



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

SCHOOL OF MUSIC & THEATRE

PEER REVIEW PANEL REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18

NOVEMBER 2017

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List of Panel Members

SCHOOL OF MUSIC & THEATRE

PANEL MEMBERS

Name	Position/Discipline	Institution
Professor Michael Alcorn	Professor of Music and Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	Queen's University Belfast
Dr Máire Leane (Chair)	Dean, Office of Senior Vice President Academic and Registrar	University College Cork
Dr Marian McCarthy	Director, Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (CIRTL)	University College Cork
Dr Dick McCaw	Senior Lecturer, Drama and Theatre	Royal Holloway, University of London
Mr Rory O'Donnell (Student Representative)	Students' Union Education Officer (2016-2017)	University College Cork

Peer Review

Methodology and Timetable

The Panel met over three days and the timetable enabled comprehensive engagement with staff, students, stakeholders, and with senior management at University and College level (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the timetable). The composition of the Panel provided broad coverage across the disciplines of Music and Theatre. Internal reviewers provided knowledge of the institutional and organisational structures within the University, while the student reviewer brought valuable insights and perspectives on student issues. The Panel commented on the great value of having the involvement of a Student Representative as a full Panel Member.

Site Visit

The Site Visit was well-organised and while the schedule was very full, it did enable some flexibility when required by the Panel. The Panel noted that meetings with Senior Representatives of the University were scheduled early in the programme, often before the key findings of the review have begun to emerge. The Panel suggests that these meetings should be scheduled later in the programme at which point the Panel would have formulated its preliminary recommendations, which could then be considered with the benefit of a strategic institutional perspective.

The Site Visit took in a tour of the facilities of the Departments of Music and Theatre, which are located at some distance apart, a factor which presents many challenges for both disciplines as shall be discussed in more detail in the body of this report. The Panel wishes to

thank the staff of the School for their open and constructive engagement with the review process before and during the Site Visit.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The SER was presented in two parts, representing the two discrete departments within the School, with a separate overview from the Head of School, Professor Jools Gilson. Despite this divide in presentation and the geographical distances across the University, a drive for increased cooperation across the School was evident, with the Head of School and Heads of Department collaborating and coordinating the final submission of the SERs. For future reference, it would be helpful for Panels if standardised data sets were agreed and a common structure for the submission of the SER is adopted across the University.

The Panel particularly noted the evaluative thrust and comprehensiveness of the report from the Department of Music, and the unusual but effective approach of having different staff members write a section, reflecting a “commitment to democratisation”. The appendices provided comprehensive evidence of a reflective approach to teaching and learning, and demonstrated effective and progressive teaching, learning and assessment practices, which are research-informed, student-centred and practice-based.

The Theatre SER opened with a strong statement on the challenges it faces and the limited institutional response to critical operational issues highlighted in the previous panel reports for Drama and Theatre Studies (DTS)¹. Despite the serious issues identified in relation to succession planning, space issues, etc. the Department noted that it has responded ...

constructively to the recommendations of previous review panels, engaged with a thorough review of the DTS curriculum, formed closer links within the School with Music, reached out to the wider community, made DTS more visible, generated additional income (for example, through our new Evening Courses) and develop new admin protocols².

The overview from the Head of School contextualises the developments and challenges that the School has faced in recent years. The main thrust of this overview lies in legacy staffing and space issues. However it also highlights many significant successes for both Departments, articulates a philosophy which “embod[ies] the *doing* of art practice as a way of being in the world, as research, as pedagogy”³, and presents a vision for the future which reflects a commitment to community engagement, including a ten-year partnership with Cork Opera House and the development of a Creative Hub within the University.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis was conducted independently of this formal review process, and in line with good practice for integrating quality processes, involved dedicated planning and review “away days” held in 2015-16 and 2016-17”. Findings of the SWOT were analysed and integrated appropriately into both SERs.

¹ The Department of Drama and Theatre Studies (DTS) was recently renamed as the Department of Theatre, therefore the School is now referred to as the School of Music and Theatre. This report will refer to the School and Departments by their new titles other than when citing direct references.

