitally-resourced spaces and state-of-the-art recording equipment, computer labs, and seminar/teaching facilities. We realise that there will be timetabling issues in implementing this recommendation and that the School will need the advice and support of the College in doing so. However, we strongly believe that a greater use of this facility will significantly enhance the delivery of teaching, student satisfaction and opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration. Such a move has the additional advantage for the University of ‘piloting mobility’ between the sites. As noted earlier, a technical manager will be needed to support the use of the specialist facilities at ATRL. This post-holder could also act as the building manager for ATRL, or manage access and support relating to use of the facility. The presence of a building manager will be critical to the success of this relocation, providing an eye and ear onsite for faculty and students, and helping to erase students’ oft-articulated sense that the ATRL is an unpopulated moon in some distant outer orbit from the main campus. The ATRL is an underutilised treasure and enabling the cultural changes that would make it a welcoming secondary hub for the School should be a priority.

3.4.7 Our understanding as a review team is that the GCID is a medium-term prospect. While not addressing the immediate needs of the School, the GCID development is an opportunity in which the School should be actively engaged, contributing to and influencing the plans to the benefit of both the School and Trinity.

We recognise that the GCID is a major Trinity initiative with a wider array of partners and stakeholders and will likely be the focus of institutional philanthropic endeavour and capital spend. The School has the opportunity to make a transformative input into this development which has culture as a central component. We urge the School in the strongest possible terms to be actively involved in the GCID planning process, to grasp the opportunities offered by a new building which would offer co-location with the LIR, for example, along with new connections and ways of working with other cultural industry partners. We invite the School to imagine how a new facility would enable teaching and research to be developed in innovative ways, and to take part as an early innovator, by seeking a seat at the table in the design and development phases. Such science-arts hubs are not merely real estate situations; rather, they represent a future of interaction between arts, technologies, and the sciences in genuinely shared intellectual and research activities. Our view was that, in the long term, the re-situation of the School in the GCID development would be energising and animating.

Other observations and recommendations

During our site visit we noticed that some signage (e.g. in the Long Room Hub) and documents (such as the Estate Plan) refer to the previous name of the School. Trinity should ensure that College documents use the designator ‘School of Creative Arts’.

We note that adjuncts are a key resource and have ideas, energy and dedication both to their subject and department. The School should consider ways in which adjuncts could be enabled to contribute more extensively to discussions, planning and wider School activities, for example by way of their inclusion in Away Day and other School/subject area discussions.

Staff and students expressed an opinion that the ATRL facility is more difficult to work with since it is ‘offsite’ and takes a while to get to. (This view was also expressed in relation to the GCID development.). In our view this is a matter of perception, since it takes less than 15-20 minutes to walk from the Samuel Beckett Theatre to ATRL. As a review team we do not consider this a particularly unusual distance to travel across large campuses. Nonetheless, we recognise the shaping

effect that such perceptions have on practices, along with the pragmatic consideration that staff and students require sufficient time to move between classes. We recommend that **in its review of timetabling, and in view of the introduction of the Trinity Education Project, Trinity consider designating specific periods (for example half days) for departments to prioritise timetabling according to their own needs and interests.** This would allow for year-groups to be accommodated in ways that are efficient and that mitigate any effects of distance between locations.

Conclusion

The School of Creative Arts is a valuable presence within Trinity College Dublin. Its staff produce world-leading research outputs, it is involved in significant and extensive public engagement, and it has excellent students. The work of alumni and academics from the School is internationally esteemed. Students at all levels praise the work of staff and assert their pride in being part of the School. Intellectually, creatively and in its civic engagement, the School holds a special place in Trinity's environment and more widely in the city of Dublin and beyond. That said, the School finds itself at a moment of necessary transition that presents both challenges and opportunities. The challenges concern the development of a truly cross-disciplinary culture; the need for infrastructures suitable for the next generation of students; and arrangements for sustainable staffing and leadership for the next phase. The opportunities include harnessing facilities that support excellence in research and teaching; deeper engagement with partners inside and external to Trinity; and a new expression of the vibrancy of creative arts within a context of rapid changes within Higher Education and culture more broadly. With suitable actions and support, the School is well placed to meet these challenges and make the most of its opportunities.

