



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

GLUCKSMAN GALLERY

PEER REVIEW PANEL REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18

DECEMBER 2017

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1. Context for Review

The Glucksman Gallery is a subsidiary company of University College Cork. It is overseen by a Board which operates according to a management agreement with the University. In December 2016, President Michael B Murphy proposed and the Board accepted that the Glucksman Gallery should engage in an international quality peer review through the University's quality process, the context of such a review being that:

- the Glucksman Gallery has become an important component of campus life at the University and, *inter alia*, provides learning opportunities for students and staff;
- the University, in return, makes a substantial investment of public funds in the Gallery on a continuous basis.

This review was considered by all parties as beneficial for the Gallery while fulfilling a function of the University by providing compelling evidence of commitment to the Quality agenda as required by the Universities Act (1997) and Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012).

The anticipated benefits of the review were expected from engagement in:

- a process of constructive self-reflection which involves international benchmarking, SWOT analysis, and an on-site visit of international peers, enabling dialogue and access to expert supportive advice;
- a peer review process which could comment on the trajectory of the Glucksman as a specialist genre, i.e. a university gallery.

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Dr Marie Bourke	Former Keeper and Head of Education	National Gallery of Ireland
Mr Diarmuid Collins (<i>Chair</i>)	Bursar, Finance Office	University College Cork
Professor Stephen Foster	Former Director of John Hansard Gallery	University of Southampton, UK
Mr John FitzGerald (<i>Rapporteur</i>)	Head, Library and Information Services	University College Cork
Dr Declan Jordan	Department of Economics	University College Cork
Ms Kate Moriarty (<i>Student Reviewer</i>)	Postgraduate Applied Psychology	University College Cork
Dr Kay Taaffe (<i>Panel Secretariat Support</i>)	Quality Enhancement Unit,	University College Cork

2. Peer Review

2.1 Panel Membership

In line with University practice for international peer review, a Panel was assembled to carry out the review. This brought together national and international expertise in governance and management of leading galleries, including a university-led institution. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University, while the involvement of a student as a full panel member ensured a valuable

student perspective. The Panel particularly commended the insightful contribution made by the student representative to the review process. The entire Panel contributed to the production of the final Panel Report. Secretariat support from the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) was provided to the Panel throughout the process, and this greatly facilitated the Panel in formulating and agreeing the final Review Report.

2.2 Methodology and Timetable

The Panel met over three days in accordance with a timetable which was agreed in advance with the reviewers and the Director (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). The timetable enabled comprehensive engagement with the Director, staff of the Gallery, the Gallery Board, senior management at the University and other stakeholders.

The Panel also met with the current President of UCC and two former Presidents who have played significant roles in the development of the Gallery since its foundation in 2004, both as *ex officio* members of the Board. All three Presidents have provided institutional leadership to promote the Gallery's mission as a laboratory for academic and creative scholarship.

2.3 Site Visit

The site visit by the Peer Review Panel from 12-14 December, 2017, was well-organised and, while the schedule was very full, it did allow for some flexibility when required by the Panel. No direct meeting by the Panel with student representatives had been arranged; this should be facilitated in future reviews. The Site Visit comprised a tour of the Glucksman Gallery and *café*.

2.4 Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and SWOT Analysis

The SER provided by the Director was comprehensive and very well assembled and presented a clearly expressed mission and vision for the Gallery. The SER evidenced a comprehensive body of policies and information which enabled the Panel to gain a clear understanding of all aspects of the operation and governance of the Gallery. The SER also demonstrated extensive external engagement by the Gallery across a broad ecosystem of stakeholders (local, national and international). All full-time staff were involved in the benchmarking and SWOT processes, which identified strengths (e.g. achieving the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI) accreditation) and challenges for the Gallery *viz.* recognising and responding to a new generation of digital native learners. Particularly evident from both the SWOT and benchmarking exercises was the issue of capacity: the small team in the Gallery is clearly stretched to full capacity as it fulfils many roles and functions. Each team member operates an extensive range of skills and this demands considerable flexibility, adaptability, and personal dedication in each case.

2.5 Benchmarking

International benchmarking took place with the Whitworth Museum at the University of Manchester and the M Museum, a city museum in Leuven, Belgium. Staff at the Glucksman were both inspired and frustrated by this process, which demonstrated that the Gallery at UCC was performing very favourably despite being significantly under-resourced in comparison with the galleries visited (the Whitworth, for example, has 65 employees in contrast to the Glucksman's five core staff and 10 part-time or casual staff). The benchmarking process with the Whitworth Museum identified a number of areas which are comparable to the Glucksman mission, such as diversity of audience, visibility of learning, emphasis on visitor experience, and using the spaces beyond the museum walls (such as the gardens of the Gallery).