² Theatre SER, p.3

³ Overview of the Head of School, p.1.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking for the Department of Theatre was with Sussex University in the UK, chosen because of its similar size to the Department at UCC; and with the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) with whom the Department at UCC would be competing for students. It was noted that “soft” benchmarking is on-going with staff visiting other universities and Departments. The benchmarking highlighted that *“UCC is significantly under-resourced in particular with regard to space. However, in spite of this, DTS continues to deliver comparable programmes to both Sussex and NUIG”*.⁴

The institutions chosen for benchmarking by the Department of Music were Columbia College Chicago (CCC) and Northwestern University (Illinois) – the former chosen for its similar size to the Music Department at UCC, and the latter to compare and contrast with a more richly resourced organisation to which the Department at UCC could aspire. Comparisons with CCC and NU highlighted a significant gap in support within the Department at UCC for all administrative functions, with a particular shortfall in the organisation, management, PR and communication around artistic events which are run, not only by and for the School, but on behalf of the wider University and the broader community of Cork.

Developments since last review

The Departments were reviewed separately on previous occasions – Drama and Theatre in 2008, and Music in 2010. As noted above, both Departments have engaged constructively in implementing the recommendations of these Review Panels at Departmental and more recently, at School level. However, both Departments have expressed frustration at the inaction at College and University level to implement previous recommendations. While a Professorial appointment was made for Music, there have been significant losses at senior academic level through staff taking up positions in other universities and early retirement, which has meant that early career staff and part-time staff are required to fill these breaches. On a positive note however, nine staff from the School of Music & Theatre applied for progression across the bar in 2017 (two in theatre and seven in Music), and all have been successful.

The SER for the Department of Theatre highlighted a number of recommendations at University and College level that were made in the previous review in 2008, which have not been completed: namely issues around succession planning for the Department and access to specialised spaces for performance. The University’s Research Quality Review (RQR) report for the Department is cited as follows: *“the theatre facilities at UCC are among the worst – possibly the worst – [the RQR Panel] had seen at any university.”*⁵

Overall Analysis

Within the School of Music and Theatre, the two discrete departments have very different histories and profiles. The Department of Music has a long and distinguished history over 100 years, with eminent progenitors of national and international standing such as Fleischmann, Bax and O’Riada remembered within the culture of the Department. A key asset for the University is this unique history and the on-going cultural significance and impact of the Department on the life of the city. The Department of Theatre (formerly Drama and Theatre Studies) has a more recent history, with the undergraduate programme

⁴ Theatre SER, p.19

⁵ UCC Research Quality Review Report (2015) p.192.

having had its first intake in 2001 – 2002 under the Department of English, but it became an independent Department shortly after the last Peer Review in 2008. Nonetheless, the Department of Theatre has in this period “*boxed above its weight*” in terms of community and cultural engagement across the city, as was evidenced by the stakeholders who met with the Panel.

The difference in size of the Departments is also notable with staff and student numbers much greater in Music than in Theatre.⁶ Notwithstanding these differences, the commitment to collaboration and cooperation across the disciplines was noted. Consequently, in this report the Panel addresses the issues at School level, except where expressly noted, to support the School in the structural integration of the disciplines and to support the mission for knowledge-sharing and interdisciplinarity across the School.

The Panel, in the first instance, commends the enormously hardworking, dedicated and talented staff, including part-time staff who are taking on roles of significant responsibility within the School. The staff gave testimony to the positive impact of the strong leadership in both Departments provided by current Heads. The constructive and collegial engagement across the School is evidenced by the on-going development of school-level administrative structures and strategic priorities. The curriculum across the School takes an innovative approach, which foregrounds the scholarship of creativity and practice. Through the case-studies of good practice and the presentations made during the Site Visit, the Panel saw evidence of highly considered, research-led approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

The School has strong relationships with external professional and cultural stakeholders. There is evidence of excellent community and practitioner engagement across the city and region, e.g. with Music Generation Cork City, Cork Community Gamelan, Graffiti and the Everyman. There is an on-going commitment to high profile performance and scholarly activity, facilitated through Fuaim and Perforum, which enhances cultural life and informs professional arts practice within the city.