Final Report – 17 January 2019

Professor Carolyn Abbate, Harvard University
Professor Deirdre Heddon, University of Glasgow
Professor Andy Lavender, University of Warwick
Professor Yvonne Tasker, University of East Anglia



23 January 2019

Professor Matthew Causey
Head of School, School of Creative Arts
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RE: School of Creative Arts Quality Review Report - Head of School Response

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge and thank the External Reviewers for their thorough and exhaustive review of our School. Their findings and recommendations are insightful and inspiring, and will be of great assistance to the School reaching its full potential. The goal of my notes here, as directed by the Quality Office, is a high-level response to the Report, allowing more specific point-by-point reactions to the various recommendations to develop during the implementation period which will be undertaken in close consultation with the School's Executive Committee.

The general recommendations of the Report call for strong leadership, common visions and governance structures, and united administrative systems, resources and research goals. All these recommendations for unification are welcome and in-line with the overall strategic goals of the School. I will respond briefly to several of the main areas of recommendations within the Report including School unification, administration rationalisation, curriculum issues and School relocation(s).

The School is fully committed to creating a unified structure with closer relations across the subject areas in research, teaching and administration. However, we also agree with the Report that the integrity of the subject areas must remain intact. We do not wish to sacrifice the fields of study of Drama, Film and Music to a wider generalised rubric of Creative Arts. We take onboard the recommendation that more School-wide strategic planning meetings, away days and curriculum planning sessions will help us develop a cohesive and confederated mission of the subject areas within one School.

The School welcomes the opportunity to rationalise its administrative structure to include new lines of management, redesigned job titles and possible co-location of School offices. We will look to College and HR for assistance in designing and negotiating these innovative models and the possible issues arising to ensure



thorough staff consultation in the process. As recommended, we will look to place the offices of the Head of School and School Manager in a suitable location within School buildings to promote a more engaged interaction between the School and subject areas.

The reviewers note that curriculum efficiencies are required as the School has experienced a growth in module offerings that are unsustainable financially while missing many opportunities for building links across subject areas. The School will endeavour to undertake a thorough curriculum-mapping exercise across the subject areas to reduce module offerings where possible and locate opportunities for pooled resources. We appreciate the acknowledgment of the Reviewers regarding the successful inclusion of practice-based research in the School's overall research planning. Further, the School recognises the Reviewers' caution against over-committing any subject area to undergraduate practice-based or conservatoire training instead looking for a wider implementation of innovative teaching and learning practices that will include expanded methods of engaging the creative arts that include practical elements by using a redefinition of practice-based as outlined.

The recommendation of relocating the Department of Music from House 5 to a facility near or within the Samuel Beckett Theatre building will require College leadership and planning with robust consultation with the School to facilitate. Any such move is contingent on the retention of a recital and musical performance space. We are pleased the Reviewers see merit and are supporting the renaming and repurposing of the Samuel Beckett Theatre and building to the Samuel Beckett Centre for the Creative Arts. We agree with the reviewers that the building should become a 'gravitational centre' for the research, teaching and administrative activities of the School.

The School will enable and timetable more classroom usage of the Arts Technology Research Laboratory (ATRL) where possible and appropriate to the subject areas. The Reviewers rightly point out that ATRL is a rich but underutilised resource. The School notes the inevitable loss of ATRL's current building in the near future as the Grand Canal Innovation District (GCID) evolves. However, the School is enthusiastic regarding a potential location in the GCID while maintaining a strong engagement and physical presence in the main College campus. The remarkable potential for new models of research in the arts and sciences within the GCID complex is an opportunity the School wishes to seize. An arts element within GCID occupied by the School will allow further collaborations and shared resources with the Lir.



