



**University College Dublin**

**REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

**Periodic Quality Review**

**UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy**

**June 2017**

**Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting on 20 February 2018**

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## **Key Findings of the Review Group**

The Review Group (RG) has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within the School of Art History and Cultural Policy, and also areas which the RG would highlight as requiring improvement. The main section of this Report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the RG in more detail. An aggregated list of all commendations and recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

### **Examples of Good Practice**

The RG identified a number of commendations, in particular:

1. The outstanding collegial atmosphere of the School as well as a strong spirit of co-operation.
2. High quality degree programmes and the provision of learning opportunities for students from a variety of backgrounds and interests.
3. Research outputs of consistently high standard, production rate and over an impressive variety of platforms.
4. Excellent connections and co-operation with the Arts community at home and internationally.
5. A Cultural Policy degree programme with a strong reputation for meeting the needs of cultural institutions for highly qualified managers.

### **Prioritised Recommendations for Improvement**

The full list of recommendations is set out in Appendix 1, however, the RG would suggest that the following be prioritised:

1. The School should become more proactive in outlining and articulating its needs, engaging with College authorities to identify strategic solutions, and demonstrating how these solutions might advance College and University as well as School goals and strategic priorities.
2. The School is urged to develop a spatial strategy that conveys its current spatial limitations. This should include potential solutions in consultation with the College and University.
3. As outlined in this report, the School should review its staff planning strategy, linking its current and future staffing needs to the School plan and vision, expressed in terms of growth in student numbers. The School is encouraged to prioritise an appointment in Cultural Policy and, in parallel, to begin the process of succession planning to ensure continued leadership in this area. The plan should also address strategic staffing issues in Art History.

In order to facilitate meaningful staff planning the School is urged as part of this process to work on achieving greater clarity and control of its income and expenditure.

4. As a successful teaching unit with a healthy flow of research output the School may have more leadership potential than it realises and is accordingly advised to adopt a higher profile. It should be confident in offering progressive leadership and innovation to the various communities with which it interacts, both within the University and beyond.
5. The School is urged to build on its excellent relationships with cultural institutions and former students by engaging with them to identify and devise strategies and initiatives that might benefit from their enthusiasm for greater involvement with the School.

## **1. Introduction and Overview of UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy**

### ***Introduction***

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a quality review of the School of Art History and Cultural Policy (hereinafter referred to as SAHCP), University College Dublin, which was undertaken on 28 February – 3 March 2017. The School response to the Review Group Report is attached as Appendix 2.

### ***The Review Framework***

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, and international good practice (e.g. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015). Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.
- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learning from this developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:
- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning.
  - To monitor research activity, including: management of research activity; assessing the research performance with regard to: research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
  - To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
  - To provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
  - To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
  - To inform the University's strategic planning process.
  - The output report provides robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.
  - The process provides an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.

- To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality procedures enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

### ***The Review Process***

1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:

- Preparation of a self-assessment report (SAR)
- A visit by a RG that includes UCD staff and external experts, both national and international. The site visit normally will take place over a two or three day period
- Preparation of a review group report that is made public
- Agreement of an action plan for improvement (quality improvement plan) based on the RG report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the improvement plan

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: [www.ucd.ie/quality](http://www.ucd.ie/quality).

### ***The Review Group***

1.5 The composition of the RG for the UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy was as follows:

- Professor Muiris O'Sullivan, Emeritus Professor, UCD School of Archaeology(Chair)
- Associate Professor Grace Morgan, UCD School of Chemistry (Deputy Chair)
- Professor Constance DeVereaux, Colorado State University, USA (Extern)
- Professor Brian Foss, Carleton University, Canada (Extern)

1.6 The RG visited the School from 1 – 3 March 2017 and held meetings with School staff; undergraduate and postgraduate students; graduates, employers, the SAR Co-ordinating Committee; other University staff, including the Dean of Arts and College Principal, and a representative from NCAD. The site visit schedule is included as Appendix 3. All members of the Review Group participated in all discussions and meetings.

- 1.7 In addition to the Self-assessment Report, the RG considered documentation provided by the School and the University during the site visit.
- 1.8 This Report has been read and approved by all members of the Review Group.

### ***Preparation of the Self-assessment Report (SAR)***

- 1.9 Following a briefing from the UCD Quality Office, a Self-assessment Report Co-ordinating Committee (SARCC) was established comprising all members of staff. Regular meetings between School representatives and the Quality Office took place during the preparation of the report. A School SWOT was also undertaken by all members of the School. Members of the committee drafted sections of the Self-assessment Report in consultation with other staff. All School staff had an opportunity to contribute and provide feedback to the report draft.
- 1.10 The SAR was prepared in the period January 2016 – January 2017. The SAR was submitted to the UCD Quality Office on 31 January 2017.
- 1.11 It was clear to the RG that the School had engaged actively with the self-assessment process in producing the SAR and its appendices.

### ***The University***

- 1.12 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origins date back to 1854. The University is situated on a large modern campus about 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.
- 1.13 The University Strategic Plan (to 2020) states that the University’s mission is: “to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential”.

The University is currently organised into six colleges and 37 schools:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities
- UCD College of Business
- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
- UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences

- UCD College of Social Sciences and Law
- UCD College of Science

1.14 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering and Architecture, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 26,000 students in our UCD campus (approximately 16,300 undergraduates, 7,800 postgraduates and 2,200 Occasional and Adult Education students) registered on over 70 University degree programmes, including over 6,300 international students from more than 121 countries. The University also has over 5,400 students studying UCD degree programmes on campuses overseas.

### ***UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy***

1.15 UCD's SAHCP is situated in the Newman Building on the Belfield campus.

1.16 SAHCP is one of seven schools in the College of Arts and Humanities. It is one of the smaller schools in the University, offering modules at undergraduate level in Art History, and the part-time Diploma in European Painting. The School offers two MA programmes at postgraduate level in Art History, and Cultural Policy and Arts Management.

1.17 The School has 200 undergraduates (joint majors), 46 postgraduates, and 31 diploma students. The School attracts strong interest from international students, particularly at the graduate level.

1.18 The School currently has 8 full-time and 1 half-time permanent faculty (one Professor of Art History, 2 Associate Professors, 6 Assistant Professors/Lecturers), 2 permanent full-time administrative/support staff (one School Administrator and one Slide Curator).

1.19 The School has a well-developed strategy aligned to the College and University strategy which is focused on enhancing research, education and engagement.

## **2. Organisation and Management**

### ***General Comments and Context***

2.1 The SAHCP is one of seven schools in the College of Arts and Humanities, four of which are significantly bigger in student numbers and staffing. However, the faculty-student ratio is in keeping with other schools within the College.

2.2 The School is organized into two overlapping parts with two heads of subject, who rotate as Head of School. A support and committee structure is in place to manage the operations of the School and appears to be working well. Key staff roles are allocated at the beginning of the academic year, with some carryover.