On the other hand the School in recent years has had, and continues to have, some serious challenges. A key concern of the Panel, which echoes those of previous Review Panels (including the RQR) and External Examiner Reports, is the lack of sufficient progress on the part of the University and College to respond to previous recommendations. There was particular concern around the provision of adequate teaching and performance spaces for the Department of Theatre (as indicated in the last two quality reviews). In addition, the lack of a security presence in the Music building compromises the safety of staff and students, and the security of valuable equipment. Furthermore, the Panel was of the strong view that there is a risk of significant reputational damage due to the lack of recurrent investment in resources and facilities.

Staff across the School reported high workloads. Within the Department of Music this was most acute for colleagues who are frequently working full-time hours on part-time contracts. The inadequacy of the part-time teaching budget in the Department of Music to meet the needs for sessional instructors (e.g. instrumental tutors) negatively impacts on the non-pay budgets available for equipment and essential instrument maintenance.

⁶ Total Staff FTE (Music) = 10.70 (8 full-time, 4 part-time [3 X 0.5 + 1 X 0.2] and one vacancy); Total Staff FTE (Theatre) = 6; Staff : student ratio (Music) = 12.29; Staff : student ratio (Theatre) = 15.31.

Despite the serious challenges faced by the School, the Panel was of the view that there are also huge opportunities for these Departments within the context of the University's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, which places “*creative scholarship and understanding*” at the centre of its vision and mission.⁷ This commitment would appear to be borne out in the appointment of a Professor of Creative Practice, who is now also Head of School. The School is central to realising the University's commitment to Creative Practice and the Creative Hub. At College level, the School is well placed to be a cohesive focal point for creative practice, potentially leading to a School of Creative Arts or Creative Practice. The Panel would, for example, see significant opportunities for academic and research synergies with Film and Screen Media particularly in relation to practice.

Externally, there are opportunities for the School to work collectively to maximise opportunities that exist in the creative industries, both regionally and nationally, and consequently an opportunity to explore philanthropic support for such possibilities in conjunction with the College and University.

Findings of the Panel

Unit details including staff and student profile

As previously referred to, the profile in terms of student and staff numbers between the Departments is very different. Music reported undergraduate numbers of 127 for the academic year 2016-17, with Theatre having 59 undergraduates enrolled in the same period. In that year, there were 19 students enrolled on Masters programmes in Music, but the taught MA programme in Theatre did not run since 2013 due to lack of enrolment. However, in the intervening period, the PG offerings have been reviewed and from 2018/2019 a new MA programme and a HDip programme in Theatre and Performative Practices will be offered along with a PhD in Creative Practice. In relation to enrolment and national trends, the statistical tracking by the School is commendable. The School provided details of the provenance of students enrolling in the School and, while it is evident that the main catchment areas are Cork and Munster, students are coming from across the country⁸. Given the small size of the Department of Theatre, the strength of the PhD research profile is to be commended and it was noted that there is interdisciplinary research taking place between Music and Theatre.

The Department of Music has 12 academic staff, although 4 of these have less than full-time contracts. In addition to the core academic staff, the Department has many tutors to support various elements of performance across many genres. The Department also hosts several post-doctoral staff and research affiliates; however, while the latter have access to departmental facilities and the Boole library, they do not have office space in the Department.

The Department of Theatre has 4 full-time permanent academic staff, one full-time on a two-year contract and a temporary Professorial secondment. The services of the administrative staff, of which there are three, are shared across the School.

Unit organisation and planning

The Panel acknowledged that as a School in transition with emerging structures, there is at present an overlap in relation to committees across the two Departments. The task of introducing School level administrative structures is compounded by the practical issue of

⁷ UCC Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, *Independent Thinking Shared Ambition*, p.3

⁸ 33% of CK104 students are Cork-based and in total 19 different geographic locations contribute students to the programme. Munster is strongly represented with a total of 68%.

location. This renders it difficult to manage school-wide committees, share teaching and research activities and to share administrative functions.