In summation, I note that the volume and complexities of the Reviewers' recommendations in their Report cannot be underestimated and will require deep commitments and flexibility from our staff and equal, robust support from College to enact. The Report, in reaction to the School's Strategic Plan, Self-Assessment Document and Quality Review Terms of Reference, suggests an overall unification process for the School through the implementation of reconfigured models of administration, new staff positions, new locations, enhanced research goals and curriculum efficiencies. Thus, there are many areas for worthy developments to be enacted. However, these improvements will be introduced during College's implementation of the Trinity Education Project (TEP) with the fixed timetable and augmented curriculum work packages scheduled to be delivered concurrently. Furthermore, these changes need to be implemented across three subject areas, one commercial venue and one research lab. The process will be demanding and will require careful thought and planning to make the substantial changes which will benefit our School. The School recognises the significant retooling and refocused work practices suggested in the Report and we are ready to engage fully with that important process.

The School also notes the essential requirements placed on the Faculty and College in terms of new hires including a Professor of Creative Arts, the Chair of Music, a Development Officer and School Technical Manager. If the overall changes recommended by the External Reviewers are to be accomplished it will only be with the support of College meeting these requirements of human resources and facility enhancements.

Finally, I want to emphasise the School's forward thinking in our engagement with the review process. We welcome the opportunities to refine the School of Creative Arts in order to support our staff in their careers while enriching our students' experiences.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Causey, Professor in Drama
Head of School of Creative Arts



MEMORANDUM

TO: Quality Office
FROM: Professor Darryl Jones, Dean AHSS
DATE: 25 January 2019
SUBJECT: School of Creative Arts Review – Dean’s Response

I would like to begin by thanking Professors Carolyn Abbate, Deirdre Heddon, Andy Lavender, and Yvonne Tasker for their wide-ranging, open, thoughtful, constructively-critical, and helpful review. This will be a key document in guiding the School of Creative Arts’ progress over the next years.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the review commends the School and its staff for their ‘world-leading research outputs’ (p. 9), their sense of civic and public engagement, the international regard in which their alumni are held, and the excellence of their students. These are things of which the College should justly be proud.

The review makes a number of recommendations, but in this high-level response I want to focus particularly on two areas with large-scale implications, the School’s **structure**, and its **governance**.

The School of Creative Arts is, if not a recent creation, then a recently-created name (2016), and the review notes that ‘further work is required to embed and extend’ the identity of the School, to create ‘a School that exists and delivers in more than name only’ (p. 2). The review treads delicately on the subject of the relationship between the School and its component disciplines. It is certainly the case that staff are properly concerned with maintaining the integrity of their own subjects. Nevertheless, I agree with the review’s sense that we need ‘a single, shared vision that is ambitious for the future of the School’ (p. 2). Governance structures are important here, with the sense of a School working together to achieve shared aims – but without sacrificing the integrity of individual disciplines. I strongly

An tOllamh Darryl Jones
Déan

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endorse the review's suggestion that 'an extensive process of curriculum review' (p. 5) would be a good place to start.

Leadership is also important here, as the review makes clear. I think the proposal to create a unifying (and potentially cross-disciplinary) Chair of Creative Arts (p. 2) is an excellent one. While budgets are obviously an issue here, I will work with the Head of School to begin to draw up a business plan for the creation of such a post. One possible way to achieve this might be to upgrade a position made vacant by a retiring member of staff.

Another major factor in cementing a unified School identity would be to move towards a co-located School (pp. 7-8). While I appreciate that Music is closely associated with House 5, it has to be acknowledged, as the review makes clear, that the building is not fit for purpose for a modern university. This is a large-scale recommendation, but I believe a necessary one.

The review, then, makes recommendations that require commitments from individual disciplines (the curriculum), the School (governance), the Faculty (staffing), and the College (space).

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