- 2.3 The small size of the School imposes heavy additional duties on staff who, in other circumstances, might have more time for embellishing their already impressive research profiles and gaining even greater international recognition.
- 2.4 The School is well represented on College, University and external committees and this was very evident in the SAR. However, it was unclear to the RG whether School members had leadership roles on any of these various committees and boards, particularly external, and their impact.
- 2.5 The School has a workload model in place which is working well. Each staff member teaches four modules a year, with the exception of the School Head (three modules) and the part-time member of staff (two modules). The School has indicated that a review of the model is planned and the Review Group would support this review.
- 2.6 The School has a research leave policy in place with each member of staff eligible to take leave every eighth semester.
- 2.7 A Staff-Student Consultative Forum is in place which meets twice yearly and is working effectively.
- 2.8 The School has identified the need to grow student numbers and income in its strategic plan through a number of key initiatives. The growth in undergraduate numbers is particularly attributed to the introduction of new module offerings which are proving attractive to Study Abroad students. Other growth areas include the Diploma in European Painting and Exchange and Open Learning, while the numbers at Master's level remain strong and constant reflecting the highly personalized approach adopted by the School in recruitment.
- 2.9 The review has identified staffing gaps and has made recommendations accordingly under Section 3.
- 2.10 Oversight for the School budget is managed between the two heads of subject and monitored by the School Administrator. Regular meetings are held with the College Financial Officer to review budgets.
- 2.11 The Head of School has struggled to understand the seemingly fluctuating financial balance of the unit. In a meeting with the College Finance Manager the RG likewise struggled to establish clearly how a significant deficit reported in the Self-Assessment report had become a surplus by the time of the site visit. These difficulties in conjunction with the fixing of budgets from 1<sup>st</sup> October, some weeks into the academic year, hinder good financial planning.

### **Commendations**

- 2.12 The School operates efficiently in a collegial fashion, and it seems to the review team that the senior Professor in the School provides excellent intellectual leadership and plays a significant role in supporting the Head of School.
- 2.13 The School has been proactive in identifying potential areas for student growth and income generation through the introduction of new module offerings.

- 2.14 The School has an internal research leave arrangement in place with staff eligible for leave every eight semester.
- 2.15 The School is to be commended for the personalized approach in operation on postgraduate student recruitment.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.16 The School is encouraged to establish a small finance committee chaired by the Head of School and reporting to staff meetings, in order to provide the Head of School with assistance in financial monitoring and planning and to draw on the best expertise in the School while inducting potential future Heads into the process.
- 2.17 The School recognizes the need to review its current workload model and the RG would support this.
- 2.18 The RG recommends that the School continues to review and identify opportunities to grow student numbers and to build on current successes. The School should work with the incoming College Marketing and Communications Manager in raising the profile, reputation and impact of its programmes as well as identifying opportunities for collaboration and growing student numbers.
- 2.19 The School is exhorted to examine how it might achieve a higher profile for its active participation on committees and projects across the University and beyond. It should seek opportunities to lead on these initiatives and, using its website and other means of communication, to highlight for the University and society the valuable contribution it is making in these realms.

## **3. Staff and Facilities**

### ***General Comments***

#### **A. Staff**

- 3.1 The RG met with all faculty and administrative/support staff during the site visit, including a meeting specifically with newly appointed academic staff. Temporary or occasional lecturers are employed for lectures, single modules or semester long contracts as required.
- 3.2 As outlined in 1.18 the School currently has 8 full-time and 1 half-time permanent faculty and two 2 permanent full-time administrative/support staff. Tutors are employed annually to teach tutorials and first and second level.
- 3.3 As reported in the SAR, the School has a reasonably good balance of Irish and non-Irish staff, most Irish lecturers either being non-UCD graduates or having taken graduate degrees, fellowships or post-doctoral research positions overseas.

- 3.4 The School has recently made a full-time lecturer appointment in Irish Early Modern, and a half-time lecturer in Art History with strong curatorial experience.
- 3.5 The gender balance within the School is in line with University policy, with 5 female academic staff to 4 male, and two female non-academic staff. The School adheres to the University's policies on Health and Safety; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and the University's Athena Swan Charter.
- 3.6 The School has three adjunct professors. – the directors respectively of the Chester Beatty Library, Irish Museum of Modern Art, and the Hugh Lane Gallery.
- 3.7 It is clear from the information provided by SAHCP that the School has exceeded its current space and staff. This includes not only growth in enrolment (for which Cultural Policy is the primary mover), but also in terms of needs that keep pace with fields of expertise, demands of technology and changes in the physical environment, primarily aging facilities in the current working environment.
- 3.8 In particular, the RG noted that there were too few staff for the number of students in Cultural Policy.
- 3.9 The age profile of the staff spans late 30s to early 60s. Three current staff members will retire over the next ten years. A key academic staff member in Cultural Policy will be retiring within the next 5 years.
- 3.10 The School's Slide Curator, who took up her position in 1998, is now managing the transition from hard slides to IT-based teaching and has a general profile that extends considerably beyond her original job description. She came to UCD from a teaching position elsewhere and is actively involved in publishing, teaching, management of the Reading Room, tutor coordination, Erasmus coordination and preparation of various student-related handbooks.

### **Commendations**

- 3.11 Members of academic staff are well known in their field and are well-regarded by students and outside stakeholders. In this way, SAHCP is an asset to the College and to the University.
- 3.12 School staff represent a healthy intellectual balance of Irish and non-Irish staff and a commendable mix of UCD and non-UCD academic backgrounds
- 3.13 There is opportunity not only to maintain but to increase the reputation of SAHCP through key hiring of academic staff over the next 5-year period.

### **Recommendations**

- 3.14 The School should revisit its staff planning strategy as articulated in its SAR and 2015 Strategic Plan. This staff planning process should include succession plans for key appointments, identifying prioritized area(s) for enhancement and growth that are aligned to the vision of the School, College and University. Key performance indicators should be

linked to these objectives, and posts prioritized with associated timelines and monitoring mechanisms. Any post increases should be linked to student numbers and a strategic recruitment plan that addresses the needs and mission of the School in the context of College and University priorities. It is important for success in this process that the School works closely with College administration in formulating and implementing a strategic blueprint that articulates the need for these investments and the expected value to be gained from them. Proactive generation of such strategic material by the School would minimise reliance on assumptions about staffing in dealings between SAHCP and both the College and University.

- 3.15 The School should create and implement a succession plan for the key academic staff member in Cultural Policy. The plan will ensure continuity for Cultural Policy and provide stability in the programme.
- 3.16 In the short term the School needs an immediate second post for cultural policy to secure the programme, but over the medium term this should be underpinned by a further appointment. Hiring should be at sufficient stature not just to replace current staff on retirement but also to maintain the reputation of the programme. To satisfy capacity properly, Cultural Policy should consider expanding academic staff to 2 full-time and 1 half-time posts.
- 3.17 With two upcoming retirements in Art History staff over the next decade it is critical that the current complement of Art History staff is maintained. The Review Group would also support School growth in the following areas of expertise: *Modernist Irish* and *Islam*.
- 3.18 The Review Group recommends that the School might consider, in consultation with the current post holder as well as College and University authorities, a review of the job title and job description of the Slide Curator so that they more accurately define the varied and remarkable contribution of the post-holder to the School and open up opportunities for advancement to reflect this contribution, not least in the use of information technology.
- 3.19 The School should consider applying for a School Athena Swan Award following the recent Institutional Athena Swan Bronze Award.

## B. Facilities

### **General Comments:**

- 3.20 As noted in 3.7 it is clear that the School has exceeded its current space requirements due to growth in enrolment (for which Cultural Policy is the primary mover), but also in terms of needs that keep pace with the fields of subjects taught, demands of technology, and changes in the physical environment (ageing facilities).