The case-studies of good practice for both Departments demonstrated quite distinct offerings and approaches, which provided opportunities for students to engage with working professionals. The Panel was of the opinion that there is potential to develop interdisciplinary site-specific projects across the School including opportunities for credit-bearing modules to capture the interdisciplinary-professional engagement (with dance, music and theatre) arising from the Perforum Series and other external engagement as exemplified by the work with Spike Island, Graffiti, Cork Community Art Link etc.

Strategic and curriculum planning

Across the School, there was a strong commitment to distinctiveness of programmes leading to a very broad range of module offerings and a commitment to further developing interdisciplinarity over time. The Department of Music prides itself on offering an *“exceptionally diverse and choice-rich curriculum, [which] strongly encourages multidisciplinary thought and practice”*. The Department has recently undergone a revision of its curriculum, not only to rationalise its offerings in terms of cost and resourcing but *“to increase choice and the ability of students to create paths through the curriculum that allow considerable specialisation”*.⁹ This on-going revision also extends to postgraduate level with, for example, streamlining taking place in the MA in Experimental Sound Practice (formerly entitled MA in Composition).

The Department of Theatre also undertook a revision of its undergraduate programmes in the 2016-17; while the content remains largely similar, there is a change in pedagogical approach, which places performativity as central and integrates theory and practice. The Panel would have concerns around the capacity to deliver the proposed new postgraduate programmes (MA and HDip in Theatre and Performative Practices) with the current staffing levels.

Teaching, learning and assessment

The SER and staff presentations during the Site Visit demonstrated a strong commitment to a wide range of pedagogies and assessment and the Panel was impressed by the highly considered, research-led approaches – including evidence of UDL (Universal Design for Learning) in practice. In keeping with the multifaceted nature of the discipline within the Department of Music, which incorporates scholarly, performance-based and compositional approaches, there is a commitment to exploring and developing new and innovative teaching practices and assessment methodologies.

The recent restructuring on the undergraduate programme in the Department of Theatre focused primarily on pedagogical approaches and, in particular the integration of theory and practice, with training no longer isolated but requiring and supported by a framework for critical thinking.

In addition to initiatives within the Departments the Panel noted that there was cross-departmental engagement, with the units already exploring and developing ideas around a shared curriculum.

⁹ Music SER, p.9

Research insofar as it impacts on teaching

The School is committed to interdisciplinarity, with research-led and practice-based teaching. The Department of Music has research partnerships at local, national and international levels, and achieved a high score in the University's RQR in 2015. In terms of research possibilities, both Departments within the School are outward-looking and there was evidence that the School engages with other disciplines across the College, for example with Film and Screen Media. Given the evidence of research in teaching and learning, and the commitment across the School to practice/performativity as both research and pedagogy, the Panel was of the opinion this good practice should be communicated more widely across the College and University. In addition, as leaders in Creative Practice, the staff might target publication of their work in international journals for Teaching and Learning.

The Traditional Irish Music archive is a huge asset to the School and the University and is currently being digitised. The archive of Traditional Dance, which is a treasure trove of artefacts, has significant potential for further work, but it is a private collection and is not presently available as a resource for research. Both archives are of international significance to the Institution and should be supported further to maximise their visibility, although the position of the Dance Archive is far from clear at this juncture

Student support (academic and pastoral)

Postgraduate students reported that there was very good support within the School in terms of facilities, and staff support and supervision. The opportunities to engage in research seminars, conferences and workshops were described as "outstanding". On the other hand, some postgraduates felt isolated because of the geographical distance between the Departments. Researchers in Theatre stated that they undertook their research within a "small cell" and would have welcomed more access for example, to the Granary Theatre and more formalised opportunities to meet those with shared research interests across the School. Postgraduate students reported that there were gaps in supports at College and University level with the PG6004 *Getting Started with Graduate Research and Generic Skills* module being of limited use for research in creative areas; bursaries for travel to conferences are small with students often having to pay expenses out of their own pockets. The Special Collections (Irish Music and Dance Archives) within the Department of Music were described as an excellent resource, although some researchers reported that there was inadequate resourcing of library materials such as scores etc. in the main Boole Library.