3. Overall Analysis

The Glucksman Gallery is a subsidiary company of the University, overseen by a Board operating according to a defined Memorandum and Articles of Association. This structure is considered by the Panel to be effective in enabling both the University and the Gallery to operate distinct complementary strategic and operational plans. For this structure to succeed, careful Board composition is required, as well as clear and open communication between Gallery and University.

The Glucksman Gallery “is its people” who form a highly motivated, hardworking, creative, and effective team. The Gallery has benefitted from excellent creative leadership vested in the Director who enjoys the support of an exceptionally talented and committed team and an active and enabling Board, especially the current Board. The Panel commends highly the performance of the Gallery especially when compared with much larger and better-resourced organisations. The Panel found unequivocal admiration on the part of all stakeholders for the Gallery staff. It was noted that, as with other areas of the University, restrictions in finance and employment have curtailed development and expansion, particularly in relation to staff numbers.

The Gallery is still at an early stage of development, having been founded only 13 years ago. Nevertheless, in this period, it has established a distinct identity as a contemporary gallery with a defined mission to represent and interpret contemporary art in an academic context. The Gallery’s engagement with the University is through a transdisciplinary approach which engages Schools and units across the University through co-curation and other innovative modes of collaboration. The Gallery has become highly responsive to the transdisciplinary agenda of the University; in the words of the Director “What was once perceived as a huge challenge has been an extraordinary moment of development, enabling bigger and more ambitious projects”. Many exhibitions receive substantial publicity, providing excellent opportunity for public dissemination of sometimes complex research findings. The Gallery also mounts a rich programme of activities around its exhibitions, often achieving strong successful civic and public engagement.

The Gallery has established a significant local, national, and international reputation. It received full accreditation on the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland in 2011 and retained this status in 2017. The MSPI guides its work in managing collections according to a recognised external quality framework.

The Panel found that the particular mission of the Gallery was clearly and convincingly enunciated by the Director and firmly supported by the Board. However, some stakeholders believed that the mission is too selective and unreceptive to the student body at UCC and the general public. The Panel believes that the Gallery needs to articulate its mission and adapt its programming, of exhibitions in particular, to accommodate greater student and public accessibility. The Panel believes that this can be achieved while maintaining the Gallery’s reputation for and compelling focus on the interpretation of contemporary art in the academic context.

While the Gallery has a strong external focus, the *raison d’être* of the University is to serve the student population – present and future. It was evident to the Panel that, while there is significant depth of engagement with those UCC staff and students who are directly involved in the various collaborative projects, there is scope for more effective engagement with more, and a broader selection, of students. This view was voiced by some representatives of

senior University management. The Panel believes that the Gallery and the University need to agree and clearly articulate the objectives and mission of the Gallery with a particular focus on improving engagement with students.

It was noted that a number of factors and opportunities are likely to impact positively on the Gallery over the coming years, including: closer alignment to the University's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022 which views the Glucksman as contributing to “cultural and artistic life [and] strengthening research, practice and learning in the creative arts”¹; the imminent opening of an actual and symbolic bridge at the Lower Grounds which links with other cultural institutions, such as Cork Public Museum; and new leadership at other major cultural institutions which will provide opportunities for renewed cross-city cultural partnership. This confluence of events provides the ideal moment for reflection and re-engagement.

4. Findings of the Panel

4.1 Unit Details Including Staff Profile

The Gallery staff comprises the Director and four full-time staff, with ten part-time and casual staff supporting the team from time to time. The small staff complement (in relation to the size of the operation) means that individual staff fulfil multiple simultaneous roles, not just at busy times during the changeover of exhibitions, but also in ICT, web-management, and marketing. Several key positions have been identified as critical to delivering “a world-class centre for interdisciplinary arts practice and collaborative research”² for a contemporary university gallery. Positions in operations, PR, and fund-raising were identified by the Director for filling, as well as the post of registrar in order to address the increasing demands of curating the University's art collection. A prioritised and budgeted staffing plan should be prepared to address the need to add these roles to the team over a five-year period.

4.2 Unit Organisation and Planning

It was noted that the Gallery Board performs a critical function in both overseeing the Gallery and representing it and the University externally. The Panel commends the current Board for its dedication and the exceptional level and quality of support that it provides to the Director. The Panel is of the view that the Board should continue to represent a comprehensive range of relevant interests and expertise, while also achieving closer alignment with the University by ensuring the voices of students and internal stakeholders can be heard. The Panel recommends that the Board should be expanded to include up to eleven members in order to incorporate academic staff and civic representation, specifically to include the UCC Registrar & Deputy President, UCC Corporate Secretary, and UCC Students Union President as *ex officio* members.