- 3.21 There are many spaces where doors are regularly locked due to the School's location and to ensure the security of offices. This may have an impact on the visibility of SAHCP and inhibit access to the offices of some staff members.
- 3.22 A number of offices visited by the RG had been sub-divided and were extremely cramped.
- 3.23 The availability of Newman House as a teaching and event space to the School is a valuable resource to the School. The RG also noted the key role of goodwill from the present Curator of Newman House in this arrangement. The RG further noted that the Newman House will be unavailable for a period of time while undergoing renovations for the UCD Ulysses Centre.

**Commendations:**

- 3.24 SAHCP has done a lot with a little. Staff have maintained high levels of research activity, high integrity in teaching, and high satisfaction among students despite facilities that do not adequately live up to the demands.

**Recommendations:**

- 3.25 As a matter of priority the School needs to develop a spatial strategy document that articulates its needs, especially in terms of student growth in enrolment, and the priorities set by the College and the University. While the spatial strategy will be developed in conjunction with College and University authorities, the School is encouraged to take a lead in articulating the value of the initiative in terms that align with College strategy, and keeping the issue on the agenda thereafter.
- 3.26 The first issue to address is whether the present location of the School is fit for purpose in terms of visibility, spatial organisation and capacity. Out of this analysis will come a decision on whether to renovate the existing space or seek re-location to a more suitable space.
- 3.27 If the School intends to remain in its current location it should be innovative in renovating space use in line with present instructional needs and future capacity. Simultaneously it should examine spaces elsewhere that might augment the current SAHCP space.
- 3.28 The School is recommended to be proactive in its approach to the Newman Building redevelopment both in terms of contribution and benefit.
- 3.29 The Review Group recommends that the School engage actively in ensuring its continuing access to Newman House as a teaching and event space, particularly as a teaching space for the MA in Art History, and as a co-teaching space with NCAD. In building a case, it should explore the value of this approach to Newman House and UCD as well as the School.
- 3.30 The School is very active in its use of online facilities, resources and social networking to communicate with students, alumni and friends of the School. The School should seek to explore opportunities to build on its impact and outreach as a means of marketing its programme offerings and strengthening its links with alumni.

## 4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### *General Comments and Context*

- 4.1 The School offers Art History modules across the BA undergraduate programme, two one-year taught MA programmes (one in Art History and the other in Cultural Policy & Arts Management), and a two-year part-time Diploma in the History of European Painting. It offers the largest and most comprehensive Art History programmes in Ireland, while the Cultural Policy & Arts Management MA is a popular and well-managed programme attracting students from Ireland and overseas, with 60%-70% of graduates in cultural policy or arts administration employment three years after graduation.
- 4.2 By international standards, student numbers have weathered the fallout from the financial crisis of the past decade. Whereas many universities internationally have become accustomed to falling annual enrolment levels, the UCD first-year BA History of Art enrolments are healthy, and have even indicated a significant increase since 2015/16. MA enrolments have remained quite stable over the past six years but the RG recognises the School's efforts to be creative in attracting PhD students and post-doctoral scholars in the face of external difficulties such as minimal funding for scholarships and studentships in the area.
- 4.3 The biggest threat to the continued health of the School concerns funding. The less than transparent budget reporting process makes it difficult for the School to allocate resources because it is unable to identify a measurable link between student numbers and available income. Budget shortfalls have made it difficult to bring in guest speakers or to arrange field trips. Trips abroad are currently limited to a Decorative Arts trip to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. This is a significant problem for teaching and learning, particularly given Dublin's proximity to large numbers of world-class art collections in continental Europe.
- 4.4 A concern to the RG is the UCD Library, where the acquisitions budget is clearly inadequate to support the School's programmes. Monographs are key resources for Art History but the School appears to be experiencing difficulties in persuading UCD Library to buy monographs that are not listed as reading for individual modules. This creates significant difficulties, especially for the School's MA programmes. Similarly, the School is concerned that UCD Library's continuing subscription to ArtStor is not guaranteed, which threatens access to an image database on which the School has come to depend.
- 4.5 The School blames UCD Library deficiencies for its difficulties in attracting post-doctoral scholars, and in the declining number of PhD students.
- 4.6 In common with many other UCD academics the School finds that the large lecture theatres in the Newman Building are very susceptible to noise from adjacent public areas. It is hoped that this issue will be resolved as part of the Newman Building development project.
- 4.7 Not all faculty members seemed to be fully aware that in recent years UCD policy has been supportive of flexible assessment methods rather than basing students' grades on two major assignments (an essay and a final exam, for example).

- 4.8 The SAR notes that many students seem unclear about how their studies align with postgraduate and career possibilities. Students receive significant on-site exposure to cultural institutions in connection with their coursework - and appreciate the career information sessions aimed at senior undergraduates and MA students. However, those students interviewed by the RG indicated that they felt the need for dedicated information from the School about types of careers, including careers outside of Art History, Arts Management or Cultural Policy. They cited the importance of transferable skills and how to advance themselves by means such as CV-writing or writing grant applications.

### **Commendations**

- 4.9 The School's teaching staff is admirably dedicated, bringing a variety of individual teaching styles, all of which have strengths.
- 4.10 RG interviews with students from various year levels indicated that the School is exemplary in the ways in which it has built and maintained a high degree of satisfaction amongst its students, both undergraduate and graduate.
- 4.11 Interviews with BA and MA graduates – and with officials from a number of Dublin's professional arts institutions - strongly indicated that the quality of the academic preparation given to students makes them highly desirable employees.
- 4.12 The most obvious reason for the students' high levels of satisfaction is the faculty members' dedication to teaching their students, to supporting them in a nurturing environment, to maintaining strong connections between their research and their classroom activities, and the many professional connections of staff members with the broader Dublin and Irish arts communities.
- 4.13 Small to medium class sizes also contribute to a strong sense of community amongst the students, as does the School's prerequisite-based academic progression system which ensures that students of Art History progress together from module to module.
- 4.14 A sense of community is also enhanced by the Françoise Henry Reading Room, which undergraduate and graduate students alike cited as a key learning resource. Building and maintaining a vital sense of community is notoriously difficult to do in relatively small programmes, and at many other universities the failure to do this often results in substantial attrition rates fuelled by students who feel disconnected and lost.
- 4.15 One key barometer of student engagement is grading and the successful achievement of learning objectives. A review of grades attained shows that on this score, too, the School is strong—not surprisingly so, given the practices and achievements outlined above.
- 4.16 The School is also to be commended for the initiatives that it has undertaken in the areas of teaching and learning. Among these is its use of evening courses, which has obvious attractiveness as a recruitment tool. Moreover the resultant freeing up of time during the day allows lecturers more flexibility in scheduling site visits to Dublin's cultural institutions, an essential for success in the Art History programme.