Undergraduates spoke of a highly supportive environment with an effective peer mentoring system in place to support first year students. The Theatre students commended the Department's "Tea Parties" which provided opportunities for social interaction.

With the reliance on visiting lecturers within the Department of Theatre, students reported varied quality in the delivery of modules, and this extended to, for example, the consistency of the use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Blackboard, for communication and access to notes and materials. The Panel would recommend that all lecturers, including visiting and part-time staff, are advised of and implement the School's standardised policies and procedures relating to communication with students and delivery of modules. It would also be advisable that visiting lecturers are invited and encouraged to engage with committees within the School and the University in matters relating to Teaching and Learning.

The issue of buildings and accommodation for both Departments, which will be discussed below, was a critical point for students, and some serious concerns around location, space, security, transport and isolation from the main campus, were highlighted. Amongst these the lack of access to properly equipped theatre-making spaces and the absence of a recording studio were highlighted by students. Opportunities for access to practice facilities are compromised because of students' concerns around the lack of security and safety in the Music building, particularly in the evenings.

Student achievement and employability

The range and number of stakeholders who attended the meeting with the Panel was a testament to the School's external engagement and to the esteem with which the School is held in the community and city. There was considerable support amongst the stakeholders for the broad educational ethos of the School which does not limit the employment potential of graduates to one profession – namely teaching. The Music Department reviews its entry requirements on an on-going basis with a view to identifying and addressing specific skills deficits (such as aural training) amongst incoming students.

Stakeholders for Theatre were of the view that extending the internship in the undergraduate programme would benefit students who would be more “work-ready” on graduation. In addition, the opinion was expressed that there should be a stronger focus on voice work on the programme.

It was noted that graduates of the School emerge with a broad concept of artistic activity, and demonstrate the commitment and the skills sets that are required for working in creative areas. Graffiti, for example, has employed over 20 graduates from Theatre, and Music Generation over 60 graduates from Music, and the general opinion was that these graduates were adaptable and professional, with notable attributes including flexibility, self-direction, dedication, commitment and autonomy. The point was expressed that graduates in the cultural sector need to have some entrepreneurial skills, not least for managing their own mixed port-folio careers.

While the broad approach of the School was welcomed, stakeholders did see a need for pathways towards specialisation, with students having the option to develop skills to a high level.

Staff development

The Report of the previous Review Panel for Music (2011) noted “significant staff morale problems” due to inadequate facilities, lack of promotion, high administrative workloads etc.; while these refer to Music, the situation in Theatre was no better, with their lack of facilities and space being even more acute. Many of the circumstances referred to have not changed in the interim – indeed Music has lost three staff members to Professorships elsewhere – and in this environment, the SER reports that plans for staff development remain challenging. The Panel was impressed by the apparently highly motivated staff who appear to be self-directed in terms of their academic and research development, but had concerns that colleagues who have related opportunities, such as book publication contracts, do not have the time to fulfil these commitments due to their excessive teaching and administrative work-loads.

It was noted, for example, that staff shoulder a huge burden in the organisation and management of the external creative output for the University as a whole, through FUAIM and Perforum, and the Panel was of the opinion that appropriate administrative resources

should be put in place for this, to allow academic staff more space for research and academic activity.

Resources (staffing, physical, technical, other)

For some time, the issue of resources has been and remains an on-going risk for the School on many levels, with both Departments having different requirements which are critical to their Departments' functioning. These risks have been highlighted by previous review panel members, by external examiners, by staff and students, and now again are being raised by this Panel.