4.3 Internal Communication Across the Unit

It is evident that the Gallery team operates at a high level of mutual trust and collegiality and that communication within the team is excellent. The Director clearly provides strong and supportive leadership and staff in turn are highly supportive of the Director and the mission of the Gallery. This ethos of open communication and consultative decision-making is the product of each individual's dedication and professionalism, and it enables the team to achieve a remarkably high level of performance where the sum is many multiples of the individual parts.

¹ University Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022, P. 14

² SER p. 31

4.4 Strategic Planning

The timing of Gallery's new Strategic Plan offers an ideal opportunity for the Gallery Board and staff to reflect and align more closely to the values and mission espoused by the University in its Strategic Plan 2017–2022. The University, in turn, should avail of the opportunity to engage with the Gallery in forging a mutually agreed strategy for the Gallery. In addition, the University should work with the Director to ensure that she has greater access to senior University staff and decision-making bodies to enable her and her team to programme activities which address and meet University concerns and priorities.

4.5 Breadth and Depth of Stakeholder Reach

The Gallery's broad reach is impressive. Annual visitor figures indicate high levels of interest in exhibitions, events, and the café and shop — even though greater granularity of data would benefit planning and resourcing of these distinct activities. The distinctive architectural design of the building and its proximity to the main public entrance to the University must serve to attract considerable drop-in visitor interest.

The Gallery's exhibition programme is its main offering. Exhibitions typically aspire to positioning contemporary art practice alongside University research and enquiry. The Gallery has been highly successful in this respect, with some extremely popular exhibition topics and treatments, and a consistently high standard of artist representation. The Gallery is adept at sourcing and facilitating University disciplinary experts to participate in exploration and exhibition in a way which benefits all of those involved. This productive and successful approach should continue, however, a significant challenge for the Gallery will be to sustain this level of engagement and innovation with the academic community.

The SER reflects an outward-facing ethos which engages with a wide constituency of users across a broad range of communities, providing formal and informal learning opportunities for different age groups and including socially marginalised groups. The Gallery team is nimble and flexible and their programming indicates that the Gallery is socially aware and provides the space for the University to deliver its civic engagement mandate.

There is substantial depth to the nature of the engagement with the communities with whom the Gallery collaborates and this was commented upon by internal and external stakeholders. The challenge for the Gallery is to expand the breadth of stakeholder reach across the University and the wider community — but particularly with the general student body at UCC. The Panel is confident that the Gallery is fulfilling its artistic mission but this is not universally appreciated. The Gallery should ensure that they communicate the message in a more accessible manner to increase the elective engagement by students in expanding their own academic and personal encounters with the Glucksman.

It is appreciated that often the germ of an exhibition comes from a conversation, publication, or enquiry by an academic or research or service staff member of the University, and that this can lead to great success. However, there may also be scope for the Gallery to issue broad invitations to the academic community in order to attract disciplines which may not already have had contact with the Gallery to come forward with ideas and suggestions. Such a mode of engagement would be seen as democratic and inviting and could ensure a strong and competitive pipeline of exhibitions into the future. The Panel heard from a number of stakeholders the view that the Gallery could hold more single-artist exhibitions, as well as exhibitions which feature more recognisable artist names and artistic genres. The view was that such exhibitions would attract wider student and general public audiences

who may not be interested in contemporary art practice and therefore unwilling to engage with the Gallery at any level. The Panel suggests that the Gallery Board and Director consider staging a regular cycle of exhibitions of this kind with the explicit aim of increasing audience reach to UCC students and members of the general public who might not otherwise visit the Gallery. This approach should continue to serve the desired range of audiences from “first-time goers to international art experts”.³

4.6 Impact on student body (e.g. education provision, teaching and learning, student experience)

The SER states that “The Glucksman is committed to enhancing the student experience and being part of the reason why a student might choose UCC, value UCC and retain a connection with UCC”.⁴ Over the review period, the potential (sometimes untapped) of the Gallery to achieve this goal became apparent, however the issue of the communication of this “added value” across the spectrum of the University’s primary constituency (potential students to alumni) was not always apparent. The Panel is of the view that there are opportunities for the Gallery to bring an extra dimension that allows for graduates to be world ready and makes the UCC graduate distinctive by adding value to their education, and that this mission needs to be more widely communicated.