## Recommendations

- 4.17 The School is encouraged to keep its teaching approaches under review and to engage proactively with new teaching software, evaluation methods, and other emerging developments in order to make what is already an effective pedagogical environment even stronger and more flexible.
- 4.18 The School is encouraged to review longstanding assessment systems in order to explore a greater variety of assessment techniques that test a wider range of intellectual skills as well as the stated learning outcomes of modules.
- 4.19 The School is recommended to identify funding opportunities from internal and external resources in order to augment the use of visiting lecturers and to support field trips within Ireland and abroad.
- 4.20 The School is encouraged to seek out already available resources—such as UCD’s Polycom system, run by IT Services—that could facilitate guest lecturers without the need to bring them physically to campus. In this regard the RG recommends that the pedagogical relationship with the National College of Art and Design might be formalised in the manner of the NCAD/National Museum link, so that it is not entirely dependent on informal links between individual staff members in both institutions.
- 4.21 The School should proactively work with the UCD Library to ensure the School’s library needs are fully and constantly on the library administration’s radar (see 8.12 below).
- 4.22 The School should work closely with Newman House to explore the full potential of the School’s involvement with the House for mutually beneficial purposes. Newman House is a UCD city centre setting already used by the School for classes but greater stability might be achieved by formulating a strategic plan setting out a vision for the proposed involvement of the School in Newman House in which teaching and conference space, the transformation of the House into the UCD Ulysses Centre and possibly even the proposed appointment in Modern Irish Art might be intertwined.
- 4.23 The School is encouraged to consider how best to support its students at various levels in their career planning so that they gain awareness of career options both within and outside Art History and Cultural Policy & Arts Management. Such information should not be confined to senior undergraduate and MA students. It should highlight transferable skills acquired during the degree programme without deflecting from core disciplinary objectives. In developing a response to this need the School is encouraged to engage proactively with relevant College initiatives and the Career Development Centre.
- 4.24 In order to address the issue of disruptive noise from the open area outside lecture theatres in the Newman Building, solutions should be explored with UCD Estates and the College to minimise the impact on lectures, especially in the context of the ongoing Newman Building renovation project.

## 5. Curriculum Development and Review

### *General Comments and Context*

- 5.1 Although the School of Art History and Cultural Policy is relatively small, it supports an ambitious curriculum that builds on the research activities and professional connections of its teaching staff. Its size makes it unable to offer as comprehensive a curriculum as larger and better resourced departments and schools of art history in other countries provide. However, the School offers the most varied and coherent undergraduate and graduate Art History curricula in Ireland.
- 5.2 With the proposed changes to the BA degree programme the School has an opportunity to identify opportunities for growing student undergraduate numbers within and across Colleges. This may require lateral thinking to identify and develop opportunities in conjunctions with Schools in other Colleges.
- 5.3 The RG noted from their discussions with alumni and employers the need to identify and communicate to students the transferable skills within the curriculum. This also highlights the value of consultation with stakeholders in identifying and cultivating the required skills.
- 5.4 The School is acutely aware of the need for Art History to be conceptualized and taught within a global context, going beyond the “Western Europe and New York” axis, as demonstrated by the goal to establish a faculty position specializing in non-Western art as outlined previously (Section 3: *Staff and Facilities*). The School is already conducting discussions with the Chester Beatty Library about creating a position in Islamic art, possibly split between UCD and the Chester Beatty which has a world-class collection of Islamic art. Non-Western architecture is a strength of the current Chair.
- 5.5 Like most undergraduate Art History programmes, the one offered by the School relies entirely on classroom teaching supplemented by impressive use of on-site visits in Dublin and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere.
- 5.6 The Cultural Policy and Arts Administration programme is very successful. It meets the demand for professionals in the area, and is sufficiently international in its scope that it is able to attract students from well beyond Ireland. The current staff complement of 1.5 faculty members is insufficient to support the current workload that such a successful programme requires
- 5.7 The School is active in reviewing its MA programmes on an ongoing basis. In Cultural Policy, for example, the dynamic nature of the field means that curriculum must be frequently updated in order to remain current and relevant. In the light of current teaching resources the potential loss of 15 Management credits that have previously been taught pro bono for the programme is a significant challenge.
- 5.8 The School is proposing a new Art History MA degree stream in Curating and Collecting. Such a programme would take advantage of the international interest amongst graduate students in curatorship and of museum practice. Student interviews with the RG support this suggestion, indicating that the third-year module in Curating is extremely popular

amongst undergraduate students, which reflects an international trend as Art History students increasingly consider employment positions in museums.

- 5.9 At the undergraduate level, the School's Self-Assessment Report expresses considerable concern about the implementation of a four-year BA degree. For example, a four-year, three-subject programme stands to increase student numbers, but without there necessarily being a corresponding increase in teaching staff. However, a sustained increase in student numbers could offer opportunities to the School to increase its financial and staffing resources. Increased transparency in calculating the link between student numbers and budget allocation would enable the School to model this more effectively.
- 5.10 While the School is the pre-eminent location in Ireland for the study of Art History, it does not have a full-time permanent staff position in modern Irish art. This is doubly anomalous because student interest in modern art is as strong at UCD as it is elsewhere in Europe and the Americas
- 5.11 The School SAR outlines the difficulties staff perceive in recruiting PhD students and postdoctoral fellows. Nevertheless Dublin—containing extremely rich collections of modern Irish art and of related archival and secondary published materials—offers an outstanding location for advanced research on modern Irish art.

### **Commendations**

- 5.12 The School is admirably concerned with conducting ongoing curriculum and programme review. Its Self-Assessment Report, as well as comments made in meetings that the RG conducted with staff members, indicates that, even when curriculum is deemed to be working well, the School is thinking ahead to potential changes that could improve the programmes' structures and/or address future challenges. Over the past decade, for example, the introduction of pre-requisites by the School has allowed it to offer a depth of learning and progression in its modules, and to respond to the challenges that arose from a flattened Stage Two and its subsequent reversal.
- 5.13 In addition, as noted above, there is a strong correlation between faculty research interests and what goes on in the classroom at both the BA and the MA levels. Certainly many sample syllabi that were made available to the members of the review committee were conspicuous for their thoughtfulness, rigour and originality.

### **Recommendations:**

- 5.14 The School should continue the practice of ongoing programme and curriculum review. As part of its review the School should involve alumni and employers in the process.
- 5.15 The School should explore ways of introducing more non-Western material into the undergraduate and graduate curricula. A proposed appointment in the area, as outlined elsewhere in the report, would be a key statement. However, their methods of incorporating non-Western material into the curriculum could include guest speakers, presented either in person or through Polycom technology.

- 5.16 The School is encouraged to explore the possibility of creating an online course and/or blended courses in order to reach students who may not be able to attend individual modules in person. In addition to being attractive to overseas students, online delivery of selected modules would also enrich the experience of on-campus students through blended learning techniques. In exploring the value, potential costs, staff commitment and likely benefits, the School should draw on the advice and experience of other UCD Schools and units who currently offer or help with online or blended learning engagement.
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- 5.18 A strategic review of the MA in Cultural Policy is recommended, with specific attention to budget, staffing, future leadership and future development, in order to ensure the sustainability of this highly successful and popular programme. Such a review should be conducted in consultation with the College and draw upon the expertise of alumni and other stakeholders.
- 5.19 In addition, there is a need for the School, possibly in consultation with the College, to identify a solution to the recently arisen risk that 15 Cultural Policy credits previously taught on a *pro bono* basis may soon need to be provided in a different way.
- 5.20 One means of reducing workload in the Cultural Policy programme is to review the curriculum and its assessment, possibly offering options of a thesis, shorter major research paper, or perhaps even an entirely course-based degree imaginatively conceived.
- 5.21 As noted elsewhere in the report, the School should prioritize in the short term the appointment of at least one new post in Cultural Policy so that the programme can respond to the demand for places and plan the next phase of its development. It requires a second Cultural Policy post in the medium term to prepare for the retirement in four years of the staff member who leads the programme. Planning for the leadership and continuing sustainability of the programme into the future is a pivotal aspect of these appointments.
- 5.22 The School should explore the opportunities and challenges of developing new programmes, especially an MA stream, to capitalize on the synergies arising from its blend of Art History and Cultural Policy expertise in order to cater for potential new students beyond those to whom the current programmes appeal. This might be considered in the context of staffing developments in Cultural Policy.