One of the most significant challenges (and posing risk to future enrolment) for the Department of Theatre, is the lack of opportunity for performance on-site due to a lack of access to appropriate theatre facilities for their programmes. In a discipline which requires students to be highly self-directed, it was reported that they are frequently working in inappropriate spaces – even out-of-doors – to fulfil the requirements of their programme. Another “tactic” that students are required to employ to overcome this lack of space is adapting to “site-specific” work taking into account whatever facilities become available to them. While this has some merits in terms of learning, it does not enable students to gain the technical skills required for working in a proper theatre environment. In some instances, the Panel observed that certain equipment available in Theatre was not accessible due to lack of adequate Health & Safety training and testing. The Panel would share the opinion of the Department that the ideal solution is priority access to the Granary Theatre under the auspices of CACSSS. However, the Panel also recognises that this resource is unlikely to be available in the short-term, and an intermediary solution is required.

The space issue for Theatre not only applies to appropriate theatre facilities, but also to teaching, rehearsal and performance space. The Department urgently needs a second designated practice space and has identified a space in the Connolly building (Conn A); the Panel recommends that this space is made available to the Department of Theatre until access to the Granary Theatre has been secured.

In relation to the Music building in Sunday's Well, it was reported that many of the facilities and services which were initially supplied by the University when the Department was relocated to this site, have been eroded over the years. The Panel noted that there were, at this point, many significant shortcomings in relation to the suitability of the building in its current state. Aside from basic issues such as heating and structural repairs which are required, a fundamental issue is the lack of compliance of the building in meeting the requirements for access to basic facilities for students with disability. The Panel notes the responsibility of the University in this regard to meet the Public Sector Duty requirements and those outlined in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

Students highlighted other issues with regard to the suitability and location of the Music building; in particular, there was a concern around security in the building, given the withdrawal of a security presence (which had been in place when the Music Department first relocated). Students reported that they did not feel safe staying in the building after dark due to the absence of a security presence, which, in turn, limited their access to practise spaces and other facilities within the Department.

The distance of the Music building from the main campus and from the Department of Theatre is a challenge for students in terms of getting to lectures. Many students are undertaking joint studies in these disciplines and lectures are sometimes scheduled

consecutively in the different Departments. The distance from the Music building to the main campus is at least 25 minutes' walking, consequently students are frequently late and rushing from one location to another – carrying bags, laptops and expensive instruments.

There was a concern on the part of the Panel around the availability of adequate resources to equip and maintain the instruments and other technical equipment in the Department of Music. The Panel noted that a recurrent and appropriate equipment budget is essential for maintaining the valuable assets and to enhance recording capabilities within the Department. The lack of such investment poses a risk for future enrolment in terms of attracting undergraduate, postgraduate and international students. Of particular note is the lack of a professional quality recording facility in the building. The absence of this level of resource impacts negatively on the curriculum and undermines the recruitment potential of the School.

Local quality assurance and enhancement activities

The Panel was satisfied that appropriate quality assurance and enhancement processes are in place at local level, and that feedback from students and external examiners is acted upon. The Music SER noted that, despite the challenges faced by the Department in recent years, staff have, under current leadership, shown “astonishing enthusiasm” for enhancing the position of the School. The following initiatives have been implemented in the past year:

Publicity has been greatly increased; communication with students improved; curricular reform has resulted in gains in efficiency and curricular delivery for First Year, and is in progress for the remaining years. Administrative structures have been revised and administrative responsibilities shared more equally; committees have been revised and their relationship to the central Staff Meeting group and to the Head of Department altered.¹⁰

Academic collaborative partnerships

While there are some notable academic partnerships in place, these appear to be individual *ad hoc* projects relating to staff/students exchanges and collaboration rather than formal programme-level initiatives (e.g. with Wesleyan College in the US); such affiliations could be more strategically leveraged with both national and international partners. For example, the Panel noted that, taking account of the particular reputations of UCC and CIT in the domains of research and performance respectively, the School should consider the potential of joint doctoral programmes with CIT. Such an initiative is likely to get support and traction at management level within the University as it is in line with the overall strategic mission of the University and the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and precedents have already been set with a number of existing joint programmes between the two institutions in other disciplines.