4.7 Staff development and workload

Staff workloads have already been referred to and there is no doubt that the high levels of output are attributable to the commitment of staff, who go well above and beyond the call of duty to achieve their work objectives. Staff have been working to increase visitor numbers to the Gallery and this has been achieved over the past few years as evidenced in the SER Appendix 11 (Visitor Numbers) which indicates increased footfall. However, increasing numbers brings additional work for the staff and the Panel acknowledges that this is unsustainable in the long-term. There is a need for additional staff to support and sustain the current outputs, but especially to expand the Gallery’s ambitious educational and artistic programme and its aspiration to be “a world-class centre for interdisciplinary arts practice”. Furthermore, in such a prolific environment, it is essential that individual staff members are sustained and nurtured in terms of their own professional development and progression. To that end, the Strategic Plan for the Gallery should facilitate the opportunity for relevant Continuous Professional Development, including exploring training possibilities with UCC HR.

4.8 Resources (staffing, physical, technical, other)

As with many other areas of the University, the Gallery has been impacted by austerity in relation to resourcing which has been substantially cut over the years and is now lower than it was in 2007.⁵ The Panel is cognisant of the need to develop the staffing levels. The Gallery has already presented a funding proposal to the University and the Panel supports and welcomes the University’s endorsement of that proposal. In addition, the Gallery needs to leverage opportunities for in-kind support across the University to include support for ICT and fund-raising (through engaging, for example, with the Development Office around philanthropic funding).

4.9 Engagement/compliance with external policy drivers

The Glucksman has already achieved MSPI accreditation which provides an external quality framework and informs the Gallery’s extensive policy in relation to all of its work. In

³ SER p.8

⁴ SER p.13

⁵ SER p.31

addition, the Gallery is in receipt of funding from external agencies and amongst its grants it is in receipt of admirable Arts Council of Ireland funding. Its policies therefore reflect current best practice for organisations working within the Arts.

4.10 Local quality assurance and enhancement activities, including those for feedback and evaluation of services

The Gallery undertakes visitor feedback surveys annually and participates in the *Here and Now Survey* (a study on arts audiences conducted by the Arts Council of Ireland in partnership with galleries and museums nationally). The Gallery should ensure that mechanisms are in place to capture the Gallery's engagement specifically with the student body in UCC and should also examine international best practice in relation to evaluation and feedback in the University setting. The Gallery should develop metrics to demonstrate delivery of its Strategic Plan.

4.11 Collaborative partnerships internally within the University

The Gallery set out in its last Strategic Plan to engage across the University with academic partners. This has largely been achieved. There is an opportunity for further partnerships with the wider student body and this could be achieved by, among other things, building on relationships with existing student societies such as the UCC International Development Society and the LGBT* Society.

4.12 External relations and partnerships

The Gallery has an established practice of engaging in external relations and with international partners. Appendix 5 of the SER provides a list of funding, cultural and community partners at local (UCC and Cork city), national and international levels. The Director has shared the Gallery's collaborative model of curatorial practice at symposia and conferences nationally and internationally.

4.13 Comment on the data provided through the annual monitoring processes (i.e. for measuring the quality and impact of the Unit's services and activities)

The Gallery should provide an Annual Report as part of a governance model to highlight the Gallery's achievements to internal and external stakeholders.

5. Recommendations for Enhancement

The Panel acknowledges the huge contribution that the Gallery staff have made in developing an identity for the Glucksman Gallery, and acknowledges the Gallery's necessary and productive independence, both structurally and artistically. The Panel is also cognisant that the Gallery's vision must align with that of the wider University, and intends that these recommendations to the Gallery and the University will speak to advancing that unity of mission.

5.1 Recommendations for the Gallery

The Panel recommends that the Gallery:

1. Develops a strategic plan for the Gallery, in alignment with the University's Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022, which articulates and communicates its vision and mission, and provides a "roadmap" and business plan for the implementation and appropriate resourcing of this plan
2. Develops an effective promotional and marketing strategy to communicate its core values and distinctiveness to all its audiences and potential audiences to include signage
3. Assesses the needs and opportunities for greater engagement across the continuum of student experience (prospective, undergraduate, postgraduate and alumni) on an academic and experiential level
4. Works with the Gallery Board to programme more single artist and broader-appeal exhibitions
5. Develops a mechanism (to be articulated in the strategic plan) to broaden engagement that informs decision-making around Gallery programming
6. Expands the potential for collaboration with the broader cultural offering of the city (e.g. Crawford Art Gallery, Public Museum etc.)
7. Enlists University services to further support the Gallery mission e.g. Marketing and Communications, the Development Office, Information Services etc.
8. Facilitates the opportunity for relevant professional development for staff
9. Develops metrics and KPIs to demonstrate delivery of its strategic plan, with particular reference to international best practice in University settings

5.2 Recommendations for the University

The Panel recommends that the University:

1. Articulates the University's vision and policy for the Glucksman, recognising the Gallery's distinct identity, mission, autonomy and contribution to civic engagement
2. Makes explicit how the Gallery could become central to the teaching and learning mission of the University
3. Clarifies the reporting line of the position of Director within the University
4. Seeks to include the Director/team members on appropriate bodies such as relevant Academic Council committees
5. Explores how the University can provide in-kind support to the Gallery e.g. the website, PR, Marketing and Development
6. Agrees a sustainable financial funding model with the Gallery
7. Expands the Gallery Board to include civic and academic representation, and to guarantee *ex officio* representation by the UCC Registrar & Deputy President, Corporate Secretary and Student Union representative

Appendix 1 Timetable

GLUCKSMAN GALLERY

PEER REVIEW PANEL SITE VISIT

Tuesday 12 December 2017	
12.00 – 12.30	Convening of Panel members Briefing by Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement, and Dr Kay Taaffe, Quality Enhancement Unit
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch and private meeting of Panel <i>Panel agree issues to be explored in meetings with the Director of the Glucksman Gallery.</i>
14.00 – 15.00	Ms Fiona Kearney, Director, Glucksman Gallery <i>(to be joined by the Administrator, Damian Jones at 14.40)</i>
15.00 – 15.45	Tour of the Glucksman facilities
15.45 – 16.15	Tea/coffee
16.15 – 17.00	Meeting with University Management Team members Professor Anita Maguire, Vice President for Research & Innovation Dr Ronan O'Dubhghaill, Vice President for External Relations Professor John O'Halloran, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning
17.00 – 18.00	Meeting with external stakeholders Ms Trish Brennan, CIT Crawford College of Art and Design Ms Fiona Kelly, Artist Ms Roseanne Lynch, Artist Mr Martin O'Donoghue, Cork Opera House Mr Kevin Corcoran, Designer of range of craft items inspired by Glucksman Ms Roz Crowley, Onstream Publications Ms Natasha Edmonson, Secondary Art Teacher Ms Maemie Lane, Senior Citizen Participant
19.00	Informal dinner for members of the Panel & staff members of the Glucksman Mr Chris Clarke, Senior Curator Mr Tadhg Crowley, Curator of Education Mr Damian Jones, Administrator Ms Fiona Kearney, Director Ms Sarah McAuliffe, Retail and Development Manager

Wednesday 13 December 2017	
08.45 – 09.00	Convening of the Panel
09.00 – 09.30	Members of UCC staff – artistic discussion Professor Nuala Finnegan, School of Languages & Literatures Dr Orla Murphy, School of English Dr Paul O'Donnell, School of Music & Theatre
09.30 – 10.00	Members of UCC staff – interdisciplinary discussion Professor John Cryan, Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience Dr Máire Leane, Dean, Office of Senior Vice President Academic and Registrar Professor John Quinn, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences
10.15 – 10.45	Ms Virginia Teehan, Director of Cultural Projects, UCC
10.45 – 11.45	Private meeting of the Panel (tea/coffee)
11.45 – 12.30	Glucksman Gallery staff Mr Chris Clarke, Senior Curator Mr Tadhg Crowley, Curator of Education Mr Damian Jones, Administrator Ms Sarah McAuliffe, Retail and Development Manager
12.30 – 13.00	Mr Rob Donelson, Executive Director, Development & Alumni Relations Dr Jean Van Sinderen-Law, Development & Alumni Relations
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch and private meeting of the Panel
14.00 – 14.30	Professor Gerry Wrixon (President Emeritus & Director)
14.30 – 15.15	Board Members Ms Paula Cogan Dr Brian Fay (conference call) Professor Caroline Fennell Dr Nicholas Fox Weber (conference call) Mr Lawrence O'Hana (conference call)
15.15 – 15.45	Private meeting of the Panel (tea/coffee)
15.45 – 16.15	Professor Patrick O'Shea, President
16.15 – 16.45	Mr Mark Poland, Buildings & Estates
16.45 – 17.15	Ms Helen Connolly, Glucksman Accountant

19.00	Working private dinner for members of the Panel to commence drafting the report.
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Thursday 14 December 2017	
08.45 – 09.00	Convening of the Panel
09.00 – 09.30	Professor Michael Murphy (President Emeritus & Director)
09.30 – 10.15	Ms Fiona Kearney, Director, Glucksman Gallery <i>Clarification and discussions of main findings by Panel.</i>
10.15 – 11.30	Tea/coffee and private meeting of Panel
11.30 – 12.00	Exit presentation to all staff.
12.00 – 15.00	Further work on drafting the final report (lunch)