## **6. Research Activity**

### ***General Comments and Context***

- 6.1 The level of research activity, especially for Art History faculty, is demonstrably high. Maintaining standards in this area while developing other aspects of School activity presents a major challenge for School staff.

- 6.2 There is a general perception by academic staff of the School that the collective research activity of the unit is not recognized at the College or University level. Changing this perception is a stated priority for staff. It is noted that the new Principal of the College of Arts and Humanities does recognize the merits of the School's research activity and welcomes discussion with SAHCP.
- 6.3 The RG were of the opinion that part of the issue may be one of public relations.

### **Commendations**

- 6.4 Staff members maintain a very high level of research activity in the face of a deficit of resources for research, professional development and research travel, for presentation at conferences, and for the acquisition of research materials. The sustained high level and quality of research demonstrates the School's dedication to excellence.

### **Recommendations**

- 6.5 In order to address the perceived shortage of recognition for its research merits, the School is recommended to initiate discussions with College and University authorities with a view to finding common ground in this area and developing strategies of communication both internally within the University and more broadly outside the University. As part of this process the School needs to articulate the value of its research to promoting the stated goals of the College and University while also framing its position in terms that are meaningful in its own disciplines.
- 6.6 As a means to advance the process of recognition, the School might consider exploring the possibility of having its research measured independently against equivalent units overseas.
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- 6.9 The Head of School, subject leaders and School research officer should be involved in the process of articulating the value of the School and its research activities.
- 6.10 The School should continue to build on its current success in attracting externally funded research awards in line with University strategy.

## **7. Management of Quality and Enhancement**

### ***General Comments and Context***

- 7.1 The School exhibits a positive and active approach to quality management and enhancement. Staff worked together to engage positively with the quality review process, and the Review Group appreciated the significant work in producing both the impressive Self-Assessment Report and its detailed Appendices. It was also clear to the Review Group that the School intended to use the quality review as an opportunity to consolidate and develop its activities.
- 7.2 In addition to engaging actively with the Quality Review process the School has in place normal internal mechanisms for quality assurance including appointment of external examiners for degree programmes, provision for management of doctoral programmes which includes doctoral supervisory panels, and active undergraduate student feedback mechanisms.
- 7.3 Some gaps in terms of formal internal organization and governance structures were noted in the SAR.

### **Commendations**

- 7.4 The School appears to be conscientious in its approach to quality assurance and the small size of the unit facilitates the effectiveness of existing informal feedback mechanisms.
- 7.5 There is a good workload model in place and a system of rotated research leave for staff.
- 7.6 Annual one-to-one interviews by the programme director with students taking the MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management – and especially the manner in which issues from this feedback mechanism influence change in the management of the programme – are an especially impressive practice.

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- 7.8 As already implemented in Cultural Policy, a transparent closing of the student feedback loop across the School is recommended whereby issues emerging from student feedback are addressed and students are made aware of developments that arise from feedback.
- 7.9 While double-marking of assessment submissions graded by tutors is practiced, the School is recommended to develop a more formal mentoring and training programme for tutors.

## **8. Support Services**

### ***General Comments and Context***

- 8.1 The School SAR details the level of engagement with some of the supports and services provided by other UCD units, specifically the relationships with the College of Arts BA and Graduate Programme Offices, central Room Allocations, IT Services, UCD Library, and the International Office. The needs of the School seem to be effectively met by these Support Services in the majority of cases and the School has a positive relationship with most of the listed support units.
- 8.2 The RG noted that only a subset of the support services supplied by the University were described in the SAR although the nature of the interaction with other units became apparent during the site visit.
- 8.3 Other units that the School interacts with regularly include the College Finance Office and the UCD Estates. On the other hand the relationship with UCD Registry, Human Resources, UCD Research and Innovation, UCD Finance, UCD Careers Development Centre and UCD Teaching and Learning were less well defined in the discussions during the site visit and absent from the SAR.
- 8.4 The RG identified that the School had encountered difficulties in obtaining transparent and up-to-date budget figures at different time periods across the academic year, and this has created challenges for the School in monitoring and planning its budget.
- 8.5 As noted in Section 4.4 above, the acquisition of new monographs is limited to those identified on reading lists for individual modules. This leads to serious problems in the availability of reading material for graduate programmes, and severely limits the scope for recruitment at PhD and Post-Doctoral level.
- 8.6 On the whole the relationship between the School and UCD Library is good. Sometimes communication problems have been encountered. The accidental disposal by the Library of a collection of work (journal holdings) relevant to the activities of the School was a source of frustration and, while access to electronic replacements is now available, it clearly highlights the need for consultation with the School prior to disposing of any Library material.
- 8.7 Challenges in setting up new Erasmus programmes had been encountered during discussions with UCD International.
- 8.8 The RG also noted that the School had to work around the University online application process for postgraduate courses in order to help applicants to navigate the system with extensive phone support. Many of the postgraduates that the RG met during the site visit expressed the opinion that the contact with staff during the application process was a positive factor in their decision to choose the UCD course over others offered in the State.

## **Commendations**

- 8.9 In general the School enjoys good relationships with many of the university units which deliver support services. There appear to be good ties with IT services while the relationship with the International Office is generally quite good.
- 8.10 The interaction with the Library on the purchase of books is severely constrained by UCD Library budget restrictions but is otherwise reasonably efficient, leading to a responsive and timely service.

## **Recommendations**

- 8.11 The recommended School Finance Committee (see 2.16) is encouraged to work with the College Finance office to try and ensure a greater level of budget transparency throughout the year.
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## **External Relations**

### ***General Comments and Context***

- 9.1 The School has a good profile beyond UCD and Ireland. It is the largest academic centre for Art History in Ireland; its degree and diploma courses are well-known and respected nationally; and its research output in many forms is internationally recognised.

- 9.2 The School actively engages with a large number of public bodies and government departments at national level. The School is represented at board level in all the country's major public galleries and museums and one member of staff has been elected to the RIA.
- 9.3 The School has excellent representation at international conferences and is also represented on international panels and boards.

### **Commendations**

- 9.4 The excellent reputation of the School for scholarship and delivery of first class degree programmes within Ireland was clear during discussions with a wide range of external stakeholders during the site visit.
- 9.5 The alumni who met the RG at the site visit expressed a strong allegiance to and affection for the School. This is testament to the work of the staff in engaging with students at all levels and in their connection to the Arts community in Ireland.
- 9.6 The School is building alignments with the National College of Art and Design.
- 9.7 The School has maintained a presence in Dublin city centre through their delivery of some parts of the programme in Newman House.
- 9.8 Employers expressed strong satisfaction with graduates from the School's programmes while making helpful suggestions for additional employment-related preparation that might be provided to students.

### **Recommendations**

- 9.9 The School is recommended to develop a proactive strategy around alumni development and engagement
- 9.10 The appointment of a School *advisory* committee is strongly recommended, capitalising on the excellent relations enjoyed with former students and other stakeholders in positions of experience, influence and innovation. Such a committee should be lean and might include representation from the public and private sector as well as School staff in the person of the Head of School, School Development Officer and possibly a third person to ensure representation from both disciplines. It could be used as a sounding board when developing strategic positions; it might help the School to identify sources of research and other funding; it might advise on possible internship opportunities; and it might generally strengthen links with decision-makers in private and public positions.
- 9.11 The School is recommended to maintain and expand its leadership roles nationally and internationally in order to maximise its strategic influence on cultural institutions and the development of its relevant disciplines as well as being recognised for its undoubted scholarship and willingness to participate.