External relations

External community relations are very good locally as evidenced at the meeting with stakeholders and staff are widely engaged with external professional organisations. The ten-year partnership with Cork Opera House is highly commended, presenting very exciting potential for the School. The Panel would recommend that the School continues to develop potential in the creative industries and examines potential for university collaborations with local SMEs – for example, in relation to work-placements, research funding, provision of training to industry etc.

¹⁰ Music SER, p.3

Case Study of Good Practice

The Panel commended the case study of good practice presented by the Music Department. Entitled “Public Learning Projects as Innovative, Research-Based Class Accomplishments”, this piece outlines a strategy which enables students incorporate an evidence-based approach, building on their own learning “within and beyond the academy”. An interesting feature of this case study was the foreword by the Head of Department which demonstrated a commitment, at School level, to developing innovative practices with facilitate learning, teaching and research to happen “between” the traditional disciplinary boundaries of scholarly, performance-based and compositional approaches.

Confirmation that programme provision is still located correctly on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

Undergraduate Programmes:

Theatre:

BA in Drama and Theatre Studies (CK112) – with four possible pathways: Single Honours; Joint Subject; International; with Music.

Music:

BA Arts-Music (CK104) – with three pathways after first year: Arts-Music (3years); BMus (4 years); International (4years)

BA in Music and Drama and Theatre Studies

BA in Music and Chinese Studies

Postgraduate Programmes:

Theatre:

MPhil/PhD

Music:

MA Ethnomusicology

MA Music and Cultural History

MA Digital Music and Media Composition

MA in Experimental Sound Practice

MA Music Performance

HDip Arts Music

MPhil Composition

PhD Composition

The School is in compliance.

Compliance with European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – Part 1

The School is in compliance.

Recommendations for Enhancement

Recommendations for the University

The Panel recognises the importance of aligning the strategic planning for the School in the context of the University's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022 and envisages that the University will play a key role in advising and supporting the School through the current period of transition and development. In that light, the Panel recommends that the University:

1. Clarifies to the School, the University's plan to realise the commitment to the Creative Hub as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022, including detail relating to provision of a building and anticipated funding streams
2. Recognises the centrality of the School to realising the University's commitment to Creative Practice and the Creative Hub, and resources and supports the School in accessing funding through philanthropic or other sources to achieve this
3. Responds to the pressing resource, staffing and space issues identified by the College as a result of this review process
4. Addresses Health & Safety and accessibility issues across the School, and in particular expedites a resolution to the lack of a security presence in the Music building
5. Resources the cultural programmes (Fuaim and Perforum) provided by the School for the benefit of the wider University and civic community
6. Ensures adequate resourcing for the maintenance of the School's valuable archives which are of international significance

Recommendations for the College:

Having considered the key recommendations for the University and the critical role of the College in supporting strategic development within the School, the Panel recommends that the College:

1. Takes urgent action on the serious resource, staffing and space issues in the School of Music & Theatre
2. Addresses the issue of the performance/theatre space for the Department of Theatre in the short-term
3. Engages with the School to develop a business case for a Head of Theatre post identified by the School as a strategic need to scaffold new income generating initiatives
4. Explores the possibilities for academic and research synergies with other disciplines engaged in creative arts practice, for example Film and Screen Media, which could lead to the establishment of a School of Creative Arts or Creative Practices

Recommendations for the School:

The Panel recommends that the School:

1. Focuses on School level synergies rather than separate Departmental structures
2. Consolidates recent planning and work to date through the development of a staged strategic plan (1, 3 and 5 years) which should include actions to:

- Implement already existing plans for cross-school modules
 - Implement school-level committee structures in relation to teaching and learning, research and innovation, communication and recruitment, and graduate studies
 - Distribute administrative staff to reflect staff and student numbers across both sites
 - Implement a sustainable plan for sabbaticals to ensure adequate teaching and administrative cover
3. Liaises with the Head of College and the College Financial Analyst to articulate the rationale and business case for a key strategic post to address leadership needs in the School
 4. As a result of this review, brings forward a space plan to the College for the development of Conn A and ultimately the Granary Theatre as teaching/performance spaces
 5. Develops a case to the University for administrative support for Fuaim and Perforum
 6. Leverages the significant research capacities of the School to profile the distinctive contribution that creative practice can make to all disciplines across the institution
 7. Ensures that all staff, including visiting and part-time staff, implement the School's standardised policies and procedures in relation to communication with students (including use of the University's VLE, Blackboard)
 8. Highlights the School's commitment to innovative pedagogy, assessment, practice and performativity and where appropriate, seek opportunities to publish this work in international journals for Teaching and Learning
 9. Taking account of the particular reputations of UCC and CIT in the domains of research and performance respectively, considers the potential of joint doctoral programmes with CIT