- 9.12 The RG considers that the emerging collaboration and links with the National College of Art and Design, which seem to depend heavily on one member of staff in the School, need to be cultivated in a more orchestrated manner by the School at different levels from governance to teaching and research.
- 9.13 Expand activity in international exchange and engage with UCD International to connect with a greater breadth of international students and international institutions of higher learning.
- 9.14 Explore new relationships with other schools across campus with a view to a shared offering of professional training in the Cultural Policy MA.
- 9.15 Explore professional accreditation of degree programmes where appropriate.
- 9.16 The School is recommended to develop the next generation of alumni by promoting the involvement of current students in common interests beyond the classroom and across the School.
- 9.17 The School might encourage students to organize mutually beneficial activities such as career events or newsletters for alumni and other external associates.
- 9.18 The School is recommended to maximize the use of the School website for two-way communication and to maintain its national and international profile.
- 9.19 In addition to forming an advisory committee (Section 9.10) the School is recommended to engage with alumni by providing a forum for panel discussions on themes such as professional practice, mentoring programmes, internships and bottom-up fundraising.

**UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy – Full List of Commendations and Recommendations**

This Appendix contains a full list of commendations and recommendations made by the Review Group for the UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy and should be read in conjunction with the specific chapter above. *(Please note that the paragraph references below refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report text)*

**Commendations**

- 2.12 The School operates efficiently in a collegial fashion, and it seems to the review team that the senior Professor in the School provides excellent intellectual leadership and plays a significant role in supporting the Head of School.
- 2.13 The School has been proactive in identifying potential areas for student growth and income generation through the introduction of new module offerings.
- 2.14 The School has an internal research leave arrangement in place with staff eligible for leave every eight semester.
- 2.15 The School is to be commended for the personalized approach in operation on postgraduate student recruitment.

**Recommendations**

- 2.16 The School is encouraged to establish a small finance committee chaired by the Head of School and reporting to staff meetings, in order to provide the Head of School with assistance in financial monitoring and planning and to draw on the best expertise in the School while inducting potential future Heads into the process.
- 2.17 The School recognizes the need to review its current workload model and the RG would support this.
- 2.18 The RG recommends that the School continues to review and identify opportunities to grow student numbers and to build on current successes. The School should work with the incoming College Marketing and Communications Manager in raising the profile, reputation and impact of its programmes as well as identifying opportunities for collaboration and growing student numbers.
- 2.19 The School is exhorted to examine how it might achieve a higher profile for its active participation on committees and projects across the University and beyond. It should seek opportunities to lead on these initiatives and, using its website and other means of

communication, to highlight for the University and society the valuable contribution it is making in these realms.

### **3. Staff and Facilities**

A: Staff

#### **Commendations**

- 3.11 Members of academic staff are well known in their field and are well-regarded by students and outside stakeholders. In this way, SAHCP is an asset to the College and to the University.
- 3.12 School staff represent a healthy intellectual balance of Irish and non-Irish staff and a commendable mix of UCD and non-UCD academic backgrounds
- 3.13 There is opportunity not only to maintain but to increase the reputation of SAHCP through key hiring of academic staff over the next 5-year period.

#### **Recommendations**

- 3.14 The School should revisit its staff planning strategy as articulated in its SAR and 2015 Strategic Plan. This staff planning process should include succession plans for key appointments, identifying prioritized area(s) for enhancement and growth that are aligned to the vision of the School, College and University. Key performance indicators should be linked to these objectives, and posts prioritized with associated timelines and monitoring mechanisms. Any post increases should be linked to student numbers and a strategic recruitment plan that addresses the needs and mission of the School in the context of College and University priorities. It is important for success in this process that the School works closely with College administration in formulating and implementing a strategic blueprint that articulates the need for these investments and the expected value to be gained from them. Proactive generation of such strategic material by the School would minimise reliance on assumptions about staffing in dealings between SAHCP and both the College and University.
- 3.15 The School should create and implement a succession plan for the key academic staff member in Cultural Policy. The plan will ensure continuity for Cultural Policy and provide stability in the programme.
- 3.16 In the short term the School needs an immediate second post for cultural policy to secure the programme, but over the medium term this should be underpinned by a further appointment. Hiring should be at sufficient stature not just to replace current staff on retirement but also to maintain the reputation of the programme. To satisfy capacity properly, Cultural Policy should consider expanding academic staff to 2 full-time and 1 half-time posts.

- 3.17 With two upcoming retirements in Art History staff over the next decade it is critical that the current complement of Art History staff is maintained. The Review Group would also support School growth in the following areas of expertise: *Modernist Irish* and *Islam*.
- 3.18 The Review Group recommends that the School might consider, in consultation with the current post holder as well as College and University authorities, a review of the job title and job description of the Slide Curator so that they more accurately define the varied and remarkable contribution of the post-holder to the School and open up opportunities for advancement to reflect this contribution, not least in the use of information technology.
- 3.19 The School should consider applying for a School Athena Swan Award following the recent Institutional Athena Swan Bronze Award.

B: Facilities

**Commendations:**

- 3.24 SAHCP has done a lot with a little. Staff have maintained high levels of research activity, high integrity in teaching, and high satisfaction among students despite facilities that do not adequately live up to the demands.

**Recommendations:**

- 3.25 As a matter of priority the School needs to develop a spatial strategy document that articulates its needs, especially in terms of student growth in enrolment, and the priorities set by the College and the University. While the spatial strategy will be developed in conjunction with College and University authorities, the School is encouraged to take a lead in articulating the value of the initiative in terms that align with College strategy, and keeping the issue on the agenda thereafter.
- 3.26 The first issue to address is whether the present location of the School is fit for purpose in terms of visibility, spatial organisation and capacity. Out of this analysis will come a decision on whether to renovate the existing space or seek re-location to a more suitable space.
- 3.27 If the School intends to remain in its current location it should be innovative in renovating space use in line with present instructional needs and future capacity. Simultaneously it should examine spaces elsewhere that might augment the current SAHCP space.
- 3.28 The School is recommended to be proactive in its approach to the Newman Building redevelopment both in terms of contribution and benefit.
- 3.29 The Review Group recommends that the School engage actively in ensuring its continuing access to Newman House as a teaching and event space, particularly as a teaching space for

the MA in Art History, and as a co-teaching space with NCAD. In building a case, it should explore the value of this approach to Newman House and UCD as well as the School.

- 3.30 The School is very active in its use of online facilities, resources and social networking to communicate with students, alumni and friends of the School. The School should seek to explore opportunities to build on its impact and outreach as a means of marketing its programme offerings and strengthening its links with alumni.