Appendix 1 Timetable

SCHOOL OF MUSIC & THEATRE

PEER REVIEW PANEL SITE VISIT

Tuesday 14 November 2017	
12.00 – 14.00	Convening of Panel members. Briefing by Director of Quality Enhancement and the Quality Enhancement Advisor, followed by lunch.
14.00 – 15.30	Meeting with Head, School of Music & Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to be joined by Head of Music at 14.40 - to be joined by School Manager at 15.10
15.30 – 16.00	Tea/coffee <i>Panel agree tasks and prepare for meetings with Head of School, Head of College and Stakeholders</i>
16.00 – 16.50	Meeting with Head of College (to be joined by the College Financial Analyst at 16.30)
17.00 – 18.00	Meeting with Stakeholders Music Teacher Actor, Alumni Former Teaching Staff Representative from Graffiti Theatre Company Representative from Cork Opera House Representative from CIT Representative from Everyman Theatre Representative from Music Generation Drama Course Co-ordinator, Kinsale College Representative from CSN <i>The Panel meets with past graduates, employers of graduates and other stakeholders as appropriate to discuss views on the quality of education received and the quality of the graduate attributes.</i>
19.00	Informal dinner for members of the Panel & staff members of the School

Wednesday 15 November 2017	
09.00 – 09.15	Convening of the Panel
09.15 – 14.30	Venue: Bax Room, 2nd Floor, Music Building

09.15 – 10.15	Meeting with School staff <i>Discuss issues such as strategy, communications, research & education, staffing, teaching & learning, curriculum & assessment.</i>	
10.15 – 10.45	Tea/coffee	
10.45 – 11.30	Enhancing Student Learning Experience <i>Opportunity for the School to showcase good practice and enhancements to the student learning experience (e.g. student feedback, staff development, graduate outcomes).</i>	
11.30 – 12.15	Tour of facilities (Music)	
12.15 – 13.15	Lunch and private meeting of the Panel	
13.15 – 13.45	Representatives of Postgraduate students The Panel met with representatives for both Departments	
13.45 – 14.15	Representatives of 1 st and 2 nd year students The Panel met with representatives for both Departments	Representatives of 3 rd and 4 th year students The Panel met with representatives for both Departments
14.15 – 15.00	Tour of facilities (Theatre)	
15.00	Return to Tower Room 1	
15.15 – 15.45	Tea/coffee	
15.45 – 16.30	Meeting with Senior Officers of the University: Vice President for Research & Innovation Manager, Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL)	
16.30 – 17.30	Meeting with Programme Directors/Chairs of Boards of Studies <i>Discussion on monitoring and review of programmes to include indicatively, student progression, assessment, External Examiner reports, external accreditation/recognition (where appropriate), supports for learners, placement (where appropriate).</i>	
19.00	Working private dinner for members of the Panel to commence drafting the report	

Thursday 16 November 2017	
08.45 – 09.00	Convening of the Panel
09.00 – 09.45	Meeting with Senior Vice President Academic & Registrar
10.00 – 10.45	Meeting with Head of School <i>Clarification and discussions of main findings by Panel.</i>

11.00 – 12.00	Private meeting of Panel (tea/coffee)
12.00 – 12.30	Exit presentation <i>Exit presentation to all staff, to be made by the Chair or other member(s) of Panel as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Panel. This presentation is <u>not</u> for discussion at this time.</i>
12.30	Return to Tower Room 1
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 16.00	Further work on drafting the final report