#### **4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

##### **Commendations**

- 4.9 The School's teaching staff is admirably dedicated, bringing a variety of individual teaching styles, all of which have strengths.
- 4.10 RG interviews with students from various year levels indicated that the School is exemplary in the ways in which it has built and maintained a high degree of satisfaction amongst its students, both undergraduate and graduate.
- 4.11 Interviews with BA and MA graduates – and with officials from a number of Dublin's professional arts institutions - strongly indicated that the quality of the academic preparation given to students makes them highly desirable employees.
- 4.12 The most obvious reason for the students' high levels of satisfaction is the faculty members' dedication to teaching their students, to supporting them in a nurturing environment, to maintaining strong connections between their research and their classroom activities, and the many professional connections of staff members with the broader Dublin and Irish arts communities.
- 4.13 Small to medium class sizes also contribute to a strong sense of community amongst the students, as does the School's prerequisite-based academic progression system which ensures that students of Art History progress together from module to module.
- 4.14 A sense of community is also enhanced by the Françoise Henry Reading Room, which undergraduate and graduate students alike cited as a key learning resource. Building and maintaining a vital sense of community is notoriously difficult to do in relatively small programmes, and at many other universities the failure to do this often results in substantial attrition rates fuelled by students who feel disconnected and lost.
- 4.15 One key barometer of student engagement is grading and the successful achievement of learning objectives. A review of grades attained shows that on this score, too, the School is strong—not surprisingly so, given the practices and achievements outlined above.
- 4.16 The School is also to be commended for the initiatives that it has undertaken in the areas of teaching and learning. Among these is its use of evening courses, which has obvious attractiveness as a recruitment tool. Moreover the resultant freeing up of time during the

day allows lecturers more flexibility in scheduling site visits to Dublin's cultural institutions, an essential for success in the Art History programme.

## Recommendations

- 4.17 The School is encouraged to keep its teaching approaches under review and to engage proactively with new teaching software, evaluation methods, and other emerging developments in order to make what is already an effective pedagogical environment even stronger and more flexible.
- 4.18 The School is encouraged to review longstanding assessment systems in order to explore a greater variety of assessment techniques that test a wider range of intellectual skills as well as the stated learning outcomes of modules.
- 4.19 The School is recommended to identify funding opportunities from internal and external resources in order to augment the use of visiting lecturers and to support field trips within Ireland and abroad.
- 4.20 The School is encouraged to seek out already available resources—such as UCD’s Polycom system, run by IT Services—that could facilitate guest lecturers without the need to bring them physically to campus. In this regard the RG recommends that the pedagogical relationship with the National College of Art and Design might be formalised in the manner of the NCAD/National Museum link, so that it is not entirely dependent on informal links between individual staff members in both institutions.
- 4.21 The School should proactively work with the UCD Library to ensure the School’s library needs are fully and constantly on the library administration’s radar (see 8.12 below).
- 4.22 The School should work closely with Newman House to explore the full potential of the School’s involvement with the House for mutually beneficial purposes. Newman House is a UCD city centre setting already used by the School for classes but greater stability might be achieved by formulating a strategic plan setting out a vision for the proposed involvement of the School in Newman House in which teaching and conference space, the transformation of the House into the UCD Ulysses Centre and possibly even the proposed appointment in Modern Irish Art might be intertwined.
- 4.23 The School is encouraged to consider how best to support its students at various levels in their career planning so that they gain awareness of career options both within and outside Art History and Cultural Policy & Arts Management. Such information should not be confined to senior undergraduate and MA students. It should highlight transferable skills acquired during the degree programme without deflecting from core disciplinary objectives. In developing a response to this need the School is encouraged to engage proactively with relevant College initiatives and the Career Development Centre.
- 4.24 In order to address the issue of disruptive noise from the open area outside lecture theatres in the Newman Building, solutions should be explored with UCD Estates and the College to minimise the impact on lectures, especially in the context of the ongoing Newman Building renovation project.

## 5. Curriculum Development and Review

### Commendations

- 5.12 The School is admirably concerned with conducting ongoing curriculum and programme review. It's Self-Assessment Report, as well as comments made in meetings that the RG conducted with staff members, indicates that, even when curriculum is deemed to be working well, the School is thinking ahead to potential changes that could improve the programmes' structures and/or address future challenges. Over the past decade, for example, the introduction of pre-requisites by the School has allowed it to offer a depth of learning and progression in its modules, and to respond to the challenges that arose from a flattened Stage Two and its subsequent reversal.
- 5.13 In addition, as noted above, there is a strong correlation between faculty research interests and what goes on in the classroom at both the BA and the MA levels. Certainly many sample syllabi that were made available to the members of the review committee were conspicuous for their thoughtfulness, rigour and originality.

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- 9.4 The excellent reputation of the School for scholarship and delivery of first class degree programmes within Ireland was clear during discussions with a wide range of external stakeholders during the site visit.
- 9.5 The alumni who met the RG at the site visit expressed a strong allegiance to and affection for the School. This is testament to the work of the staff in engaging with students at all levels and in their connection to the Arts community in Ireland.
- 9.6 The School is building alignments with the National College of Art and Design.
- 9.7 The School has maintained a presence in Dublin city centre through their delivery of some parts of the programme in Newman House.
- 9.8 Employers expressed strong satisfaction with graduates from the School's programmes while making helpful suggestions for additional employment-related preparation that might be provided to students.

## Recommendations

- 9.9 The School is recommended to develop a proactive strategy around alumni development and engagement
- 9.10 The appointment of a School *advisory* committee is strongly recommended, capitalising on the excellent relations enjoyed with former students and other stakeholders in positions of experience, influence and innovation. Such a committee should be lean and might include representation from the public and private sector as well as School staff in the person of the Head of School, School Development Officer and possibly a third person to ensure representation from both disciplines. It could be used as a sounding board when developing strategic positions; it might help the School to identify sources of research and other funding; it might advise on possible internship opportunities; and it might generally strengthen links with decision-makers in private and public positions.
- 9.11 The School is recommended to maintain and expand its leadership roles nationally and internationally in order to maximise its strategic influence on cultural institutions and the development of its relevant disciplines as well as being recognised for its undoubted scholarship and willingness to participate.
- 9.12 The RG considers that the emerging collaboration and links with the National College of Art and Design, which seem to depend heavily on one member of staff in the School, need to be cultivated in a more orchestrated manner by the School at different levels from governance to teaching and research.
- 9.13 Expand activity in international exchange and engage with UCD International to connect with a greater breadth of international students and international institutions of higher learning.
- 9.14 Explore new relationships with other schools across campus with a view to a shared offering of professional training in the Cultural Policy MA.
- 9.15 Explore professional accreditation of degree programmes where appropriate.
- 9.16 The School is recommended to develop the next generation of alumni by promoting the involvement of current students in common interests beyond the classroom and across the School.
- 9.17 The School might encourage students to organize mutually beneficial activities such as career events or newsletters for alumni and other external associates.
- 9.18 The School is recommended to maximize the use of the School website for two-way communication and to maintain its national and international profile.
- 9.19 In addition to forming an advisory committee (Section 9.10) the School is recommended to engage with alumni by providing a forum for panel discussions on themes such as professional practice, mentoring programmes, internships and bottom-up fundraising.

**School of Art History and Cultural Policy: response to RG report, July 2017**

The School thanks the Review Group for its assiduous work in producing this report and for its very helpful recommendations.

Since the visit of the Review Group a School sub-committee on Finance, comprising Kathleen James Chakraborty, Pat Cooke, John Loughman, Nicola Figgis, and Elizabeth Varley, has already been set up and has met with the College Finance Officer (2.16). Workload meetings for 2016-17 have been held according to the existing model with administrative duties assigned to staff for 2017-18 (2.17). The School has already put in place a Space Planning Committee, comprising Kathleen James Chakraborty, Lynda Mulvin and Conor Lucey, which will deliver a report in Autumn 2017 (3.7, 3.25-29) and will consider the options regarding Newman House (4.22). The School has begun consideration of more formal mentoring and training programme for tutors and meetings are being arranged before the start of 2017-18 (7.5).

Regarding the School's plans for the coming academic year, we will work with the incoming College Marketing and Communications Manager, once this role is in place, to identify opportunities for growing student numbers with the aim of achieving a higher national and international profile for the School (2.18, 2.19, 6.5). The framing of the School's research values will fold into the College KPI strategy (6.8).

A sub-committee, comprising Kathleen James Chakraborty, Pat Cooke and Nicola Figgis is to develop a staff planning report in Autumn 2017, which will include staff succession planning for those who will be retiring within the next 5 years (3.14-17). The splitting of the cost of an appointment in non-Western art was with Trinity (not the Chester Beatty) but the point regarding the role remains valid and will be considered under the plan (5.4). Establishing a full-time permanent staff position in modern Irish art will be an important item on the report (5.10). The School will recommend strongly that the Slide Curator's major workload is reflected in an upgrade (3.18).

A strategic review of the MA in Cultural Policy will be carried out and the points made will be taken on board (5.18, 5.20, 9.14). The Head of Cultural Policy will meet and consider options in relation to employment of occasional lecturers in consultation with the College Principal (5.19). In the short term a temporary solution has been found in relation to the Business Planning module. By employing an occasional lecturer, the module will not have to move to the Business School.

The School plans to set up an alumni friends group and has identified a suitable former doctoral student, who will be approached to lead this group in Autumn 2017 (4.19, 9.9, 9.19).

The School will set up an advisory committee comprising of our adjunct professors, Kathleen James Chakraborty and Nicola Figgis (9.10) and develop a formal consulting process as part of its ongoing programme and curriculum review (5.14).

Teaching and Learning will explore alternative methods of assessment at a meeting with all staff in Autumn 2017 (4.7). Staff planning, fund-raising and staff grants will help to introduce more guest

speakers on non-Western material (5.15) and we will investigate UCD's Polycom system (4.20). The School will await the first intake of students to the new four-year BA programme, in September 2018 to see how the budgetary and staff implications work in practice (5.17). The School will work with the Clinton Institute to raise funds to develop blended learning engagement in Irish art (5.16). The School will also apply for a School Athena Swan Award (3.19).

The existing career seminar which is held for third level students will from 2017-18 be open to all levels (4.8). DRAWSOC already involves current students beyond the classroom, but we can do more, and the alumni group will help here (9.16, 9.17).

The School will do more to reach out to UCD Registry, Human Resources, UCD Research and Innovation, UCD Finance, UCD Careers Development Centre and UCD Teaching and Learning (8.12) and will continue to develop its relationship with UCD Estates through its Space Planning sub-committee (8.1).

Regarding the library, we will work with our library liaison and other staff (4.21). There is little subject-level acquisition from within the library, as would be international best practice, and the lack of resources has an impact on PhD and postdoctoral numbers (8.5). The School will lobby for additional funds for the Library (8.13).

The Head of School and Erasmus co-ordinator will meet with Douglas Proctor to bring about improvements in the mechanism to establish new Erasmus exchanges. Likewise the Heads of Art History and Cultural Policy will engage with him in relation to overseas student recruitment and support (8.14, 8.15).

We will continue to formalise the link with National College of Art and Design (4.20) but there is no NCAD/National Museum link of which we are aware (9.12). The emerging collaboration of the School with the NCAD depends heavily on two members of staff (Kathleen James Chakraborty and Emily Mark FitzGerald). It should begin to move forward with the appointment of the new Director head of NCAD, already an adjunct professor of the School, as well as the new head of visual culture.

The School will work towards expanding its leadership roles nationally and internationally in order to maximise its strategic influence on cultural institutions and the development of its relevant disciplines (9.11). The School will use the School website for two-way communication and to maintain its national and international profile, within the limits allowed by the current UCD template (9.18).

On a point of clarification, regarding leadership roles on various committee and boards (2.4.), internally, Lynda Mulvin and Pat Cooke have served as vice principals within the UCD College of Arts and Humanities. Externally Kathleen James Chakraborty currently chairs one of two standing committees of the board of the National Museum; Pat Cooke was recently acting chair of the board of the Hunt Museum; Conor Lucey is President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland; Emily Mark FitzGerald has recently chaired the board of the Irish Museums Association. Nonetheless, more could be done to make the School a place where new approaches to national cultural policy are articulated.





**UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy**

**Quality Review Site Visit 28 February – 3 March 2017**

**TIMETABLE**

**Pre-Visit Briefing Prior to Site Visit – Tuesday February 28**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 17.00-19.00 | Review Group (RG) meet to review preliminary issues and to confirm work schedule and assignment of tasks for the site visit |
| 19.30       | Dinner hosted for the RG by the Deputy President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar                         |

**Day 1: Wednesday, March 1**

**Venue: Françoise Henry Reading Room (Room J007), School of Art History and Cultural Policy, Ground Floor, Newman Building**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 09.00-09.30   | Private meeting of Review Group (RG)  |
| 09.30 – 10.00 | RG meet College Principal, College of Arts and Humanities                       |
| 10.00 – 10.45 | RG meet with Head of School   |
| 10.45 – 11.15 | Tea/coffee break  |
| 11.15 – 12.15 | RG meet with SAR Coordinating Committee   |
| 12.15-12.45   | Break – RG review key observations and prepare for lunch time meeting           |
| 12.45-13.45   | Working lunch with representative group of undergraduate students:              |
| 13.45-14.15   | RG review key observations  |
| 14.15-15.30   | RG meet with representative group of academic staff – primary focus on Teaching |

and Learning, and Curriculum issues.

15.30-15.45	RG tea/coffee break
15.45-16.30	RG meet with support staff representatives (e.g. administrative / technical etc)
16.30-16.35	Break
16.35-17.05	RG meet UCD Programme Dean
17.05-17.15	Break
17.15-18.15	Tour of facilities
18.15	RG depart

## Day 2: Thursday, 2 March 2017

Venue: Françoise Henry Reading Room (Room J007), School of Art History and Cultural Policy, Ground Floor, Newman Building

08.45-09.15	Private meeting of the RG
09.15-10.00	RG meet relevant support service representatives
10:00-10:20	Break
10.20-11.00	RG meet with a representative group of postgraduate students (taught and research, recent graduates (PG and UG) and post doctorates
11.00-11.15	RG tea/coffee break
11.15-12.15	RG meet with the School Research Committee
12.15-12.30	Break - RG review key observations
12.30-13.30	Lunch – Review Group only meeting with employers (and/or other external stakeholders), including graduates
13.30-14.00	RG meet with Level 2 undergraduate students
14.00-14.15	RG private meeting - review key observations
14.15-15.00	RG meet with College Finance Manager and Head of School to outline School's financial situation
15.00-15.15	Break
15.15-16.15	RG meet with recently appointed members of staff

16.15-17.15	RG available for private individual meetings with staff
17.15-18.00	RG private meeting – review key observations/findings
18.00	RG depart

**Day 3: Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017**

**Venue: Françoise Henry Reading Room (Room J007), School of Art History and Cultural Policy, Ground Floor, Newman Building**

09.00-09.30	Private meeting of RG
09.30-10.30	RG preparing draft RG Report
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-12.30	RG continue preparing draft RG Report and feedback commendations/recommendations
12.30-13.15	Lunch
13.15-13.30	RG meet with Professor College Principal, College of Arts and Humanities, to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
13.30-13.45	RG meet with Head of School and Subject Head to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations
15:00	Exit presentation to <u>all available staff of the unit</u>
15:30	Review Group depart